‘Black Diggers’

CRITICAL READINGS

NAOMI WEILER

Using Critical Readings:

Within this booklet are a series of readings and extracts from study guides. The way we use these readings is that we take:

1. Ideas we like about the text/s characters
2. The concepts surrounding the events
3. The phrasing employed to discuss the text
4. Information about the views and values of the author/s and/or creator/s
5. Vocabulary we can use to make our writing more sophisticated

As you read highlight words you do not know, or words you like. Annotate on the documents and record information about the play.

Introduction: Diversifying the black diggers' histories

Noah Riseman

When I started researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service history in 2004, this was a very niche academic area. David Huggonson did some work in the 1980s and 1990s on the First World War, and Robert Hall's canonical texts *The Black Diggers* (1989) and *Fighters from the Fringe* (1995) had set a dominant narrative of the First and Second World War experiences: notwithstanding regulations explicitly prohibiting enlistment of persons 'not substantially of European origin or descent', Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people managed to circumvent the rules and served in both conflicts. For those men and women enlisted in regular units, it was largely an egalitarian experience – often for the first times in their lives – yet they returned home to continuing discrimination. Huggonson estimated about 400 Aboriginal men served in the First World War; Hall estimated approximately 3,000 Aboriginal people and 850 Torres Strait Islanders formally served in the Second World War, not to mention the hundreds more who served in informal, labouring capacities in remote northern Australia.[1] Some local histories enhanced this dominant narrative of participation, including the works of scholars such as Heather Goodall, Kay Saunders and Elizabeth Osborne.[2] Now the estimates have increased to at least 1,000 and 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander personnel in the First and Second World Wars respectively. These men and women came from diverse cultural, educational, linguistic, regional and employment backgrounds.

1 Huggonson 1993, 1989; Hall 1997, 1995.

2 Goodall 1987; Saunders 1995; Osborne 1997.

Until the 2000s, it was not solely academics who had focused their research on other areas of Indigenous and/or military history; so, too, was there little public interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service. Yet there was a growing movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence, spearheaded primarily by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans. As one Aboriginal person I spoke to early in my doctoral research pointed out to me, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been well aware of the histories of their men and women in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and its predecessors. Indeed, several Indigenous publications told the histories of their communities in the military.[3] It was non-Indigenous people who knew little or nothing about it. That point has always stuck with me over the years both when researching and writing in this area.

In the 2000s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups pushed for greater recognition and were successful in numerous endeavours: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Association led Perth's 2001 Anzac Day march; Honouring Indigenous War Graves was founded in 2005 and has been performing ceremonies at the gravesites of deceased Aboriginal servicemen and women across Western Australia; in 2006, Aunty Dot Peters lobbied Victoria's Returned and Services League (RSL) to sponsor a commemorative service at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance during Reconciliation Week; since 2007 the Department of Veterans' Affairs has sponsored services across the major capital cities; 2007 also marked the first annual Coloured Diggers March in Redfern on Anzac Day. Since the 2010s, there has been a growing movement for memorials to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders military service. Adelaide's memorial was completed in 2013 and Sydney dedicated a sculpture commemorating Indigenous military service in March 2015. Indigenous military service history has also gradually infiltrated Australia's popular consciousness through cultural events such as the play *Black Diggers*, premiering in Sydney and Brisbane in 2014 and touring Australia in 2015. There is much greater media interest in the area too – including SBS programs like *Living Black*, NITV specials on Anzac Day and news features on the ABC and local radio in particular. There are resources available online through the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and other websites.

Accompanying the growing popular interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military history, historians, too, have focused more on this topic over the last decade.[4] This growing body of work from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians has expanded the dominant narratives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service, addressing issues including Vietnam War

3 Jackomos and Fowell 1993; Kartinyeri 1996; Bray et al. 1995.

4 See Riseman 2014.

service, the links between military service and activism in the interwar period, Aboriginal women on the homefront and contextualising Australia's experience within other Anglo-settler societies. Research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service continues both at the grassroots level through the work of public historians, and through major initiatives such as the Australian Research Council Linkage project 'Serving Our Country: A history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Defence of Australia', in partnership with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian War Memorial, the National Archives of Australia and the Department of Defence.

Aboriginal History was early on a pioneer in highlighting this area of research, publishing a special issue in 1992 on Aboriginal military service as the field was in its infancy.[5] As Australia commemorates the centenary of the First World War, it is timely that this special section of *Aboriginal History* continues this investigation into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military history. More importantly, the articles in this special section focus on the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service personnel and their families. The articles expand our understanding that wars' impact on Indigenous communities was neither uniform nor even. Each of the authors in this collection approaches the topic of Indigenous military service through different angles previously unexplored, and as such they provide new understandings of the diverse ways that military service affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

First in this collection is John Maynard's article on Aboriginal participation in the South African Anglo-Boer War. For years, commemorations of Indigenous military service have assumed their participation in all conflicts from the Anglo-Boer War through to the present, yet it is only in the last few years that historians have been able to point to concrete evidence of Aboriginal men's participation in the Anglo-Boer War. As Maynard argues, much of the speculation from the past few years about numbers of Aboriginal trackers, as well as the allegation some were left behind in South Africa, contains grains of truth, but are actually exaggerated claims. Even so, Maynard demonstrates the ways in which policymakers, non-Indigenous Australians and Aboriginal people positioned military service as an opportunity with different meanings attached for each advocate.

The theme of mateship underpins Philippa Scarlett's article about both the breadth of Aboriginal servicemen's backgrounds, as well as her complex evaluation of an 'egalitarian' experience. Scarlett draws on service records and newspaper articles to demonstrate that whilst current discourse tries to include Aboriginal diggers in the Anzac legend of 'mateship', in actuality they were

5 *Aboriginal History*, vol. 16, part 1, 1992.

not seen as equal. Instead, supposed equality on the front was still an exercise in white power, willing to elevate Indigenous Australians overseas, but just as willing to reposition them as inferior upon their return to civilian society. This analysis offers new insights into a recurring query among histories of Aboriginal people in the First World War: why prejudice and discrimination endured after the war, even amongst the ex-services' community.

Tasmanian Aboriginal participation in the First World War and the returned servicemen's post-war experiences are, as Andrea Gerrard and Kristyn Harman argue, quite distinct from the experiences of those from other states. Because popular discourse contended there were no more Tasmanian Aboriginal people (although the soldiers were recognised as being of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent) and there was no state protection board, Aboriginal veterans were not necessarily denied benefits as in the other states. Moreover, a complex situation arose through the intersections of a colour blind repatriation regime and a public that still stigmatised so-called 'half-castes' for their Aboriginal heritage. Gerrard and Harman argue that amidst these intersections, the problems Tasmanian Aboriginal people encountered with the repatriation regime had more to do with structural issues including distance and practical access, some of which were legacies of colonisation, rather than racial discrimination per se.

Jessica Horton's research addresses the important issue of repatriation benefits after the First World War, focusing on the Gunditjmara in western Victoria. It has long been understood that government policies obstructed Aboriginal access to benefits including soldier settlement, and the tale of Lake Condah Aboriginal Reserve being closed and given to non-Indigenous soldier settlers is a prominent example. Yet, as Horton argues, using letters from Aboriginal returned servicemen and their families, the Gunditjmara resisted the Aborigines Protection Board's attempts to curtail their entitlements and in some cases were successful in securing their benefits. Her article not only devotes significant attention to Aboriginal agency and how returned servicemen positioned their veterans' status, but also challenges the notion of complete Aboriginal powerlessness in the face of government oppression.

