

‘Literature and Sensation’
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Abstracts

Maria Angel and Anna Gibbs

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On Moving And Being Moved

Mark Hansen (2004) argues that the privilege of literature as a technology of communication lies not in its imitation of the flexibility of technical media, but rather in its relationship with the body. This is apparent in the processes by which we acquire alphabetic literacy (how we learn to read and write) and in the reproduction of writing through processes of inscription, dissemination and reception. Newer media technologies are tapping into this relation of intimacy with increasingly greater speed and accuracy (Kittler, Levy). The conversion of text into language calls not only on the cognitive capacities of writers and readers, nor simply on the sense of sight alone. Rather, it mobilises these capacities along with those of all the other sensory modalities, including affect. Language itself is a supramodal synaesthetic medium, as various theories of metaphor make clear. This view of language makes the literary a privileged site for understanding the implication of the body in writing, as well as the way in which writing organises relations with and between readers through its construction of social imaginaries. Our paper will show in detail why this is the case.

Derek Attridge

University of York, UK

Bad Sex: Beckett And Coetzee

J. M. Coetzee's depictions of the sexual act are among the more peculiar features of his novels, from Eugene Dawn's grim account of sex with his wife in *Dusklands* to Paul Rayment's one-legged encounter with the blind Marianna in *Slow Man*. The writer who probably influenced Coetzee more than any other, Samuel Beckett, also specialized in descriptions of sex that break with all the erotic or pornographic conventions that usually govern such matters. In this talk, I will ask what is going on in these scenes and what they tell us about the connection between

the two writers.

Lindsay Barrett

University of Western Sydney

Patrick White And Voss

Patrick White's Masterwork *Voss* is usually assessed in relation to theological questions of Spirit, the Sacred, and Sacrifice. While not wanting to dismiss the metaphysical themes that quite obviously inform the book, this analysis will be conducted mainly at ground level. In his autobiography, White mentions having conceived the idea for the novel while serving with the Royal Air Force in the North African desert in 1941. Bearing this in mind, this paper will look at the role that day-to-day confrontations with death and destruction (on both a grand and minor scale) played in the gestation of *Voss*. It will also speculate on the manner in which the experience of a relatively brief but intense period of life in the Lybian desert eventually came to be rewritten as a chronicle of personal and social dissolution located in Central Australia.

Brian Boyd

University of Auckland

The Art Of Literature And The Science Of Literature

Literature thrives but literary studies languish and lament. How can an awareness of science – especially of evolutionary and cognitive psychology – return us to the *art* of literature, and what can literature offer science?

I will take as my main example Nabokov's *Lolita*, which caused and still causes a sensation – and a complex range of sensations.

Lachlan Brown

University of Sydney

'Deep Inside The Things Of The World': The Visible And Invisible In Kevin Hart's Poetry

As he reads "God's Grandeur" by Hopkins, and tries to describe what a 'poetry of experience' might look like, Kevin Hart writes:

The poem is a site where many intuitions, not all of them sensible, are gathered, each of them being an *intus legere*, a reading inside things, a discernment of original form and pattern not apparent before our gaze is converted from a concern with the positive and superficial.

Within Hart's reading of Hopkins, one can determine the major themes that can be traced throughout Hart's own work. Most tellingly this is a poetics where the

sensual apprehension of the visible is important, and yet it is always linked to something invisible that eludes conception. For Hart, this relationship between the visible and the invisible takes place in the poetry of experience (or counter-experience). This paper attempts to trace this relationship throughout Hart's work, in particular noting the philosophical background that offers much to any reading of Hart's poems. In this way Hart's poems "The Ten Thousand Things" and "The Real World" will be read with Blanchot's *Outside* and Rilke's *Weltinnenraum* ('world's inner space') in mind. For Blanchot and Rilke it is the deeper interior of things given to the senses that can somehow open up new realms. Similarly the poem "Approaching Sleep" can be read as liminal space between the visible and invisible, particularly in terms of Hegel's real and natural consciousness. Finally, Jean-Luc Marion's notion of the saturated phenomenon leads us to "Facing the Pacific at Night" and the idea that the senses may be overrun in a type of mystical experience, a counter-experience that transcends experiential limits.

Bonny Cassidy

University of Sydney and The Red Room Company

The Music Of Fact: The Australian Poem As Organism

For the twenty-first century, Susan Stewart's *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (2002) recovers a paradigm of writing and reading that drifts away from the dichotomous mode of thought inherent in Plato's *Republic*. Stewart's thesis is based on the definitive role that the senses play in art. "What propels us outward will also transform us," she writes, "and it is only by finding means of making sense impressions intelligible to others that we are able to situate ourselves and our experiences within what is universal." As Stewart points out, this paradigm has long been in existence. We encounter aspects of it in Epicureanism, Objectivist poetry, and the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In Australia, Vincent Buckley has defined poetry's potential for "sensation-exposition" as a "pre-poetic" musicality – a dynamic that exists beyond two-term distinctions between rationality/sensation, word/thing, or ourselves/others. Local exploration of a poetics based around pure sensation has been limited, but Stewart's study provides a way of reading those incidents of positive language in Australian poetry. Focusing on sensation in landscape, we can hear synaesthetic descriptions in the colonial poetry of Charles Harpur and others echoing in the nineteen seventies poetry of Robert Gray and Jennifer Rankin. The works of Gray and Rankin share a project of detachment; Rankin in particular explores our three-dimensional relationship to the poem. How do Australian poetry's encounters with sensation offer a new way of reading that reflects universality? How can they be seen as part of a larger aesthetic shift in our times?

Michele Connolly

Catholic Institute of Sydney

Gospel Of John: A Synaesthetic Encounter With The Spiritual

In the Gospel of John, hearing words enables us to see love. Hearing the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth, enables us to see what no-one has seen, namely the God and Father of Jesus, who is love (John 1:18; 1John 4:8).

For *John*, the Word, something spoken and therefore heard, is that by which the whole world, even light, was made. Indeed, this Word *is* light (John 1:3-4). *John* opens “In the beginning,” echoing the primeval chaos of Genesis 1:1. Thus, within its first four verses, *John* has taken the reader, by sound, from an amorphous “darkness upon the face of the deep” to seeing light itself.

Thus, as we use one sense, we activate another, and that other is stimulated to operate outside its usual competence. Hearing provokes us to see beyond the range of the naked eye. For the willing listener, *John* enables this synaesthesia by asking us to hear and hear again, so as to see with the naked and then with the deeper eye. Johannine irony and imagery, where words must mean more than they initially suggest, achieve this. Jesus, the Word and the Light, is the ultimate metaphor whereby God’s own self will be exegeted (1:18).

The first-century, largely illiterate, Mediterranean audience of *John* was accustomed to ‘seeing’ by hearing. Even for the non-Christian in today’s intensely empirical, literate but perhaps over-literal society, engagement with the Gospel of John is a wonderful means of developing rich vision by listening attentively to the multivalent sounds of the world.

I propose to show from a reading of the first chapter of the Gospel of John (1:1-51) how *John* inducts his hearers into this synaesthetic encounter with the spiritual.

Chris Conti

University of Western Sydney

Adorno On ‘Aesthetic Negativity’

Adorno’s work is a sustained defence of the cognitive and humanizing potential of great art. The cognitive potential of great art, however, lies in its inescapably sensuous media against which the academic sciences have allied themselves. Nominalism – or the convergence of the rationalizing forces of science and capital – systematically attacks the sensuous character of experience: on the one hand, the senses are assaulted by the electronic worlds of the culture industry; on the other hand, the senses are robbed of any cognitive capacity by the positivism of the sciences. Today Cultural Studies, like Socialist Realism before it, prescribes the kind of art-alien lessons one is permitted to draw from aesthetic experience. Adorno’s concept of aesthetic negativity defends the ‘sensational’ moment of art from the depredations of popular culture and the idealizing rationality of the sciences. Explaining exactly how it does so will be the burden of my paper. I will briefly compare Adorno’s understanding of art and aesthetics as a refuge from ‘the withering of experience’ and Husserl’s conviction that philosophy could shelter the horizontal character of experience from the idealizing currents of scientific

explanation. Philosophy can capture the phenomenal essence of experience in Husserl's phenomenology, but only conceptualize the not-wholly-conceptualizable character of sensuous perception in Adorno's dialectics.

