

Abstracts for Shadow of the Precursor conference Kangaroo Island, 7–9 December 2009

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“For Fiction—read Scott alone”: the legacy of Sir Walter Scott on youthful writers

The wide influence of Sir Walter Scott on numerous writers of the nineteenth-century and beyond is well known. Less known and less studied is the seminal role his work had on young writers in Britain and throughout the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Wherever British colonists landed they took with them their favourite volumes of Scott or had them sent from Britain as new editions were published. In Britain and in the colonies, such as Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, young writers modeled their first efforts in story-telling on the historical romances of Scott.

This paper will examine the significance of both his novels and historical work for children (*Tales of a Grandfather*), arguing that his crucial influence on child writers ultimately directed the course of the novel genre for years to come. The paper will discuss a variety of writers like Ainsworth, George Eliot, Stevenson, Louisa May Alcott and Rosa Praed, and focus in particular on the Brontës who were avid readers of both Scott’s poetry and prose from an early age. In July 1834, Charlotte Brontë recommended to her friend Ellen Nussey: “For Fiction—read Scott alone all novels after his are worthless”, a statement that contrasts with her later negative reference to antecedents—“even the greatest, even Scott”—that paradoxically betrays the depth of her engagement with his work. Both his life and work provided inspiration and models for the imaginative creations of Glasstown, Angria and Gondal, with their characters, landscape, themes, tropes and language that echo throughout the later novels of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.

These young authors were first readers and then writers. The prevalence in their early writings of Scott’s enthusiasm for historical romance, his use of landscape, his emphasis not only on heroic but also picturesque low-life characters, his modeling as a story-teller, and direct quotation from his works, tells us much about the way such children read, and the social circumstances of their reading and writing practices.

Tully Barnett
Flinders University

The Shadow of the Golem in *Foucault's Pendulum* and *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*

The figure of the golem has been identified as a precursor to, among other things, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which itself is a precursor to modern ways of thinking about the unintended consequences of techno-science in the contemporary era, and both have been identified as precursors to fictional robots and artificial intelligence.

The figure of the golem continues to resonate in contemporary fiction where it has been used, I argue, to articulate the concept of information technology and embodied information, as well as to provide dramatic shorthand for a history of cultural and religious subjugation and persecution. Authors use the figure of the golem to invest their texts with a mythological dimension and historical resonance, and to identify a trajectory of culture and ideas centred around the issues of information, technology, power, and identity.

In Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum*, a novel about secret societies, conspiracy theories, and the perils of over interpreting texts and symbols, Eco uses the golem as a means of allegorizing information technology and contextualizing it within a wider history.

In Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, with a backdrop of the American Depression, World War II, and the golden age of comic books, the golem is used to allegorize Jewish identity and nationalism amidst a rapidly changing historical climate and media. Chabon's characters use the comic book medium to fight Hitler and anti-Semitism, and their actions are contextualized within a larger history of Jewish history, something Chabon links explicitly to the medium of the comic book.

This paper argues that the golem appears in Eco and Chabon as a precursor to – and enables the articulation of – mid-to-late twentieth-century concepts of information, media, and the transmission of national identity.

Giselle Bastin
Flinders University

“Re-imagining the 1930s: Intertextual References in the book and film of *Atonement*.”

The long shadows cast by writers in Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* are mirrored in the filmic references that inform much of Joe Wright’s adaptation of the novel of the same name. For both McEwan and Wright, images and references from the 1930s and 1940s aid in the reconstruction of historical period while furthering, also, their acts of *homage* and critique of the artists who have come before them. In Wright’s case, this project becomes doubly entwined in the complexities of intertextuality because of its status as an adaptation of McEwan’s precursor text. This paper will investigate examples of intertextuality in both McEwan and Wright, and examine how their works both re-imagine and re-create the historical period labelled ‘Modernist’.

The Precursor as Shadow and Light: Ovid in Dante's *Comedy*

Dante Alighieri is undoubtedly among the West's greatest writers and his most famous work, the *Comedy*, continues to be one of Western literature's unparalleled triumphs. This rich poetic compendium of theology, history, philosophy, literature and mythology is interwoven with the ideas, techniques and writings of an impressive array of authors, ancient, historical and medieval. The works of such thinkers as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle and Virgil are ever present in the *Comedy*. And to such writers it seems due homage is paid: in the very first canto of the poem, Virgil is credited with being one of the greatest sources of poetic inspiration for Dante:

"You are my teacher and my author.
You are the one from whom alone I took
the noble style that has brought me honor."¹

Yet there are other authors of equal note in the *Comedy* toward whom Dante appears to remain ambivalent. One of the most prominent is the Roman poet, Ovid. The number of direct references to his works are second only to those of Virgil² and Ovid's most famous poem, the *Metamorphoses*, in particular, provides a valuable source of transformation myths and imagery from which Dante borrows heavily.³ What makes the dialogue between the two figures more interesting is that both shared a similar experience of political exile that significantly influenced their writings.⁴

In this paper I seek to explore how the predecessor can become both blessing and curse: a valuable source of learning and inspiration and therefore a beacon for those that follow but one that necessarily casts heavy shadows of originality and talent. I suggest that the relationship that Dante poet creates with Ovid throughout the poem mirrors, on a literary level, the spiritual transcendence story of his protagonist in the *Comedy* and that Dante's success with this literary relationship is therefore linked to his going beyond the Ovidian source.

