

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (1100-1800) presents

INTO THE WOODS: AN 'EMOTIONS AND ENVIRONMENT' SYMPOSIUM

22 July 2015

The University of Melbourne



Keynote Speakers:
Professor Stephen Knight
(The University of Melbourne)
Associate Professor Linda Williams
(RMIT)

Image: Alphonse Adolphe Bichard, 'Baron Munchausen Flogs a Fox Out of His Skin', c.1886, © The UIG/The British Library Board (902_05_1856420)

Convenor: Grace Moore, The University of Melbourne
An Emotions and Environment Research Cluster Event

SCHEDULE

DATE: 22 July 2015

VENUE: The University of Melbourne

WEDNESDAY 22 JULY 2015

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| 9.30 – 10.30 | Keynote: Associate Professor Linda Williams, RMIT University John Evelyn and 'the memorie of that delicious place': the role of nostalgia in early modern concepts of nature Chair: Grace Moore McMahan Ball Theatre | |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | MORNING TEA | |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | Panel One: Fairy Tales (McMahon Ball) Chair: Professor Stephen Knight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria Tedeschi, 'Fantastical Forests and Enchanted Environments: Evaluating Environmental Identity in Victorian Editions of the Grimms' Fairy Tales' Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario, 'Agony! Misery! Woe!' Athena Bellas, 'An Escape to the Forest in Catherine Hardwicke's <i>Red Riding Hood</i>' | Panel Two: Kangaloon (Theatre A) Chair: Dr. Susan Pyke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kim Satchell, '<i>The Forest Within: Orpheus in Rilke</i>' Lorraine Shannon, '<i>Following Charles Darwin Into the Woods</i>' Louise Fowler-Smith, '<i>The Veneration of the Tree</i>' |
| 12.00 – 1.00 | Panel Three: Demonic Landscapes (McMahon Ball) Chair: Samantha Strong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Bartels, 'Plants, Animals, and the Devil: Diabolical Symbolism in the Nineteenth-Century English Woodland' Juanita Feros Ruys, 'The Devil's Coach House: Reading the Australian Bush through the European Demonic' Barbara Holloway, 'When Absence feels like Presence: Affect and the Tree-Stump in Forest Imaginary' | Panel Four: Wildernesses and Arcadia (Theatre A) Chair: Alanna Myers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bella Li, '"These Are the Old Home Trees": Susan Howe and the American Ancestral Forest' Jessica Hancock, 'Woodland Imaginary: The Question of Experience and Fiction in regards to Stef Penney's <i>The Tenderness of Wolves</i>' David Haworth, 'Silence, Speech, and the Unruly Forest: From Fairy Tales to Carmel Bird's <i>The Bluebird Café</i>' |
| 1.00 – 2.00 | LUNCH | |
| 2.00 – 3.00 | Panel Five: Affective Forests (McMahon Ball) Chair: Grace Moore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Sigler, '"My Secret Bower": The Erotic Forest of Verse in Hannah Cowley's "To Della Cusca"' Heather Kerr, 'Songs from the Heart's Forest: Charlotte Smith's Contagious Petrarchan Melancholy' Meredith McCullough, 'Reading the Ocean as Forest in William Blake and Elizabeth Barrett Browning' | Panel Six: Reading the Emotions of the Forest (Theatre A) Chair: Dr. Juanita Feros Ruys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordon Raeburn, 'The Culbin Sands disaster of 1694: Emotional responses to the loss of the Culbin Estate, Moray' Bronwyn Reddan, 'Navigating the Emotional Landscape of Fairytale Forests' Alexander Thom, 'Reading the Forest: Ecological Legibility and <i>As you Like It</i>' |
| 3.00 – 4.00 | Panel Seven: The Uncanny Forest (McMahon Ball) Chair: Dr. Heather Kerr <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michaela Baker, '"The Bush Began to Howl": A Postcolonial Gothic Reading of the Forest in <i>Heart of Darkness</i>' Susan Pyke, 'The Earthy <i>Bacchae</i>: Shape-Shifting Gifts of the Divine' Anne Elvey, 'From Lost Forest to Local Creek: Reading John Anderson's "the forest set out like the night"' | Panel Eight: Remembering the Forest (Theatre A) Chair: David Haworth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan Reidy, 'Into the Urban Forest: The Going and Coming of Trees in Australia's Metropolitan Parks' Julie Cotter, 'Memory of the Australian Forest' Alanna Myers, '"Why do we need wilderness?" Reading the emotions of the forest in Tasmanian forestry conflict' |
| 4.00 – 4.30 | AFTERNOON TEA | |
| 4.30 – 5.30 | Keynote: Professor Stephen Knight, 'Robin Hood and the Forest Laws' (McMahon Ball) | |
| 5.45 – 6.30 | Short Performance: 'Tree Duet' (Theatre A), Paul Rae and Kaylene Tan, pianist Stefan Cassomenos | |

