

***JASAL* 22.1 (July 2022 General Issue): Introduction**

As we launch *JASAL*'s first general issue of 2022 as new general editors, we greet you from *nipaluna* Hobart at the University of Tasmania where Robert Clarke and his team have been hard at work convening the remarkable conference *Coming to Terms, 30 Years On: the Mabo Legacy in Australian Writing*. It's NAIDOC week, and we pay our respects now as ever to First Nations storytellers, scholars, and leaders past, present, and emerging. This long-overdue conference that is not just about Australian literature, but also *against* Australian literature, has given us much to come to terms with. It has also raised the need not just for words but for action.

This week we've begun a series of important acknowledgments and taken crucially important steps toward decolonising Australian literature and its peak body association. As the peer-reviewed journal of ASAL, *JASAL* also acknowledges that it has important work to do in fostering strong collaborations with First Nations scholars, in elevating First Nations peoples' stories and scholarship, and in standing for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language, and history.

As we humbly step into our roles as new co-editors, we wish to signal our greatest wish that this journal be a respectful and inclusive space that honours the past and makes a way for the future. As we've busily worked to bring into production the number of essays and reviews outgoing editors Ellen Smith and Joseph Cummins loaded into the editorial pipeline, we have front of mind the enormous amount of largely invisible work that has gone on behind the scenes over decades to lend *JASAL* the credibility, status, and longevity it has acquired as journal of the peak body association for Australian literary studies—the largest literary association in Australia.

We acknowledge that without the many outstanding scholars who have supported *JASAL* for decades, none of what this journal stands for would exist. With these acknowledgements, we have been conscious of responsibilities owed not only to the past but also to the future.

And so it is that in this editorial we are delighted to announce our new vision as editors for the next three-year term. In addition to continuing to publish excellent scholarship in all facets of Australian literature and helping new publications from scholars in the field find their readers, from 2022, *JASAL* will seek to introduce three new critical themes: Writing Australian Literature, Worlding Australian Literature, and Teaching Australian Literature.

Writing

Understanding literature as vibrant, alive, and in a constant process of construction and reconstruction, from 2022, *JASAL* will seek to build sustainable connections between Australian literary studies and creative writing. Mindful that creative writing scholars and practitioners are an important and increasingly visible part of our scholarly community, we are delighted to open up *JASAL* to submissions of exegetical essays and non-traditional research outputs. In future, we hope to be able to publish guest-edited sections of original creative writing, including but not limited to fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction, from emerging and established creative writing practitioners and scholars.

Worlding

JASAL is committed to worlding Australian literary studies: to reimagining, challenging, troubling notions of the “national” and the “literary,” while exploring the place of Australian literature within global movements and mobilities. The worlds of Australian literature crucially involve First Nations perspectives and these are part of the worldliness of Australian literature. Moreover, in embracing international scholarship of Australian literature, as well as tracing the transnational lives and stories of Australian writers and their audiences, we continue to do the important work of opening borders and breaking down fences, as a critically important counterpoint to boundary-riding visions of national letters. Within this vision of Australian literature as world literature and of worldly scholarship, we also seek to reconstitute understandings of regional literature. We invite contributions that address how texts, writers, readers, and teachers imagine the relationship between local, regional, and global spaces and histories. In addition, we welcome articles that examine the production, reading, circulation, and reception of Australian writing in all its forms.

Teaching

As the pandemic shifted classrooms online, and as we have become increasingly mindful of the standpoints from which we teach and learn about literature, we can no longer afford to overlook how we read, teach, and disseminate literary knowledge. Teaching is the bread and butter of scholarship, intimately related to research and writing, and a key way that Australian literature reaches audiences. From 2022, *JASAL* will welcome contributions that represent emerging scholarship of teaching and learning Australian literature in all its forms and forums, including the nexus between different domains of education in Australian literary studies as well as articles that address matters of practice, theory, and policy.

These are aspirational statements that indicate works in progress. They reflect work that has already been building in these directions over many years. So, while we articulate this as a new vision and develop these themes going forward, we respectfully acknowledge that many constituent parts of these themes are happening already and are visible both at ASAL conferences, and in this issue.