Finally, Kristyn Harman looks at gender and race relations in the Second World War through the prism of the Aborigines Uplift Society's national comforts auxiliary. This organisation recruited white women to 'adopt' Aboriginal soldiers and to send items such as socks to Aboriginal men on the front, and they in turn corresponded with the women in Australia. Harman's analysis of the letters and newspaper articles reveals ways in which even from far away, Aboriginal soldiers could challenge white women's (mis)perceptions of Aboriginal Australians. Harman also addresses the role that Aboriginal women

played across a range of Australian comfort funds, including a focus on the race relations with white women and authorities near Cummeragunja in New South Wales.

All the articles in this special section offer new insights into the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the armed forces, extending from the South African Anglo-Boer War through to the Second World War, contributing to the increasingly complex and nuanced readings of Indigenous military service that are emerging in this growing field of academic inquiry. They also challenge our understandings of how Indigenous Australians coped during the aftermath of the First World War, highlighting in particular the necessity to focus on specific times and places in order to understand better local specificities and regional variations. It was not simply a common story that extended across the nation. These articles show the value and importance of in-depth research and analysis in this area, to deepen our knowledge of the history, rather than being content to trot out the same statements that circulate about Indigenous Australians' service. There are as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories of military service as there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and this special section continues to fill those gaps in academic histories and Australians' popular memories of those experiences. Lest we forget.

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Rectifying 'the Great Australian Silence'? Creative representations of Australian Indigenous Second World War service

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Abstract: *Until the publication of Robert Hall's landmark book* The Black Diggers *in 1989, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were essentially 'written out' of Australia's Second World War history. Still, more than 20 years since the publication of Hall's book, Australian Indigenous participation in the war effort as servicemen and women, labourers and scouts, in wartime industries and in various other capacities, continues to be on the periphery of Australia's war history. The Second World War remains part of what WEH Stanner referred to in 1969 as 'the Great Australian Silence' of Indigenous history.*

Notwithstanding the lack of significant academic histories of Indigenous military history, there have been a few creative depictions of Aboriginal participation in the Second World War. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have used creative mediums, such as poetry, short fiction, film, musical theatre and music, to portray Aboriginal Second World War service. This paper examines these creative cultural representations and how they position Australian Indigenous war service within a wider narrative of the Second World War and Indigenous history. Though the portrayals of Aboriginal service vary, the majority of creative works present the Second World War as central to Australian Indigenous history. Moreover, the creative representations depict Indigenous servicemen's hopes for a better life after the war, only to be crushed when they returned to ongoing discrimination. Even so, the creative depictions use the Second World War as an early marker of reconciliation in Australia, portraying the conflict as a time when ideals of liberty and equality overruled prejudice to unite Australia. Such a message continues to resonate, as creative representations of the Second World War contribute to contemporary understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander citizenship and reconciliation.

On 19 February 1942 — four days after the fall of Singapore — the Japanese launched two air raids on the northern Australian port of Darwin. The two raids represented the first foreign assault on white Australia. The attacks resulted in the deaths of at least 243 people, crippled the harbour and led to widespread panic that Australia was on the verge of invasion. The Commonwealth Government subsequently censored reports of the attack to minimise its impact on the public consciousness (Grose 2009; Lockwood 1992; Powell 1992). The bombing of Darwin is well

known in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory, where it forms a significant part of the region's collective memory. What is less well known, though, is that amidst this raid, a Japanese Zero airplane was damaged and crashed on Melville Island, about 40 kilometres north. The Japanese pilot encountered a group of Tiwi Islanders who ran into the bush, leaving a baby behind. A Tiwi man named Matthias Ulungura snuck up behind the Japanese with a tomahawk and said, 'Stick 'em up!' This is the story of the first Japanese prisoner of war ever captured on Australian soil — captured by an Aboriginal man (*No Bugles, No Drums* 1990). The story is celebrated within Australian Indigenous circles, yet has received little dissemination among the wider Australian community. This remarkable story has, for the most part, been what anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose refers to as a 'hidden history' (Rose 1991).

Hidden histories of Indigenous people in the Second World War reflect a wider Australian cult of forgetting Indigenous history. In 1969 the anthropologist WEH Stanner referred to the absence of Aboriginal people from Australia's popular consciousness and history as the 'Great Australian Silence' (Stanner 1969). Since the 1970s both non-Indigenous and Indigenous historians have worked to document Indigenous contributions to Australia's history. This rise of Aboriginal history, though a fraught process, has been one of the great strides of Australian historiography. Yet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the armed forces is still under studied and under documented. Robert Hall's landmark book *The Black Diggers*, first published in 1989, remains the defining academic work about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions to the Second World War (Hall 1997). Recent works by other historians have aimed to expand understandings of Indigenous military service (*Aboriginal History* 1992; Ball 1991; Huggonson 1993, 1989; Jackomos and Fowell 1993; Riseman forthcoming; *The Forgotten* 2002; Winegard 2009) or the links between military service and 1930s–40s activism for citizenship rights (Horner 1994). Indigenous organisations, too, have arisen since 2001 to commemorate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service in ANZAC Day marches and Reconciliation services across Australia.[1]

The history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Second World War service has been documented in several other non-fiction forums and formats. In addition to the aforementioned texts, there have been several published Aboriginal autobiographies that discuss life during the Second World War (see Briscoe 2010; Kruger and Waterford 2007; McGinness 1991; Tucker 1977). Permanent displays in mainstream museums, such as the Australian War Memorial, only haphazardly address the topic of Aboriginal military service,[2] while Aboriginal keeping places such as Brambuk Cultural Centre in the Grampians/Gariwerd contain displays highlighting Indigenous military service. Museums have hosted special exhibitions on Aboriginal military service, most famously the Australian War Memorial's travelling photographic exhibition *Too Dark for the Light Horse* in 1993 and 2000. The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, too, organised an exhibition on Koori military service in 2010, which began touring regional Victoria in 2011–12.[3] There have also been news reports (particularly around ANZAC Day), television documentaries and occasional features on current affairs shows such as *Stateline* and *Living Black*.[4]

Despite the increasing academic and Indigenous interest in the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander military service, the topic still remains on the periphery of Australia's popular memory and there have been few explorations of the theme of Indigenous military service in creative works. The aforementioned primary and secondary sources are certainly significant, but this paper focuses exclusively on creative representations that would *not* be classified as 'non-fiction' or documentaries, even though the cultural productions are often based on true stories. This also does not include documents such as cartoons or newsreels published *during* the war, as those were contemporaneous representations that did not contribute to post-war memorialising of Indigenous service.[5] Canvassing several creative representations of Indigenous service in the Second World War, the only identified portrayals include a country song performed in 2011, a children's book written in 1947, a musical performed in 1999, some poetry composed by Indigenous and

non-Indigenous veterans, Baz Luhrmann's blockbuster *Australia* (2008) and Richard Frankland's short film *Harry's War* (1999).[6]

This paper examines these creative representations of Aboriginal Second World War service, analysing ways in which cultural productions have situated Indigenous service within wider narratives of Aboriginal or Second World War experiences. This paper does not engage debates about constructions of Aboriginal identity in these cultural products. Such a topic is certainly worthy in its own right, but this paper instead analyses the varying portrayals of Aboriginal service — focusing in particular on representations of Aboriginal agency, motivations to serve, genre, audience and historical contexts. Several themes permeate most depictions of Aboriginal service — especially ideas of brotherhood in the ranks and persisting inequality in post-war Australia — but representations of Indigenous agency vary across the materials. The depictions that most effectively challenge the invisibility of Indigenous service are those that portray Second World War service as central to Australian Indigenous history and as part of their wider history of oppression. These representations express Aboriginal agency by exploring personal motivations to serve and the impact of the war on Aboriginal individuals and communities. This contrasts with other examples that portray the Second World War as an isolated experience and Aboriginal involvement as an aberration or exception to the norm. Though varying in their accuracy and the extent to which Aboriginal characters are active agents in their own right, all representations portray the Second World War as a moment that united Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. This message especially had resonance for those cultural products of the 1990s and 2000s, when the Reconciliation Movement sought to promote better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Understanding constructs of Indigenous military service is important because of the traditional links between military service and citizenship, national identity and unity.[7]

Film portrayals: *Australia* and *Harry's War*

To date the only films to portray Aboriginal contributions to the Second World War are Baz Luhrmann's romantic historical fiction *Australia* (2008) and Richard Frankland's short fictionalised biography *Harry's War* (1999). The Second World War emerges late in *Australia*, and within the war narrative Luhrmann presents Aboriginal service as a sidenote to the white characters. The Aboriginal character Magarri is, in fact, the only representation of Aboriginal military service in mainstream Australian cinema. By contrast, Frankland — who is a Gunditjmara man from south-west Victoria — examines the whole-of-war experiences of Aboriginal soldiers; the relationships among the Aboriginal soldiers, their friends and family are the thrust of *Harry's War*. Moreover, through the incorporation of other Aboriginal characters and various dialogic references, it is quite clear that Harry's wartime experience is not isolated, but rather is one shared by thousands of other Aboriginal servicemen.