¹ *Inferno* 1, 85-87, D. Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, trans. R. Hollander & J. Hollander, Princeton Dante Project, 1997-1999: [<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html>].

² J. Scott, *Understanding Dante*, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004, pp. 241-242.

³ R. Jacoff & J.T. Schnapp, "Introduction" in R. Jacoff & J.T. Schnapp (eds), *The Poetry of Allusion. Virgil and Ovid in Dante's Commedia*, California, Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 1.

⁴ J. Levarie Smarr, "Poets of Love and Exile" in M.U. Sowell (ed.), *Dante and Ovid. Essays in Intertextuality*, New York, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991, p. 140.

Laura Carroll,
La Trobe University

Figures of Adaptation: Pages on Fire

Literature-to-film adaptation is, as Sarah Cardwell observes, ‘both a process and a product’. Thus adaptation is hard to satisfactorily describe or account for within linear theoretical frameworks such as narratology or structuralism. Metaphor, with its compoundings and densities, appears to be the medium of choice for some critics to think about what adaptation is and does: to André Bazin, adaptation is a flashlight beam passing over a crystal chandelier; to George Bluestone it is alchemy; to Millicent Marcus the connection between source novel and target film is ‘umbilical’. But what do adapted films themselves have to say? How do movies represent or figure their relations with precursor texts?

Through a sustained close reading of figures of adaptation present in François Truffaut’s 1965 adaptation of Ray Bradbury’s novel *Fahrenheit 451*, this paper constructs the hypothesis that successful and sophisticated literature-to-film adaptations, like all successful artworks, are self-reflexive to some degree about their own artistic processes and provenances. Thus many adapted films contain within them illuminating figures, tropes, or images of adaptation as process and adaptation as product. Truffaut’s movie figures adaptation as the burning of a book - an image that is at once beautiful and disturbing - from which the film unpacks an extraordinary range of ideas and emotions about what the (f)act of adaptation signifies materially, psychologically, and culturally.

Moya Costello

Southern Cross University.

The unhinged cursor and her reluctant precursor

My paper will be performative creative nonfiction that's about my (virtual) (non)relationship with Murray Bail through my journey with *Holden's Performance* (specifically my (re)creation of Harriet Chandler's life, a minor character in that novel): the made, made-up and uncanny coincidental (non)connections with him as my precursor author. Cars, painters and paintings, and eucalypts feature along with the strange, hauntingly real appearance of a character I created who uncannily embodied Chandler's literary physical description and professional occupation. Moreover, underpinning the paper will be the Gothic-in-nature obsessed/possessed relationship one can have to one's precursor.

Andrew Craig
Flinders University

***Riddley Walker* as Intertextual World**

Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* (1980) follows the journey of twelve-year-old Riddley through a post-apocalyptic landscape some two thousand years after a devastating nuclear holocaust. Written in an invented, poststructuralist dialect of English, the novel explores the intertextual nature of literature, myth and culture. Protagonist and reader synchronously grapple with meaning in a world viewed through a dark and smoky intertextual filter. Linda Hutcheon calls *Riddley Walker* an example of historiographic metafiction, for the way that it incorporates historical elements and then draws attention to their textual nature. The myth and history of the twentieth century is textual precursor to Riddley's world, problematised by a firebreak in culture caused by nuclear war. Simultaneously, the reader recognizes in Riddley's twisted narrative the fragmented echoes of our present and future.

The landscape Riddley travels through is a palimpsest of geographies; it is by mining this landscape that Riddley and his father make a living, excavating the machines of the past 'connexion man', the group's official interpreter of ancient myth. In his search for meaning, he now mines a textual palimpsest of myth.

Jacques Derrida called nuclear war the ultimate referent of all literature, for by destroying the literary canon it would destroy literature itself. *Riddley Walker* supports yet subverts this notion; in digging for the precursor, the ultimate referent of his world's history and myth, Riddley exhumes only an apocalyptic absence, but in this absence literature remains.

Luciana d'Arcangeli

Flinders University

Dario Fo's Invented Quotations

Dario Fo has written, rewritten and reinterpreted a number of oeuvres from the past in his quest to demonstrate to the masses that popular culture had ancient roots that were and are equally worthy of performance and study as those of the more celebrated "higher" culture. His intellectual "Gramscian" goal of giving back to the people their own culture coupled with his storytelling and theatrical ability soon put Dario in an odd-spot when he collaborated in 1966 with the philologists of the Nuovo Canzoniere Italiano group. He had been asked to collaborate with the group in order direct and put together the show *Ci ragiono e canto*, or *I Think It Over and Sing*, with popular songs that researchers had gathered first hand in the field; however, Fo went on to write his own songs and seamlessly added them to the show. Needless to say, the collaboration ended rather brusquely but the show was very successful and Fo presented a second version of it in 1969 and a third in 1973.