Anthony Cordingley

University of Sydney

Université Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle

Beckett's Mudspeak

The narrative voice of Beckett's *How It Is* self-consciously recites that of another in its head, "voice once without quaqu then in me". What is without is mud, the matter of extension, yet the place of the novel's action is properly in the mind. The status, quality and content of the past voice is the preoccupation of the first person "I"; this is, in essence, the issue of the novel. Scholarship has yet to come to terms with this situation, to account for what it represents, how it functions and why Beckett uses it. In approaching these questions, I shall demonstrate how Beckett drew from the knowledge contained in his "Philosophy Notes", held in the archives of Trinity College Dublin, to animate his narrative predicament and fashion a philosophically reflexive and reflective voice, one which is thoroughly implicated in theories of sensation, those most particularly from Antiquity and the Enlightenment.

Sally Cove

University of NSW

A Lack Of Reason, A Loss Of Heart:

Western Europe's Paradoxical Literary Affair With An Emotional East

Since the deconstructionist efforts of the linguistic turn, literary historians have written extensively about modern European culture's devotion to a gendered division of reason and sensation. Tracing the development of this discursive tradition from the pages of texts such as Rousseau's *Emile* or Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, literary historians have argued that the age of Enlightenment, far from establishing a secure basis for sexual equality and civil meritocracy, provided potent and enduring gender tropes and stereotypes. However, in addition to the gendering of reason and sensation the age of Enlightenment also established the cultural precondition for a geographical allotment of these characteristics. From the 18th century onward, West European literature concerning Eastern Europe (especially the Balkans) was written from the superior (progressive) standpoint of the rational subject addressing the emotional object.

Yet in a paradoxical twist to this literary model, these texts also betray a fascination with and attraction to Europe's non-western, non-modern societies; indeed, the representation of Europe's internal "other" reveals a love-hate affair. The

critique of reason's absence in the east is inverted by a body of work indebted to the same process of western cultural mourning evinced by the 19th century romantics: a process that determined the cost to European civilization of the Promethean bargain - a loss of sensation. Thus this history of representation reveals a literary engagement redolent with the usual suspects of rational / emotional binaries - judgement, disparagement, prejudice, self-congratulation, mockery and so on - but reveals also a history of envy, uncertainty and desire in its search for and depiction of those free of the "artifice" and "squalor" of modern European life.

Louise D'Arcens

University of Wollongong

The Round Table And Other Furniture: Sensing The Medieval Past On The Nineteenth-Century Australian Stage

The title of this paper is taken from William Mower Akhurst's 1868 burlesque extravaganza *King Arthur, or, Launcelot the Loose, Gin-Ever the Square, and the Knights of the Round Table and Other Furniture*. This was just one of a surprising number of medieval-themed historical burlesques created by Akhurst and other Australian authors, including Marcus Clarke, for the Melbourne and Sydney stages in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

As examples of popular theatre, historical burlesques were avowedly ephemeral and simplistic. This paper will argue, however, that they are worth revisiting for what they can tell us about the complicated nature of representing the medieval past in popular comedic performance. The complication is located in the tension between the burlesques' ambitious representational form and their relatively facile content. On the one hand, the sophisticated stage machinery of the burlesques, which they borrowed from sensation drama and from the spectacular historical realism of antiquarian theatre, enabled them to exploit the unique power of the stage to present — that is, literally to *make present* — the events and characters of the European past for their Australian audiences, and to give their audiences a sensation of the 'real' Middle Ages. Yet the populist pressures of the genre, especially its reliance on jejune comedy and topical satire, meant that the burlesques' evocations of the medieval past were disrupted by a blithe unconcern with the fact that their subjects were indeed medieval.

This paper will discuss the ways in which audiences were able to experience a sensation of the medieval past in a range of Australian-authored burlesques, pantomimes, harlequinades, and fairy spectacles from this period.. It will consider some of the specific cultural and ideological valencies of the medievalist burlesque in the context of Australian popular theatre. Of particular interest is whether the Australian burlesques' repeatedly irreverent treatment of the English Middle Ages reflects the beginnings of a sense of cultural separation from the land of Arthur, Robin Hood, and Alfred the Great.

Chris Danta

University of New South Wales

Sarah's Laughter: Kafka's Abraham

Kafka is known to have laughed – at times uncontrollably – when he read his work aloud to his Prague coterie. According to Max Brod in his biography of Kafka: “we friends of his laughed quite immoderately when he first let us hear the first chapter of *The Trial*”. What are we to make of Kafka and his friends laughing “quite immoderately” at the fearful earnestness of his work? For Brod, it points to something too easily and often overlooked by critics: Kafka's *joie de vivre*.

“There is a Kafka laughter,” aver Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their influential *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*: “a very joyous laughter, that people usually understand poorly. It is for stupid reasons that people have tried to see a refuge far from life in Kafka's literature, and also an agony, the mark of an impotence and a culpability, the sign of a sad interior tragedy. ... Everything leads to laughter, starting with *The Trial*”. Despite so vehemently affirming the significance of laughter to Kafka's work, Deleuze and Guattari do not develop their thinking any further on this topic.

This paper attempts to substantiate the inchoate claims of Brod and of Deleuze and Guattari that laughter is central to Kafka's work. In it, I utilize the stories of Kafka laughing uncontrollably as he read out his work to argue that laughter is a physical expression of scepticism or a defence. “My laughter is a concrete wall”, says Kafka to Gustav Janouch. By laughing, I claim, we appeal to our own bodies as a basis of doubt. I substantiate this general proposition by examining Kafka's identification with the story of Sarah laughing uncontrollably at God's promise of Isaac in Genesis 18. My claim here is that Kafka finds in the figure of Sarah's laughter not only a most poignant precursor to his own scepticism of the body, but also a basis to retell (in the *Octavo Notebooks*) the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.

Ben Denham

University of Western Sydney

Difficult Sense: The Neuro-Physical Dimensions Of The Act Of Reading

This paper draws from the fields of contemporary art, neuroscience, philosophy and literature to consider the significance of the struggle to make sense in the act of reading. It frames the sense making process of understanding by considering it as part of a larger sensory confound that includes the five senses, balance and proprioception. By thinking of this confound in relation to the struggle to read and make sense we see certain aspects of its functioning that are subsumed when understanding comes easily. The inclusion of recent neurology into this mix allows us to conceive of a neurological pragmatism in which difficulty and struggle are seen as positive elements that develop our capacity to sense/think. Key references for this paper include ideas surrounding neurogenesis and the mirror

neuron system, the writings of Brian Massumi, Deleuze and Guattari and Jorge Luis Borges and Gary Hill's video art.

Angie Dunstan

University of Sydney

Stunner: The Sensation Of Elizabeth Siddal

The sensation sparked by Pre-Raphaelite muse Elizabeth Siddal was not limited to the world of nineteenth century English art. Renowned for her ethereal beauty as the original Pre-Raphaelite "stunner" rather than for her oft-ignored talent as a poet and artist, Siddal has traditionally been represented according to sensations stirred in those who knew her. Such solely sensory depictions of Siddal in biographical writing are visually typified by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's static portrayal of her during their twelve-year relationship and echoed in biographical writing of Rossetti's brother and Siddal's earliest biographer, William Michael. Such objectifying depictions are juxtaposed with a persistent desire of consequent writers to know the "truth" of the woman behind the face of nineteenth century visual art. This desire to comprehend the unattainable "truth" behind Siddal has engendered a remarkable number of texts that appropriate Siddal's life story, and range from criticism and biography to fictive biography and literary plays. This unusual literary legacy of at least thirty texts has included several works of sensational fiction, ranging from overtly dramatic nineteenth century texts through to fictobiographical texts such as the sensational modern woman Violet Hunt's final work, *The Wife of Rossetti*. This paper will analyse elements of these works to reveal how hybrid literary works of fictobiography attempt to resolve the gap in our understanding of the original "stunner"; a woman who ignited a visual sensation and revolutionised notions of beauty as we know it.

Atousa Ebrahimi,

Islamic Azad University, Ghaemshahr Branch, Iran.

A Rose For Emily: A Psychological Thriller

Edgar Allan Poe's essay on the "Unity of the Single Effect", which describes the short story as a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting and which aims to produce a single effect or emotion in the reader, surely provides one of the most important structural bases for the short story in English language literature. Poe believes that the subject matter of art should be the emotions because he reasons that man feels and senses things before he thinks about them.

Sensational stories are thus, naturally, those in which psychological aspects dominate. William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is a conspicuous example of such a story. It describes a "fallen monument" of past tradition that gradually fades away in the face of the "gross" industrial present. Although the author does not make the sensational atmosphere of the story apparent through the use of violence events, for

example, or even through a tense narrative tone, and although he does not convey it directly to the reader until the end, the final sensational scene of the story carries the whole impact to readers in a powerful way.

A Rose for Emily is a multi-perspective story. A perfect mirror of the confrontations between the past and the present, tradition and modernity, the aristocratic and working classes, patriarchal supremacy and female inferiority, the sensational and psychological impacts of all these things are shown as turning a normal woman into an evil woman.

