

HERE BE DRAGONS

vol. II *Current*

The Global Studies Magazine

_Culture

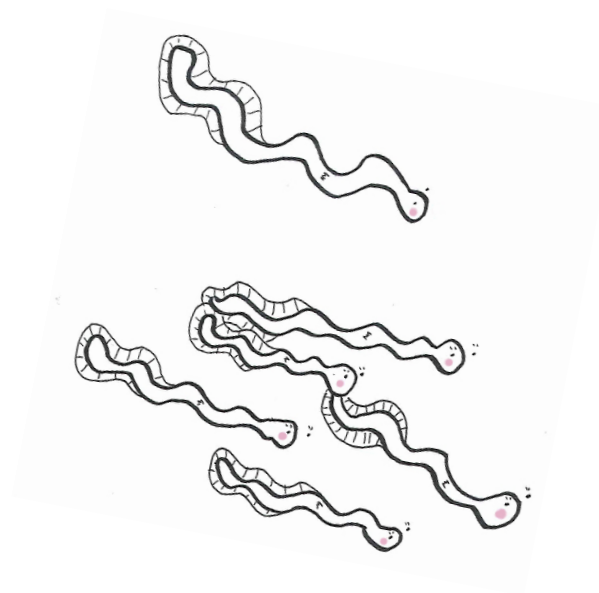
_Commemoration

_Corruption

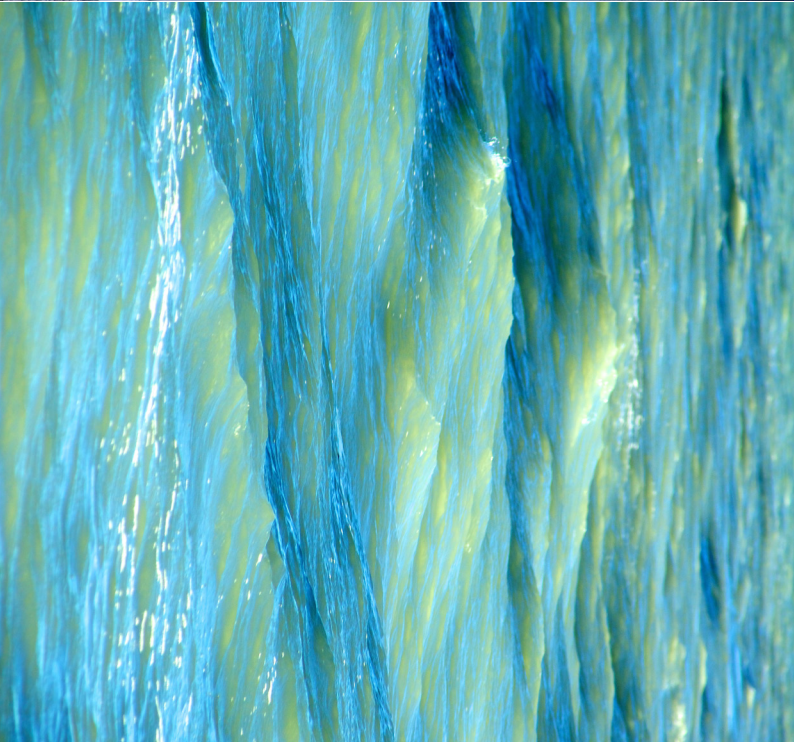
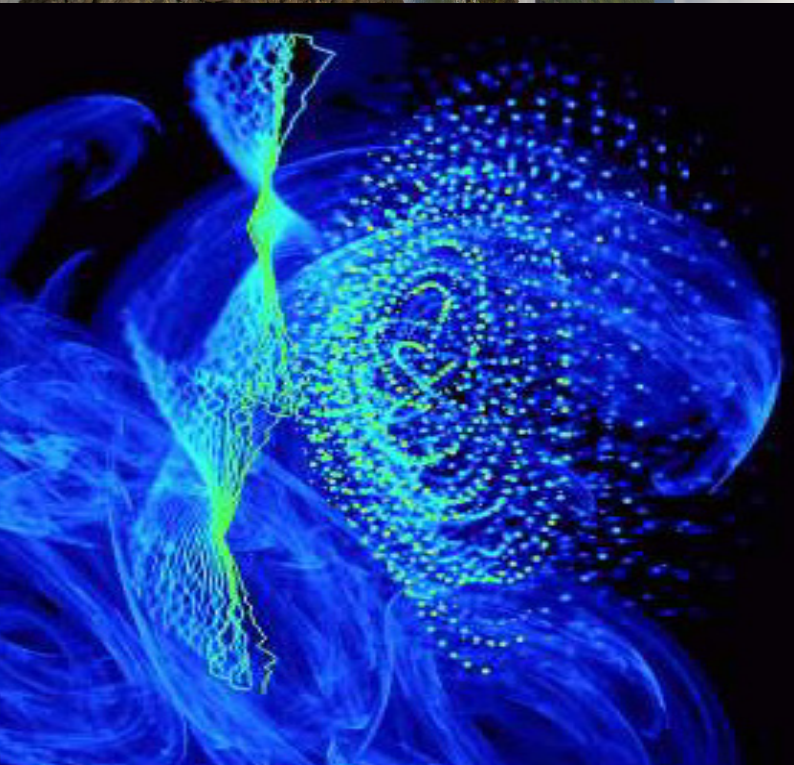
_Clothes

This is the magazine of Global Studies at RMIT University. Global Studies encompasses the staff and students involved in the Bachelor of Arts (International Studies) and its Honours program, the Master of International Development, and PhD research. The contributions to *Here Be Dragons* reflect some of the key interests and values of those involved in Global Studies, including the pursuit of social justice, a globally-informed perspective, and critical reflection.

This is the second edition.



~ #devlyf - Emily Taylor - 4 ~ Drawing culture from a stone - Conor O'Grady - 6
~ Are we beyond fast fashion? - Isabella Andersen - 8 ~ Building corruption in Nigeria - Oluwatobi Foluronso - 10
~ What is development? - Sam Carroll-Bell - 14
~ An interview with an interesting person: Carly Donovan - Ally Gevers - 12 ~ Seeking asylum - Lora Chapman - 19
~ 100 years later in Ireland - Aisling Power - 16 ~ Thinking with eels - Peter Phipps - 22
~ Engaging young & passionate professionals in Central Australia - Georgia Lennon - 20 ~ We Live By - Tom Allen - 24
~ Book review: Metaphors
~ The contributors - 26 ~ Image credits - 28



Here be dragons vol. II_Current

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The editorial committee wishes to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional owners of the land on which RMIT University stands. We respectfully recognise Elders past and present.

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Bree Alexander
Coordinating editor vol. II

A NOTE ON THE PAPERSTOCK

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#devlyf

Emily Taylor

The current in the Mekong River carried with it the livelihood of six nations, and a boat full of young development professionals eating cheese and drinking Angkor beer. Excited to be around like-minded people, we barely noticed where the river was taking us. For the next two weeks we were the leaders of a design summit introducing community development to Australian and New Zealand undergraduate engineering students in Cambodia. Everyone was quietly aware of the irony of well-educated, middle-class westerners chaperoning other well-educated, middle-class westerners around a 'developing' country.

I was there because of my expertise in community engagement. Chosen, apparently, over two hundred other worthy applicants for my specialized skills and experience in the field. Though after a few more Angkor beers, it was revealed that what made me truly stand out from the crowd was my ability to make the recruiter laugh. She was a comedian after hours, so appreciated a good sense of humour. Six years of study and eight years working in community development and it was a carefully placed gag that got me over the line. Cruel world. One week after my arrival the rose coloured glasses had shattered and my positive voice of reason was beginning to sound like a child sadly blowing out candles of hope.

I didn't doubt there were probably people more qualified than me who could be sitting here watching the lights of the Royal Palace bounce along the Mekong River in Phnom Penh. Heck, I had to compete against my friends for the position. I even had to lie when one friend told me he had contacted the organization to follow up and they said they were still in the recruitment process. I had already been told I was successful and that all the positions were filled. I was embarrassed. We were all waiting for our big break. Cruel, cruel world.

Why did I get through, and he didn't? We graduated at the same time with the same degree. It seemed unfair, but this, I have learned, is the life of a Development Practitioner. As you swing from project to project, gradually getting better at grabbing the vines with longer contracts and better working conditions, you become part of the jungle. Everyone is going for the same bananas. Everyone has to eat. It's no good holding grudges or making enemies because you never know who is going to be at the other end of the grant proposal you are writing. It's a dangerously small world.





The life of a Development Practitioner or #devlyfe as it's been coined, is a constant paradox. You jump from air-conditioned rooms and an endless supply of Mentos, to squat toilets with several buckets and limited instructions. Then it's back to rooftops with cocktails laughing about the organ meat you had to pretend to enjoy with your hosts in their bamboo house the night before. It can actually give you

The current gets stronger. Figures get thrown around. One minute you are a volunteer and your value can be calculated by how much it costs to keep you alive. Next thing you know, you are pulled in as an 'international expert' to give more value to something.

motion sickness. It's not necessarily dealing with stark contrasts between the environments you experience from day to day, but rather the speed and ease at which you transfer between them, which makes it hard to process.