INTO THE WOODS

KEYNOTE LECTURES

Associate Professor Linda Williams, RMIT University

JOHN EVELYN AND 'THE MEMORIE OF THAT DELICIOUS PLACE': THE ROLE OF NOSTALGIA IN EARLY MODERN CONCEPTS OF NATURE

This paper considers the emotional qualities of nostalgia in the works of John Evelyn - the renowned 17th century diarist and author of a 'Discourse of Forest Trees', or *Sylva*. *Sylva* was the first book to be published by the newly formed Royal Society in 1664, and along with his other publications and the diligence with which he maintained his diaries, Evelyn also amassed a substantial archive of notes and designs for his unfinished long term project *Elysium Britannicum*.

Comprising a range of observations on everything from basic gardening techniques to philosophical reflections and literary allusions, the *Elysium Britannicum* was essentially a blueprint for the creation of the ideal garden. Like *Sylva*, it was also a work conceived as a demonstration of how nature in England could be reshaped in accord with the imagined ideals of a distant past.

Evelyn was a great advocate for the importance of trees, and clearly took pleasure in gardens and forests. Yet his vision of nature was also consistently tempered by a sense of longing and nostalgia for an imaginary nature of the distant past: a modern nostalgic yearning for an imaginary pre-modern time when nostalgia was unknown.

Linda Williams is an Associate Professor of Art, Environment & Cultural studies at RMIT University, an Associate Investigator (2015) of the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, and also a key researcher at the HfE Mellon Observatory for the Environmental Humanities at the University of Sydney, and a Research Associate of Circles of Sustainability at the University of Western Sydney. She has also recently accepted an invitation to be president of ASLECANZ (The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, Australia and New Zealand).

Linda's research is in the interdisciplinary fields of the environmental humanities and studies in human-animal relations - particularly histories of the *longue durée*, and the contemporary issues of climate change and mass species extinction. Linda has curated major international exhibitions on these research themes, and currently leads an ARC Linkage Project: Spatial Dialogues: Public Art & Climate Change with partners Grocon and Fairfax Media. Her work on social theory, historical sociology and European philosophy is focused on questions of materiality—such as the ontological status of the animal and the nonhuman world in human history, and the connections between cultural history, science and technology. She also has a particular interest in 17th century studies.

Professor Stephen Knight, The University of Melbourne

ROBIN HOOD AND THE FOREST LAWS

The routine opening for a Robin Hood film or novel shows a peasant harassed for breaking the forest laws by the brutal, and usually, Norman authorities. Robin, noble in both social and behavioural senses, protects the peasant, so offends the authorities, and takes to the forest for a life of manly companionship and liberal resistance, at least until King Richard returns and reinstates Robin for his loyalty to true values, social and royal, as deployed in his forest freedom.

It makes us moderns feel those values are age-old. But in his original late medieval appearances, Robin's primary hostility was to officials of the law and the church, and he had little contact with forest laws, even though resistance to them was not uncommon, and linked to Magna Carta. Robin and forest freedom is a more modern development. From the seventeenth century on, it is a developing response to the growing practice of enclosure by powerful landholders, including the royal family. After 1800 this English political debate meshes with the Romantic valuation of the forest as the opposite to urban modernity, and that emotive politics flourishes to the present. Like the outlaw myth itself, Robin Hood's links with the forest change in response to new sociopolitical contexts.

Stephen Knight is an Honorary Professor of English Literature at the University of Melbourne, having previously taught at a number of universities, including Sydney, De Montfort and Cardiff. He has published widely on medieval and modern topics, usually non-canonical, and has written and edited six books on the Robin Hood myth, most recently *Reading Robin Hood: Content, Form and Reception in The Outlaw Myth* (Manchester University Press, 2015).