This paper will thus focus on elements in Faulkner's style which help create the sensational and emotional aspects of this story, which is understood to be a psychological thriller.

Anne Edmonds

Heidegger And The Origin Of The Work Of Art

This paper is an exploration of the connections and resonances between science and art, which share a common relation to the philosophy of Plato's Cave. If art interprets the visible world and science charts its unseen workings then the two disciplines would seem completely opposed, yet throughout history art and science have had a complimentary vision and have shared a similar struggle in drawing mental images from language so as to express this vision. Philosophy, with its constitution of concepts can provide opportunities and challenges to 'ordering' the complexity of seeing what is already known and seeing but not being able to see.

"in truth Art lies hidden within nature; whoever can wrest it from her has it"
(Durer, cited in Heidegger 1971, 70).

Durer's reference to truth is an inheritance from Plato's *Theory of Forms*, which includes the ideals of Good Truth and Beauty. Plato argues in Book 11 of *The Republic* that a world lies behind what we experience in the everyday and what we encounter in the world is only a copy, or reflection of the true forms. Plato develops this idea of true forms in the allegory of the prisoners in the cave .

The image of a cave with shackled prisoners, puppeteers and firelight may seem dated and unfamiliar in the twenty-first century but my intention, in exploring this image, is to arrive at the intersection of philosophy and science in drawing parallels between Plato's Cave and the science of the Linear Accelerator. This invisible, high energy, radiant light is artificially created and controlled for medical technology.

Using the *Origin of the Work of Art* by Martin Heidegger, I explore sensations on quite a different level, via an interpretation of the contemporary artwork *Roden Crater* by James Turrell.

Chris Fleming

University of Western Sydney

Hallucinogens, Thought And Writing

When it comes to literature, the notion of 'recreational drugs' becomes something of a misnomer. Here, drugs have been regularly put to work on the author's behalf in the service of creativity. Alternatively, writing itself has sometimes been figured as a kind of drug. This paper will seek to explore, in a somewhat haphazard way, some of the links between drugs – particularly hallucinogens – and literature. In so doing, it hopes to proffer some tentative claims about the relationship between language and thought, between sensation and articulation.

Cassandra Gercken

University of Sydney

The Manufacture And Purpose Of Sensation...The Affective Power Of Christina Stead's Novels

Christina Stead can be seen to combine literary and scientific ideas and methods to manufacture sensations within and between her characters which are able to reach out past their fictional confines and move within the reality of the reader and the reader's society. One only has to look at the original reception of Stead's novels which variously included bans, short print runs and allegations of obscenity to see the sensation that this novelist is able to elicit outside of the fictional or literary realm. By employing a scientific/naturalist prose style and continually presenting conflicting or polarised themes and characters, Stead is able to manufacture physical, emotional and societal sensation.

Stead presents to the reader a carefully considered world where the only thing missing is a decisive narrative voice. Like an objective observer, she introduces us to her characters' world and details their lives and movements, what they do and what they like, yet she makes no ultimate judgements about them: that is left to the reader and this is perhaps one of the reasons why Stead's readers are prey to such a variety of sensations.

This paper aims to explore the ways in which Stead's physical, emotional and societal sensations are manufactured through her use of hybrid literary and naturalist principles. It will further explore the affects that these sensations and her literature have had (and may still be having) on the reader and society.

Suzie Gibson

University of New England

Sensation And Resistance In J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

Literature gives the secret life of sensations a public space for expression and translation. Narrative prose and prose that is anti-narrative converts sensations into ideas, ideas into stories, and stories into memories. Sometimes if the stories are good enough and told well enough, they are returned to the invisible realm of the sensory

and the felt. Memory is fundamental to this process. So is resistance. Resistance introduces a necessary point of limit, or of no return, through which sensations resist, battle, and transform into figures of speech and writing. Language too, the language of poetics is produced and changed on the strength of the felt. The world of sensations gives writing and storytelling passion, fire and form: without it there would be no loving or longing, no anger or violence, no hope or desire.

J.M. Coetzee's fiction is a literature of resistance. Resistance produces drama and drama opens up a vast field of sensations. Through making a close reading of *Disgrace* my paper will track the difficult and complex moments of resistance and sensation that structure and drive this novel. In *Disgrace*, the possibilities and limits of our relationships to others, and to ourselves is dramatised through a complicated entanglement of emotions and responsibilities that are accessed through sensations because they are of the order of the sensory and the felt.

Özlem Görümlü

Dokuz Eylül University, Yzmir, Türkiye

Elif Shafak's *The Saint Of Incipient Insanities*: An Issue Of Identity

Elif Shafak is one of the most prominent Turkish novelists of her generation. Through her cosmopolitan novels, such as *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*, she questions the themes of love, friendship, culture, nationality, exile and belonging.

The Saint of Incipient Insanities concerns Omer, Abed and Piyu who are roommates, and foreigners who have all recently arrived in the United States. Omer from Istanbul, is a Ph. D. student in political science who adapts quickly to his new home, and falls in love with the bisexual, suicidal, intellectual chocolate maker Gail. Gail is American yet feels utterly displaced in her homeland and moves from one obsession to another in an effort to find solid ground. Abed pursues a degree in biotechnology, worries about Omer's unruly ways, his mother's unexpected visit, and stereotypes of Arabs in America; he struggles to maintain a connection with his girlfriend back home in Morocco. Piyu is a Spaniard, who is studying to be a dentist in spite of his fear of sharp objects, and is baffled.

According to an old Islamic narrative there is a tree in heaven that has its roots up in the air. In one of her interviews, Shafak likens her past to that tree. She says, "I do have roots, but my roots are not in one place, neither in the ground nor in the air. I'm connected to different cultures, and that's, I think, part of the reason why I believe it's possible to be multicultural, multilingual and multifaith". This paper aims to study the way in which we witness an author encountering different identities on her way to experiencing the world in *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*.

James Gourley

University of Western Sydney

"Whenever said said said missaid": Beckett's *Worstward Ho* And DeLillo's *The Body Artist*.

I propose a paper focusing on Beckett's *Worstward Ho* and DeLillo's *The Body Artist*. I intend to examine the manner in which these two works, both texts from the latter part of the author's career, utilise a new mobilisation of language and at the same time, investigate language through both the narrative and literary techniques utilised. I will set out to suggest that both *Worstward Ho* and *The Body Artist* are texts which fundamentally question the role and function of language in society, through a rejection of canonical narrative movement, and propose an alternative style of text in which sensation is driven by metalanguage rather than narrative.

The theoretical basis for my analysis will be Gilles Deleuze's essay 'The Exhausted', combined with an analysis of the two texts through the framework of 'the Gothic', specifically as constructed in Eve Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Convention*.

Ultimately, I aim to argue that both *Worstward Ho* and *The Body Artist* are texts which eschew both writers established style, and conventions of literariness, in favour of creating a text based on image, which in turn functions to analyse the manner in which language is integral to texts and the analysis of the literary.

Jennifer Hamilton

University of New South Wales

"In the winter, of course, that amusement would come to an end": Hans Christian Andersen And Temperature In Literature

What is temperature in Literature? How are climatic sensations felt through words? What cultural systems are used and embellished through assigning a descriptive temperature and how does this then generate meaning? How can we think about temperature in terms that are not simply peripheral?

In Hans Christian Andersen's short story *The Snow Queen* there are relationships between hot and cold, pleasant and terrible, and good and evil that operate effortlessly. A reading of the conventional uses and values assigned to temperature in this fairytale enables us to access a structure of tacitly assumed relationships between temperature and other narrative devices that create or produce meaning within the text.

In this paper I will assess the performative taxonomies of temperature that operate in Andersen's story. This might lead to an assessment of how value, in a religious sense, is then assigned to each sensation. In turn, I ask whether there is a correlation between value, affect and temperature and see how these assigned values conjure meaning and assist in the apprehension of a given meaning within the story.

Christopher Kelen

University of Macau, China

Inebriations Of The Tang - Responses In Kind

Drawing on a growing body of collaborative translation, variation and response to Tang (and other classical Chinese) poets, this paper considers relationships between inspiration and alcohol-induced sensation as these are revealed in and through the poetry of Tao Yuanming, Meng Jiao, Li Yu, Xin Qiji and others over a fourth to twelfth century timespan (and further). Attention is paid to certain synaesthetic effects and felicitous confusions of sense and the senses wrought by engagement with brush and bottle.