For me, this is what 'white privilege' means. The ability to navigate between the most disadvantaged spaces in the world to the most privileged, without being questioned. Unless you question yourself. Which you tend to do on a daily basis – What am I doing here? How am I contributing? Who is benefiting the most from me being here?

The challenge is understanding your position within the wider context of development. You try to figure out how to value yourself, how others should value you, and who sees you as valuable. The current gets stronger.

Figures get thrown around. One minute you are a volunteer and your value can be calculated by how much it costs to keep you alive. Next thing you know, you are pulled in as an 'international expert' to give more value to something. Soon you will be seen as having valuable international experience and you can start putting a price on your services. I literally heard myself say only recently, 'I won't work for less than \$75,000 per annum'. Only a few months earlier I was working for free.

My #devlyfe now moves at a pace I can barely keep up with. The current pushes and pulls me in new directions, with new experiences, meeting new people. It is an exciting life, but one that keeps you questioning. You question yourself, you question what's happening around you. If you have chosen a #devlyfe it's a little bit like taking the red pill. Welcome to the Matrix.

Drawing culture from a stone

Conor O'Grady

I have a necklace that I wear every day, and I get very excited when people ask about it. Hideously embarrassing, but if I'm going to throw it out there I might as well put it in a magazine, and if you're reading this in front of me stop now and walk around the corner before continuing please.

It's a *pounamu* (greenstone) necklace, shaped like a *hei matau* (fish hook), with a curling *koru* (infant silver fern frond) forming the hook. It was given to me by my Aunt the day I became an Australian citizen. The *Ngāi Tahu iwi* (the principle Māori tribe of the South Island) own all the *pounamu* in New Zealand and their approval is required if others are to be granted the legal right to craft it and sell it; so it came to her, and so it came to me.

When I explain all that to you, I'm conscious that the words I used are from a language I do not speak. Despite knowing the listener won't understand, I say them anyway, awkwardly tacking on the English translation. This is because the history behind my necklace and the words used to tell that history are somehow just as important to me as the reason my necklace was gifted to me. To me, they form a big part of the cultural link to 'home'.

But there's a cultural disconnect here - the Māori members of my family are related by marriage, not descent (I blame Celtophilia). So what makes the meaning I ascribe to the *pounamu* around my neck anything more than appropriation of a cultural tradition that was never mine? Do you think we can find a satisfying answer in 800 words? Let's try.

I don't have any ancestral right to Māori language or culture, and I wouldn't lay claim to it. But I grew up having been uprooted aged ten and moved to Australia, and despite the excitement every kid feels moving countries I felt very strongly that I needed to maintain that link to home. New

Zealand, even at a young age, felt at its most vivid to me when it was being described through stories. Most of what I knew New Zealand 'was' I learned in primary school. It was *Maui* pulling the North Island from the depths of the ocean or beating the hell out of the sun. It was *Mauao* being caught by the dawn. It was knowing I am a *Pakeha* - a New Zealander of European extraction - but a New Zealander above all. Growing up with these myths and stories made them far more real and relevant to me than the European ancestry I am fascinated by (my Great-great-granduncle stole a horse!), but would only really learn about as an expatriate teenager.

The New Zealand of my youth didn't begin with the first Western ships, but was instead told through the lives and stories of both Māori and *Pakeha*. It was my Great-great-grandfather that made the trip, and there's a degree of separation there too. It's just hard to feel more historical connection to the English Civil War over the Battle of Gate Pā. My ancestors may well have been involved in the former, but the latter happened literally next door.

So maybe by dint of my ancestors staying in one place for about a century I actually have good cause to say that New Zealand is my place, the stone around my neck is my stone, and the symbols it represents are my symbols too. Right? Yeah, it's not that satisfying an answer for me either. Let's keep trying.

Maybe it's a young people thing? It was not long ago when an operator was punished for greeting callers with 'Kia ora!', when Tame Iti was given detention for speaking Māori. The idea of a unified and accepting New Zealand is scarcely older than me, and it's really a bit of wishful thinking. You might have picked up on the Māori/*Pakeha* delineation leaving non-European or Māori New Zealanders out in the cold, for example. But it is *popular* wishful thinking and that has power. Maybe cultural osmosis happens when people agree to



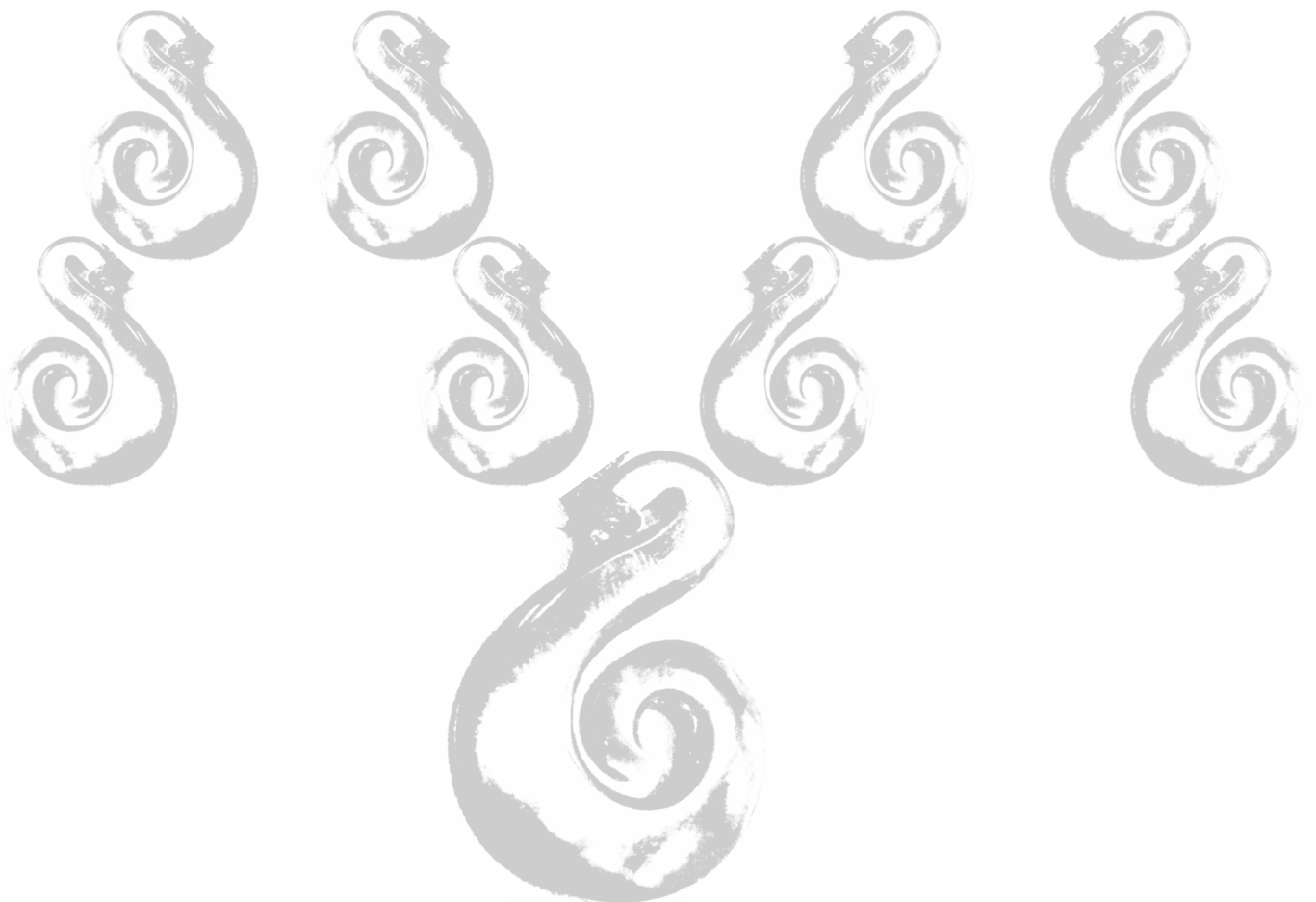
stop questioning it? Maybe.

The world is a smaller place. People don't catch the mail ship out of Auckland harbour for the three-month trip to the 'mother country' anymore. We are not European, and as young *Pakeha* we have to ask ourselves: who are we? Where are we from? What can we fall back on? What is ours? Was it stolen? Can we share it? Is it unfair to even ask that? New Zealand is a unique place, but many countries have indigenous populations and these questions have to be asked. They become even

more pressing when they're asked by traitorous dual citizen expatriates like me.

So, this necklace of mine. Can I wear it? Does it have meaningful cultural significance for me? Or is it just another curio taken without permission in a grand tradition stretching back two centuries?

I have no idea.



Are we beyond fast fashion?

Isabella Andersen

Shopping for clothes can be an overwhelming experience. There is an abundance of products to choose from, and there seem to be new items on the shelves every week. Fast fashion: it's hard to ignore. What is often ignored, or should I say who, is actually the most important part of the production process. I'm talking about the people who make your clothes.