This kind of contamination continued over the years and many researchers have spent hours in libraries poring over books in an attempt to verify the origin of this story or that quotation by Ruzante, Shakespeare or Marx only to find that these were invented. They were Fo's version of Ruzante or Shakespeare or Marx. Indeed, Michele Straniero, in 1978, wrote a book on jesters (Giullari & Fo) which partly traced the historical material Fo had found and gathered for his masterpiece *Mistero buffo*. It was an attempt to show the author's manipulation of the original texts yet it failed to discover what really drove and continues to drive this author to delve and revel in ambiguous relationships with his precursors. In this paper I will look at how intertextuality, allusion and quotation are used by Dario in his relationship with past authors in a bid to answer the question: Is the shadow of the precursor looming on Fo's work or is Fo's shadow looming on that of his precursors?

Gillian Dooley
Flinders University

Iris Murdoch in the Shadow of the Precursor: A Fairly Honourable Defeat?

Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) had a lifelong belief that nineteenth-century novels were intrinsically better than twentieth-century novels. She gave various historical reasons for this difference, to do with the rise of Romanticism and changes in society, but nevertheless during her whole career she aspired to emulate the great novels of her nineteenth-century predecessors. This had a deleterious effect on her fiction, chiefly because she felt that creating a particular kind of 'free' character was paramount, whereas her greatest skills arguably lay in creating compelling plots. Her preoccupation with aiming for what she suspected was impossible, but believed was a moral imperative for the novelist, restricted her development as an artist by turning her attention away from what she might have achieved if she rethought the form on her own terms.

Diana Glenn
Flinders University

Through Ovidian Eyes: Dante's Transformation of a Myth

Joseph Campbell regarded Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as: "a mythological work that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though rejected from all ecclesiastical lists of approved 'curriculum authors', nevertheless decisively influenced the whole narrative art of the secular tradition" (*The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*, p. 237).

Dante Alighieri's *Commedia* contains numerous references to the Ovidian collection of myths. This paper offers a close reading of the complementary tales of incestuous adultery and murder in Dante's *Inferno* V (involving the episode of the illicit affair between Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta who were murdered by Francesca's husband, Giovanni Malatesta) and Ovid's myth of Tereus, Procne and Philomela in *Metamorphoses* VI.

Md. Rezaul Haque

Flinders University

Intertextuality as a Structural Device in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*

Amitav Ghosh made his entry into the world of fiction with *The Circle of Reason* in 1986. As the title suggests, the novel engages with one of the key ideas of modernity: reason. After the Enlightenment, reason is the prized human quality. Human progress depends, it is believed, on the unobstructed march of rationality, the mark of being human. The place of a society on the scale of civilization is determined by the degree of rationality it has attained. But as with other imports from the West, reason is not free from tensions in a postcolonial context such as India. Instead of complacently seeing reason as advancing effortlessly from one stage to another, that is, as developing and thus liberating, Ghosh sees it as circular (hence the circle in the title) and thus restrictive as well.

Ghosh explores some of the limits of reason by using intertextuality as a structural device in his novel. The text used for the purpose is rather atypical as an intertext. 'It was a copy of Mrs Devonshire's translation of René Vallery-Radot's *Life of Pasteur*.'⁵ The fate of this text mirrors those of the principal characters in the novel. Starting its journey as an emblem of reason in Calcutta (now Kolkata), it ends up in the Algerian Sahara where it is given 'a funeral.'⁶ The ritual burning of *Life of Pasteur* on the pyre has a number of implications: first, the past is left behind, with the main characters starting life anew; second, the enchanting circle of reason has been broken loose, which is no less liberating; and finally, reason has uses (though limited perhaps) for humanity.

In this paper, I will examine how Ghosh uses a European text to give his novel structural coherence. By enabling Ghosh to use itself as a structural device, *Life of Pasteur* suggests on a meta-textual level that it is not the exclusive privilege of the West to exploit the resources of the rest of the world. It is vulnerable to being appropriated, if not downright exploited, by the Others. As Rushdie has famously put it, the colony *can* and *does* write back to the metropolis.

⁵ Amitav Ghosh, *The Circle of Reason* (1986; London: Abacus, 1991) 46.

⁶ Ghosh 415.

Kate Hayford
Flinders University

From Hogsmeade to Muggleton: Harry Potter and the Dickens Influence

At face value, J.K. Rowling and Charles Dickens have many qualities in common. They are both popular authors – I use the term ‘popular’ in regard to their wide appeal, not as a synonym for ‘escapist’. In their books, both Rowling and Dickens feature a disadvantaged orphan as the hero (Rowling in *Harry Potter*, Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield*); also, they both possess a knack for endowing characters with wonderfully whimsical and appropriate names that often hint at their roles in the plot (Mrs Gummidge, Gilderoy Lockhart to name a couple). Avid *Harry Potter* readers will remember feverishly counting down the weeks to the release of each new installment; this echoes the plight of Dickens’ fans over a century ago, who, driven by their need to find out if Little Nell lived or died in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, waited in thousands by the ocean wharves so that they might meet the ship bearing the next precious chapter.

It is that last which leads me to speculate on the influence that Dickens has had on Rowling’s work. His ability to move the human spirit, to the extent that thousands of people were utterly transfixed by the fate of a fictional child, is a phenomenon that has never been repeated until Pottermania grasped the globe a hundred years later. Such an occurrence cannot be merely accidental.