Luhrmann's *Australia* is a love story between the Drover and Lady Sarah Ashley, played by Hugh Jackman and Nicole Kidman respectively. The romance is set against the backdrop of a remote cattle station and the Stolen Generations in 1939.[8] The movie generated significant interest in academic circles because of the portrayal of Australia's history, particularly the Stolen Generations,[9] and there was a series of high profile debates between feminist expatriate Germaine Greer and Aboriginal academic Marcia Langton about how the movie depicts frontier relationships and Aboriginal child removal (Greer 2008; Langton 2008a, 2008b). Late in the movie the main characters happen to be present for the bombing of Darwin and the Drover must — with his Aboriginal sidekick Magarri — rescue some Aboriginal children from impending Japanese invasion on the fictitious Mission Island. Interestingly, the incident on Mission Island is almost the reverse of what actually happened in history; rather than an Aboriginal man capturing the crashed Japanese pilot, in the film a group of Japanese shoot Magarri as he sacrifices himself in a moment akin to Archie's death in Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*.

Australia portrays Aboriginal contributions to the war effort as an isolated experience on the margins of a wider war effort. Mission Island is not the site of the main action — Darwin is — and the Aboriginal residents under attack are not as significant to the white authorities as the main

township. Moreover, the only reason that Mission Island is of any concern to the characters in the film is because Nullah — the child at the centre of the Stolen Generations narrative — is housed there. The actual white administrators care nothing for Mission Island and it is the Drover — the white hero — who goes to rescue Nullah and the other children. Magarri, the embodiment of Aboriginal military service in *Australia*, is the white man's friend and companion. The Drover drives the action and is at the centre of the war effort. Magarri nobly sacrifices his life so that the children and the Drover can escape, but as he dies his final words are 'Drive 'em home, Drover'. Thus, even as he is dying, he is lauding the Drover as the central figure who becomes the protector of the Aboriginal children.

The representation of Magarri's military service in *Australia* challenges the 'Great Australian Silence' about Aboriginal military service. The problem, though, lies in the limitations imposed on Magarri and his role as an exception to the norm of white service. Magarri is the *only* Aboriginal person in the film who contributes to the war effort, even though historically there were large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women. Hall has estimated that at least 3000 Aboriginal people and 850 Torres Strait Islanders served in the armed forces during the Second World War, and more recent estimates place the number around 5000 (Hall 1997:60). These estimates do not include those men and women who contributed to the war effort on the home front and, in the Northern Territory especially, Aboriginal people served in unofficial capacities as scouts, labourers in work camps and wharf workers (Berndt and Berndt 1987; Hall 1997; Saunders 1995).[10] In a city such as Darwin, which had a large Aboriginal population, Aboriginal contributions to the war effort were pronounced and visible; they were the norm, not the exception. *Australia* therefore leaves the audience with a perception of the Second World War in the Northern Territory as primarily a battle between white Australians and Japanese.

These examples of Magarri as the (albeit positive) aberrant Aboriginal person are in sharp contrast to the manner in which Richard Frankland constructs Aboriginal service in *Harry's War*. The plot of *Harry's War* follows Harry Saunders — the filmmaker's uncle — as he enlists in the Army in south-eastern Victoria, befriends both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal servicemen, and is ultimately killed by a Japanese sniper in Papua New Guinea. Indeed, the Saunders family has a long history of military service; Harry's father served in the First World War and Harry's brother Reg famously became the first Aboriginal commissioned officer in the Australian Army, serving in both the Second World War and Korea.[11] As a biographical work, the film reflects genres of Aboriginal writing and history telling, which meld historical narrative with poetic licence. This genre of Aboriginal life writing, which in Western discourse may be classified as 'fictionalised biography' or 'fictionalised autobiography', reflects Aboriginal literary epistemologies (Haag 2008; Shoemaker 2004). Unlike *Australia*, Aboriginal military service is the explicit focus of *Harry's War* instead of a side plot within a larger narrative. *Harry's War* is about friendships among soldiers and Harry Saunders represents an archetype for Aboriginal servicemen. As early as the opening scene, when the new enlistees are farewelling family at the train station, Harry is not the only Aboriginal serviceman. Throughout the film Thomas Green, and both Harry's family and Thomas Green's wife, make references to fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins fighting and dying for Australia in both the First and Second World Wars. Thus in *Harry's War* it is quite clear that the Second World War has affected every Aboriginal family by sending their men off to war, the same as for white families.[12]

A big difference for Aboriginal people, however, would be their motivations to serve and their expectations for outcomes from the war effort. In *Harry's War* there are a wide range of reasons for Aboriginal enlistment, which reflect the testimonies of Indigenous war veterans (Hall 1995; Jackomos and Fowell 1993). They include earning a better wage, equal pay to non-Indigenous soldiers, hoping for equal rights during and after the war, and desiring an easing of colonial restrictions. These hopes are expressed most effectively during a discussion among Harry, Thomas and Maude Green on the train:

> Maude: Don't you go making excuses for me, Thomas Green. You fellas make me sick. You think it'll all be one big adventure, that everything will be fine when you come home. You'll get your equal pay, live in a fine house in town; you won't need a permission slip to leave the bloody mission. What about cousin Johnny over there fighting? They still took his kids away. Listen up, you two. This war won't make us equal, because wars kill. They kill a lot of good Black men who should have been home looking after their families, and my father and brother were just two of them. Joining won't change nothin'. They'll still take our kids away. You won't get to drink in their pubs. And the only time you'll get to vote, Mr Saunders, is while you are being cannon fodder for their war. Why don't you wake up to yourselves?
>
> Harry: Look, you're right, ok. Is that what you want to hear? You think this is easy? Being regarded as half a bloke by blokes who make up the rules as they go? About where you fit in their lives? Look, I'm sorry if I upset you, Mrs Green, Maude. But a bloke's gotta have a go. That's why I'm goin', that's probably why Thomas is goin' too. Because we reckon it'd be wrong not to. Not to have a bloody good crack at it — to have a go at being looked at as equal (*Harry's War* 1999).

The reason this scene is so significant is because it succinctly summarises the hopes of Aboriginal servicemen and their families, while concurrently presenting the wider context of Indigenous affairs circa the Second World War. Issues confronting Indigenous people — child removal, apartheid-like restrictions and inequality — are still in the minds of the Aboriginal residents of Australia. Thus *Harry's War* places the Second World War as a key moment in the collective history of Aboriginal Australians. Military service is commonplace among Indigenous communities just as much as ongoing discrimination. Nonetheless, the Aboriginal people themselves — Harry and Thomas — are agents trying to improve their status within this wider, complex framework.