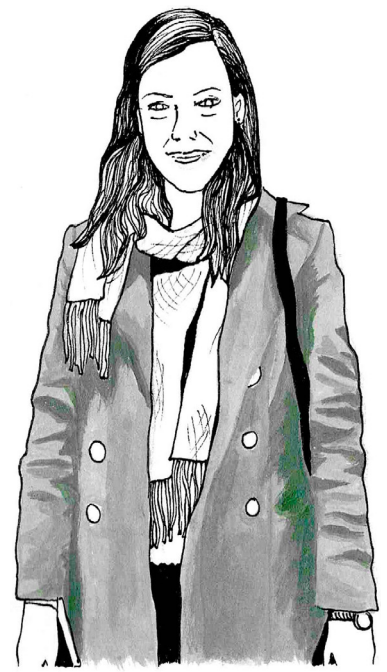
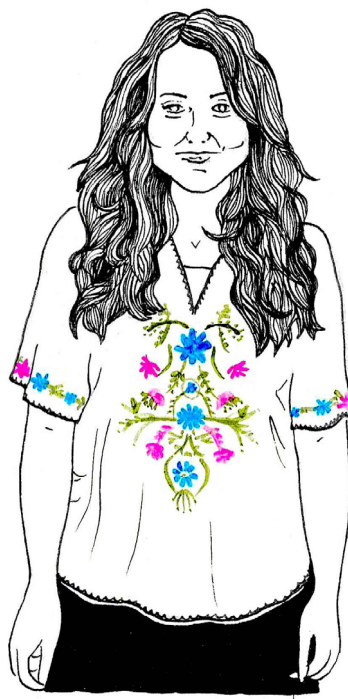
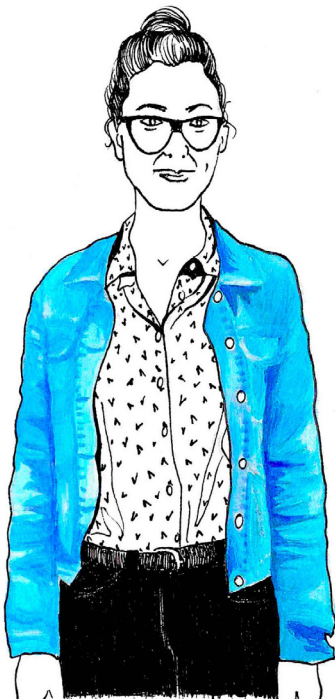
What I would argue is the most exciting social movement, and one that has almost as much teeth as multilateral efforts, is being championed by the individual: the ethical consumer.

There is a new slavery that is undeniable: the disposable person. Kevin Bales is a theorist in the field of forced labour, and claims that labour in global production networks is 'faceless, temporary, highly profitable, legally concealed and completely ruthless' (2012, 143). New slavery is particularly rife in the textile, clothing and footwear industries. Workers are under the ever-present threat of penalty for non-performance, in a situation where their labour is involuntary. They are in a constantly precarious situation in terms of safety and job security.

Due to the globally competitive nature of contemporary production networks, companies feel the pressure of price and supply. Consequently, the risk lands on the least powerful actors – the labourers (Le Baron 2014). These parts of the supply chain are often unregulated and remotely located, to ensure that disposability remains the core attribute of the labour force. Thus, human rights issues most often arise 'given the high levels of outsourcing and subcontracting, licit and illicit, which characterise production networks beyond the first tier of direct suppliers' (Philips & Mieres 2014, 13). It is important to note that this is a very short and simplistic overview of a highly complex, debated issue, which involves the lives of many vulnerable people.

Current strategies to tackle new slavery range from voluntary codes of conduct in business, to lobbying from NGOs, restrictions of imports by state governments, regional efforts, and projects run by the United Nations, World Trade Organisation and the International Labour Organisation. What I would argue is the most exciting social movement, and one that has almost as much teeth as multilateral efforts, is being championed by the individual: the ethical consumer.

Ethical consumerism is arguably running alongside fast fashion, and has the potential to catch up. There is a multitude of anti-sweatshop organisations around the globe that are currently raising awareness of labour exploitation in the textile industry. These include, but are not



limited to, the Clean Clothes Campaign, Fashion Revolution, Project JUST and Eco Age. A multitude of niche ethical brands have erupted from the ethical fashion trend too. Just last May at the 2016 Met Gala, Emma Watson was under the spotlight for participating in the Green Carpet Challenge, an initiative that aims to encourage celebrities to wear socially responsible and environmentally friendly clothing at red carpet events. On her Facebook page, Watson explained her reason for wearing the gown made from recycled plastic bottles and ethically sourced organic cotton.

'It is my intention to repurpose elements of the gown for future use. People can be so trend-oriented – after two or three months there'll be something new and they'll dispose of what they had before. But I think people should value what they own.'

Despite the recent success in the media, it has been argued that ethical fashion NGOs are only partially successful in pushing clothing firms to be more transparent and apply more rigorous social standards in their supply chains (Balsiger 2014).

So what can you and I contribute to the cause? It comes down to quality over quantity. Think about how long a potential purchase will last and how much use you will get out of it. In an interview with the makers of *The True Cost* movie, Livia Firth the creative director of Eco Age, explained her idea of '30 wears'. It's as simple as asking yourself before buying if you will wear the product more than 30 times (The True Cost 2015). This is an incredibly positive, albeit simple way of contributing to the current movement aimed at tackling forced labour in global supply chains.

Not everyone can afford ethically made clothing or footwear, at least for the time being. So instead, buy pieces that will last or that you know you will wear often. Buy clothes from op-shops or vintage specialty stores. Buy less.

You should feel empowered by the clothes you wear and love the pieces you buy. Arguably, fashion should be about creating your own style through particular items that you love and will have for years. So go forth, purge your wardrobe of unnecessary things, and feel more content in the process.

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Ending corruption in Nigeria

Oluwatobi Folorunso

Corruption is entrenched and systemic in Nigeria. This is not said in an effort to disparage the country or its approximately 180 million citizens. It is simply a statement of fact. Nigeria sits in 136th place out of 168 countries surveyed for the ranking of the world's most corrupt countries by Transparency International (2016). Even more glaringly, it scores 26 out of 100 in the Corruption Perceptions Index, where scores range from 0 – highly corrupt to 100 – very clean (Transparency International 2016). While corruption is present in every facet of Nigerian society, it is perhaps the widespread corruption in the political sector, that has had the most damaging impact on the country. It has been estimated that approximately \$US400 billion has been stolen or mismanaged from the country's coffers by the political elite in all three branches of government, the executive, legislative and judiciary, since it gained independence in 1960 (Okoye 2012).

This is \$US400 billion that was allocated to improving schools, infrastructure and other public institutions but was instead diverted into the pockets of individuals, who served in positions ranging from the head of state to the local government chairman. It is \$US400 billion that could have been used to bring a significant portion of the 60 per cent of Nigerians that live on less than a dollar a day out of poverty (The Economist 2016). Instead, it has been used by politicians to buy lavish homes and vehicles in foreign countries. Furthermore, Nigeria's economy which was worth \$513 billion in 2014 could have been 22 per cent bigger if it had a lower level of corruption perhaps on par with countries such as Ghana, Colombia or Malaysia (The Economist 2016).

President Muhammadu Buhari (pictured above), while running for president, campaigned on a platform of ending corruption in the country and swept into office on the votes of Nigerians who'd had enough of the blatant corruption of the political class. In his inaugural address in May 2015, Buhari reiterated his determination to bring it to an end including at the legislative and judicial level (World Bulletin 2015). Anti-corruption bills have gone before the House of Assembly in the year since Buhari was sworn in as the nation's president and high ranking politicians have been questioned and put on trial by the country's anti-fraud and anti-corruption agencies. Although his efforts have been marked by accusations, that he is

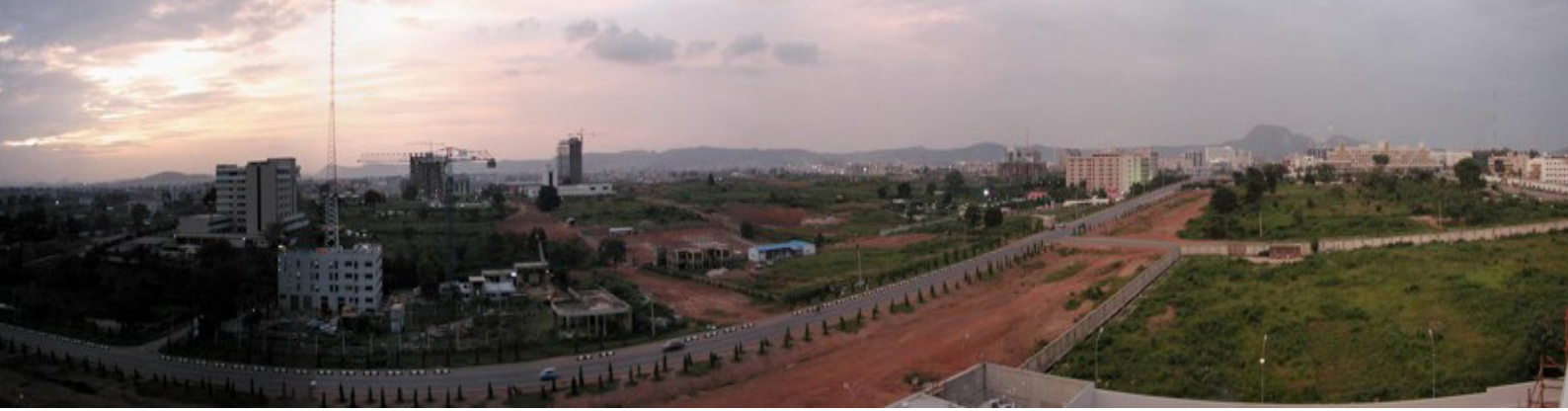


only targeting his political rivals and opponents, the political will Buhari displays in fighting corruption is indispensable to addressing such a persistent issue in the country.

