

Introduction

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Literary expatriation as a practice, but also topic of curiosity, discussion and scholarly enquiry, is deeply entrenched in Australian cultural life. For well understood historical and geographic reasons, the need for travel is embedded in Australians, and for generations of creative individuals it has been the norm to turn travel from their homeland into long term absence.

But despite the attention lavished on expatriation as a subject in itself, or as an organising principle for literary scholarship, it has proven to be a changing and challenging concept, increasingly exposed to suspicion as to what is normative when it comes to choices about place of residence or nationality. The massive upheavals to transportation and communication across the last century or more have inevitably meant that the concept of expatriation has continually evolved and been rendered more complex and contestable. In the Australian context, the classic literary/cultural expatriate of the post-war years, who shipped his or her prodigious talents to London in order to find a position at the centre of the Anglosphere while simultaneously writing to two worlds in ways that enlightened both, is now seen as simply one manifestation of the impulse, or the need, to shift homelands on either a temporary or permanent basis. As a result, literary scholarship in the twenty-first century needs to continue asking questions about expatriation. How does it manifest at a particular point in time? How do we read works associated with ‘expatriated’ authors when scholarship retains a deep engagement with national frameworks?

The papers in this collection had their origin in two conferences held on the Greek island of Hydra that were organised by the editors with support from the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. These were *Half the Perfect World: Literary Sociability and Expatriation*, held in September 2016; and *Writers, Dreamers, Drifters and the Aegean*, held in September 2018. Both conferences had a particular focus on literary expatriation to Greece and the wider Aegean, but papers were also invited on any aspect of the movement of writers from and to Australia. Hydra was chosen as the location as it was the site of one of the most storied examples of Australian literary expatriation, the near-decade that George Johnston and Charmian Clift spent on the island (1955–1964) during which time they became the centre of an international ‘colony’ of writers and artists.

It was clear in the course of these two conferences that the papers presented were producing not only considered studies of individual cases of expatriation but were also doing the work of critiquing the evolving notion of expatriation, and challenging ‘expatriation’ as a yardstick by which to comprehend the mechanics and value of certain types of literary production. As a result, it was decided that presenters should be invited to submit relevant papers for a ‘special issue’ of *JASAL*. (There were a number of fine papers but some of these were not sufficiently relevant to the national focus of *JASAL*.)

The opening section, ‘Reflections on expatriation,’ brings together personal accounts of literary expatriation from three highly regarded creative writers: poet Andrew Taylor, who was one of the post-war generation who set out for Europe, although in his case the pathway led to Italy and not the UK; novelist Susan Johnson, who reflects on the phenomenon of twentieth century

literary expatriation and her own choices to spend periods living in the Aegean, and raises some of the questions regarding who we do or don't consider to be 'expatriates'; and novelist and diplomat Margaret Barbalet, who asks us to consider the case of Australian diplomatic expatriates and their propensity to produce a very particular form of memoir.

The second section, 'Australians in the Aegean,' references some notable cases of Australian writers who have found themselves—for various reasons—in that part of the world. Anne Pender considers novelists Meghan Delahunt and Susan Johnson, who have both spent considerable periods living in the Greek islands (and elsewhere) and discusses the impact of the Aegean environments on their writing and their conception of what it means to be a non-resident Australian writer. Tanya Dalziell discusses the life and writing of highly decorated Australian humanitarian worker Joice NanKivell Loch, whose autobiographical memoir *A Fringe of Blue* deals with her experience working in the Aegean among a very particular category of non-willing expatriates—refugees. Shilo Previti, Jamie Walters and David Roessel remind us that Charmian Clift's time on Hydra was preceded by a period on another Greek island, Kalymnos. Their paper traces Clift's evolving depictions of Kalymnos through her memoir and fiction, establishing the different ways in which the island is represented in three texts.

Narrowing the Aegean focus under the heading 'Hydra,' Susan Carson continues the discussion of Charmian Clift's work in a paper that argues that a utopian spirit underpins all her writing and reflects her desire to create an authentic authorial voice, which remained consistent irrespective of whether she was writing from Australia or Greece. Paul Genoni compares the very different representations of the island and town of Hydra in the memoirs of two expatriated women writers, Charmian Clift, and Welsh artist and writer Brenda Chamberlain. The stark contrasts between these imaginings of Hydra strongly suggests the extent to which the expatriate experience is internalised as much as it is a life that is simply lived in a changed setting. Helle V. Goldman narrows the focus further to one Hydra house, the mansion of renowned Greek artist Nikos Hadjikyriakos-Ghikas, and the role it played in fostering an expatriate artist community on Hydra—including, in addition to Clift and Johnston, other prominent Australians, notably Sidney and Cynthia Nolan.

Under the heading 'On (not) being Greek' are two papers that address the work of the fascinating Greek-Australian poet, Dimitris Tsaloumos. Both Julian Tompkin and Jena Woodhouse find in Tsaloumos's poetry evidence of the complex impact of expatriation on the emotional and imaginative life of a writer who is separated from the land that made him as he goes through the process of adapting to a very different world and acquiring a very different language in which to express himself. Tompkin also uses his discussion to consider the case of another poet 'exiled' from Greece—Martin Johnston, the Australian-born but Greek-raised son of George Johnston and Charmian Clift.

The final two papers are collected under the heading 'Internationalised Australian literature,' and consider the complexity of 'expatriation' as an organising principle for a common experience when faced with the realities of lived experience. Catherine Noske invites a reappraisal of Randolph Stow's novel, *The Girl Green as Elderflower*, in a way that turns attention away from his expatriation, and towards an approach that recognises the fluidity in his self-identification and an attempt at creating fiction within a framework of transnationalism. Michael Jacklin discusses the life, career, and poetry of Silvia Cuevas-Morales, born in Chile; long-term resident in, and citizen of, Australia; now living in Spain; and widely published both Spanish and English. Is there scope, Jacklin asks, for any useful application of the concept of 'expatriate' when faced with such cases?