Discrimination common to Aboriginal people manifests in a scene from *Harry's War* that has a counterpart in *Australia*. Harry, Thomas and their white friend Mitch enter a bar and Mitch orders drinks for all three. The bartender refuses to serve Harry and Thomas, which angers Mitch. Then Harry speaks up against the discrimination, saying to the entire bar, 'I'm thirsty...And I reckon, if I can wear this uniform, then I can bloody well have a beer!' (*Harry's War* 1999). The bartender relents and serves Harry and Thomas. In a similar vein, *Australia* has a scene in a bar after the bombing of Darwin. As the Drover enters with Magarri behind him, the bartender remarks, 'No Boongs in here'. The crowd stops as the Drover, shocked, retorts, 'You didn't say that, did you? Give him a fucking drink.' The Drover invites Magarri inside in an Aboriginal language, but still the barman only serves one drink. The Drover again says, 'Short one glass...one more glass.' Finally, the publican pours a second glass and toasts to 'the Japs, who are not the Boongs'. Throughout this entire exchange, Magarri says nothing, but cries after being served (*Australia* 2008). Magarri's tears can be read either as happiness for finally being served, or as sadness for still confronting discrimination. The contrasting manner in which these two scenes play out is striking. In both situations the war circumstances lead to challenges against the ban on Aboriginal people drinking — laws that were in place in every state and territory except Tasmania until well after the Second World War (Chesterman 2005; Chesterman and Galligan 1997). Yet in *Harry's War* it is Harry who speaks up for his rights and uses his position as a soldier to demand equal treatment. He does this with the support of his white ally, but it is still his own agency and he is an empowered individual. By contrast, in *Australia* it is the good white man who speaks for the Aboriginal person and represents his interests.

Ultimately, what the viewers of *Australia* and *Harry's War* receive are two different versions of Australian history and the position of Aboriginal people within the Second World War. *Australia* presents as a pop cultural imagination of the Northern Territory frontier, which, according to Aboriginal academic Marcia Langton, contains the complexities of interpersonal and intercultural relations that characterised this historical era (Langton 2008a, 2008b). But the movie presents Aboriginal military service as tangential to the war effort and as beholden to the whims

of the white men. By contrast, *Harry's War* examines Aboriginal military history from the Aboriginal perspective, with service central to the experiences of Aboriginal families. Admittedly, it was not Baz Luhrmann's intention to present an historically accurate depiction of Aboriginal people in the Second World War; his purpose was to direct an epic about the Australian outback, the bombing of Darwin and the Stolen Generations (Luhrmann 2008, 2011). That is why most of the debates regarding *Australia* have centred on his portrayal of Stolen Generations. Moreover, his intended audience was mainstream moviegoers, particularly in the United States. Frankland, on the other hand, planned to make a short film about Aboriginal military service. *Harry's War*'s expected audience is Indigenous people, but also school children who are studying Aboriginal history.[13] Luhrmann's *Australia* reached cinematic audiences worldwide, earning more than $49 million in the United States alone, and $161.7 million dollars in other countries — not to mention the tourism tie-ins and DVD sales (Box Office Mojo 2012). *Harry's War* has screened only at a few film festivals and on the National Indigenous Television channel in Australia, and occasionally airs on the SBS network. Thus mainstream cinema audiences in Australia and around the world are yet to be exposed to the critical position of the Second World War in Aboriginal histories.

Verse expressions: poetry and songs

One form in which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have portrayed Second World War service is through poetry and song writing. Several Australian poets have written about memories of wartime, returns home, difficult readjustments and the legacies of war. Works relating specifically to Australian Indigenous Second World War service, by two poets and one singer songwriter, focus on other themes: mateship during war and discrimination in civilian life. For the Aboriginal writers, poetry and song writing are forms of expression adopted as a contemporary form of traditional storytelling and sharing of Aboriginal knowledge (Shoemaker 2004; van den Berg 2005).[14]

The non-Indigenous author Sapper Bert Beros (1943) — who is most famous for his poem *The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels* about Papua New Guineans in the war — also wrote the poem *The Coloured Digger* in 1943 about fellow soldier Private Harold West, who died of malaria in Papua New Guinea. Though Beros wrote the poem during the war, it has come to prominence primarily in recent years and thus represents a significant creative representation memorialising Aboriginal military service. Beros' poem has been well received by the Australian Indigenous ex-service community, and is read regularly at Indigenous commemorative services. Katie Beckett — the great-niece of Harold West — has even written a one-woman play entitled *Coloured Diggers*; she performed the short play at the 2010 ANZAC Day March in Redfern ('Coloured Digger' 2010; *The Last Post* 2006).

The Coloured Digger describes the patriotism of an Aboriginal soldier serving alongside white men. The particular soldier being described is clearly a metaphor for all Aboriginal servicemen, their dedication and their dreams. The first third of the poem focuses on the soldier's devotion, answering the call of service.

> He waited for no call-up,
> He didn't need a push,
> He came in from the stations,
> And the townships of the bush.
> He helped when help was wanting,
> Just because he wasn't deaf;
> He is right amongst the columns of the fighting A.I.F (Beros 1943:18).

The invocation of patriotism generates a feeling of connectedness for the reader. The Aboriginal Digger is one of us — another Australian — who is answering the call of duty to one's country. Such a message bridges the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It was a progressive message for 1943, particularly being written by a non-Indigenous man.

The final 12 lines of the poem make the poem's purpose clear, advocating equal rights for Aboriginal people:

> He'd heard us talk democracy—,
> They preach it to his face—
> Yet knows that in our Federal House
> There's no one of his race.
> He feels we push his kinsmen out,
> Where cities do not reach,

And Parliament has yet to hear
The Abo's maiden speech.
One day he'll leave the Army,
Then join the League he shall,
And he hopes we'll give a better deal
To the Aboriginal (Beros 1943:18).

The poem depicts the links between military service and citizenship and encourages the Australian public and politicians, in particular, to reward service with equality. In the process the poem also acknowledges an 'us' and 'them' division, with the white Australians as the oppressors. Beros' advocacy for the rights of Aboriginal people displays sympathy for the dispossession of Aboriginal people. This was a progressive stance for 1943 and positions Beros and other returned servicemen as allies in the struggle for Aboriginal equality.

Aboriginal country singer Troy Cassar-Daley's short song *That's Why I'm Your Friend* expresses similar sentiments of brotherhood between Indigenous and non-Indigenous soldiers, but from the perspective of the Aboriginal soldier himself.[15] Cassar-Daley writes:

As the battles raged around us
We would watch each other's backs
two soldiers in the jungle
so weary from attacks
We'll see this through together
And on me you can depend
That's why, that's why I'm your friend (Cassar-Daley 2011).

By writing the song in the first person, Cassar-Daley portrays the Aboriginal soldier as an active agent whose decisions and motivations are quite clear rather than speculative. Unlike Beros' poem, the song does not dwell on the notion of inequality experienced within Australia. This is a significant difference from other cultural representations, and the reason seems to be the audience for which Cassar-Daley wrote *That's Why I'm Your Friend* in 2011. The lyrics, 'We'll see this through together/And on me you can depend/That's why, that's why I'm your friend', reflect the contemporary ideals of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Cassar-Daley 2011). Cassar-Daley's song thus represents the Second World War as an early marker of reconciliation and invokes that spirit, still relevant in 2011.

Aboriginal Korean War veteran Cec Fisher's poems, written during the 1990s, pose messages about yearning for equality and disenchantment with the post-war situation. The message of Fisher's poem *Black Anzac* is clear from the opening line: 'They have forgotten, need him no more' (Fisher 1993). The Aboriginal serviceman whom Fisher describes is, like the Coloured Digger, representative of all Aboriginal servicemen. Even more so, Fisher's poem invokes not just the Second World War, but all conflicts in which Australia participated, including the frontier wars. The sentiments Fisher expresses are longstanding because Aboriginal people regularly answered the call for service but were denied equal rights upon their return. This theme of disappointment of Aboriginal ex-servicemen reflects the status of military service within a wider context of discrimination. With the conflict over, the goals of equality unachieved, the veteran is left with only his medals and his unfulfilled hopes: 'His medals he keeps hidden away from prying eyes/No-one knows, no-one sees his tears in his old black eyes/He's been outcast — just left by himself to die' (Fisher 1993).