Political will, however, is simply not enough to reduce or remove such a deep-seated practice. There also has to be a consensus on the level of corruption and the threat it poses. In addition to this, a concerted effort needs to be made to ensure that all corrupt persons are persecuted equally regardless of tribal, religious or political affiliation. This however, will be difficult to achieve due to a number of issues ranging from a relaxed attitude to corruption, tribalism and an unabashed glorification of wealth.

In spite of the widespread knowledge of this issue and of the potential and wealth that has been lost due to political corruption in particular, there are some who believe that corruption is not the country's main problem. Some individuals are also of the opinion that corrupt politicians who steal from the nation are justified because any other Nigerian citizen in their place would do the same. Even more disturbing, average citizens routinely state that they also endeavour to run for public office so that they might steal from the government. Basically, there is both an outright denial of the level of corruption in Nigeria and an acceptance and aspiration to it.

While a lack of understanding of how corruption directly contributes to persistent



underdevelopment might explain the denial of the level of corruption and the reason it needs to be immediately addressed, there is another reason why Nigerians might accept corruption and aspire to be corrupt. This is tied in with the glorification of material wealth in the country, where rather than character, intelligence or merit, people are judged by and valued on their wealth, regardless of its source. The average citizen witnesses the ostentatious way the political class display their ill-gotten wealth and not only praises this wealth but the politicians' 'clever' way of getting said wealth.

This is akin to an individual celebrating the new fortune of the thief who robbed him, because of how publicly he spends what he stole. This denial of the level of corruption/acceptance of corruption in Nigeria will hamper any efforts to end corruption in the country, for an issue cannot be addressed when there is no consensus on what the issue is, how bad it is, its impact or why it needs to be addressed.

There is also a tendency for the prosecution of corrupt individuals to be turned into a tribal issue. Instead of focusing on the accusation of corruption, the focus shifts to the tribe of the individual and if this differs from the tribe of his prosecutors or accusers. Rather than discussions relating to the amounts stolen, how they can be recovered and how the guilty party should be punished, they relate to how many people from a certain tribe are being prosecuted and while members of another tribe have escaped prosecution even though 'it is common knowledge that they are the most corrupt in the country'. Thus, prosecution of accused individuals becomes a 'we against them' situation, in which only corrupt public officials win. Therefore, in order for any efforts against corruption to succeed,

Nigerians must fully support the prosecution of corrupt persons regardless of their tribal affiliation. Furthermore, the government and anti-corruption bodies must ensure that they prosecute and bring to trial all corrupt officials regardless of their religion and political affiliations. Ultimately, failure to do so will undermine the fight against corruption in the nation.

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An interview with an interesting person

Carly Donovan

of RMIT's Ngarara Willim Centre

Illustration and interview by Ally Gevers



A: How did you end up doing the Bachelor of Arts (International Studies) (BAIS)?

C: After I finished high school I wasn't really doing anything with my life. I was working full-time in a café and thought to myself, I don't want to be doing this forever. So I saved up all my coins and took off to Europe for seven months. Meeting heaps of people from so many diverse cultures inspired me to want to learn more. When I got home to Melbourne, I went to see the team at

the Ngarara Willim Centre and had a chat to them about my options to study. I did really bad at VCE, so I was advised to enroll in a single subject and see how that goes. To my surprise, I ended up doing really well in that course, so the next year I got into BAIS. I still remember my interview for BAIS. I was interviewed by Robbie Guevara. I look back at that and cringe! I remember telling Robbie that I want to save the world and work at the United Nations. Haha!

A: How did doing BAIS enable you to move on to the work that you're now doing?

C: Throughout the degree I was challenged mainly by presenting my thoughts and ideas to a classroom full of people I didn't know. It made me so nervous, and I was a terrible public speaker. Now it just comes naturally to me. The research project in my final semester was really fantastic for developing my research skills. I think the course encourages a lot of personal development, which is important.

A: What are some of your most memorable moments from your BAIS days?

C: Making awesome friends. I can actually remember meeting my current circle of friends on orientation day.

A: Have you got any pearls of wisdom for current or future students?

C: Put yourself out there and don't hold back. Get involved in as many things as you can because three years goes really fast. Also, make sure you have a good networking game.

A: What is the Ngarara Willim Centre?

C: The NWC is a cultural hub that provides a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We provide academic and cultural support to students, and aim to inspire future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to consider studying at RMIT.

We pride ourselves on the sense of community that we provide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, especially to those who may be living away from their families and communities. We have students from all over Australia, from remote and rural communities to urban cities and towns who relocate to Melbourne to study at RMIT.

We at the Centre have a responsibility to ensure that all of our students are well supported, and many of the students see us as their second family.

A: Why is it needed and important?

C: We are the first peoples of this country, and we have been severely disadvantaged by the effects of European colonization. Still to this day, we are suffering from a significantly lower life expectancy gap and we are constantly playing catch up with the rest of Australia. To succeed in this day and age, we need to look at Western education as a means of continuing the oldest surviving culture. That is not to say that it's one or the other, our culture always comes first – but Western education gives us the power to determine our own futures. The NWC plays an important role in enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to access university education.



What is development?

Reflections and questions from rural Timor-Leste.

Sam Carroll-Bell

It's a cool evening in the village of Lolotoe and I am sitting on a clay floor talking to a young woman as she prepares dinner for her elderly parents, brother and cousin. Located in the mountainous terrains of Timor-Leste's western districts, Lolotoe has just endured several days of heavy rain. As my host moves back and forth from the stone campfire ring, I ask her what she is cooking. 'It doesn't really have a name', she says, 'it is simply vegetables and rice'. 'We eat simply', she explains, 'in Lolotoe, most of us eat very simply'. As she sprinkles some seasoning over the vegetables I notice that the wax candle she is using to light her way around the kitchen is beginning to drip over her fingers. I ask her if I can help. Taking the candle from her, I do my best to give her the light she needs and we continue to talk.

I ask her what she thinks of the development that has taken place in Lolotoe. To my surprise, she says 'I really don't think too much about the development in Lolotoe. The medical centre is good. So is the School. But most of the development is not for us. Development is for the people who live in Dili'.

Gradually the conversation comes to rest on the topic of development in Lolotoe. Over recent years, the village has seen the construction of a new medical centre as well as the refurbishment of several administrative buildings. Major repairs are also planned for the local school and the nation's electricity grid has just been extended to the village. I ask her what she thinks of the development that has taken place in Lolotoe. To my surprise, she says 'I really don't think too much about the development in Lolotoe. The medical centre is good. So is the School. But most of the development is not for us. Development is for the people who live in Dili'.

Later that night, I find myself thinking on my host's comments. In many ways her thoughts

and words echo a wider critique of the practice of development in Timor-Leste, being that its approach and activities have tended to have far more in common with the understandings and practices found elsewhere in the world (among others see Chopra 2000, Cummins 2015, Grenfell 2012). As a result, there are those who feel that the development 'process' is both disconnected and disassociated from the way that life is both lived and understood in Timor-Leste (CDA 2008, McGregor 2007, Peake 2013, Richmond and Franks 2009, Neves 2006).

Reflecting further on these thoughts, I find myself transported back to an experience I had only one day earlier in the neighbouring village of Dilai. There, together with my RMIT colleagues, I was invited to meet and share a meal with several of the village elders, including their spiritual leader or *Liana'in*, inside a sacred house known as an *Uma Lulik*. It was a rare and altogether unexpected experience, after all, outsiders or *malai* are not normally granted access to such places. Inside the *Uma Lulik*, we were invited to engage the elders in conversation and to ask questions on the significance of the building, the sacred objects housed within, and the extent to which local or 'customary' systems and beliefs, such as *Lisan* and *Lulik*, continue to shape day-to-day life and inform people's priorities. *Lisan* can be broadly defined as a legal-ethical system operating in recognition of 'still-sentient ancestors' (Cummins 2010, xii) while *Lulik* is best understood as the attribution of a living soul to, and preservation of, sacred animals, objects, plants and other natural phenomena (Trindade and Castro 2007, 19–21). Far from being just a building, I learnt that the *Uma Lulik* draws together familial lines and networks, and asserts an ancestral, spiritual and mythical connection to the land on which it is situated. It is therefore an integral element to East-Timorese concepts of life, order and knowing the world.