In Tao Yuanming's drinking poems - pre-dating by several centuries Wang Wei's more famous evocations of bottle, moon and shadow - we find a progenitor for all those poets who have withdrawn from the 'world of dust' to a bucolic solace, drinking vessel generally within reach and rarely further than the 'four treasures' - ink, paper, inkstone and brush. In Tao Yuanming's oeuvre and that of the other poets discussed we witness new landscapes - other worlds - resulting from other states of mind. There are implications here for knowledge and action and for the relationship of poetic/creative work to the processes of 'great nature'. Relationships between social and natural worlds are likewise highlighted by the interval of communion and the promiscuous sensations alcohol affords.

The paper concludes with a critical consideration the ways in which this venerable (if heady) tradition is being pursued in Chinese poetry today and the prospects for a felicitous continuance of same.

Erika Kerruish

Southern Cross University

Aesthetic Experience, Emotional Response And Style

Although eliciting emotional response is not in itself a measure of aesthetic value, emotional response is an integral part of the aesthetic experience. In "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination" Richard Moran argues against the idea that our emotional responses to fictions are quasi-emotions and observes that many emotions, not just our responses to fiction, are responses to unreal and imagined events. He accurately notes that fiction does not elicit emotion through its propositional content but through the manner in which this content is expressed. This position recalls Friedrich Nietzsche's discussions about the style of language in which he also relates the way in which something is expressed to emotional engagement. Both Moran and Nietzsche see the artifice of a work of art, as opposed to its realism, as that which stimulates and enhances emotional engagement. Non-mimetic aspects of language, such as metaphor, figuration, tone and tempo are thought to directly produce feeling. A distinction is made between unobtrusive language ("realist" in Moran's terms and "natural" in Nietzsche's) and obtrusive or overt styles that highlight the non-mimetic aspects of communication. Considering Nietzsche's ideas about style and emotion together with Moran's clarifies the role of style in engaging our emotions in aesthetic experience.

Sue Kossew

University of NSW

“Pip In The Pacific”: Reading And Sensation In Lloyd Jones’s *Mr Pip*

In an increasingly end-directed academic environment where literary scholars are asked to provide proof of the economic and social impacts of their work, it is even more urgent to consider what literature itself can “do”. This paper looks closely at the recent Commonwealth Regional Prize award-winning novel by New Zealand writer Lloyd Jones, *Mr Pip*, and considers its portrayal of the power of the book, particularly in colonial contexts. Set on the island of Bougainville during the blockade by Papua New Guinea in 1991, the novel is narrated by Matilda, a young island girl, whose temporary teacher, the only white man on the island, Mr Watts, reads to her class from *Great Expectations*.

The novel and this paper consider questions such as: How might literary works be read in times of crisis and violent political upheaval? What are the implications of readings and misreadings of canonical English literary texts in a Pacific context? Can literary works have material effects?

Lloyd Jones’s novel provides a useful counterpoint to the current discourse of “usefulness” against which literary scholarship is being measured. It textualizes both the affective aspects of literature – literally, how reading can change lives – and what could be seen as the sensational, in its graphic descriptions of violence. As such, it provides a crucial and timely example of what Derek Attridge has called “the singularity of literature”.

Niven Kumar

Macquarie University

‘Reason’ And ‘Sensation’ In Kafka And Borges

The Coleridgean ideal that sense impressions are valid and pertinent conduits to knowledge and discovery of the world assumes at the very outset two modes of being – the mode of *reason*, via which the reality of the world as we know it is apprehended and understood and acted upon, and the mode of *creation*, through which the powers of imagination and the intensity of emotions access realms that are not ‘real’ but which lie beneath the surface of or hover in the ether above things and which serve as essential complementary or alternative approaches to the understanding of the world. This separation of being implies a disembodiment or fragmentation that cannot be reconciled with the act of writing, which is, as Blanchot would have it, a space into which the writing subject disappears. In such a ‘space of death,’ both the ‘world-as-reason’ and the ‘world-as-sensation,’ the body and the mind, are dismantled, and the resulting residue is an embodiment of absence, from which loci-less voices emerge. This paper will examine this embodied absence by looking at the work of Borges’ labyrinthine ‘post-gaicho’ fiction and Kafka’s maze-

parables and show how the two modes of being become one phenomenological entity of experience.

Alison Lyssa

Macquarie University

Theatre As Agent Of The Heart In Its Struggle Against Annihilation, In Wesley Enoch, *Black Medea*, And Stephen Sewell, *Gates Of Egypt*.

In two recent Australian tragedies, Wesley Enoch's *Black Medea* (2005) and Stephen Sewell's *The Gates of Egypt* (2007), a mother defies the unreality of debased love, and plunges into battle to wrest love from destruction. Although Enoch's Medea, who murders her son to break the trap of her husband's violence, may appear remote from Sewell's Clarice, who begs her kidnapper-torturers to forgive her her sins, both playwrights gift great power to their female protagonist's heart. The heart, theatre's anagrammatic core, constructs a mythic space. By shaping situations where it must face a cruel nihilistic antagonist, the heart frees itself – forces itself – to tear itself open. The heart's actions make visible the hell it is complicit in creating, and the terror it feels at the death it must suffer if it is to re-conceive love as a communion of ancient landscape, self, family, humanity, spirit and earth.

In program notes each playwright pinpoints political concerns. Sewell evokes the “ghost life” of contemporary Australia under a Government that eschews “the moral and legal issues of participating in an invasion of a sovereign nation.” Enoch tackles “domestic violence in our [Indigenous Australian] community.” Medea's husband “is grappling with identity issues, loss of cultural practices and alcoholism.”

This paper arose in heart-shocks I felt watching these plays. Where Euripides' Medea kills her children to punish their father for dishonouring her, Enoch's Medea kills to stop her beloved son becoming his father. In declaring herself to be on a “spiritual journey”, Sewell's Clarice departs radically from his hero, Talbot, in *Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America* (2003), who extols “Reason” as guide to “justice and survival”. This paper asks what a wild heart, rather than an enlightened head, reveals when it fights onstage to free a colonised/terrorised and complicit self.

Paul Magee

University of Canberra

Yielding: The Senses In 20 Contemporary Australian Poets

‘It is the enforced element in the history of our lives.’ I am quoting from Charles Saunders Peirce's 1898 Cambridge Conference Lectures on *Reasoning and the Logic of Things*. Peirce is defining ‘experience.’ On these grounds, he proceeds to define the modality of experience that is observation: ‘It is that which we are

constrained to be conscious of by an occult force residing in an object which we contemplate. The act of observation is the deliberate yielding of ourselves to that *force majeure*. If one detects here a language - 'the deliberate yielding' - redolent of the passions, this should be seen less as a deconstruction of Peirce's semiotically-informed analyses of empirical inquiry, than as an hint to the substratum of pleasure pertaining to such processes. This is not to deny their potential accuracy.

My concern is with the evidence of the senses, as it writes its way into the work of some 20 contemporary Australian poets. In interviews conducted over the course of 2007, I am asking these poets to describe both their research practices and their compositional practices. The aim is produce a monograph on the question of poetry's relation to knowledge, by studying the knowledge processes of poets at the point of production. The thing that intrigues me, from the 6 interviews I have so far conducted (Marcella Pollain, Mark Reid, Jan Owen, Robert Gray, Mal McKimmie, Claire Gaskin), is my subjects' stress on the primacy of objective observation in the production of their compositions. Of course the parallels between poetic and scientific observation have been noted before. Only my subjects have made such comments not so much in relation to the external worlds that form the subject matter of their verse, but rather in relation to the way words, phrases and lines come to them in the process of composition. The verse itself is the external reality to which my subjects describe themselves as yielding. Editing is a later, and quite separate, phenomenon.

In this paper, I will illustrate and also complexify this preliminary finding with quotes from the actual interviews. I will also qualify the relevance of Peirce's discussion of observation, to the sort of observation that occurs in poetic composition. In a Peircean universe, it is 'the logic of things' which impresses itself upon the scientific subject, a logic that subject will then transcribe into the field of knowledge. Whereas a poet's internal senses yield not merely to the names and relations of objects, but also to the voices around them.

William Martin

Charles Darwin University

The Sensible And The Intelligible In Joyce's *Ulysses*

Considering that Joyce lists "interior monologue" as the technique for the Proteus episode of *Ulysses*, it is perhaps surprising that Stephen Dedalus' thoughts continually refer to the shifting forms of appearances in the sensible world. The basic paradox of this episode concerns Joyce's attempt to reduce the particularity of sensible qualities to the universality of intelligible words and concepts. Yet the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible, two terms which are separated by the gulf of abstraction, can be overcome if it is realized that Aristotle uses the metaphor of shining light in the *De Anima* to describe the operations of the mind. When Stephen refers to the transparent medium of visible sensation as the "diaphane" (or privatively as the a-diaphane), this can be interpreted as both the medium of sensation and thought. Yet Stephen's belief in the existence of concrete substance is also questioned by his disbelief in God, whom is according to Berkeley's theory of sensation the active cause of sensations becoming impressed upon the mind (and henceforth the agent that replaces Locke's notion material substance as the cause of sensation). In my view, Proteus can be interpreted as a key text that performatively shifts the ground of sensation from the mind of God to the intentional activity of the modern subject. Furthermore, the material of sensation is situated within a spatio-temporal framework (inherited from Lessing) that orders experience in such a manner that it becomes the raw material for aesthetic creation. In this way, Joyce creates a medium for literary expression that transforms the material of sensation into the linguistic content of an artwork.