Another poem of Fisher's effectively demonstrates the paradoxical pride of the families of Aboriginal servicemen in conjunction with the disappointment over continuing discrimination. He writes in *Anzac Day*:

Granny was treated like a Queen Anzac Day
See the shiny medals flashing from far away
Next day they crossed the street, racism was back
Didn't treat her equal just because she was black (Fisher 2001).

Fisher's approach in this poem centres around the Aboriginal families and the impact of military service on them. The grandmother is proud of her husband's achievements in war, yet it is only on ANZAC Day that the Australian public is willing to treat her as an equal. Such experiences have resonance across Australia; the 1965 Freedom Ride to outback New South Wales exposed one of the more high profile examples at the Walgett Returned and Services League, where Aboriginal people were only allowed to enter on ANZAC Day

(*Blood Brothers: Freedom Ride* 1993; Curthoys 2002). Thus, unlike Beros and Cassar-Daley, Fisher focuses on the lingering post-war racism confronted by Indigenous servicemen and their families. Fisher's poems express the emotions of the Aboriginal veterans and their families to highlight injustice. Beros and Cassar-Daley, on the other hand, appeal to sentiments of brotherhood among soldiers to elicit non-Indigenous support for Aboriginal civil rights. Both devices are effective in their own right, and they reveal the potential for poetic representations of Indigenous war service to promote greater understandings between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Children's fiction

One of the more intriguing depictions of Aboriginal participation in the Second World War effort is Owen Griffiths' children's book *Dhidgerry Dhoo: A tale woven around fact* (1947a). Griffiths was a serviceman stationed in Darwin during the war, and he is best known for his published eyewitness account of the bombing of Darwin in 1942 (Griffiths 1947b). Griffiths' story follows the war experience of a remote Aboriginal man named Dhidgerry Dhoo as he assists in the war effort in the north. Dhidgerry Dhoo is ultimately kidnapped by a Japanese submarine crew and dies escaping from a prisoner-of-war camp. Griffiths includes several contemporaneous aspects of Aboriginal life in the period leading up to the Second World War, including contact with settlers, life on a mission at Bathurst Island, continuing cultural connections, and the hostile relationships between Aboriginal people and Japanese pearlers (see Austin 1997; Oliver 2006; Pye 1977).

Griffiths introduces the book with a foreword grounding the significance of Aboriginal contributions to northern defence. He writes, 'The Australian Aborigines of the North-west responded magnificently to the calls made upon them by the various armed services during the critical months of 1942, when a Japanese invasion seemed imminent. They were widely employed as coastal pilots, bush-runners, scouts, trackers and plane-spotters' (Griffiths 1947a:7). Griffiths' statement is quite accurate and reflects the diversity of tasks performed by Aboriginal people in the north (*No Bugles, No Drums* 1990; Riseman forthcoming; Saunders 1995). Moreover, Griffiths' narrative makes it clear that Aboriginal people are aware of the wider war situation and are active agents who choose to assist in the war effort. Dhidgerry Dhoo worries about how the war will impact on Aboriginal people, and for this reason the Aboriginal people choose to work as allies with the white men. This is clearly their own initiative, as the text states: 'A scheme was put forward *by the elders* under which the Aborigines would patrol the countryside and act as scouts and guides for the white man' (Griffiths 1947a:28, emphasis added). The motivations given to serve include distrust of the Japanese, loyalty to missionaries, hope for a better future with white settlers, and desire for goods and payment from white men. Investing the Aboriginal Elders with agency and desires to serve in the war effort was progressive at the time, given that many post-war non-Indigenous histories of the Second World War suggest that white men were the principal organisers of Aboriginal support for the war effort (Riseman 2010).

Dhidgerry Dhoo travels throughout the north to garner the support of other Aboriginal men and women. Thus Griffiths is positioning Indigenous service not as an isolated experience, but as one central to remote Aboriginal Australia. Dhidgerry Dhoo witnesses Japanese submarines and airplanes, and watches the bombing of Darwin from across the harbour. As the war progresses, his own settlement at Bynoe is bombed. The story continues: 'There were no casualties but by morning, panic-stricken and afraid, some were hurrying inland to different parts and only the steadfast example and wise counsels of the elders of the tribe prevented a mass exodus' (Griffiths 1947a:39). Griffiths' language invokes a real sense of fear among the Aboriginal population, highlighting the war as a serious threat to their existence, just as it was to white Australia. Such an approach to the story creates a sense of connection, common purpose and shared humanity between a non-Indigenous reader and the Aboriginal communities of the north.

The potential impact of Japanese invasion on Aboriginal lives receives further attention in the book when Dhidgerry Dhoo encounters a Japanese landing party. He follows the tracks and finds that the Japanese have abducted his wife and

child. The book says, 'There [at the waterfront] he found his wife lying on the ground tightly clasping her little girl and moaning piteously' (Griffiths 1947a:47). What ensues is a peculiar storyline where Dhidgerry Dhoo attempts to rescue his other son from the Japanese, only to be abducted himself. Meanwhile, within the bowels of the Japanese submarine, his baby son dies. The story describes Dhidgerry Dhoo's reaction: 'He wondered what his wife and daughter were doing and if the [American] airman had been rescued. He remained thus seated, with his dead child in his arms, for a long while, too ill and broken-hearted to care what happened next' (Griffiths 1947a:51). The Japanese callously toss his son out of the submarine. They subsequently torture Dhidgerry Dhoo before sending him to a prisoner-of-war camp on an unknown island. He successfully escapes from the camp only to die at sea, his body picked up by a vessel returning to Darwin. This entire storyline portrays the cruel Japanese, but it also demonstrates the impact of the war on the Aboriginal north. Aboriginal people, too, are subject to torture; their families, too, are at risk; they, like white Australians, are in danger of invasion and thus should have the empathy of white Australia.

Unlike many of the other cultural representations of Aboriginal service, there is no reference in *Dhidgerry Dhoo* to the ongoing discrimination facing Aboriginal people. The book considers white Australia preferable to Japanese rule, but it does not actively interrogate the impact of colonialism on the Aboriginal north. Rather, Griffiths subtly questions Aboriginal people's status when he posits one of the motivations to serve to be the defence of liberty and freedom; the text states, 'the white man's cause was, at the moment, his [Dhidgherry Dhoo's] cause — a struggle for life and liberty' (Griffiths 1947a:43). Although there is no mention of what liberty would mean to Aboriginal people, this subtle differentiation between 'the white man's cause' versus Aboriginal people's implies an unjust situation for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Thus *Dhidgerry Dhoo* represents a sympathetic portrayal of Aboriginal people in the Second World War and it imbues the Aboriginal characters with their own agency. Though it does not actively question the wider social context of the war, colonialism and discrimination, the language subtly subverts the status quo — quite a skilful feat for a children's book in 1947.

Musical theatre

Performed in 1999–2000, *The Sunshine Club: A Very Black Musical* (Enoch 2000) takes place after the Second World War in a settled part of Queensland, most likely urban or suburban. The story centres on an Aboriginal veteran named Frank Doyle, who returns to a Queensland that continues to discriminate against Aboriginal people. With his family's help he sets up The Sunshine Club for social dances on Saturday nights, where Aboriginal and white youth can dance together. The subplots include a doomed romance between Frank and the white clergyman's daughter, Rose, and an unplanned pregnancy between Aboriginal girl Pearl and non-Indigenous womaniser Peter. The musical sets the Aboriginal characters on a trajectory of hope for an equal future amidst the contemporaneous discrimination.