As the plates were cleared away the Dilai elders told us that they were building a new *Uma Lulik* and invited us to take a tour. As the elders showed us around the new structure, our attention was drawn to the modern materials that were being used throughout, such as freeze blocks and concrete. In explaining the use of such materials, the elders once again emphasised the importance of the *Uma Lulik* to the community and to their

way of life. The continued cultural relevance of this building had therefore led the community to consider materials that would enhance its longevity even though these materials were more expensive and financial resources scarce. It was a powerful and thought provoking experience.



The *Uma Lulik* draws together familial lines and networks, and asserts an ancestral, spiritual and mythical connection to the land on which it is situated.

Later I would learn that this was far from a one off. During the Indonesian occupation and the 1999 Indonesian withdrawal, dozens of *Uma Luliks* across the island were destroyed. In the years following Timor-Leste's independence, many of those *Uma Luliks* have been rebuilt. For some, this process of reconstruction has been interpreted as 'a message from the Timorese that, they want to keep their cultural values alive and respected in contemporary settings' (Trindade 2012).

Back in Lolotoe, and now much later in the evening, I again find myself thinking on all that I have seen and heard over the last couple of days. A number of questions come to mind, in particular; what might international development workers and donors make of the activities being undertaken in Dilai? Would these activities be interpreted as development? And what might the answers to these questions tell us about the practice of development itself?

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100 years later in Ireland



Aisling Power

The name Aisling Power isn't very common in Australia. My parents were going to go for Isabel – that would have been a breeze! Over the years, I have heard some horrific pronunciations of my name, and am usually referred to as Ashley or Ash. My name, however, is synonymous with a beautiful nation-state in north-western Europe – The Republic of Ireland. This year marks the 100th anniversary of one of the most important events in Ireland's history – The Easter Rising.

On the Easter Weekend of 1916, the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizens Army stormed public and government buildings in central Dublin after their declaration on an independent, sovereign Irish state (Mulqueen 2015). This commenced the start of the contemporary battle for a self-determined Ireland, which had been under British rule since the twelfth century. Under the leadership of Padraig Pearse, the leaders of the rebellion desired an independent Ireland, with a defined Gaelic culture and language (Murname & White 2016).

In recent years, the international community has been commemorating the anniversaries of various historical events. In 2014, I attended a study tour to Bosnia and Herzegovina which focused on post-conflict society and the development of a post-war national identity. I completed an article for *JOM Magazine* which illustrated the inability of the international community to intervene during the Bosnian War, as mandated by their 'responsibility to protect' (Power 2014). The genocide in Bosnia represented the dissolution of international values and egalitarianism in the region.

These values were omnipresent in the nationalist Proclamation produced by the leaders of the Easter Rising. Nailed to the General Post Office (GPO) in central Dublin, this 'quasi' constitution of the new Republic promised a society based on largely cosmopolitan and cross-cultural ideals, promising equality regardless of nationality or religious affiliation. These same values were prevalent in the former Yugoslavia, but disappeared when nation-states declared their independence. Authoritarian leaders asserted ethnonationalist values that eradicated any sense of social cohesion or cross-cultural understanding. The 1916 Proclamation projected the values we all desire. It illustrates the ability of individuals to imagine something better. In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it represents what could have been.

I travelled to Ireland in February this year, where remnants of the rebellion are inescapable. I spent most of my time in County Waterford in south-eastern Ireland, where both my parents were born and raised. My mother's house was on Plunkett Rd, named after Joseph Plunkett, one of the leaders of the rebellion. Plunkett was an Irish nationalist and established poet who sought to reinvigorate Celtic culture and the prevalence of the Gaelic language. He famously married his fiancé, Grace Gifford, the night before his execution.

The visibility of the Irish tricolour throughout the nation's capital is really striking when one goes to Dublin. The green, white and gold of the flag is now present at almost every sporting event in the world, but a few contentious sporting decisions have stymied the vocal Irish presence in recent years. This passion to be Irish is exactly what the leaders of the rebellion envisaged – individuals engaging

with each other to support a common goal, a popular ideal in a free environment – the success of the Republic of Ireland. This is what needed to occur in Bosnia. The break-up of Yugoslavia represented a missed opportunity for individuals of varying ethnicities, nationalities and religions to reinforce the socially progressive society established in the aftermath of WW2 (Office of the Historian 2010). While the Balkans were no longer a coalition of states, their shared history and culture could have facilitated a new era for Eastern European cooperation.

2016 marked an important opportunity for Ireland to celebrate its prolonged journey to become a legitimate, sovereign state. Triumphant celebrations were organised by the Irish Parliament, *Dáil Éireann*, to commemorate the individuals who fought against the ruling British following their declaration of an Irish Republic. When one walks up O'Connell St, where the GPO is situated, it's incredible to think this was the battleground of the rebellion 100 years ago. This building was the headquarters of the *Irish Volunteers* during the rebellion. The GPO remains one of the most iconic landmarks in central Dublin, having been wonderfully restored by the former Irish Free State. The reading of the Proclamation at the GPO has been memorialized on the walls of the building. It remembers those who 'asserted in arms Ireland's right to freedom' (Pearse 1916).



Excerpt from the national anthem of the Republic of Ireland:

*Ba bhuachach ár sinsir romhainn,
Ag lámhach go tréan fé'n sár-bhrat séin
Tá thuas sa ghaoith go seolta*

Our fathers fought before us,
And conquered 'neath the same old flag
That's proudly floating o'er us.

(Kearney 1907)

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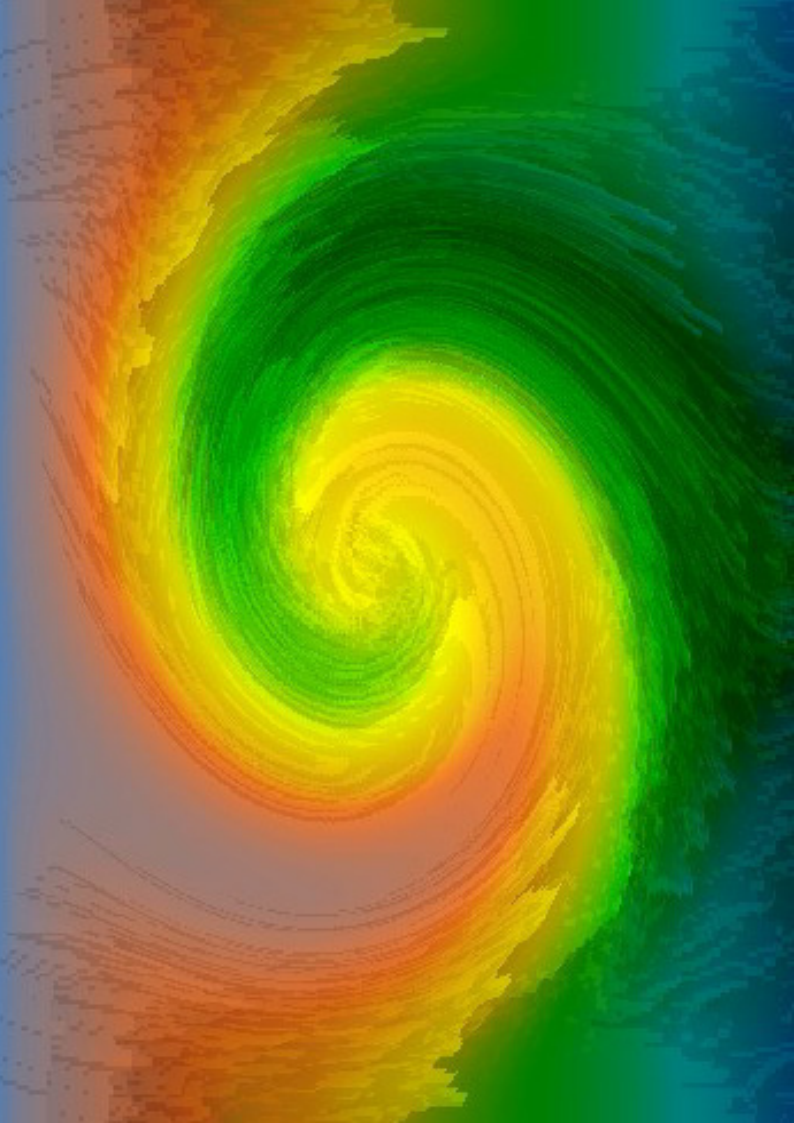
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Seeking asylum

Lora Chapman

Our great southern land bears a strange fruit upon its trees.
Fruit ripened by the blood of those who fall upon our shores seeking asylum.

My dreams are coveted by black and white images that I had once
looked at in horror, as Billie Holiday's raspy voice echoed in my ears.
Photographs of beaming white men, pointing up towards battered black
bodies hanging like stars in the sky.