In evaluating the intertextual⁷ relationship between Rowling and Dickens, there are three main aspects I wish to focus on; firstly, the character of the orphan as hero. There are literally thousands of ‘disadvantaged-orphan’ stories in literature, to the extent that the very word ‘orphan’ dredges up images of penury and misery (often perpetuated by the obligatory evil guardian looming in the background); however, there are certain traits in Dickens’ orphans that suggest them as likely predecessors of Harry Potter’s character. For example, *Oliver Twist* places his virtue on the same level of importance as his life, which is certainly comparable with Harry’s own psyche (notably in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*); in fact, it is this quality that dictates Harry’s actions throughout all seven *Potter* books, and consequently decides his fate and that of all wizardkind.

Another aspect of comparison lies in the social commentary of both authors’ writing. Dickens’ work shows a powerful sense of social duty, demonstrated by his vehement portrayals of corruption and bureaucracy, particularly in the legal system. The most obvious parallel to this in *Harry Potter* is, of course, the Ministry of Magic, but Rowling has also included some more subtle references that reflect her views on government and society (for instance, the character of repugnant, Thatcher-esque Aunt Marge).

Lastly, I will discuss in detail the themes of Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, focusing particularly on Sydney Carton’s death and its possible bearing on certain events in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Rowling herself once acknowledged that she was profoundly moved by Carton, who sacrificed his own life for his friend. Is it more than a coincidence that this theme of resurrection – of love’s ultimate victory over death – is so prominent in *The Deathly Hallows*?

My ultimate purpose in this paper is not to discount Rowling as a mere imitator/borrower of Dickensian elements, nor is it to commend her for successfully emulating Dickens’ style. Rather, I hope to demonstrate, through the intertextual relationship between *Harry Potter* and Dickens’ stories, that Rowling has potentially bridged a literary chasm by making Dickens’ work accessible to modern readers, especially children.

⁷ I use this term very loosely in this abstract. The concept of intertextuality has been played around with so much that it now encompasses several meanings beside Kristeva’s original theory of texts as intersecting ‘sign-systems’. In this context I use it to refer to the aspects of Rowling’s work that have been consciously or unconsciously drawn from Dickens’ work.

Andrew James Herpich

Flinders University

Toland's Milton

John Milton (1608-1674) remained a threatening figure to the religious and political orthodox in the later seventeenth century. This paper begins with an examination of the controversy surrounding the 1698 biography of the poet by the infamous deist and republican, John Toland (1670-1722), which will serve as background for its main focus, an exposition of his reading of *Paradise Lost*. While Toland's direct comments on the poem in his 'Life of John Milton' are brief to the point of vagueness, his resuscitation there of Samuel Barrow's 'In Paradisum Amissam Summi Poetæ Johannis Miltoni', added to the second edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1674, but replaced in the popular 1688 folio by some doggerel rhymes by poet laureate John Dryden, is a significant act of criticism in itself. The paper turns to Toland's own works, in particular his poem *Clito* (1700), to demonstrate that the republishing of Barrow's poem is part of an attempt to recover a radical reading of *Paradise Lost* that was gradually being – and by the early eighteenth century would be – suppressed by the growing body of critical literature. A consideration of the influence of 'Toland's Milton' on later generations closes the paper, with especial focus on late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century radicals like William Godwin, William Hayley, William Blake, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Richard Hosking

Flinders University

John Lang and Rudyard Kipling

In the Victorian period, the book trade in the English-speaking world (and especially in the British Empire) developed what we now recognise as an early manifestation of the now-familiar globalising economic system. Published by British publishers and reprinted in colonial editions, best-selling authors often found success in the various markets of that increasingly connected world. While such writers may have begun their literary careers in one of the colonies, some managed to broaden their appeal across the empire and even the world. Some of them settled in Britain, enjoying the fruits of their wealth and status: knighthoods, Nobel Prizes and the like. Rudyard Kipling is a typical example, as recent biographical work shows clearly (Charles Allen, *Kipling Sahib: India and the making of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Little, Brown, 2007). Late in his career Kipling—and after his death, members of his family—did much to promote the idea that he was *sui generis*, a unique writer who owed little to his colonial origins, a writer without peers or precursors.

This paper will explore connections between Kipling's writings and those of John George Lang. Born in Parramatta in Sydney in 1816, Lang moved to India in 1842, where three years later he established a very successful English-language newspaper, the *Mofussilite*, in which he published not only his own journalism but also his translations, poems, stories and serial novels, many of them representing 'Anglo-Indian' life and manners before the Sepoy Rebellion, before 1857. Born in Mumbai in 1865, Kipling returned to India in 1882 after schooling in Britain to take a job as a journalist with the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore, where he soon began publishing poems and short stories as well as journalism, in much of his early writing his subject the Raj, British India after the Mutiny. The company for which Kipling worked had taken over Lang's old paper the *Mofussilite* in 1872, prompting the question: did Kipling carry on a tradition of writing about British India which Lang had helped develop four decades earlier? Is there any evidence of John Lang's work in Kipling's writings?