David McCooley

Deakin University

Fine Lines: Poetry In Film

Poetry in literary public culture is routinely described as marginal. At the same time, poetry and the figure of the poet are sites of a nostalgic yearning for a discourse that is putatively bardic, premodern and oral. Such a dyadic conception of poetry perhaps explains why poetry is forever, in contemporary public culture, 'making a comeback' in sites such as pubs, work places, classrooms, the bush, and bus stops.

But this model ignores the fact that poetry and the figure of the poet often occupy, and make their 'come backs' in, less-than-marginal spaces. They are, indeed, sensorially visible in scores of mainstream feature films. The representation of poetry and poets in such films are often associated with sensation. For instance, poetry in film commonly represents poetry as a discourse of sensational events, such as death, funerals, weddings, tragedies, love. Poetry in film is also often presented as constituting a special realm of sensation and consciousness, and poets are often

represented as having singular access to this realm. In addition, poets (such as Coleridge and the second Earl of Rochester) are often presented as living 'sensational' lives, occupying a place that is paradoxically both central and marginal to public culture.

This paper will consider the significance of these kinds of representations in contemporary feature films such as *Pandaemonium*, *Sylvia*, *The Hours*, *Dead Man*, and *Libertine*. It will consider how poetry signifies as an alternative form of sensation and consciousness, especially one in opposition to 'official' versions of modernity, identity and desire. The paper will also consider the significance of a mainstream (and 'sensational') medium such as feature film employing a 'marginal', ambiguous medium to evoke, critique, and represent the affective possibilities of art.

Donna McDonald

University of Queensland

The Art Of Being Deaf

In this paper, I will examine how deafness is portrayed in contemporary literature, including autobiographies by deaf writers, and speculate on literature's power (and failure) to influence people's understanding of how deafness can be understood as a sensation capable of providing a casual joy to the deaf person rather than simply involving a grief-laden loss. I will also discuss, as a deaf person, what I have learnt about the sensation of hearing through reading such literature.

Most writers and publishers portray deafness as a melancholy condition, or as a subject of caricature, or as a problem to be understood, overcome or resolved, whereas the deaf person's experience can be quite the opposite. Notable recent portrayals of deafness in literary fiction include Vikram Seth's compelling *An Equal Music* (a contemporary love story in which one of the main protagonists is a concert musician who deals robustly with her hearing loss) and Frances Itani's more melancholic *Deafening* (another love story, this time set during the First World War, in which a young deaf woman's deafness is evoked poignantly with the manifest intention of conveying her 'courage'). Landmark autobiographical writers on this subject include the blind-deaf writer, Helen Keller, perhaps the most famous deaf person of all time (*The World I Live In* and *The Story of My Life*) and deaf South African poet, David Wright (*Deafness: a personal account*).

Stephen McLaren

University of Western Sydney

Making Sense Of *Portrait's* Villanelle

The perceptual and interpretative framing that we have often applied to James Joyce's first novel can lead to the obscuring of certain other of its themes. I explore the "villanelle" scene of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in relation both to the aesthetics of Stephen Dedalus, and to the little-analysed, unrequited love

affair which is literally at its heart. Stephen, in an exposition of his aesthetics, differentiates between the “aesthetic stasis” that is the proper response to an image of beauty, and the sensually inclined Lynch’s physiological response to “the stimulus of a naked statue”, which Stephen dismisses as “simply a reflex action of the nerves”. A closer examination of James Joyce’s account of the compositional process in the scene where Stephen composes a villanelle, confirms his view that the perceptual, “apprehensory” process is central to artistic labour. However, this emphasis on aesthetic stasis, this proscribing of the kinetic feelings excited by “improper art”, is balanced in this scene by the poet’s embracing elements of the sensory, the sensuous and even the uncanny. Indeed, the poet’s compositional process in this scene is related to the “cardiac condition” which, Stephen explains to Lynch, “the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley’s, called the enchantment of the heart”.

Larissa McLean Davies

University of Melbourne

Sensational Stories: Helen Garner And The Failure Of Fiction

Throughout her career, Helen Garner has been associated with sensation. Her first novel *Monkey Grip* (1977) caused outrage amongst some critics who believed that the reworked diary entries of a drug-taking, single mother living in shared-house accommodation did not constitute ‘literature’. *Honour and Other People’s Children* (1980) and *The Children’s Bach* (1984), while less controversial, also prompted some antagonistic responses from those who felt Garner had rescinded the support for second-wave feminism and alternative family structures evident in her first novel. Garner’s willingness to lay out her life to be read continued to create sensation, in different ways, in the 1990s. In 1992, Garner’s screen play *The Last Days of Chez Nous* dramatised her experience of her husband leaving her for her younger sister. At about the same time, Garner became interested in a charge of sexual harassment made against the Master of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne, and the resulting court case. What followed was her most sensational, divisive and notorious work, *The First Stone* (1995).

While Garner’s oeuvre offers the literary critic a variety of examples of ‘sensational’ writing, this paper is primarily concerned with a one work has not been associated with such controversy. In 1992, Garner published *Cosmo Cosmolino*, a triptych that remains her last work of fiction to date. Infused with biblical symbolism and employing decidedly ornate language, *Cosmo Cosmolino* stands out as somewhat of an aberration amongst Garner’s other ‘economic’ and ‘realist’ works. The biblically inspired language and symbolism of *Cosmo Cosmolino* prompted some critics to dismiss it as an innately conservative and unsuccessful fictional experiment. Ever sensitive to criticism, Garner herself has accepted this work as her “clumsiest”, and blamed an over-indulgence in metaphor and an intellectually dominating spouse. In contrast to these views, I will contend that *Cosmo Cosmolino* can be fruitfully read as the culmination of Garner’s exploration of fiction as a vehicle to advance feminist political argument. Drawing of the spatial theories of

Michel Foucault, I will assert that this book can be regarded as 'sensational' because it indicates the limits of second-wave feminist fictions, and thus explains why Garner has chosen to abandon the genre of fiction in her subsequent large scale works.

Kate Mitchell

University of Melbourne

Sensational Knowledge: Reading As Romance In A.S. Byatt's *Possession*

This paper examines the way in which A.S. Byatt uses the trope of Romance to both embody and illustrate the model of historical knowledge projected in her novel *Possession: A Romance*. It argues that the relationship of mutual possession that comes to characterise the Romance between the lovers in her novel becomes a metaphor for the dialogic relationship between an ideal (and idealised) reader and the literary text. The Romance thus becomes the vehicle through which Byatt attempts to re-centre literature as a tool for historical knowledge.

In the dialogic relationship between text and reader, as it is elucidated in the novel, the reader not only possesses the text, in the sense of knowing it and understanding it, but also allows him or herself to become possessed by the text. The text becomes a medium of the past, connecting the reader with the spectre of history. Driven, primarily, by desire, not by intellectual knowledge or cognitive understanding, this model of knowledge, this connection with the past, relies upon emotional and sensate knowledge, not simply rational knowledge. Romance becomes a vehicle for the illustration and explication of this mode of knowledge in the novel's form and content. *Possession* initially installs the conventional dichotomy between literature and science, and also that between Romance and Realism. It aligns science, intellect, reason and Realism and identifies their conventional opposition to literature, emotion, the sensate and Romance. It then grafts these onto a dialectic of possession so that the ideal reader, who both possesses and is possessed by the text, is influenced by *both* reason and emotion, realism and romance. Or rather, the ideal reader no longer distinguishes between these binaries.

Byatt's use of the Romance genre, with its traditional theme of desire, enables her to establish a metaphor for the relationship between an ideal reader and the text through depicting romantic relationships. Byatt situates her contemporary lovers, Roland and Maud, in an age that no longer believes in love, except as a "suspect ideological construct". The fear of being possessed, of becoming the lover's object, is coupled, for Roland and Maud, with the fear of surrendering to the dictates of Romance as a controlling system. In the course of the novel, the rather impersonal, theoretical brilliance of their scholarship must give way to a more personal, and mutually possessing reading. They must recover the passion they first felt for the texts and lives they study. Equally, their sophisticated understanding of love must give way to a personal investment in each other. They must rethink, or, more precisely, *re-feel* the theoretical position they have adopted as postmodern lovers as well as postmodern scholars. The dialogue of possession between lovers mirrors and elucidates that between the ideal reader and the text.