In my sleep these images return to me, replacing the sinking boats and
barb wire camps that saturate my television set.
Blood drips down green leaves as bodies swing in the still tropic air.
The decorated feet of women sway gingerly across the pitch-black night
as the creaking of bloodied branches echoes through my nightmares.
As do meek cries that turn to gasps in the harsh night air.
These noises call to me, reminding me there is no room on this land.
They ask us to love those who look the same, and shun those who do not.

The cries of babies disappear before they reach our ears.
They are quietened by the stories we are told, alongside the tales of land that
waits to be claimed, land now awaiting redemption.
Instead these cries haunt the women whose arms are left empty as they
hang from trees we cannot see.

Our great southern land bears a strange fruit upon its trees.
Fruit that is bound by crimson thread, stitching lips together instead of
white sheets.

Engaging young and passionate professionals in Central Australia

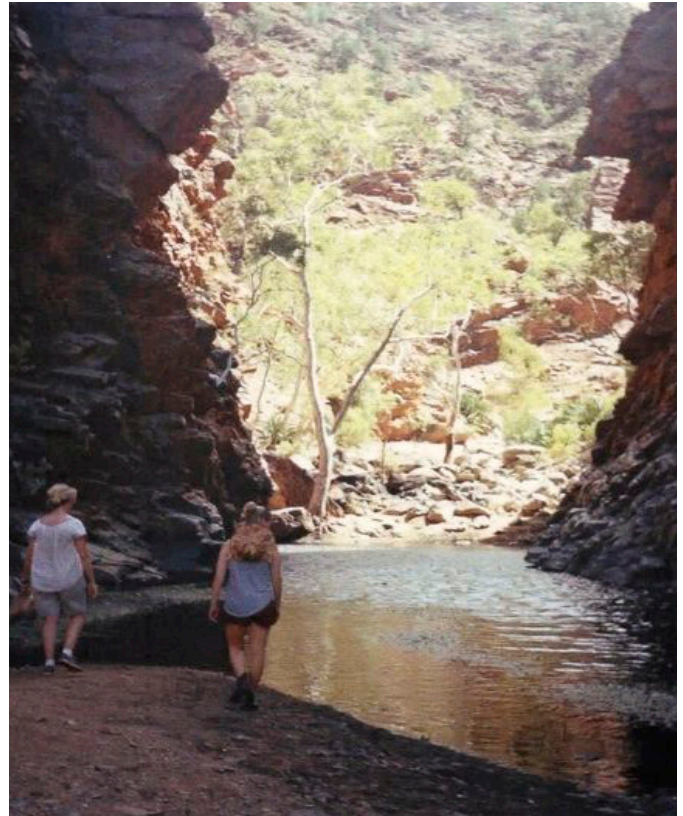
Georgia Lennon

In January of 2016 I left the cold summer of Melbourne behind for two months in forty-degree Alice Springs. As part of the International Studies course at RMIT I was required to undertake a forty-day placement, which is included in the course as part of 'work integrated learning'. I chose to complete this through the Aurora Internship Program. Aurora places students and graduates across the fields of law, anthropology and some social sciences in organizations working in the Indigenous sector nationally. Although my choice to intern in this field within an internationally orientated course was unconventional, my desire to work alongside Aboriginal people in Australia was strong. So I set off to Alice Springs.

Everyone had different motivations for working in this space, and the passion behind their work was ever-inspiring. Alongside the formal work I completed within the office, meeting and working with Aboriginal Community Researchers taught me a tremendous amount.

Arriving there I was surprised by the balance of ease and wonder that I felt with the place. While I had just moved from inner Melbourne, I had spent a lot of time in my youth in small country towns. At first glance Alice Springs felt like any other. I had to remind myself I was in the middle of Australia by sporadically glancing up at the surrounding red ranges. As I investigated the town further I observed the strength of the Aboriginal presence and the subtle partition between the two dominant cultures within the township. I also came to appreciate the strong respect and knowledge afforded to Aboriginal cultures by the many people I met. So many of these people soon became my friends.

I was placed at an organization called Ninti One. Ninti One works out of the Desert Knowledge



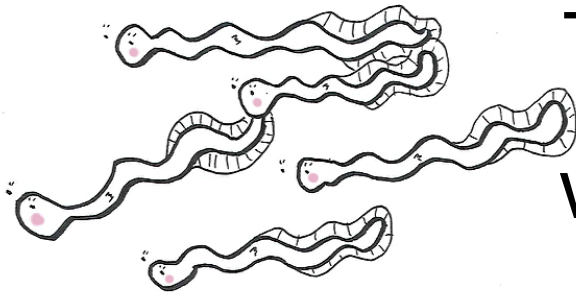
Precinct, a collaborative and innovative space located outside of the Alice Springs township. It sits cohesively amongst solar panels and the unique flora and fauna of the desert. The organization is predominantly research-based and works across a number of fields, such as agriculture, climate change adaptation, Aboriginal wellbeing and community development. The work Ninti One undertakes is unique due to their employment of Aboriginal Community Researchers throughout the communities of the Northern Territory, rather than outsider anthropologists or researchers. My work within the organization largely revolved around their research on the trial of the National Disability Scheme in the APY Lands, the 'Stronger Communities for Children' project, within which Ninti One worked in a support and consultancy role, and research relating to Ninti's Aboriginal Community Researcher network. Over my eight weeks I undertook desktop research, conducted face-to-face interviews, attended and took minutes for teleconferences, and developed visual support material.

In the time I spent at Ninti One I learnt a lot about working within a professional, team-orientated environment. I also had the pleasure of meeting a variety of different people working within the Aboriginal field. Everyone had different motivations for working in this space, and the passion behind their work was ever-inspiring. Alongside the formal work I completed within the office, meeting and working with Aboriginal Community Researchers taught me a tremendous amount. I was lucky enough to be able to take an overnight trip to a community called Atitjere with two Aboriginal Community Researchers. Two days in the heat, chatting to my colleagues and the people of the community could be labelled as token. However, it provided me with an unwavering appreciation of life in community. I was proud of the history of these people, the way they spoke with such love for their Country and their willingness to share their knowledge with me.

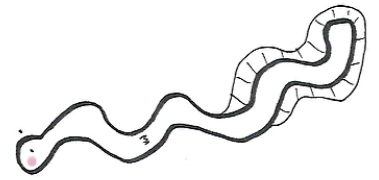
Even though I have come to recognize that regional hubs such as Alice Springs, and the remote communities that are accessed from them require innovative professionals with a committed and long-term frame of mind, I would highly recommend the

experience of an internship. I gained a passion and love for the area that will see Alice Springs on the top of my list when I transition from university to the workplace. Without access to an Aurora Internship this may have never been the case. Therefore I was troubled earlier this year when the federal government questioned the future funding of the Aurora Internship Program. Thankfully the program has secured funding for the remainder of 2016, however it is at the hands of the newly elected government to ensure Aurora is able to provide these opportunities into the future. In a time that is being promoted by our Prime Minister as the 'innovation boom' it would be hypocritical to not recognise the need for innovation and passion in the process of working alongside the Aboriginal people of this nation. I hope that anyone who may be interested in working in rural and remote Australia consider applying for such worthwhile programs. If more people show their interest in this way, hopefully the government will see just how willing Australia's young people are to work in the field and continue to fund such programs.





Thinking with eels



Peter Phipps

Each year millions of semi-transparent tiny eels known as elvers travel the warm waters of the Eastern Australian Current made famous by the animated film *Nemo* ('you're surfin' it dude!') These short-finned eels (*anguilla australis*) are migrating from their birthplace deep in the waters of the Coral Sea near New Caledonia to the rivers, streams, lakes and dams of South Eastern Australia. Like other coastal waterways in Victoria, Melbourne's Yarra River (Birrarung - see Bernard Young's piece in first edition of *Here Be Dragons*) and the connected billabongs of the Botanic Gardens are rich in eels, taking decades to mature until they are ready to make the end of life journey thousands of kilometers back to the spawning ground of the Coral Sea.

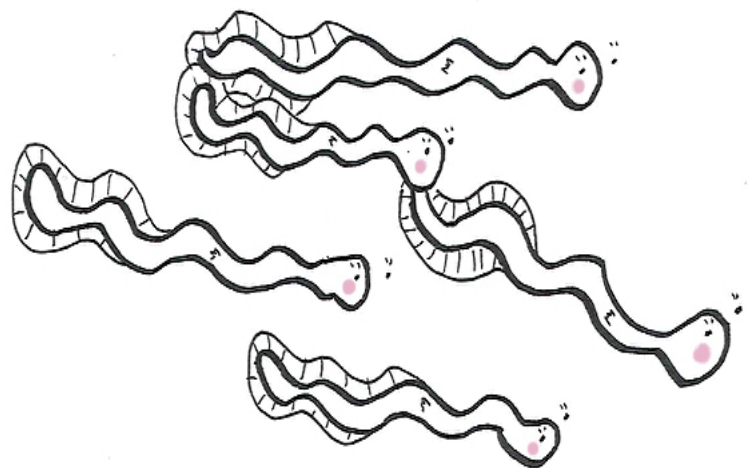
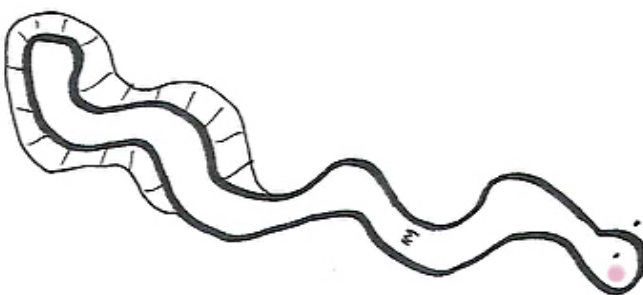
Ideas, like eels, travel global currents and find homes thousands of kilometers from where they may have been spawned. As these ideas mature, new intellectual and practical possibilities emerge.