INTO THE WOODS

PANEL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Michaela Baker

Macquarie University

"THE BUSH BEGAN TO HOWL": A POSTCOLONIAL GOTHIC READING OF THE FOREST IN *HEART OF DARKNESS*"

In this paper, I examine the important role played by the forest in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* by conducting a postcolonial Gothic analysis of the means of its presentation and its effects. From the moment that Marlow begins his voyage up the river, the forest which surrounds it, and with which it forms an ecosystem, looms large in his narration. The ways in which Marlow describes the forest, as 'howl[ing]' (Conrad, 2006, p. 45), having 'eyes...that had seen us' (Conrad, 2006, p. 42), render the forest as animate, possessed of a life of its own. This animate forest provokes in Marlow a feeling of fear and discomfort – it is *Unheimlich* – and embodies resistance both to the expedition's passage up the river, and hostility to the colonialist project in which the expedition is implicated. At the same time, the forest incarnates what Hurley terms the '*gothic of matter*' (1996, p. 33, emphasis original). The entire narration is a project of memory, and of unpacking the effects of trauma, and the role that the forest plays in this, through the Gothic means of its presentation, generates profound 'uneasiness' (Conrad, 2006, p. 21) in the reader.

Sarah Bartels

University of Queensland

"PLANTS, ANIMALS, AND THE DEVIL: DIABOLICAL SYMBOLISM IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH WOODLAND"

In Victorian England, the word 'Devil' was often attached to objects of fear or anxiety, serving as a convenient way of identify something as perilous or unpleasant. This tendency was especially marked in the world of popular belief, in which the Devil existed as both a potent symbol and a potentially dangerous reality. As such, he and anything, which might be connected to him, had to be handled carefully. The balance between the natural and supernatural worlds could be, worryingly, precarious and many folk beliefs served as a blueprint for navigating this complex and, potentially, perilous relationship. The fact that the Devil was often believed to exercise considerable power in both the natural and supernatural worlds did little to ease anxiety. Numerous plants and animals, generally ones, which were, in some way, ominous, were considered to have diabolical associations. This fact offers a demonstration of the supernatural dimension, symbolic meaning, and emotional resonance of the English woodland and provides an opportunity for an investigation of the way in which the natural and supernatural worlds interacted in the nineteenth-century English imagination.

Athena Bellas

University of Melbourne

"AN ESCAPE TO THE FOREST IN CATHERINE HARDWICKE'S *RED RIDING HOOD* (2011)"

This paper explores representations of gender, resistance and space in Catherine Hardwicke's contemporary teen fairy tale film *Red Riding Hood*. This film chronicles heroine Valerie's escape from the oppressive confines of the Gothic domestic, and the hegemonic feminine roles of wife and mother that this space requires her to adopt. Pursuing an errant path into the expansive forest, Valerie's entry into the liminal landscape registers a rebellion against the patriarchal culture from which she flees. I argue that in this contemporary rewriting of 'Little Red Riding Hood,' Valerie's wayward journey is an empowered assertion of resistance to the 'straight path' and all it represents. In the Perrault and Grimm tellings of the tale, the forest is the domain of masculine dominance and violence, and feminine shame and punishment. Hardwicke's female-dominated production team intervenes into this patriarchal narrative by reimagining the forest as a geography for feminine empowerment, creative design, and independent transformation, a liminal journey allowing for challenging, non-hegemonic expressions of girlhood to emerge. Furthermore, I argue that the film develops an alternative and potentially feminist screen language of feminine adolescence through its formal structures of mise-en-scène, gesture, panoramic mobile framing, and female voice-over in these liminal forest scenes.

Julie Cotter

Monash University

"IMMERSION IN THE SUMMERTIME OF THE BOX HILL CAMPS IN 1885-86 PROMPTED TOM ROBERTS TO POETICALLY MUSE UPON THE 'THE DEEP QUIET FACE OF NATURE.' 1"

The Box Hill artists watched the beauty of the fading light imbue their work with a quiet mystery. Friends and colleagues could rendezvous in these bush idylls in order to experience the camaraderie of the artists and the euphoria of escape from the growing urban metropolis.

The paintings the artists produced suggest a return to the myth and memory of the influential landscape images of the early nineteenth century. Yet replacing the solid, impenetrable European woods are spindly eucalyptus trees that created protective hazes around subjects, the intimacy of engagement within the Australian setting similar in scope to that sought by Roberts in his portraiture. Indeed, it is the subject within the landscape that often defines these works.