Sue Hosking

Adelaide University

'Slumdogs and dogs' breakfasts: poverty and disadvantage in global entertainment.'

In a globalising world, any new work that enters the various fields of textual production can affect the way we read earlier texts. This is nowhere more apparent, today, than when the new work is a huge commercial success. The international box-office success of the film *Slumdog Millionaire* has given Australians cause to think again about our film industry in the twenty-first century, seen by some commentators as 'consistently disappointing culturally' (Greg Sheridan). But how do we assess representations of poverty and disadvantage in the increasingly complex contexts of postcolonial attitudes, global entertainment and developing nations? In considering (if not answering) this question, this paper examines the reception of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009) and two Australian films: *Australia* (2009) and *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002).

Linda K. Karell

Montana State University

“As if the sky were one gigantic memory for us all”: Louise Erdrich and Native American Authorship

In a 1987 interview about her writing process, Native American writer Louise Erdrich stated that, “you don’t control the story.” In part, Erdrich referred to her collaborative relationship with husband Michael Dorris, where both writers claimed that all aspects of the writing process were shared, negotiated, and agreed upon; in part, she referred to traditional Native beliefs regarding language and storytelling, in which the “story” always preexists (and therefore challenges) its status as the unique creation of an individual author. My paper investigates both of these approaches to authorship by focusing on the ways in which each redefines our understanding of literary precursors in contemporary Native American literature.

Throughout her fiction, Louise Erdrich, a mixed blood Native American writer of Chippewa, Objbwe, French, and German descent, establishes writing as an activity that is inherently collaborative—which is to say that any writer must grapple with the writers/storytellers who accompany or precede her. From this perspective, Native American storytelling traditions explicitly establish relationships with the precursors—the prior storytellers—from whom one receives the story, and with post-modern concepts of authorship that challenge the stability and surety of language and authority. Throughout Erdrich’s novels, stories are complicated and necessary healing events, and finding and telling the story is as often dangerous as it is humorous. Deriving from historical events, from personal experience, from ancestors, or from four-footed beings who accompany humans through their lives, Erdrich’s storytelling recasts the idea of precursor as “influence” into a relationship more integral, variable, and continuous.

Throughout my paper, I will also be investigating the difficult reality that, for Native American writers, particularly contemporary mixed-blood writers such as Erdrich, “precursor” is a vexed but crucial aspect of the literary event: not only must they negotiate (and create) a literary history that includes human and non-human storytellers, they must also negotiate a literary identity that has, in its immediate past, the reality of land theft and attempts at genocide. Literary precursors are, therefore, both threatening and healing, a comfort and a burden.

Ben Kooyman
Flinders University

Shakespeare Unloved: The Bard in the Age of Incessant Reproduction

The 1990s was the most productive, prolific period in the history of Shakespeare film production. In addition to the films of Kenneth Branagh—who was widely touted as successor to the likes of Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, and Franco Zeffirelli in the realm of Shakespeare cinema—the decade spawned numerous high profile film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and wrapped up with the popular success of the romantic comedy *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Then... nothing much really.

While the adaptation of Shakespeare in film and television has continued over the first decade of the new millennium, no production has been as high profile or invited as much attention as any of the major—or even the minor—successes of the 1990s. This paper will consider this sharp decline in Shakespeare cinema in light of several things, including the tendency of this genre to operate in fits and starts, changes in film and television production due to the rise of DVD and internet technologies, and, perhaps most controversially, Gary Taylor's argument—which appears in "The Incredible Shrinking Bard" (1999)—that Shakespeare's cultural status and popularity are steadily decreasing. However, even though Shakespeare's visibility in popular film culture has significantly decreased, his shadow remains palpable in a postmodern culture of incessant reproduction.

Bernadette Luciano

University of Auckland

The Shadow of Neorealism: From Vittorio De Sica to Francesca Comencini

The shadow of neorealism has always loomed large in the history of Italian cinema with its critical reception having achieved legendary status. Subsequent generations of filmmakers have continually returned to reappropriate and renegotiate neorealist stylistic elements and themes and to reengage with neorealist films in a metacinematic, parodic or otherwise imitative way. One of the iconic films of neorealism is undoubtedly Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* which can be seen cited in countless films—Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Uccellacci e uccellini*, Maurizio Nichetti's *Ladri di saponette*, and Xiaoshuai Wang's *Beijing Bicycle* to name a few. In this paper I would like to focus on the influence and intertextual references of *Ladri di biciclette* in Francesca Comencini's *Mi piace lavorare* (*Mobbing*). In her rigid exploration and condemnation of social institutions, Comencini explores contemporary variations of neorealist themes and adopts certain recognizably neorealist conventions. Her film also displays the raw emotional intensity coupled with a focus on current political and social problems that P. Adams Sitney associates with neorealist cinema. Like De Sica's masterpiece, Comencini's film resorts to the recounting of an intimate narrative to highlight a range of social ills with the parent child dynamic proving central to the films' unravelling. In Comencini's film, however, the father-son relationship is replaced by the mother-daughter one. The recurring representation of a distracted father leading a concerned son aimlessly through the streets of Rome is reappropriated in representations of Comencini's protagonist Anna and her daughter, Morgana. While looking closely at 'the shadow of the precursor' this paper will also explore how Comencini adapts an established cinematic tradition to suit stories by and for women. Her response to the ongoing debate concerning the problematic relationship between realism and feminist cinema, is a work that displays characteristics of a new feminist cinema of corrective realism that transforms the characterisations and the narrative working of traditional realism.