The role of the Second World War is explicit, particularly in the early part of the musical, because the Aboriginal servicemen and their wives express hopes that they will receive fairer treatment at the war's conclusion. The opening number presents the sentiments of several demographics — non-Indigenous men, non-Indigenous women, Aboriginal men and Aboriginal women. The non-Indigenous men sing about their joy to be home, and state, 'We want it all again/The world we knew before the war'. This is in stark contrast to Frank's verse, 'Give us our freedom/Now the fighting's done/We fought for freedom/The same as everyone' (Enoch 2000:8–9). The juxtaposition of the two verses reveals a tension to the audience — that Frank and the other Aboriginal veterans will not be returning to a changed world, but, rather, one in which they still confront racial prejudice.

It is early in the musical that Frank realises just how much Queensland has not changed. A doorman refuses to let Frank enter a concert at Cloudland, and the following dialogue ensues:

> Doorman: You're not going in there.
> Frank: I'm a guest of...

> Doorman: I don't care who you're with...You know the rules.
> Frank: Things have changed...
> Doorman: No one's told me.
> Frank (stronger): Things have changed...
> Doorman: Nothing's changed (Enoch 2000:20).

Frank is ultimately let in at the insistence of Reverend Percy Morris, but told to stand in the back. This exchange epitomises the shattered hopes of Aboriginal veterans. Even so, what Enoch expresses through *The Sunshine Club* is the determination of Aboriginal people in the post-war era to fight for their rights. Frank continues to stand up for himself against the doorman, and ultimately he founds The Sunshine Club as a place for Aboriginal and white people to socialise harmoniously. The integrated nature of The Sunshine Club, similar to Cassar-Daley's song, fits with the message of reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians promoted during the 1990s. *The Sunshine Club* presages the Aboriginal activism of the 1960s, during which many Indigenous Second World War veterans were active leaders in the movements for civil rights and the 1967 referendum.[16] Thus, like the other Aboriginal-authored representations of Second World War service, the war does not sit as an isolated experience but fits into a wider context of Indigenous history. Enoch successfully weaves the connections between returned servicemen, discrimination and activism through his narrative about one particular time and place.

Conclusion

This paper has considered the extent to which a range of creative cultural representations have confronted the 'Great Australian Silence' about Aboriginal people in the Second World War. Whether through film, poetry, songs, fiction or musicals, the examples presented have made some strides presenting aspects of Aboriginal participation in the war effort. Though by no means universal, some of the common themes include notions of interracial brotherhood, hoping for equality after the war, a return to discrimination and the centrality of Aboriginal service. The ways in which the authors have represented Aboriginal service vary, with some representations taking a broader approach to the war as one component in a wider Australian Indigenous history.

The question of audiences is a complex factor at play when examining the cultural productions. With the notable exception of Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*, most of the examples presented in this paper have had a limited distribution. Indeed, the Aboriginal-authored works — Richard Frankland's film, Cec Fisher's poetry, Troy Cassar-Daley's song — have reached predominantly Indigenous audiences because of their places of publication and/or performance. They portray how the Second World War bridged the gap between the two races only for a short while. As they were all published since the 1990s, the implication of such portrayals is that war service was a moment of reconciliation that teaches lessons relevant in the present. Non-Indigenous portrayals of Aboriginal service — Luhrmann's *Australia*, Beros' poem and Griffiths' children's story — vary in their portrayals of Aboriginal service. Even so, the reconciliation message through common enemies, common sacrifice and hopes for a better future are present in the texts. Thus, the cultural representations certainly have challenged the absence of Aboriginal military history, but much work remains to redress this aspect of the 'Great Australian Silence'.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of colleagues at the Australian Catholic University who read earlier drafts, and especially Dr Maggie Nolan.

NOTES

1. The most high profile Indigenous march is the Redfern ANZAC Day March, begun in 2007. Commemorative services now run in all capital cities during Reconciliation Week in May of each year. Honouring Indigenous War Graves also co-ordinates commemorative services and marches in Western Australia.
2. One of the more intriguing museum examples is a plaque in the Melbourne Jewish Holocaust Museum honouring Yorta Yorta activist William Cooper for protesting against Nazi treatment of Jews after Kristallnacht in 1938. Cooper was the founder of the Australian Aborigines' League and fought for Aboriginal citizenship rights. See Attwood and Markus 2004; Markus 1988.
3. For more information about *Too Dark for the Light Horse*, see the 'Travelling exhibitions — completed' page of the Australian War Memorial website at

ARBOR Ciencia, Pensamiento y Cultura
CLXXXVI 743 mayo-junio [2010] 479-486 ISSN: 0210-1963
doi: 10.3989/arbor.2010.743n1212

CULTURAL HISTORY AS POLYPHONIC HISTORY

HISTORIA CULTURAL COMO HISTORIA POLIFÓNICA

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RESUMEN: En este texto se ofrece una reflexión sobre el origen y actual desarrollo del campo de la historia cultural a través de una comparación con el término que ha dado título a este seminario: "historia polifónica". El autor propone un recorrido por las áreas temáticas que han conformado la estructura del seminario (la historia de las representaciones, la historia del cuerpo y la historia cultural de la ciencia) con el objeto de explicitar y explicar esta pluralidad de voces en el campo de la historia, así como su repercusión en otras áreas del conocimiento.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Historia cultural; giro cultural; historia polifónica.

ABSTRACT: This texts offers a reflection on the origins and actual development of the field of cultural history through a comparison with the term that has served as title for this seminar: "polyphonic history". The author provides an overview of the themes that have structured the seminar (the history of representations, the history of the body and the cultural history of science) with the aim of making explicit and clarifying this plurality of voices in the field of history as well as its pervasiveness in other research areas.

KEY WORDS: Cultural history; cultural turn; polyphonic history.

The occasion of the conference that led to this special issue was a moving one for me. I am deeply grateful to the organizers and contributors for making the event happen and was delighted by the conference itself, including its title, a welcome sign of the increasing interest in Bakhtin on the part of historians: in the whole Bakhtin rather than the author of an exciting but sometimes questionable book on Carnival (Mantecón, 2008).

In France, the final speaker might reasonably be expected to summarize the collective conclusions of the earlier participants. Fortunately for me, Madrid is very different from Paris, leaving me free to adopt a more individualistic approach, commenting on a few central themes of this wide-ranging conference, beginning with the idea of polyphonic history itself.

What is polyphonic history? It might be useful to begin by defining it negatively, in opposition to historical "monody". It is polyglot rather than monoglot, presented as dialogue rather than monologue, and tells multiple stories rather than a single Grand Narrative. One of the great changes in the humanities in the last half-century has been the multiplication of the voices expressed in texts, or to switch from an aural to a visual metaphor, the multiplication of perspectives or points of view, in anthropology, sociology, literature and other disciplines as well as in history.

It may be useful to distinguish between various forms of polyphonic history. One variety might be defined by the concern with "perspectivism", with the plurality of viewpoints that existed in the past. Thus Miguel León Portilla (1961) and Nathan Wachtel (1971) have been concerned to reconstruct what they call the "vision of the vanquished", the attitudes of the Indians of Mexico and Peru after the Spanish conquest. In similar fashion, the scholars involved in the British movement for "history from below" and the Indian movement for "subaltern studies" have made ordinary people – and their view of society – visible, while feminist historians have done the same for women.

Here, following the master metaphor of the conference, let us describe this kind of history as concerned to make audible the multiple voices of the past, the working classes as well as the middle classes, losers as well as winners, victims as well as aggressors, in short the "Cinderellas of history" [*Os marias-borralheiras da história*], to use the memorable phrase of the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre (1948, 50), as well as its normal heroes. In the last decades, historical writing on cultural encounters and also *desencuentros* – to use the expressive Spanish term which

unfortunately lacks an English equivalent – has multiplied at a rate that is as gratifying as it is terrifying.

The phrase "polyphonic history" may also be employed to refer to the plurality of approaches to the past that exist at the present time, in which, to quote the Chinese saying (which Mao Zedong notoriously misused in order to trap his opponents) "Let 100 flowers bloom, let 100 schools of thought contend".