This paper will look at the attachment by the late nineteenth century Australian artists to the images of landscape, the engagement akin to the approach of painting a portrait, and the lament of the artists, much later in life, to the demise of a time and place.

¹ Tom Roberts, *Argus*, 30 September, 1893, p.14.

Rebecca-Anne C. Do Rozario

Monash University

"AGONY! MISERY! WOE!: AN EXCESS OF LOVE IN THE WOODS"

Fairy tales are, generally, love stories. Heroes fall in love, languish, become passionate and then – mostly – wed. Their amorous adventures frequently take place within the woods. *Into the Woods* (2014), a film adaptation of the Sondheim musical, demonstrates that there is still a strong interest in sylvan affairs. As Prince Charming notes, "right and wrong don't matter in the woods, only feelings."

This paper explores the history of passionate encounters in fairy tale's wooded expanses, highlighting courtly castles tucked away in the darkest forests where monstrous paramours roam, sexual violations behind sharp thorns, paths on which slippers and innocence might be lost, and wild places where refuge is sought. Drawing upon the tales of d'Aulnoy, Perrault, the Grimms, Sondheim and others, the paper examines constructions of sexuality, gender and class permeating the leafy trysts.

The woods offer an alternative to urban and pastoral society, a place where social hierarchies and sexual mores can be torn apart in the name of love. Drawing on the work of Lewis Seifert and Marina Warner, in particular, the paper draws conclusions about changing attitudes to true love and fairy tale.

Anne Elvey

University and University of Divinity, Melbourne

"FROM LOST FOREST TO LOCAL CREEK—READING JOHN ANDERSON'S "THE FOREST SET OUT LIKE THE NIGHT""

Poet John Anderson's sequence "the forest set out like the night" appears in his book of the same title originally published by Black Pepper in 1995 and reissued in 2013. In the front matter a note reads that the "locality [where Anderson was born and grew up around Kyabram] was once covered with thick forest and its name is thought to indicate this. That forest is the one he would most like to have seen." Later he moved to Melbourne and from 1975 Anderson lived near Merri Creek. The sequence "the forest set out like the night" crosses between the Kyabram "forest" and the local Merri Creek and opens out to many locales. My paper considers the way the longing for the ancient forest of Kyabram is expressed in an attentiveness to the Creek and its layered histories, both pre-colonial and colonial, and to other-than-human life in multiple locales. With reference to my own writing of Merri Creek and my experience of short cross cultural retreats in the Barmah Forest, and to other Australian poets, I explore the way the sense of habitation and multiple more-than-human presences of forests can inform an ecological affection for local more-than-human habitat.

Louise Fowler-Smith

UNSW

"THE VENERATION OF THE TREE"

At a time when ecological degradation and deforestation is still occurring at an alarming rate it is possible to find pockets of land where religion has offered protection to trees and forests in the country of India. These are called Sacred Trees and Sacred Tree Groves and vary from one square metre to about a two million square metres, providing a network of protected areas across the country where the inherent diversity of flora and fauna have been preserved. Sacred groves also help to preserve the cultural identity of the country, as each grove has its own mode of worship.

I propose to speak about the veneration of the Tree as an environmental phenomenon and reveal some of the myths and stories behind this practice.

As an environmental artist, my work focuses on the veneration of trees. This investigation and resultant work has spanned two continents, Australia and India.

Jessica Hancock

The Australian National University

"WOODLAND IMAGINARY: THE QUESTION OF EXPERIENCE AND FICTION IN REGARDS TO STEF PENNEY'S *THE TENDERNESS OF WOLVES*"

The Death of the Author has, within a generation, itself died with the resurgence of attention directed towards biographical readings. This revived insistence on the "real" meaning of a text resting ultimately with the author is problematic for neo-historical works, for which an author's first-hand experience is impossible. Instead, details of an empirical world and use of realist modes of imagining are used to create a strong sense of place, upon which an unexperienced sense of time can be more convincingly drawn. This accepted wisdom, of fictional time and characters drawn on real and known places, does not always play out as expected. Stef Penney's novel *The Tenderness of Wolves* was hailed as a great work of realism, obviously written with intimate knowledge of the Canadian wilderness, until it emerged that the novel had been written entirely from knowledge gleaned in the British Library. Penney, it turned out, was agoraphobic, and had never been to Canada in her life. This paper will examine the problems with conflating literary criticism and author biography, and interrogate our notions of the woods in the cultural imaginary.