Thus, the "Romance" of the novel's title refers not only to the love affair between the various pairs of characters, but also serves as a model for historical knowledge that privileges the literary text as a medium for the lost voices of the past, and that requires the conjunction of the rational and more visceral faculties. The central Romance in *Possession*, this paper argues, is that between the text and its ideal reader.

Pam Newton

University of Technology, Sydney

Beyond The "Sensation Novel: Contemporary Crime Literature – Sharing The Sensations Of The Real World

An outrageous scandal, the touch of a lover or the anticipation of dread; sensation is by nature complex, ranging from the external to the intimate. Crime literature is filled with sensation, the physical senses applied to the act of detecting, the emotional senses inflamed by grief, mourning, anger, revenge. Characters are *in extremis*, their relationship with the world one of hyper sensation.

The rise of science had a major impact on this genre. Poe's detective was progenitor to Holmes, Poirot and others, who relied on science and fact to reveal the excess of feeling in the criminal whilst denying it in their own natures. The earliest crime novels were pejoratively labelled *sensation novels*, not only because of the shocking nature of their subjects but for presenting them in modern realistic settings. Ironically some contemporary crime literature, whilst exploiting the realism of science, has created extraordinary characters, such as *Hannibal Lecter* and *Temple Gault*, who are closer to fantasy than realism.

This paper will examine what elevates the best crime literature beyond sensationalism. It will show this is achieved by tethering crime novels in a reality that reflects social, cultural and political events, that links intimate personal crimes to larger ones. This is demonstrated in works such as Peter Temple's *The Broken Shore* and Andrew McGahan's *Last Drinks*, both grounded in reality, containing ordinary sadly believable characters and in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, a literary work displaying the power and limitless possibilities of this genre. Crime literature can be more than just emotional voyeurism; it can immerse the reader in universal human experiences. The ability to create and share subjective moments of experience, *qualia*, is a unique quality of literature. Crime literature creates a space where *qualia* of the deepest emotional intensity can enhance our understanding of what it is to be truly human.

Timothy O'Leary

University of Hong Kong

The Perils Of Experience: Sensation In Joyce's *A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man*

Two conceptual distinctions form the basis for this paper. Firstly, a distinction I extract from Foucault's late work, between experience as, on the one hand, an everyday background to our mode of being in the world, and experience as, on the other hand, a punctual, transformative intervention in the former. The second distinction is the one classically made within German philosophy between experience as *erlebnis* (immediate lived-experience) and as *erfahrung* (an integrated life experience). Taking Joyce's characteristically modern, and Irish, *bildungsroman* as my point of focus I will try to answer two questions. In the first place, to what extent does the distinction I find in Foucault's late work help us to give an adequate account of the transformative potential that occurs within the shift from *erlebnis* to *erfahrung*? Secondly, what can a novel such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, through its representation of the shift from *erlebnis* to *erfahrung*, tell us about the transformative potential in experience? And, more particularly, what does its presentation and enactment of sensation tell us about the relation between sensation and experience – both that of the reader and the protagonist?

Geoff Payne

Macquarie University

Managing Sensation: Incestuous Desire In Joanna Baillie's *De Montfort*

This paper explores how Joanna Baillie manages the impact of a sensational subject (incest) upon a society ill-equipped to discuss the idea and unwilling to recognize it. Through the lens of Baillie's *De Montfort* (1798), it considers the social reception of the idea of incest in Georgian England, exploring the differences that existed amongst the period's legal, literary and religious discourses regarding the subject, all of which served (in various ways) to confound any discussion or recognition of incest as it is understood by our twenty-first century audience. Baillie's *De Montfort* appeared as the final installation of her *Series of Plays: In Which it is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind*. Notionally a tragedy that investigates the operation of repressed hatred, Baillie produces a text that explores the effects of incestuous desire on individuals who can or will not acknowledge its existence, mimicking the social conditions extant in Baillie's world. The paper suggests that Baillie's framing discourse and representational methods successfully suppress the sensational aspects of her subject, generating a work that could dramatise incestuous desire and its effects without provoking the horrified reactions that met other texts that produced more literal representations of incest.

Robert Savage

Monash University

Eroicide Is Painless. Insensation In Les Murray's 'Fredy Neptune'

While the literature of sensation is legion, that of insensation, understood as a total absence of bodily feeling, knows but a single example. "There is quite simply no

other story that could be called "The Man Who Lost His Sense of Touch", Les Murray writes in his afterword to 'Fredy Neptune' (1998), his picaresque verse novel about one man's journey through the age of catastrophe. In this paper, I argue that Fredy's condition is far from unique, his symptoms corresponding instead to the crippling effects of what Murray elsewhere terms "erocide", the concerted destruction of a person's sexual morale. The novel provides a rich phenomenological account of a kind of embodied existence which both draws to an extreme and challenges the dualist model of human self-understanding that informs the prevalent scientific, medical and beauty regimes of Western society.

Natalie Seger

The University of Queensland

Meditations On Sensation: Judith Beveridge's 'From The Palace To The Bodhi Tree'

Exploring sensation is a distinctive way of communicating in the writing of Judith Beveridge. The Sydney poet has, however, spoken with wariness about her own capacity to be 'attached to' the senses in her poetry – to the visual sense in particular, although her writing is also oriented towards the senses of smell and touch and sound. This wariness has a lot to do with a perceived conflict between poetry which is generated by a love of the physical world, and by the sense-impressions with which we encounter it, and the teachings of the Buddha which Beveridge is interested in. How does a poetics that is at once detached from the senses yet alive to our perception of the world come into being?

'From the Palace to the Bodhi Tree' is Beveridge's prize-winning long poem that depicts, from his own perspective, the wanderings and transformations of Siddhattha Gotama that led to his becoming the Buddha. In this paper, I offer a reading of this poem, exploring how it approaches the above conflict. In both 'From the Palace to the Bodhi Tree' and the theories and practices to which it is responding there is another way of looking at the ancient divide between reason and the senses. A 'middle path' that negotiates the two is to observe sense-impression, and sensation, as a focus of meditation. Meditation, as an active aesthetic within the poem, is an aspect of a poetics that engages with the teachings of the Buddha and shows how this poetics relies upon an inquiring awareness of the sensations we experience.

Paul Sheehan

Macquarie University

Murder Most Artful: De Quincey And The Work Of Darkness

For the nineteenth-century aesthete, eager to defy mainstream Victorian values, the 'outsider' status he claims for himself typically involves some form of transgression. Whether through sexual irregularity, a confounding of the distinction

between art and life, or the suspension of political and ethical imperatives, he is resolute in his disavowal of social responsibility. Perhaps most controversial of all, however, is the aestheticist interest in violent crime, especially murder, as a uniquely alluring form of sensation. This position underlies Oscar Wilde's notorious comments, in his essay "Pen, Pencil, and Poison", that certain 'criminals' are outlaw figures who inhabit the same space as artists, who require 'sensation' in order to operate. Murder, then, is seen as a way of gaining access to the world of pure aesthetic experience dreamed of by aesthetes and decadents.

The origin of this claim, and the chief source-text for Wilde's essay, is a piece published by Thomas De Quincey in 1827 entitled "Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts". Deadpan and Swift-like, this blackly comic essay – the first in a series of writings on the subject – addresses the different ways that the aesthetic intercedes in the act of murder. In this paper, I suggest that even though De Quincey's (considerable) influence on the Aesthetic movement is generally seen to lie in his accounts of the otherworldly dream-visions that obtain from eating opium, a parallel case could be made for his more transgressive rhapsodes on art and murder. I examine De Quincey's treatment of the aesthetics of murder in its biblical, historical, philosophical and theatrical aspects, and his arguments concerning the lust for spectacle and elevation of the sublime over the beautiful. Through these claims, I reconsider whether or not *aesthesis* (perception), and the sensation that immediately follows it, actually does indicate the point of conjunction for connoisseurship and crime, aesthetics and murder, art and life.