Micro-historians and macro-historians, scholars concerned with "high" and "low" politics, economic historians and historians of the environment, historians of the body and historians of mentalities, as well as "old" and "new" cultural historians (to say nothing of historians of art, literature and science, who usually inhabit other departments on the campus) now coexist, more or less happily, in the university.

Many of these different approaches depend on regular conversations between historians and scholars in other disciplines, so we might use the phrase "polyphonic history", as I believe Manuel Lucena Giraldo and Javier Moscoso intended, to refer to historical writing that draws on other disciplines – not only anthropology, sociology, and the history of art and literature, science and philosophy but also, as contributions to this conference made clear, neuroscience and "cultural zoology" – for chimpanzees, for instance, have a culture in the sense that they not only learn from experience but pass on what they have learned (Wrangham, 1994).

A substantial proportion of historical writing now attempts to follow this ideal, so that we might describe our time as marked by a "polyphonization" of history, even if the different voices do not always sing in tune. There is a more frequent and intense dialogue between disciplines, even if on occasion it appears to be a dialogue of the deaf. The recent and apparently irresistible rise of cultural history at the expense of its neighbours may seem to contradict this trend towards polyphonization, but the contradiction, so I shall argue, is more apparent than real.

The cultural turn is in full swing. Since the year 2000, at least twelve introductions to the subject have been published, two in French – one in the famous "Que-sais-je?" series, which implies a certain academic consecration – (Ory, 2004; Poirrier, 2004); two in Spanish (Rodríguez G., 2004; Pons and Serna, 2005); two in German (Daniel, 2001; Maurer, 2008); two in English (Burke, 2004a; Green, 2007); and one each in Danish, Finnish, Italian and Brazilian Portuguese (Christiansen, 2000; Kaartinen and Korhonen, 2005; Arcangeli, 2007; Falcon, 2002). Others are on the way. An International Society for Cultural History was founded at Aberdeen in 2007 (see http://www.abdn.ac.uk/ch/ch_soc.shtml) while the French already had their own Association pour le développement de l'histoire culturelle. Conferences on the theme are becoming increasingly frequent.

Almost everything seems to be having its cultural history written these days. To quote only the titles or sub-titles of some books published since 2000, there are cultural histories of calendars (Rüpke, 2006); causality (Kern, 2004); climate (Behringer, 2007); coffee-houses (Ellis, 2004); corsets (Steele, 2001); examinations (Elman, 2000); facial hair (Peterkin, 2002); fat (Gilman, 2008); fear (by a contributor to this conference: Bourke, 2005); impotence (McLaren, 2007); insomnia (Summers-Bremner, 2007); masturbation (Laqueur, 2003); nationalism (Leerssen, 2006); pregnancy (Hanson, 2004); and tobacco (Gately, 2002). Some of these books have been written by amateurs, often journalists, but others by professional historians. The concept of "cultural revolution" has been extended from China in the 1960s, where the phrase was launched, to other places and times, including not only Russia and Mexico in the 1920s (Transchel, 2006; Vaughan and Lewis, 2006) but even the Russia of Peter the Great (Cracraft, 2004) and ancient Athens and Rome (Osborne, 2007; Habinek and Schiesaro, 1997; Wallace-Hadrill, 2008).

However, we find that recent developments are not uniform but uneven. There are national styles or traditions in cultural history (Poirrier, 2008) as in the case of anthropology or even – if to a lesser degree – in the natural sciences. These traditions illustrate yet another form of polyphony.

In Britain, for instance, we find a certain resistance to cultural history, viewed as incompatible with "hard facts" or "brass tacks" (Burke, 2008). In contrast, the USA is one of the places in which cultural history – like cultural geography and cultural anthropology – has flourished longest. It is tempting to offer cultural explanations for

ARBOR CLXXXVI 743 mayo-junio [2010] 479-486 ISSN: 0210-1963
doi: 10.3989/arbor.2010.743n1212

the contrast between the North American emphasis on culture and the British emphasis on society, linking the American style to the fluidity of a society of immigrants in which geographical and social mobility is high, and the British style to a more stable society as well as to what we might call a "culture of empiricism" that goes back (as far as philosophy is concerned) to John Locke or even to William of Ockham.

Again, the "global turn" in cultural history, well exemplified by Felipe Fernández-Armesto, is geographically circumscribed. The movement is, as he suggests, much stronger in the USA than it is in Europe. In any case, the majority of global historians still come from and work in the West.

Needless to say, the cultural turn by historians is a small part of a much broader movement. Within the wider academic field, we have seen the rise of Cultural Studies (including the newer domain of Visual Culture Studies), not only in Britain but elsewhere in Europe, the USA, Australia and elsewhere (Grabes, 2001). The cultural turn has affected sociology, anthropology, geography, archaeology and politics as well as the history of art, science and literature (though not always in the same way, of course, given the existence of different disciplinary traditions). Some scholars in all these disciplines now like to describe themselves as students of "culture", and even as cultural historians.

Certain domains of cultural history have attracted particular interest in recent years, including the three domains on which the conference focused: the history of representations, the history of the body and the cultural history of science, viewed here as part of a larger field that I call "the cultural history of intellectual practices".

I

A well-known essay on cultural history by Roger Chartier situated it "between practices and representations". The focus on representations has not only enlarged the territory of history but also made historians more critical of their sources by becoming more aware of mediators. Take the case of travelogues, for instance.

Thanks to traditional methods of source criticism, historians have long been aware that travelers do not offer objective descriptions of other cultures and that they often have their own agenda, religious or political. Today, however, there is more interest than there used to be about the unacknowledged contributions to these travelogues made by local informants. In other words, scholars now listen – as Bakhtin did so acutely – for different voices within a text that used to be read as a monologue. In similar fashion they have become aware of the presence of indigenous knowledge in treatises by Europeans discussing the healing properties of herbs in Asia or the New World (Grove, 1996).

Again, thanks to the dialogue between historians and specialists in literature, travelogues are now commonly viewed as examples of a literary genre with its own conventions, often following the models presented in the treatises on the "art of travel" current in early modern Europe (Stagl, 1995; Rubiès, 2000). Such conventions alerted travelers to some features of the foreign culture at the expense of discouraging them from seeing others. Over the long term they acted as obstacles to innovation, even if it was sometimes possible to surmount or circumvent these obstacles.

To such examples of the limits of representations one might add the testimony of images, which I have discussed more fully elsewhere (Burke 2001, 2008b). Images are more powerful than words, partly because they work faster, but they are also more ambiguous and liable to be understood by different viewers in ways even more diverse than the interpretation of the same text by different readers. The ambiguity is part of the power of images – but also a limitation (Barasch, 1997).

A similar point about ambiguity might be made and indeed has been made about rituals. To take one example among many possible ones, this aspect of national festivals in Venezuela has been emphasized in a recent study, suggesting that different groups of spectators interpret the same festive event in very different ways (Guss, 2000).

On the other hand, rituals, unlike texts or images, are fluid not fixed, despite attempts to fix them on the part of masters of ceremonies who like everything to be done "by the book", *prout in libro meo*, as Paris de Grassis, who served

Pope Julius II and kept a record of ritual events, liked to say (Burke, 1987, 177-9). Every repetition is at least slightly different from earlier ones, even if it is carried out by the same people in the same place as before.

II

Another major theme of the conference was the history of the body and the history of emotions. Since I have written elsewhere about problems in the history of the emotions (Burke, 2005), it may be more useful to concentrate on bodies. The history of the body is older than many of its practitioners think – an important contribution was made by the Brazilian historian Gilberto Freyre as early as the 1930s. He used the advertisements for runaway slaves printed in Brazilian newspapers of the early nineteenth century as a source for the reconstruction of slave bodies, noting the tribal marks on the face, the filing of the teeth, the scars left on the back from flogging and the marks left on the head and body by heavy loads (Freyre, 1937, 1963).