David Haworth

University of Melbourne

"SILENCE, SPEECH, AND THE UNRULY FOREST: FROM FAIRY TALES TO CARMEL BIRD'S *THE BLUEBIRD CAFÉ*"

Christopher Manes has argued that "nature is silent in our culture ... in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative". Manes does not characterise the silence of nature as the lack of noise—nature can sometimes be very noisy—but as a lack of speech, a denial of the right to speak: nature is not so much silent as it is *silenced*. Along these lines, this paper explores ideas of silence, silencing, speech and noise in literary or narrative depictions of the forest. In many fairy tales, voices in the forest are not exclusively human: fairy-tale forests can be filled with the clamour of verbose and articulate animals and plants. In contrast, the forest is aggressively silent or silenced in Carmel Bird's 1990 novel *The Bluebird Café*, which is structured as a polyphonic collection of human utterances. This structure seems to valorise the privileged status of the speaking human subject in Western cultures, but Bird's novel actually makes space for the subversive infiltration of a non-speaking, but noisy and unruly nature, in the form of the Tasmanian forest.

Barbara Holloway

The Australian National University

"WHEN ABSENCE FEELS LIKE PRESENCE: AFFECT AND THE TREE-STUMP IN FOREST IMAGINARY"

The 'undead', in Eric Santner's term, have a 'dimension of surplus animation' that he detects in the world of things encountered when transformed by death or decay. This paper — adopting Meaghan Morris's approach of speaking from local environment and experience first — begins in an area of forest in central NSW characterised by stumps and dead trees. These, dead though full of creaturely life, all showing marks of saw, axe and ring-barking, have a strange presence. 'Undead', perhaps 'natural historical fissures or caesuras in the space of meaning', the stumps and tree-skeletons 'act' as catalysts and magnets in a complex of changing emotions.

The numerous projections of 'melancholy' onto the living forests in Australia's settler culture have often been discussed. The history of forest and timber is also well documented but the changing emotional meaning of these remnants in and of the forest has not. In this paper, images of stumps and skeletons become a conduit to a close reading of texts by regional writers Mary Gilmore, E. O. Schlunke and local journalists. Such texts express 'sympathy', fear and apprehension in popular lore about falling branches, climate change and settler-triumph. Examples from Henry Kendall and F. McCaffrey then suggest such writing contributes to and is influenced by a transnational, colonial and environmental forest imaginary.

Heather Kerr

University of Adelaide

"SONGS FROM THE HEART'S FOREST: CHARLOTTE SMITH'S CONTAGIOUS PETRARCHAN MELANCHOLY"

The example of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* offered Charlotte Smith a model of sensibility that, in Edoardo Zuccato's words, "fitted her project in the *Elegiac Sonnets*, that is, melancholy reflections of a solitary figure in a landscape" (9). In the *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784), Smith turns to the *in morte* section of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* for models of suffering selves who demand a sympathetic response from their imagined audiences. Rather than leave them behind in her later poetry, Smith gives the melancholy reflections of the solitary Petrarchan lover a positive valence in the forests and woodlands of "Beachy Head" (1807). Sympathetic imaginative engagement with Petrarchan melancholy is literally enacted by the lyrics that haunt the last part of the poem. Songs of sympathy are at once examples of the poem's figurative negotiation of authenticity-effects and resistance to the idea of universal benevolence in human nature. Sympathy's local and limited resonance is figured as lyric responsiveness to the Petrarchan melancholic's imagined suffering. From the *Elegiac Sonnets* to "Beachy Head", Petrarchanism inflects Smith's exploration of form, performance, figuration and the generative effects of melancholy in the late eighteenth century.

Bella Li

University of Melbourne

"THESE ARE THE OLD HOME TREES': SUSAN HOWE AND THE AMERICAN ANCESTRAL FOREST"

In this paper, I undertake an analysis of the Bakhtinian chronotope of the forest in the following long-form poems of American poet Susan Howe: *Articulations of Sound Forms in Time*, *Secret History of the Dividing Line and Thorow*, which take as their setting the thickly wooded surrounds of New England in the early frontier period. The forest is a pivotal foundational space in American colonial history: by turns associated with the howling wilderness and a utopic vision of Arcadia, the forest has been rendered from the time of first colonisation through to the present as a crucible from which 'America' as a nation was born. In the poetic works under consideration, I show that Howe draws upon these conceptions of the forest in order to engage with questions of historical and literary authority. In Howe's work, the forest is a spatial and temporal marker—situating her writing within the geographical and historical frontier landscape of her native New England—as well as a mythic, symbolic and ultimately self-consciously literary construct (or 'word forest'). Through the assertion of her own textual authority in and of this complex space, Howe engages in a guerilla campaign of 'taking the forest', claiming it as an ally in her project to unsettle the boundaries and contents of American colonial and literary history.