Intertextuality as Discord

In his boldly intertextual novel, *Wanting* (2008), short-listed for the 2009 Miles Franklin award, Richard Flanagan offers a clarion call to PhD novelists like me, who play with similar subjects: fictionalised historical characters, depictions of feminine and racial ‘other’; allusions to popular nineteenth-century writers and writing, and apocryphal historical events like Indigenous extinction. Immersed in multiple research texts linked to my creative project I connected all the notes, unwittingly and consciously. As one supervisor commented on my novel, ‘there is a lot going on!’

If plays on words and literary allusions are inevitable in historical novels, Flanagan makes a feature of it. While the protagonist of my novel, *Unsettled*, alludes to Anthony Trollope’s novel *The Macdermot’s of Ballycloran*, Charles Dickens’s *Little Dorrit*, and to Shakespeare’s plays Flanagan makes his alternating Dickensian intertext integral to his main Tasmanian narrative.

This paper argues that Flanagan uses intertext to expose the underlying savagery of ageing men and the patriarchal society they represent. His author’s notes describe *Wanting* as a ‘meditation on desire’, anticipating and summarily dismissing criticism of his depiction of a Zeus-like Sir John Franklin figuratively or actually raping his Indigenous Tasmanian protégée after a ball. But does he go too far, further debauching Mathinna’s historical character in the process? *Unsettled*, my novel, draws on missionary Christina Smith’s warm but patronising account of *Booandik* people speaking, as a tuning fork for the voice of a nineteenth-century Indigenous character. And it is silenced by Flanagan’s playful and confident impersonation of Mathinna’s polyphany.

Julia Kristeva’s notions about writing subject, target readers and exterior texts, usefully synchronises my reading of the allusions present in each text. Flanagan’s and my novel resound with meaning in their choice of subject — violent Aboriginal dispossession — and their connections to precursor texts. Flanagan takes up traditional themes as well as the tunes of the twenty-first-century; he creates sudden riffs. Every note plays on others. *Unsettled* improvises but without Flanagan’s conviction, intent less on discord than re-inscription.

Russell McDougall
University of New England

The Intertexts of Capricornia

This paper will explore the Australian, British and American intertexts of Xavier Herbert's 1938 novel, *Capricornia*, looking backwards and forwards in time, to Omar Kyayyam and Buster Keaton on the one hand, and Baz Luhrmann and Alexis Wright on the other. This will necessarily involve a consideration of both "vertical" and "horizontal" types of intertextuality, "manifest" and "constitutive" forms, and the changing codes of literary and filmic meaning.

John McLaren
Victoria University

Vincent Buckley and his Land of No Fathers: the Irish shadow on his work.

Vincent Buckley maintained that as an Irish Australian he had grown up as a member of a persecuted minority. He also claimed that, although this minority was crucial in shaping the Australian identity, its members had failed to keep an imaginative connection with their homeland. Much of his work can be read as an attempt to rediscover this link, but his understanding of the Irish element changes over his career. In his earlier work his concern is with the Irish tradition of Yeats and Joyce, and with his own forefathers as people dispossessed by the heartless English. Later he becomes involved with the fate of the nationalists in Northern Ireland. This leads him both to take direct political action in Australia and to write some of his most significant poems. These show the influence of Heaney or Kinsella rather than Yeats, but also bring to bear a distinctly Australian sensibility.

Molly Murn

Flinders University

Grand Undulations: William Anderson Cawthorne's 'Diary 1849 c.1859', 'Journal of a Trip to Kangaroo Island' and *The Kangaroo Islanders*

*Saw the gigantic rollers that set in, which, when they break, cause the very earth to vibrate. Perhaps some of those grand undulations had come from the South Pole, and, like the lives of many, finished their career upon a wild, barren and unknown spot*⁸.

In January 1853, William Anderson Cawthorne's 'Journal of a Trip to Kangaroo Island' was published in the *Observer*. The trip Cawthorne recorded in his diary and later published as 'Journal of a Trip...' entailed a three-week journey to the Sturt Lighthouse at Cape Willoughby, Kangaroo Island. Travelling by whaleboat from Adelaide to the South East coast of Kangaroo Island with legendary Islander, Nat Thomas and crew, Cawthorne describes evocatively the simple details of the trip. Reading his journal around 150 years later, one gets a glimpse into how Kangaroo Island might have looked, smelled and tasted in his time, as well as being introduced to some of the characters that appear in his 1926 novel⁹ *The Kangaroo Islanders*¹⁰. It could be said that Cawthorne's 'Journal of a Trip to Kangaroo Island' is a precursor to *The Kangaroo Islanders*, as some of the experiences in the Journal are later fictionalised in the novel.