Once I happened by a pond almost opposite Melbourne's National Gallery being cleaned out, the muddy base writhing with huge eels being hauled out by net for transfer to another pond. By the time the short finned eel is mature and ready

to migrate it can be over a meter long and weigh in at three kilograms. With its incredible life-cycle, largely hidden existence all around us right here in the city and impressive serpentine form, it might just qualify as another candidate (along with Julian Lee's beloved weedy sea dragon also featured in the previous edition) for the title, 'most dragon-like local creature'.

Ideas, like eels, travel global currents and find homes thousands of kilometers from where they may have been spawned. As these ideas mature, new intellectual and practical possibilities emerge. In recent decades critiques of established academic disciplines by peoples previously seen to be the objects of, or marginal to, their study, have been travelling these global currents. These critical thoughts, like little eels, have found a home and matured in various social movements, and in 'new' academic disciplines like women's, postcolonial, and Indigenous studies. They have returned to challenge the established methods and truth claims in the 'old' disciplines like anthropology, history, philosophy and others.

In history, for example, this meant a conceptual expansion of the discipline to include the experiences of more than half the population previously ignored by its orbit. Women and marginalized minority groups insisted on their place as legitimate agents of history. This required profound methodological innovations that read the existing historical archive more closely and critically, 'against the grain' of the social system that produced them. It has also led to a reevaluation of the largely oral and performative knowledge



systems of Indigenous peoples, from 'ancient myth and legend' to living epistemologies which might make a critical contribution to contemporary human development.

In Australia, the implications of these ideas are just beginning to mature, and are being fed back into the global currents at a time of profound ecological and social uncertainty. *Is 'thinking with eels' taking this critical turn too far?* For at least two communities in Western Victoria, they are taking eels very seriously indeed. Their connections to eels and related Indigenous knowledges are becoming crucially important aspects of their local identities and plans for the local economy and environmental management.

Despite a plethora of evidence, Australian archaeologists long remained skeptical that Gunditjmara Aboriginal people at Lake Condah in Western Victoria had permanent dwellings, a sophisticated system of eel aquaculture (eel farming) food preservation and trade. These facts didn't fit dominant Western models of Aboriginal Australians as 'nomadic hunter gatherers' in a racist hierarchy of civilizations.

In the decades since, technical developments in geospatial mapping and remote sensing have transformed archaeological understanding. Simultaneously and more importantly in this case, the conceptual developments in the study of human cultures and history described above have opened radically new perspectives on the world around us. Gunditjmara people used the accumulation of this scholarly evidence (which confirmed and expanded what they already knew) and advocated for the site to be registered on the National Heritage List. In 2004 the place was registered as the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape, and is now being considered for World Heritage nomination as an outstanding cultural landscape of global significance, with engineering works over six thousand years old.

In early April 2016, sixteen students from the International Studies program participated in the Lake Bolac Eel Festival; an event supported by RMIT researcher Yaso Nadarajah, who has worked in the region for many years. Students were immersed

in deep experiential learning about community sustainability, reconciliation and Indigenous epistemologies on Country. This involved activities as apparently unrelated as serving food and drinks to people at the town's art auction to raise festival funds, participation in a cross-cultural ceremony dancing inside a long mobile eel, a spontaneous three hour seminar around the campfire with elder Uncle Ted Lovett, listening to talks rethinking Australian environments and cultures, eating cooked eel, seeing, touching and smelling live eels, weaving baskets and eel traps, and just being by the lake.

So yes, the rumours on the International Studies grapevine are true: students in the Postcolonial Cultural Studies course were advised to 'learn from the eels', and interpretive dance was an 'assessment option'. As it turns out the interpretive dance already happened in the eel ceremony, and basket weaving has emerged as a preferred assessment component. It's surprising where the currents can carry us.

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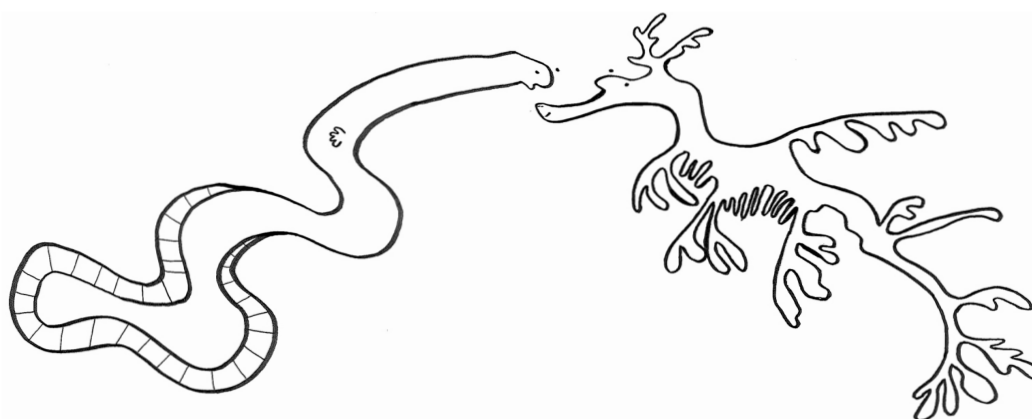
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Book review

Tom Allen

Metaphors We Live By

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson
Chicago, University of Chicago Press,
2008 (1980), 274 pp., ISBN 978-0226468013

There's something immensely satisfying about an unseen, unnoticed, uncritically examined aspect of everyday life being exposed in all its power, reach and consequence. *Metaphors We Live By* offers a heady dose of that feeling as it delves into the daily interactions between language, thought and action via metaphor.

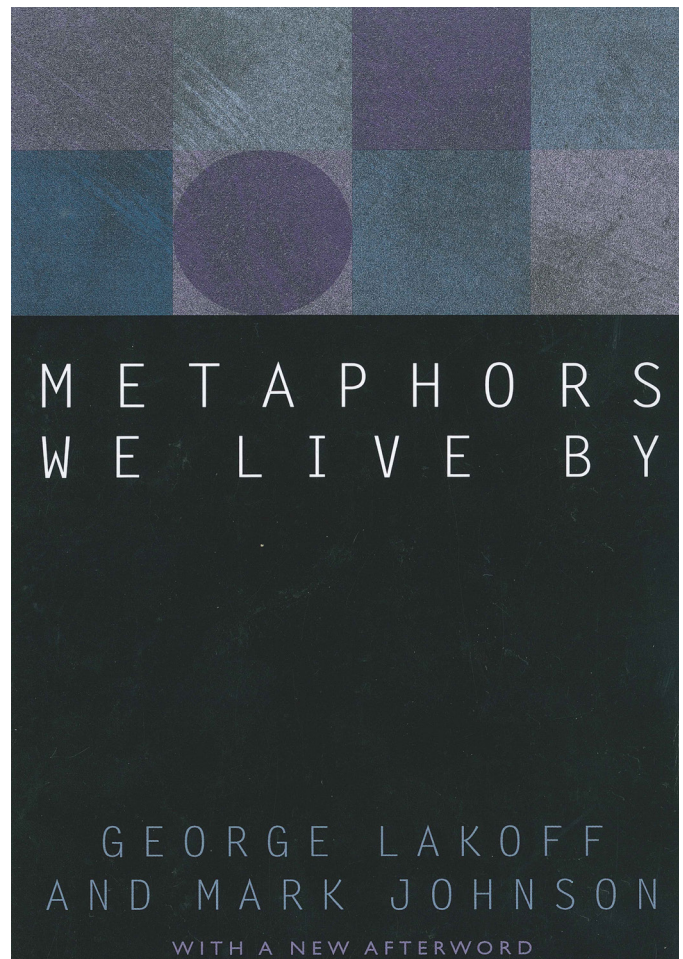
It was hard, I'll admit, not to feel quite satisfied with myself at the time I read most of this book. I was on my honeymoon in Tasmania, consuming $n+1$ bottles of wine, basking in the sunshine on the deck of my partner's relatives' holiday home. At the time I was reflecting on the significance of the wedding ceremony, an event full of imagery and metaphor, some great (the vows) and some perpetuating antiquated ideas we chose to omit (why does only the bride walk down the aisle?) We put a lot of thought into our wedding, and in conversations with people of many different persuasions and beliefs we came to understand that a wedding, in all its metaphorical richness, says a lot about the two people (and possibly the god) at the centre.