Meredith McCullough

University of Melbourne

"READING THE OCEAN AS FOREST IN WILLIAM BLAKE AND ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING"

In *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992) Pogue Harrison describes forests as places for "the outlaws, the heroes... the persecuted, the outcasts" (247). The forest is a place at the edge of society, inhabited by those seeking radical social change. If this is the case, and the forest is a place where "the logic of distinction goes astray" (Harrison, x), then surely the ocean represents a kind of forest, a place at the margins of society that threatens to dissolve the normative logic of distinction.

What Stacy Alaimo describes as a "(habitat) humans cannot inhabit" (191) the ocean is a space completely other to Western culture. Both Oothoon of Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, and the speaker in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point* stand on a precipice above a raging ocean, demanding radical social change. Both enslaved, these female speakers go into the ocean as persecuted outcasts, yet this position gives strength to their prophetic calls for revolution.

In my talk I will compare these two poems, particularly looking at how the ocean becomes a place for heroic outlaws, similar to Harrison's conception of the forest. I am particularly interested in how the ocean becomes a place where these speakers gain the power to call for an end to empire and slavery.

Alanna Myers

"“WHY DO WE NEED WILDERNESS?” READING THE EMOTIONS OF THE FOREST IN TASMANIAN FORESTRY CONFLICT"

This paper takes two recent media flash points in the ongoing forestry conflict in Tasmania as a starting point to explore contemporary cultural meanings of forests in Australia, particularly in relation to persistent associations between the ecological and cultural value of forests with the degree to which they are 'untouched'. The first flash point is the federal government's (unsuccessful) attempt in 2014 to delist 74,000 hectares of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area on the basis that it was already logged and degraded. The second is the current Tasmanian government proposal to rezone some 'wilderness areas' as 'remote recreation zones', a change that would allow selective logging of some speciality timbers and increased private tourism investment within the World Heritage Area. The paper locates these policy interventions within the literary and cultural history of environmental conflict and conservation in Tasmania, a history which begins not just at the landmark Franklin River blockade of 1982-83, but takes in the violence of early Indigenous-settler conflict in the island state. Keeping this history in mind, I argue, is crucial to unpacking the emotional appeal of 'wilderness' from its very 'unnatural' beginnings and its implications for present-day land management strategies.

Susan Pyke

University of Melbourne

"THE EARTHY *BACCHAE*: SHAPE SHIFTING GIFTS OF THE DIVINE "

My ecocritical reading of the *Bacchae* begins with the shapeshifting Dionysius; as petty and material as a human and as divine as a lion, a bull. I explore the work this classic text does to refute the Aristotelian promotion of rationality, positioning this ontology as the base of the determined hierarchies causing inexorable Anthropogenic damage to the world. Honing in on the ambivalence that surrounds Bacchaen Maenads, I celebrate the nonhuman elements that support these women's escape from logic as they dance to the woods, even as I recognise their actions are written as follies created by Dionysus for the joys of revenge. The flowing honey and milk of the mountainside forests contrasts with the logical yet fragmented and vulnerable Pentheus, showing the cracks in the walled spaces he feigns to control. Considering Agave's dismemberment of Pentheus, I view this as an invitation to audiences to see his potentiality to be more-than-human. I suggest this need not be interpreted as a reduction, nor might Agave's response be considered a madness. Indeed, the tragedy of the *Bacchae* might the willingness of the state to destroy the nonhuman hospitality that provides the Maenads with manna, revelry and song.