In October 2007, I went on a journey to Kangaroo Island to gather material for poems and a novel about the early history of Kangaroo Island. I brazenly stole Cawthorne's title 'Journal of a Trip to Kangaroo Island' and in it recorded my days spent exploring the Island. And while I didn't have the vantage point of the whaleboat, I followed the footsteps of Cawthorne and created some of my own. Two years later I have nearly completed the novel and would like to acknowledge the precursor writer and artist, W.A Cawthorne, whose interest in Kangaroo Island began a series of grand undulations that reverberate in my own work.

⁸ p166

⁹ The story was first written around 1854 under the title *The Islanders* and published in serial form in *The Illustrated Melbourne Post* between January 1865 and February 1866.

¹⁰ W.A Cawthorne *The Kangaroo Islanders. A Story of South Australia before Colonization 1823*. Adelaide: Rigby, 1926.

Barbara Pezzotti

Victoria University of Wellington

Humour and the Mafia: a Story of Sicilian betrayal

The Nobel laureate Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) had a deep influence on subsequent Sicilian literature, and various authors cited, were inspired by and engaged in a figurative dialogue with him. Among those writers Leonardo Sciascia (1921-1989) and Andrea Camilleri (b. 1925) make constant reference to Pirandello and his works. Sciascia published several essays on Pirandello, while Camilleri wrote a fictionalised biography of the Nobel laureate, *La biografia del figlio cambiato*. Moreover, analysing the works of these two detective fiction writers, several scholars highlight some Pirandellian patterns, especially in their use of humour.

In this paper I would like to analyse the works of Sciascia and Camilleri in the light of their fellow islander and master. I will try to show whether and how Sciascia's and Camilleri's commitment, especially in tackling a serious issue such as the Mafia, owes something to Pirandello. Finally, I will give an account of what I define as a 'story of betrayals' which passes through the works of these three authors.

Lucy Potter

University of Adelaide

“Casting a Shadow of One’s Own: Marlowe’s *Dido* and the Virgilian Intertext”

Authors elect their precursors by allusion, quotation, imitation, translation, homage, at once creating a canon and making a claim for their own inclusion in it (Charles Martindale. *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 2).

The imitation of Virgil’s *Aeneid* was a pillar in the education system of Renaissance England. Literary production in this period appears in the mind of its author in the light of *translatio*—the adaptation of “original” compositions that invariably refer back to prior narrative sources. Also in this period, there were some forty dramas based on the Dido and Aeneas episode, or books 1-4 of the *Aeneid*, most of which are now lost. This paper offers insights into why the episode was so popular in the emerging drama of the English Renaissance with a reading of selected elements of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tragedy of Dido* against the backdrop of the overt intertextuality of Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

The paper begins with a discussion of the many possibilities—thematic, generic, artistic, and authorial—that an engagement with Virgil’s intertextual project afforded Marlowe’s career aspirations as well as his play. It then demonstrates the ways in which Marlowe seeks to cast his own shadow as a precursor by activating both certain aspects of the *Aeneid* beyond Books 1-4 and the antecedent texts upon which the epic draws. Virgil’s Lavinia, Juno, and Amata are the focus: the paper argues that in *Dido*, Marlowe uses these characters to construct a “new” portrait of the Carthaginian queen as a second Helen entirely responsible for the Trojan War and a second Eve. The paper concludes with brief comments about the success of Marlowe’s intertextual ambitions.

Christine Runnel

Flinders University

The Literature of Shadows and the Sharp Shadow of Murakami's [Post]modern Perversion

If I borrow the words of Russell West-Pavlov, we are probing into an 'awareness of the complex interrelationships between subjectivity, texts (both literary and social) and the processes that generate such texts, and the determining discourses they transmit or contest.'

My creative project, *Under the Freeway* is a work of fiction in the fantastic mode. The theme of the double or shadow world is reworked as a central trope. In linear terms the narrative spans the seven months it takes Grandad to die. But the unities of time, space and action are transgressed. Alternative stories are played out in the private theatres of the mind. Grandad is confined to a hospital bed but my narrative transports him to an alternative world woven from elements of the past. Which world is more real?

A major theme in my text is a juxtaposition of youth and age. My young protagonists are created in the discovery of the competing discourses of this generation (with a focus on media representation) and an acute sense of family disintegration and accelerating change.

Intertextual references are subversive; they allow historical subjects, alien texts and scripts to infiltrate the field but they also set in motion a revolving door between worlds. In espousing a postmodern project I can allow intertextual montage to meld other historical periods and geographical locations into a fictional simultaneity. My intent is subversive, to provide a literary *topos* for interrogating our world of consensual reality and the orthodoxy about literary imitation.

The internationally popular Japanese writer Murakami Haruki set my creative juices flowing at the start of my research in 2007. He provided a model that sent my writing off in new directions. He is a sharp shadow over my experimentation, as I seek to domesticate the chaos of my unconscious. His strategies and techniques provide inspiration for a new kind of fantastic writing aimed at mapping the *Zeitgeist* and locating the individual in the welter of discourses around the subject. He exemplifies the postmodern fantastic.

This paper seeks to explore the significance of a 'literature of shadows'. Charles Shirō Inouye defines the term in relation to Izumi Kyōka's work which he situates in a world-wide Gothic tradition, even as he refines the Japanese context. Light blends with shadow in unforgettable patterns.