In this general issue of July 2022, Susan Ash’s “‘Somewhere to Store All Those Memories’: Archive Fever in Simone Lazaroo’s *Lost River: Four Albums*” is a worldly reading that draws on Jacques Derrida’s notions of the archive to demonstrate that memory and remembrance are at the heart of the existential issues explored by the novel. A story of adoption and migrancy, *Lost River: Four Albums* outlines a series of ways its main character is haunted by the spectre of unbelonging. Moreover, Ash reads Lazaroo’s novel as an extended meditation on alternative forms of belonging. In her reading of the dying mother Ruth’s act of salvaging four discarded photo albums to create stories and memories for her daughter Dewi to cherish after her death, Ash illustrates how Lazaroo’s vision of memorialisation reveals how stories can become homes, enacting the kind of “taking care” Heidegger privileges: providing a dwelling space for binding love as a counterforce to annihilation. Here the theme of storying and writing is intimately related to forms of worlding, constituted in the process of making scrapbooks of memory from discarded and salvaged remnants of others’ lives and stories.

In another article focusing on other aspects of literary worlds, Rachel Solomon carefully retraces Henry Handel Richardson’s relationships in London. Diving deeply into the archive, Solomon’s article “Henry Handel Richardson and Olga Roncoroni 1919–24: An

Entanglement” offers a reconsideration of the nature of Richardson’s long-term relationship with Olga Roncoroni. While prevailing characterisations have come to see Richardson as a self-serving and domineering party in an entangled relationship with the significantly younger and vulnerable woman, Solomon’s careful analysis of previously unexamined archival material draws out a more detailed picture of Roncoroni’s mental ill-health and Richardson’s burden of care.

Liz Shek-Noble offers another kind of worlding entirely in her discussion of Alexis Wright’s *The Swan Book* and its extensive depictions of the more-than-human world that includes representations of brolgas, cats, dogs, fish, owls, rats, and snakes and its exploration of their connection to Indigenous cosmology. Shek-Noble suggests that Wright offers this complex multi-species cosmology as a counterpoint to the Western anthropocentrism that Wright critiques, with its interlocking discourses of racism and ableism.

Last but by no means least, Lucas Klik engages in a close reading of Kenneth Cook’s posthumously published *Fear Is the Rider* (2016) as settler colonial critique. While Klik notes that the novel echoes themes of Cook’s best-known novel *Wake In Fright* (1961), he reads Cook’s later writing as much more than a mere Gothic narrative about the outback. Instead, he argues that *Fear Is the Rider* takes up the structure of Australian settler colonialism and anthropomorphises it as an abject monster that cannot be vanquished.

On other matters monstrous: three years into the pandemic, it is clear that few sector managers have let a good crisis go to waste. Australian literature and its scholarship have faced extraordinary challenges through the loss of promising scholars, funding, dedicated positions, support staff, and infrastructure. But this issue, including the many reviews of exciting new work featured in it, demonstrates that the field is resilient. Even as we have faced substantial losses as a result of the departures and retirements of colleagues, this field is full of remarkable and remarkably productive talent. Indeed, one of the wonderful aspects of *JASAL* is the way in which emeritus professors integral to the ASAL community continue to play important roles in peer reviewing articles, reviewing books, and mentoring the next generation within the journal.

We thank our peer reviewers, book reviewers, outgoing editors Ellen Smith and Joseph Cummins, and scholars featured in this issue. We also wish to acknowledge sincerely and most gratefully the hard work of editorial assistants Lianda Burrows, Wayne Bradshaw, Nicole Crowe, and copyeditor Angela Rockel, as well as Roger Osborne and Sue Murray for their help with technical matters during the production of this issue.

If you are reading this and you would like to become part of helping with the production of *JASAL* behind the scenes, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are grateful for a supportive community, now as ever, and as incoming editors we hope to continue the work *JASAL* has always done so well as an integral part of building our scholarly community.

We hope you enjoy this issue; we thank you for your work in reading it and in contributing to it; and we look forward to working with you to bring our 2022–2025 vision for *JASAL* to fruition.

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