Gordon D. Raeburn

The University of Melbourne

"THE CULBIN SANDS DISASTER OF 1694: EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO THE LOSS OF THE CULBIN ESTATE, MORAY"

In early November 1694 a vicious storm battered the coast of the Moray Firth in north east Scotland. The sand dunes which lined the coast were forced inland by the strength of the wind, eventually burying the entirety of the Culbin estate near Nairn. Possibly as many as sixteen small farms were buried, and the estate was ultimately abandoned, eventually becoming the site of the Culbin Forest, a pine forest which ultimately stabilised the dunes. Alexander Kinnaird, the owner of the estate, was left destitute, and died shortly afterwards, a broken man. He was not the only individual affected by this disaster. This paper will investigate the emotional responses, both individual and communal, to the loss of the estate and its farms. Folklore around the time of the disaster ascribed blame to the execution of an accused witch, or to the land being cursed. Did these beliefs have an impact on the emotional responses to the disaster or vice versa? Finally, do emotional responses to natural disasters such as this differ according to socio-economic factors, for instance did Kinnaird react differently to his tenants?

Bronwyn Reddan

The University of Melbourne

"NAVIGATING THE EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE OF FAIRY TALE FORESTS"

Forests are mysterious places. In countless fairy tales, forests appear as the enchanted setting for dark acts, and heroic deeds; a place where predators live, children are abandoned, and dangers lurk for those who stray from the path. The journey into the woods marks the beginning of an adventure into a metaphysical realm where emotional transformation is but one of the possibilities invited by the liminal, "in-betweenness" of an untamed natural environment. And yet despite the wildness of forests, they are, as Nancy L Canepa observes, "spaces of intense human intercourse"² where the otherness of the supernatural comes into contact with the codes of morality embodied by fairy tale protagonists. In the fairy tales written by Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Baroness d'Aulnoy, and Henriette-Julie de Castelnau, Comtesse de Murat at the end of the seventeenth century, forests are places where passion is declared. In the forest, intimacy develops between tender lovers secluded from the prying eyes of the court. The symbolic significance of their forests as metaphorical emotional landscapes overlays the physical alterity of the woods with a psychological frisson, testing the moral virtue of their characters as often as their courage.

² Nancy L Canepa, *From Court to Forest Giambattista Basile's Lo Cunto de Li Cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 211.

Susan Reidy

University of Melbourne

"INTO THE URBAN FOREST: THE GOING AND COMING OF TREES IN AUSTRALIA'S METROPOLITAN PARKS"

It is self evident that people love trees. Yet, during the growth of Australian cities in the 19th century, the pre-existing open forests of Aboriginal lands were progressively wiped away by the accretions of British cultivation, by the artifice of new botanic gardens, arboretums and public parks. In the process, native trees were replaced by new trees; trees from somewhere else, 'exotic' trees. These shifts caused a dramatic alteration to the lands on which our urban public parks and gardens were created. Then something strange occurred. In the 20th century, native trees regained value, first as objects of beauty and then of ecological importance. What caused these fluctuations in the fortunes of urban trees? Was it love of nature, nostalgia for 'home', desire for knowledge, fear of the climate? This paper explores this going and coming of trees, both native and exotic, on land reserved for public recreation in the Australian urban environment.

Juanita Feros Ruys

University of Sydney

"THE DEVIL'S COACH HOUSE: READING THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH THROUGH THE EUROPEAN DEMONIC"

There are two competing stories about how the large open cavern in the Jenolan Caves area of regional New South Wales came to be known as The Devil's Coach House. Both offer us snapshots of European settlement in the Jenolan wilderness area in the mid-nineteenth century: one involving an escaped convict cattle duffer and his nightmarish visions, the other a bushranger and the manhunt for him through impenetrable bushland. In both cases, the stories point to a culture of European settlers describing the alterity of the Australian bush by reference to imported old world ideas of Hell and the Devil, a tendency witnessed elsewhere in the early Australian colonies. This paper will explore the colonial impetus to 'make sense' of the Australian landscape by reference to the European demonic. It will also show how, in the case of The Devil's Coach House, the initial characterization of the Jenolan Caves area in terms of the demonic continued to resonate throughout the early twentieth century and even into the twenty-first, inflecting the way people have accessed and experienced it.

Kim Satchell

Southern Cross University

"THE FOREST WITHIN: ORPHEUS IN RILKE"

The forests of literature and the literature of forests are riven with all sorts of motifs, passages and thickets bearing on an inward journey, as much as ventures out into the surrounds. As such these peregrinations—quests (of both thought and existence)—formulate the stuff of life that span time and place, awkwardly, and at other moments with considerable prescience and resonance. Thinking, reading and writing in an ecological mode (in the current milieu), bears witness to forebears whose epistemic location and trajectory produced profound intellectual challenges and in turn soaring flights of imagination, of ontological acuity.