Today, however, studies in the history of the body proliferate, sometimes inspired by current anxieties, whether about anorexia or about obesity (Bell, 1985; Gilman 2008). This domain was well represented at the conference. However, one focus of attention in recent studies of the body which does not appear in the articles in this collection is the history of cleanliness (Vigarello, 1985; Hoy, 1995; Smith, 2006; Ashenburg, 2007). I choose it now because it is a meeting-point between studies of the body as a physical object and studies of the wider culture, between purity in the literal and in the metaphorical senses. The history of cleanliness was already studied before the rise of the New Cultural History – here as elsewhere, tribute is due to the amateur historians (Wright, 1960) who turned to certain topics before the professionals.

All the same, recent studies have had much to add, thanks to more intense research and in particular to the theories put forward by anthropologists such as the late Mary Douglas, who showed that codes of cleanliness vary from one culture to another. One theme in recent work is the importance of the frequently-enacted metaphor of cleanliness or purity – spiritual purity, ethnic cleansing, the purity of language and so on (Burke, 2004, ch.6; Biow, 2006). Another is the link between concepts of cleanliness and national identity. For example, nineteenth-century middle-class American ladies attempted to teach Italian or Polish immigrants their standards of cleanliness as part of the American way of life (Hoy, 1995, 87-121).

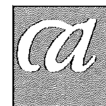
III

So far as the cultural history of science is concerned, it may be illuminating to locate studies of this kind within a wider field, raising the question of the relation between intellectual history, longer-established and more rigorous, and cultural history, more recently-established and more imaginative and wide-ranging. The point is not to praise either at the expense of the other but rather to draw attention to the recent interaction between these two approaches. The frontier between the two is increasingly transgressed, producing a hybrid that we might describe as the cultural history of ideas, or better, perhaps, the cultural history of intellectual practices.

To the cultural histories of science discussed elsewhere in this issue, I should like to add two examples. The first, concerned with the process of hybridization itself, is Peter Galison's study of what he calls the "subcultures" of twentieth-century physics (notably theorists and experimenters), identifying what he calls "trading zones", defined as spaces in which "two dissimilar groups can find common ground", exchanging items of information while disagreeing about the wider significance of what is exchanged (Galison, 1997, 46, 803). My second example is a recent article by James Secord (2007) on scientific conversation. It is both a contribution to the history of the communication of scientific ideas and to the rapidly expanding field of what will surely soon be named "conversation studies".

These cultural studies of science are part of a larger group, the products of a recent movement marching under the banner of "the cultural history of ideas" or more exactly, "the cultural history of intellectual practices" (Burke, 2007b). A few scholars working on the history of political thought have moved closer to cultural history thanks to their participation in the "visual turn", discussed elsewhere in this issue. Nicolai Rubinstein was a pioneer in this re-

ARBOR CLXXXVI 743 mayo-junio [2010] 479-486 ISSN: 0210-1963
doi: 10.3989/arbor.2010.743n1212



spect, thanks perhaps to his association with the Warburg Institute, and his interpretation of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes of good and bad government in the Palazzo Publico in Siena (Rubinstein, 1958) provoked Quentin Skinner (1986) to move away from his usual concern with classic texts and to focus on images instead. Again, José María González García (1998, 2006) has approached political thought via the study of metaphors and visual images.

The history of reading is now an accepted approach to the history of the book. Histories of different kinds of writing, from poems circulating in manuscript (Bouza, 2001) to letters written in prison (Castillo Gómez, 2005) or techniques of note-taking (Blair, 2004) are also beginning to appear. Other historians (Head, 2003, Navarro Bonilla 2003, 2004) are focussing on the way in which governments gathered knowledge, stored it in archives and libraries and employed it for a variety of purposes.

Three important studies of the "information state" deal with the history of colonial India. One (Cohn, 1996) argues that even apparently disinterested knowledge of India was mobilized by the British to help them control the country. Another (Bayly, 1997) emphasizes the way in which, so far as information gathering or "political intelligence" was concerned, British administrators built on the work of their Mughal predecessors. The third (Dirks, 2001) claims that the caste system, at least in its modern form, was not so much an expression of Indian tradition as the product of the encounter between Indian subjects and British administrators, concerned as they were to classify the people under their control.

Another striking example of this hybrid intellectual-cultural history – an approach that would have pleased Gilberto Freyre – is what might be called the historical sociology or historical anthropology of knowledge. It is practiced, for instance, by Françoise Waquet (2003) in France, by Martin Mulsow (2007) in Germany and by William Clark (2006) in the USA. All three scholars are concerned in their different ways to link the history of ideas to broader cultural developments that include changes in the media of communication. Their concern with "cultures of knowledge" emphasizes the history of cultural practices such as reading or lecturing, the history of academic rites of passage such as examinations and degree ceremonies, and the history of the material culture of academe, including "little tools of knowledge" such as blackboards and lecterns. We normally associate the world of learning with reading and writing, but all three studies emphasize the survival of oral culture in the university in the age of print in the form of lectures, seminars and *viva voce* examinations.

In short, we find a body of work located on the frontier between intellectual and cultural history (understanding the term "frontier" in Peter Galison's sense as a "trading zone" rather than a line of separation).

Work of this kind makes it apparent (or more exactly, even more apparent than before) that the simple model of ideas "spreading" unchanged from one place to another is as much in need of revision as the simple model of "traditions" being handed down unchanged from one generation to another. The idea of creative "reception", long established in literary studies, is becoming commonplace among cultural and intellectual historians as well. The question whether or when, under what circumstances, a historian may describe ideas that move from one culture to another as "out of place" is currently under debate.

IV

One way to confront this question is to examine the role of translation and the way in which key ideas change in the course of being rendered into other languages. That this can happen even in the case of similar languages, such as English and German, has been neatly demonstrated by Fania Oz-Salzberger (1995) in the case of the Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson and his concept of "civil society", turned into *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*.

However, the demonstration is even clearer, not to say more dramatic, in cases in which European concepts such as liberty or democracy were translated into languages with very different structures and traditions: John Stuart Mill's *Liberty* into Japanese in the nineteenth century, for instance (Howland, 2001), or "democracy" into the Wolof spoken in Senegal (Schaffer, 1998). The "global turn" that Felipe Fernández-Armesto illustrates elsewhere in this issue extends to intellectual and cultural history.

In these cases, of course, the problem of translation is not only linguistic but also cultural. The greater is the distance between the two cultures, between the assumptions of the original author and the new readers, the more difficult is the translator's task. In this context as in others, the anthropologist's metaphor of "cultural translation" becomes an extremely useful concept, drawing attention to the effort and skill and also to the difficult decisions involved in the act of translation.

In my view, one of the ways forward in the near future in the cultural history of ideas is precisely this concern with interlingual translation as a special case of cultural translation (Pallares-Burke, 1996; Burke, 2007a).

Living and working as we do in the age of both a cultural turn and a global turn brings us back to the question of pluralism and polyphony. What we see today is a plurality of approaches to cultural history – if not a "hundred flowers", at least a bunch – linked to a rise of international and interdisciplinary contacts that this conference illustrates in microcosmic form. To speak personally, I find this situation a welcome one, and would, indeed, extend this pluralism from regions and disciplines to periods. In other words, I would suggest that new approaches are better viewed as supplements to rather than as substitutes for old ones. Cultural history, for instance, should not drive out intellectual history, or the study of images drive out the history of texts, or the study of popular texts drive out the study of the canon, such as Cervantes or Shakespeare (though we need also to study when how and why a given canon was constructed). As in the case of cultural encounters, we should recognize the value of interaction, interpenetration and hybridization within our own discipline.

Recibido: 1 de diciembre de 2008
Aceptado: 1 de mayo de 2009

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