'I doubt you can regain your shadow,' speaks the Colonel as he sips his coffee. Murakami descends to a Kafkaesque underworld below Tokyo. In *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the author meditates upon the split-subject of postmodernism. The result is a darkly inventive fantasy in which the narrative re orders two chaos worlds and reality is still in question.

Murakami again dabbles in a weird whimsical world of urban noir in *After Dark*. He grasps the spirit of mortality woven through the lives of the young girl protagonists, sisters Eri and Mari, bound in struggle against evil forces as the clock ticks from midnight to dawn.

Here I find it absolutely necessary to explain the concept of the 'simulacrum': a tool for understanding the abstract representation of human existence in the *polis*; a crutch in a second order signifying system.

This work is about turning away from simple polarities and essentialist constructions of the subject and about their modification by postulates of cultural and literary transculturalism. My *raison d'être* is not a negative impulse but a move towards positive transformation and the future.

Ralph Spaulding

University of Tasmania

'Past shapes of things present' in the Poetry of Syd Harrex

As a member of that generation of Tasmanian poets born and educated in the State in the first half of the twentieth century, Harrex's poetry retains something of the 'silent croon' of the island itself, as well as echoes of images and ideas from the poetry of some of his contemporaries including James McAuley, Gwen Harwood and Christopher Koch. This paper discusses these influences briefly, before focusing in more detail on earlier precursors in Harrex's work. An analysis of a sample of his allusions and references to the Romantics, Shakespeare and other writers such as Milton, Yeats and T.S. Eliot shows how these features shape and amplify Harrex's thematic concerns and the extent to which they influence his poetic form and style. The paper concludes with a consideration of changes in Harrex's writing over time and a comparison of his oeuvre with the work of his immediate contemporaries, Graeme Hetherington and Vivian Smith.

Rachel Spencer
Flinders University

Paris as Precursor: Premise or Curse?

Paris as a fictional setting is such a cliché that its merit in terms of originality and creativity is becoming questionable. An apparent glut of autobiographical material published in Australia over the last fifteen or so years has surely sated the Australian public's appetite for the story of the average Aussie coming to grips with the French language and lifestyle. From Sarah Turnbull's *Almost French* to more recent offerings such as Nadine Williams' *From France with Love* and Bryce Corbett's *A Town Like Paris*, one could be forgiven for thinking that it is only a matter of time after setting foot in Charles de Gaulle airport that one will be whisked off into a Gallic maelstrom of amour about which one will write a best-seller.

Australian bookshop shelves heave with the promise of languid evenings and strolls along the Seine, of gorgeous men and even more beautiful women. There are tales of quaint little garrets, sleazy nightclubs and endless lunches, all against the undeniable magnificence of Paris. To add my story to this already voluminous canon appears to be unnecessary. How many times can the *Tour Eiffel* be described? Is there any need to describe the streets of Paris now that they are forever immortalised by Collette, Miller and Hemingway? Is it really possible to add a fresh perspective to the *Champs Elysée*, or the *Moulin Rouge*?

In writing a semi-autobiographical novel about life in Paris in the 1980s, I have been daunted by the inevitable comparisons that will be made. This paper explores the similarities between various Australian texts about Paris, and in particular, looks at the Australian perspective of French life as it is portrayed in popular fiction and recently published memoirs. It will then examine texts that have portrayed a side of Paris that is neither glamorous nor seductive, including: Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and Malouf's *Johnno*.

The two contradictory views of one of the world's most famous cities form the theme for my creative work which will depict the struggle of a woman coming to terms with her life which she does not recognise as one she planned. Unlike other creative works, my novel will not be about finding love in Paris, and so this paper will also explore whether the traditional romantic happy ending is essential to literature about life in the French capital.

Helen Tiffin

University of Tasmania

Of Ivory and Elephants

Perhaps no other literary work has catalysed more responses—hostile, dedicatory, interrogative—than Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* published in the first decade of the twentieth century and widely disseminated throughout the English-speaking world.

This paper will consider the ways in which V.S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe and Barbara Gowdy have addressed Conrad’s work. After brief mention of Naipaul’s acknowledgement of his debt to Conrad, Achebe’s direct and indirect critique of ‘omissions’ in *Heart of Darkness* will be followed by a discussion of the ways in which Gowdy’s *The White Bone* also addresses a fundamental ‘absence’ in Conrad’s canonical ‘image of Africa’.

Janet Wilson

University of Northampton, UK

Antipodean writing about and back to *Great Expectations*: Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1999) and Lloyd Jones's *Mr Pip* (2007)

This paper examines the inter-texts, con-texts and pre-texts of two recent novels which draw explicitly on classic motifs of Dickens's *Great Expectations*. It will use as an analytical framework the concepts of a counter discourse and 'writing back', both of which feature less in New Zealand and Australian postcolonial writing than in that of other decolonised cultures. A brief comparison will be made between Carey's interpretation of Dickens's narrative in political terms of class, gender and nation in *Jack Maggs* and Jones's narrative appropriations of *Great Expectations* in *Mr Pip* for his dramatization of the civil war in Bougainville. Finally, I will discuss how story telling as ethical practice and literary technique is developed by the writers in different directions, moving their fictions out of the shadow cast by their famous precursor.