The experience of reflection is, at times, uncomfortable – facing up to one's privilege, for instance – but behind it there is more often than not a sense of liberation and empowerment. That sense seems to come from understanding the minutiae of everyday experience and thought not as simply 'the way things are', but as a system to be explored and, maybe, reformed.

Metaphors We Live By is an exposition of a process embedded so deeply within our thought and language that we fail to notice it at all. Its short, punchy chapters (there are 30 within 274 pages) draw you into a world of mundane expressions with extraordinary significance for our lives and relations with one another. Such is the depth of this book that it cannot be summed up in the few words available to me here, and there is a whole body of scholarship it has spawned. However it is well worth a read, and I've found myself citing it in just about everything I've written since.

Written in 1980 (most versions you'll find today will have the 2003 or 2008 afterword) this book is certainly not current. But it represents the beginning of a *current* in philosophy, linguistics and the cognitive sciences that is still only trickling through the rest of the social sciences. This book represents the spring that has, several kilometres down the mountain, produced a torrent, and is well on its way to a broad, lazy river, constant and self-evident.

Lakoff and Johnson start off with a relatively easy to comprehend metaphor: argument as war. You defend an argument, attack one, can rebut and counter-attack; eventually one might surrender, or win. This metaphor carries through the entire book, and its familiarity is comforting as the point contained in each chapter gets ever more complicated. To illustrate, the key point of the first chapter is that when we think of argument as war, *our experiences*, not simply our words, are framed by metaphorical concepts – think about how differently you would act in an argument if you



thought about it as a collaborative treasure hunt. That is not all that mind blowing, but by the fifteenth chapter we arrive at 'the coherent structuring of experience.' The authors posit that an argument is a type of experience called a conversation, and a conversation is an 'experiential gestalt.' *Gestalt* is a German word meaning one whole experience, which is often thought of as a single, irreducible unit, but that actually has component parts (every conversation, to extend the example, has participants, parts, a sequence, and so on).

The latter stages of the book become less interesting to the non-student of cognitive science and linguistics as the authors attempt to anticipate potential attacks on their thesis from other established schools of thought in the field, for most of whom metaphor is of marginal significance. Apparently Chomsky was not impressed.

A final, and extraordinarily broad-reaching conclusion of the book is that the significance of metaphors in everyday life points to the need for an 'experiential account of truth.' This is conceived in opposition to relativism/subjectivism on the one hand, or empiricism/objectivism on the other. Experientialism says that while there might be an absolute truth out there, we simply cannot understand it without looking through a heavily metaphorical lens. We always and can only consider abstract concepts with reference to metaphors that emerge from our physical and immediate experience. The experiential account of truth is far more humble than an objectivist account of truth, where certain people are given licence to demand the world simply is a certain way. And yet it avoids the inability to say anything of any real worth for more than one person at a time that a radically subjectivist account demands. Where an extreme objectivist would say 'the lake is most certainly in front of the mountain', and a radical subjectivist would say 'it's up to any one person's interpretation', an experientialist would say 'who decided the mountain has a front? From whose perspective is the lake in front?' One might consider it right from their

perspective and at the same time acknowledge that our understanding is fundamentally experiential.

That's all very interesting, but so what? Well, consider the primacy of 'the market'. 'The market' is metaphorical in essence, and in quite a complex way. The role of the market in our society is often understood with reference to the natural sciences: just as animals and organisms compete to survive in the wild and evolve and progress towards 'better' forms, so, if the market is allowed free operation, economic forces will refine us towards societal progress and evolution. This is seen as quite a natural jump, but there's a metaphor at work, and when there's a metaphor at work it doesn't necessarily have one option. The market economy doesn't have to be metaphorically likened to natural selection with all its contingent implications of inevitability and 'natural-ness'. When we explain market forces as 'natural' and by extension 'good' then we free ourselves from ever questioning what those market forces supposedly demand of us, like balancing a budget by cutting spending.

Metaphors We Live By offers a well written account of a fundamental mechanism for perceiving and constructing reality. Inevitably, any account of such an enormous and abstract concept will get bogged down at times as the authors struggle to convert their thoughts into words. But the chief aim of the book, to reveal the significance of the interplay between language and thought, roots it in everyday ideas like 'winning an argument'. This is what makes it so readable and so fun to think about: it doesn't reject the mundane and retreat to abstract 'academese' but it also doesn't ignore the profound and philosophical.

If you're looking for a book to shake up and enrich your experience of everyday life, *Metaphors We Live By* will hit that nail on the head.



The contributors

(reverse alphabetical order)



Emily Taylor spent a year in Manila working for a local NGO supporting community driven housing resettlement through AVID after completing her Master of International Development in 2014. Following this, she worked with Engineers Without Borders as a facilitator on the January 2016 Design Summit. Emily's interest in development however has always been on the home front. She believes there is still a need for better community development practices here in Australia. Since returning, Emily has been working with Moonee Valley City Council as a Development Consultant and is currently a permanent staff member on the Community Planning and Development team.



Aisling Power is currently studying her Bachelor of Arts (International Studies) Honours. Her studies focus on the influence of the US-Russian bilateral relationship on the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. When she isn't reading about Putin's judo regime or Obama's microphone drop, she runs so she can continue to sample the various granola, chia pudding and chai lattes in Melbourne's wonderful cafes. In addition, she is sick of people mispronouncing her name and has been told she comes back from beach holidays paler than when she left.



Peter Phipps is a senior lecturer in Global Studies at RMIT University. He undertook post-graduate training in cultural anthropology at the University of California Berkeley, and completed a PhD on the cultural politics of postcolonial theory at Melbourne University. He has published on Indigenous festivals, commemorations, tourism and the politics of cultural globalization. He is a founding member of the Centre for Global Research and has consulted to a number of organizations and government bodies in Australia, PNG and Europe.



Conor O'Grady is currently in his Honours (International Studies) at RMIT, with a thesis focused on issues surrounding identity and belonging among dual nationals. He's a dual citizen himself (Australia and New Zealand) and whilst he's sure he wants to work in development and policy, he's currently trying to decide if he wants to go into the NGO or Public sector here, in New Zealand, or abroad. His hobbies include writing, cooking, and boring everyone in the immediate area with stories about his necklace.



Georgia Lennon is a recent graduate from the International Studies program. After such a fulfilling two months at the beginning of the year, she plans to return to Alice Springs in 2017 to dive into her career. In the meantime however, she has escaped the confines of Melbourne's winter and moved to the sunny climate of New South Wales' Far North Coast. Here she spends her time making coffee with a view of the ocean, watching whales and obsessively reading Richard Flanagan novels.

Ally Gevers is presently two-and-a-bit years deep into the BAIS. After wriggling out of the clutches of her home town Perth three years ago, she decided to study the BAIS for its amazing international internship and languages components. Ally dedicates the majority of her time to volunteering, teaching swimming, changing her hair color and drawing silly pictures of animals and slimy politicians.



Oluwatobi Foluronso is a graduate of the Master of International Development program who is currently undertaking volunteer work in the community service sector and working at a financial planning firm. She is interested in the African diasporic experience and the way migrants navigate life in new countries. Oluwatobi loves interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds which is one of the reasons she loves living in Melbourne. In her down time, she enjoys listening to 80s and 90s R&B, particularly by Anita Baker.



Lora Chapman is a social worker and a first year PhD candidate. She has worked with children and families from a range of cultural and social backgrounds, and currently plans to conduct a qualitative study examining the lives and familial relationships of women and girls in red light areas. These days, when she is not focusing on research, she unwinds by enjoying poetry, coffee, wine, music... And of course, international travel whenever financially possible.



Sam Carroll-Bell is a PhD candidate, Master of International Development graduate and Research Coordinator with the Centre for Global Research. He is a founding director of Cambodian organisation *Agile Development* specializing in community-based agricultural programs, inclusive design and social enterprise development. He is a member of the *Matadalan Ba Malu*, a program facilitating English language training and cross-cultural exchange for East Timorese women in community development contexts. Sam's PhD examines the knowledge and worldviews of international development workers based in Timor Leste and since 2012 he has published several articles with a development focus.



Isabella Andersen is a third year International Studies student who has loved the course from day one. Human rights and intercultural communication are her areas of interest. Currently she is part of a group at Amnesty International that seeks to engage with audiences at pop culture conventions on human rights issues within Australia. This stems from Isabella's other love of movies, art, and cosplay. Excitingly, she started an internship at the Human Rights Commission in Sydney in July 2016. Isabella hopes to use what she learns to further her knowledge on measures to tackle inequality and discrimination.



Tom Allen is currently completing his BAIS Honours with a thesis focusing on gentrification and community development in Melbourne. Highlights of his time in the BAIS were a 2014 study tour to Bosnia and beholding Fidel Castro's Cuban cigar in Joe Siracusa's office. He is Brunswick born and bred and happens to fit in quite well in his home suburb, but swears he was there when it was more synonymous with gangland killings than single origin espresso.



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