Emma Simone

Macquarie University

Virginia Woolf And The Sensation Of Being-In-The-World

This paper concentrates on the ways in which the oeuvre of the modernist writer, Virginia Woolf, exhibits a dominant preoccupation with the relationship between the subject and the world. Parallels between the work of Woolf and the philosophy of Martin Heidegger will be explored through notions such as *Being-in-the-world*, *authenticity/inauthenticity*, *Being*, *nothingness*, the *everyday*, and *theyness*. The ways in which such notions lead to an interrogation of Western metaphysical modes of thinking will be emphasised. The focus of this paper is on the ways in which the sensation of what Heidegger terms *Angst*, acts as a catalyst that allows the subject in Woolf's texts to "disclose something essential about man's existence as a whole" (Krell 90). For Woolf, such a sensation is often found within the 'exceptional moment' which contrasts sharply with her understanding of *non-Being*. As Woolf writes, "I feel that I have had a blow; but it is not...simply a blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool [non-being] of daily life – it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances" ("Sketch of the Past" 85). I highlight the ways in which, for both Heidegger and Woolf, art – particularly literature – "opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force" (Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art': 170) and as such, "breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual" (197). A discussion of Freud's treatment of *das Unheimlich* or the *uncanny* will be used as a means of

understanding aspects of both Woolf and Heidegger's treatment of the everyday. I will also discuss Rudolph Otto's notion of the *numinous*, as well as both Plato's *thaumazein* or 'wonder'. John Duns Scotus' (1266–1308) theory of *Haecceity* will be explored in relation not only to Heidegger, but also to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of the *Plane of Consistency*. As George Steiner argues, the sensation of *Angst* "brings *Dasein* face to face with its terrible freedom to be or not to be, to dwell in inauthenticity or strive for self possession" (Heidegger 100).

Hazel Smith

University of Western Sydney.

soundAFFECTs: Transcoding, Writing, New Media, Affect

This paper will argue for the importance of sensation in new media writing. It will focus on the transcoding of a page-based text 'AFFECTions: friendship, communities, bodies' by Anne Brewster and Hazel Smith into a multimedia work *soundAFFECTs* by Anne Brewster, Hazel Smith and Roger Dean which combines word, image and sound. 'AFFECTions' is a fictocritical and multi-genre text about emotion and affect. In *soundAFFECTs* (<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/oct04/content.htm>) sections of 'AFFECTions' are treated in programs written by Roger Dean in the real-time image-processing platform Jitter, and a soundtrack is algorithmically generated from the image of the text. Jitter is interactive and the program can be manipulated in performance so that each version is different.

The paper discusses the way in which the transcoding of the piece changes its affective impact because sensation becomes foregrounded in the multimedia version. It draws on theoretical approaches from the work of cognitive psychologist Keith Oatley concerning emotion, and from the philosophical /cultural theory of Deleuze and Guattari regarding affect and sensation. It argues that *soundAFFECTs* creates an affective environment which is different from the environment created by the print version of the piece. Distinguishing between emotions as coded psychological states and affect as sensation, or a flux of sensations, it suggests that *soundAFFECTs* in performance creates an affective environment which focuses on sensation as much as semantics, and is discontinuous, multi-sensory and immersive. This environment is distinct from that created by, for example, certain types of realist novels which encourage emotional identifications and emotional ups and downs. It is also very different from the environment created by the print version of the piece which oscillates between affect and emotion as defined here.

The paper goes on to suggest that the affective environment created by *soundAFFECTs* can be theorised in two different ways. From a cognitive psychology perspective it can be conceptualised as 'emotional interruption', or the thwarting of emotion expectations, and from a more cultural studies/philosophical perspective as 'affective intensities'.

The paper is illustrated with an excerpt from *soundAFFECTs*.

Ros Smith

University of Newcastle

Dark Places: Intimacy, Horror And The Nation In True Crime Writing.

The international genre of true crime writing has been adapted and reinvented in specific ways in an Australian context, where crime has a particular cultural resonance in rhetorics of nation. The settlement of Australia as a penal colony, the violent and unresolved history of relations between settler and Indigenous cultures, and our national mythmaking surrounding criminal figures highlight the centrality of true crime and its narration to formations of Australian national identity. Chloe Hooper's *A Child's Book of True Crime* recasts the history of colonization in Australia as an "Ur-true-crime-story," where "in volume after volume the bodies pile up" (97), but more typically Australian true crime texts concentrate upon particular events and figures as kinds of cultural flashpoints. Histories of the Kelly gang, the Pyjama Girl, Shark Arm and Azaria Chamberlain cases, biographies of underworld figures such as Neddy Smith and Chopper Read, as well as more ephemeral and local instances of crime, are returned to again and again in different forms and media in contemporary Australian writing. These recent forms are supplemented by a longer history of true crime writing in Australia, from colonial true crime narratives to mid twentieth-century pulp fiction. Yet it is a genre that has received almost no critical attention in any of its Australian forms. This paper begins to explore what constitutes true crime writing in Australia: examining its history, its distinctive generic markers of irresolution, truth claim, intimacy and horror, and the ramifications that this sensational genre might have for current constructions of nation, culture and history.

Russell Smith

Australian National University

Walking ... Stumbling ... Falling ... Lying Down: Beckettian Operations In The Work Of Ugo Rondinone And John Barbour

This paper traces the influence of Samuel Beckett's work on two contemporary artists, Australian John Barbour and Swiss Ugo Rondinone. Both artists acknowledge a debt to Beckett, and in each case I wish to trace the working through, in different media, of a distinctively Beckettian sensory experience. Modelled in part on Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss's taxonomy, in *Formless: A User's Guide*, of the "operations" of George Bataille's notion of *l'informe*, this paper seeks to isolate a similar sequence of "operations" – walking, stumbling, falling, lying down – that, combined and repeated, might be seen as characteristically Beckettian, and to use these operations as a way of tracing the various manifestations of a post-Beckettian aesthetic.

Zeynab Soltanzadeh

Macquarie University

Literature And Sensation: Poetic Sense And Sensibility

Although poetry, most often, is referred to as a language of sheer sensation, the idea of thinking through its light has been also seen as a highly constructive, cultural and philosophical mirror to reflect a hidden truth. The shaping ritual of 'New Nature' poetry, American poetry in particular, the walk, the climb, the trip and the voyage(actions) lending themselves all too effectively to enlightening abstractions. The Abstractions which allow us to see 'who we are' and 'how we can meaningfully advance' to the next stage in our life. Contemporary 'Nature Poetry' or 'Eco-poetry', following some facets of transcendentalism [philosophy] of past, such as, 'A poet is a representative of truth', is an aesthetic resonance of intellectual sensitivity to the current environmental crisis. Hence, raising public consciousness becomes an embodiment. Ecocritically speaking, its literary discourse contributes with a role as vital and sensible an action can trigger by educating a vast spectrum of individual thoughts to speculate about 'spiritual' and 'cultural' reflection within the very environmental disaster. Ultimately, to seek the truth beneath the surface of reality shapes majority of this poetic mode's circular angles.

This paper will attempt to explore the way in which this new literary mode can heighten communal consciousness and be utilized as a significant cultural object through its immanent spiritual and philosophical rhetoric rendered by its language of sense and sensibility. It will further interrogate an emerging possibility, a hope of perpetuating an intellectual action, bringing the century-long debate on environmental crisis into poetry, to answer the question, "How this new poetic mode can impact on contemporary audience who is living through its anxiety-stricken environment and is in need of a liberating transformation in soul and mind?"

Maria Takolander

Deakin University

The Sensational Imagination: Ian Mcewan's *Saturday*

In Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday*, the protagonist, a neurosurgeon named Henry Perowne, and his daughter, a poet and literary scholar named Daisy, have a history of going head-to-head over the purpose and meaning of literature. According to Henry, the notion that 'people can't "live" without stories, is simply not true. He is living proof' (2005: 68). After this reflection, he goes to collect the morning paper. But it isn't only the character of Daisy and the novel's irony that challenge the neurosurgeon's view. A sequence of sensational events – an aeroplane descending in flames above the London skyline, accounts of torture under Saddam Hussein's former regime, a car accident, drug-addiction, a violent break-in – also come into play.

This paper will investigate McEwan's exploration of literary imagination and sensation in *Saturday*, taking into consideration the novel's intertexts – such as Gustave Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*, which similarly engages with literature's effects – and the dialogue McEwan's novel sets up between science and art. The theoretical context will be provided by work in literary, psychoanalytic and cognitive studies. The paper will also be grounded in the revival of interest in literature's power to generate effects and its ties, subsequently, with ethics, which we see in the recent novels of other contemporary novelists, such as J.M. Coetzee.

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Post-Structuralism, Anthropology, Literature: The Sense And Nonsense In Carlos Castaneda.

In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze develops a linguistic theory, that accounts for language as an emergent product of a generative play of sense and nonsense. Deleuze proceeds to ramify the philosophical implications of this position, by demonstrating the differential power not only for linguistics, but more broadly for thought; "what would be the purpose of rising from the domain of truth to the domain of sense, if it were only to find between sense and nonsense a relation analogous to that of the true and the false?" (Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*. pg 79-80). The current proposal would seek to explore this Deleuzian concept to re-evaluate the otherwise problematic work of Carlos Castaneda. Castaneda's work is most infamously known for its rather public debunking - a consequence of the insubstantiated nature of its anthropological research and its general inadherence to verifiable scientific methods. However it is our contention, that through an analysis of sense and nonsense, we will uncover in Castaneda a most profound mythico-scientific figure; a powerful story of the exemplary, rational 'modern man', confronted by an unstoppable becoming (mad/other), which culminates in a most astute encounter with the indiscernible zone from which structuralist anthropology, language, myth and the subject, disappear/emerge. In so doing, we will expose not only the incapacity of the true and the false, of fact and fiction to make account of Castaneda's work, but also the rich production of sense the work undertakes, rendered all the more acutely by its profound engagement with nonsense.

The question of Castaneda's literary status will be conclusively addressed, in accordance with the developed theory of sense. The thrust of this general discussion will attempt to draw out the inherent difficulties of 'factual' categorisation, in light of the inevitable becomings, and interdisciplinary crossings, which make these categories sensible. Finally, some general implications offered by *The Logic of Sense*, for the broader question of Literature, will be discussed as a conclusion.

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The Sense Of Intention And The Sensation Of Meaning In Nabokov's *Despair*

While Nabokov had a strong interest in scientific enquiry, and developed a formidable body of knowledge within that corner of lepidoptry in which he took an interest, he brought his own understanding of the real to it, one which owed as much to his artistic frame of mind as to his close observations of nature and understanding of scientific theory. The particularity of Nabokov's understanding of mimicry in nature allowed him to draw a clear analogy between creation and design in nature and creation and design in art. This in turn, allowed for an understanding

of art as producing an analogue of natural creation rather than a simple representation of nature, imagined worlds which offer in analogue both the sense and the sensation of the real, rather than a conventional depiction of reality.

For Nabokov, as Brian Boyd has shown, the real world is full of patterns of connection, and these patterns link into a woof and weft that not only makes the texture of being, but imbues that being with meaning, a meaning, moreover that is objective and intended. Such a view allows the constructions of fictional worlds which mimic this play of pattern, drawing meaning out of connections which seem hidden and unexpected, but which are able to be verified through close attention to the correspondence of details, a correspondence which announces itself through the sensation of pattern and relation as much as through the intellectual understanding of these links. In turn these details themselves reveal the hand of the one who means, or intends. Sense and intention, on this model, are inseparable: that sense can be drawn at all, that signs emerge and are understood, means that sense has been intended, and in affirming this the work of art does no more than offer an analogue of the real for Nabokov. Here I will examine these ideas in relation Nabokov's *Despair*.

Dimitris Vardoulakis

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Sensing Language, Sensing Literature

Marshall McLuhan's essay on G.K. Chesterton starts with the following assertion: "When it is seen that there two sides to everything, a practical and a mystical, both exciting yet fruitful, then the meaning and effect of Mr. Chesterton can become clear even to those who delight to repeat that he stands on his head." Chesterton posture of standing "on his head" will be examined here with reference to a short story from the early collection *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905), titled "The Noticeable Conduct of Professor Chadd." This is a story about the possibility of language and hence about the possibility of literature itself. Professor Chadd's eccentric conduct desires a witness to see the genesis of language. But this can be understood in two distinct ways: either as the mystical belief in a single origin of language, or as the assertion of a purely communal, iterative foundation of language. The argument will be that the debate will remain in a double bind so long as it is framed merely in terms of 'origin vs reproduction' or 'the mystical vs the practical.' However, a new possibility will emerge when the oppositions are seen as a site which gives rise to notion of sensing as potentiality.

Caroline Webb

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Sensation, Pornography, Guilt: Angela Carter's Seduction Of The Reader In "The Bloody Chamber"

The work of English writer Angela Carter has been much studied for, in particular, its radical treatment of gender and sexuality, notable especially through her revision of traditional European fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979). Much less attention has been paid, however, to the narrative language through which Carter engages her readers. Carter's deployment of highly sensuous, even erotic, language in the first-person narration of the title story implicates the reader in the protagonist's guilt. As respondent, whether male or female, the reader experiences a complex of physical sensations generated by, among other things, the narrator's description of her own body. The guilt the protagonist feels as she finds her sexuality constructed through her husband's representation of her to herself is replicated as the reader experiences a corresponding combination of uneasy eroticism and (self) disgust. Thus Carter interrogates not only the construction of female sexuality by the patriarchal gaze, but, I would argue, the ethical potential of sensory language itself. Her evocation of sensation becomes the means by which readers are not only educated in the power of patriarchal vision and its construction of sexuality, but also required to engage with the moral implications of their own responses. I shall consider the implications of this for current debates in narratology.

Jordan Williams

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Toy Literature And Real Authors

In the essay "Reflections on History and Play" published in *Infancy and History*, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben explores the relationship between play and the sacred. He considers the particular case of the toy and concludes that the toy "makes present and renders tangible human temporality in itself, the pure differential between the 'once' and the 'no longer'". Thus the toy materializes the historicity contained in the objects it 'miniaturizes'. Elsewhere Agamben argues that 'infancy', as the space of the voice before language, is the only space wherein experience resides. Taking these notions of the toy as miniaturized temporality, of infancy as the only space of experience and another argument from Benveniste, that play is related to the sacred, this paper seeks to interrogate popular views of children's literature as somehow inauthentic, as toy literature. Many successful contemporary authors of literary fiction have also written for children, Salman Rushdie, Jeanette Winterson and Tim Winton to name three. Through a critical comparative reading of Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* and her recent novel for children, *Tanglewreck*, their content and stylistic markers of sensory experience will be compared to illustrate that children's literature as literary play/toy is indeed linked to the literary sacred/authentic.

Peter Williams

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Getting Real: Absorption, Coolness And Aesthetic Bliss

In *Culture and Value* Wittgenstein proposes a thought experiment in which he imagines a man who thinks he is unobserved performing some quite simple everyday activity as if in a theatre. He implies that the man is absorbed in the performance of that activity and is therefore unaware, unconscious of being observed. The everyday is then imagined by Wittgenstein as an implicitly absorptive form, a form "more wonderful than anything a playwright could cause to be acted or spoken on stage" and, perhaps, a privileged aesthetic category which underpins his notion of the real itself.

To see something as a work of art is, for Wittgenstein, to see it in another perspective, a perspective that is fundamentally, not just contingently, different to the insensibility of the everyday. Kantian disinterestedness is a part of this perspective, a coolness towards objects and persons that Wittgenstein contrasts with "the insipid snapshots of a piece of scenery which is of interest for the man who took it because he was there himself and experienced something." In the absence of this perspective, perhaps described as the cool heat of imagination, the object is just a fragment of nature like any other, and is reabsorbed by the real.

Modernists' perspective of the real, however, moved from substance to subtlety as the real became more closely associated with complex representations of states of mind and experience. But absorption remained an essential element of that movement, from Wallace Stevens, who urged that we embrace the dark, "Throw away the lights, the definitions, / And say of what you see in the dark / That it is this or that it is that, / But do not use the rotted names" to Nabokov's Hermann Hermann in *Despair* who is solipsistically absorbed in exchanging the cool heat of aesthetics and imagination for the everyday real by shooting Felix between the shoulder blades, precisely the point that Nabokov himself identifies as the site of "the telltale tingle" of "aesthetic bliss."

Kim Wilson

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Living History In Historical Fiction: A Past To Excite The Senses

Historical fiction, because it locates itself in the real, can be especially adroit at simulating an authentic lived experience. Historical reconstruction, or living history, "is the quest for immediacy, the search for a past which is palpably and visibly present" (Samuel, 175). Historical fiction's use of living history satiates the desire to engage in a discourse with the past, a past which is not perceived as "a *thing* or a sterile collection of written texts but rather a cacophony of voices of living beings who preceded us in time" (Elias, 168).

Historical fiction enquires into 'the real' rather than 'the true' (White, 148). Such an investigation involves a testing of the possible rather than the recounting of the verifiable. The author of historical fiction attempts to communicate what it may have been like to live in the focalised time period without burdening the reader with a surfeit of facts and laborious argument. The fictional discourse reconstructs the

past as an authentic and real experience and invites the reader to (i) put faith in the historicity of the story and (ii) place themselves in, and thus claim ownership of, the memory of past reality.

This paper will examine how young adult historical fiction employs living history as a means by which the 20th century reader can access the past and mediate its foreignness. Questions to be considered include: *How can historical fiction be understood as a lived experience? To what extent does the sensation of the vicarious (historical) experience fulfil the subject's desire for the individualisation of cultural heritage? How and to what extent does focalisation sensationalise the past?*