In this spirit I journey with Rainier Maria Rilke, specifically attendant to his work (sonnets) addressed to Orpheus. A mythic figure whose stories hold considerable valence with the contemporary context, which Rilke addressed to transitions afoot in his own period and beyond. The presentation of my delimited survey of Rilke's poetry inspired by Orpheus, seeks to consider song, musicality and ecology (of a lyre-poetics awakening the living and dead), evident in the language, toward inner exploration bound to a care of the self (as a writing practice manifest in Rilke) with implicit regard for the more-than human.

Lorraine Shannon

Independent scholar

"FOLLOWING CHARLES DARWIN INTO THE WOODS"

On the 18th January 1836 Charles Darwin walked from what is now the Blue Mountains town of Wentworth Falls, along Jamison Creek to Wentworth Falls. He recorded his impressions in his first book *The Voyage of the Beagle*, describing the distinctive nature of the Eucalyptus trees with their bark hanging down in "long shreds, which swing about with the wind and hence the trees look desolate and untidy."

He continued, "we follow a little valley and its tiny rill of water" until "suddenly and without any preparation, through the trees, which border the pathway, an immense gulf is seen at the depth of perhaps 1500ft beneath ones (sic) feet."

Eighteen months ago I purchased a property, which backs onto what is now called the Charles Darwin walk, a bush track that retraces Darwin's journey. I frequently walk along this track and this paper explores my response to Darwin's experience of a sublime moment when he emerged from the trees, arguing instead for a sublimity that challenges the dichotomy between an autonomous self encountering the objective realm of wilderness. The sublime moment experienced before emerging from the trees is described as an instant of the chiasmatic relation between the trees and the human.

David Sigler

University of Calgary

“MY SECRET BOWER”: THE EROTIC FOREST OF VERSE IN HANNAH COWLEY’S “TO DELLA CRUSCA”

Hannah Cowley’s poem “To Della Crusca,” published in *The World* in February 1789, uses the forest as a way to think through sexual pleasure, textual pleasure, and the relation of eroticism to death. The poem is addressed to Robert Merry, the expatriate British poet whom, at the time of her writing, Cowley had never met. Cowley, in love with Merry’s verse, praises his “CREATIVE LABOUR! whose all bounteous hand / Drops Flowers, and Fruits, and Forests o’er the Land.” Thus Merry’s poetry becomes a metaphorical forest in which Cowley has been seduced. The “patter’d Trees” of Merry’s forest are exciting but dangerously polyamorous, so different from “LOVE’S devoted Tree” as discovered in other poems. Yet although Merry’s verse is a forest, Cowley’s is a dispatch from the future of that forest. In this thoroughly necrophilic poem, Cowley imagines Merry dead so she can memorialize him with her own deforested verse, even as she demands that he keep on writing—producing further “leaves” of published verse, which announce his death and produce their own “arden[t] throes”—and so seducing her, and her alone, from beyond the grave. Thus a “FALSE Lover!” becomes a “TRUEST Poet” in the moment of his “farewell,” as the poetry gains autonomy from its author. The enchantments of the forest, once a space of sexual enjoyment but now, in “retrospect” if glimpsed from the future, a site of mourning, enable Cowley to elegize the still-living Merry while expecting that his future (apparently posthumous) poetry will “o’er my Nerves its tremors rush.”

Victoria Tedeschi

“FANTASTICAL FORESTS AND ENCHANTED ENVIRONMENTS: EVALUATING ENVIRONMENTAL IDENTITY IN VICTORIAN EDITIONS OF THE GRIMMS’ FAIRY TALES.”

Translated and adapted during an age when industry threatened the total annihilation of the ecosphere, nineteenth-century English editions of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s fairy tale literature prompted nostalgia towards pristine nature. The literary forest, in particular, functions as a recurring topos in fairy tale literature, yet is anchored to contemporaneous cultural concepts of nature. Whether wildly dangerous or idealised, the immense structure of the literary forest offers fairy tale characters a means of self discovery. Edgar Taylor’s variants of “Hansel and Gretel” (1823) and “Little Red-Cap” (1884) present the enchanted forest as a revitalised wonderland where personal accomplishments can be actualised. By analysing the protagonists’ difficult journey through the forest, this paper adopts an ecocritical methodology to argue that the Grimms’ literary forest cements a symbiotic relationship between the external environment and the internal self. While the woods were classified as an agricultural nightmare, the fairy tale forest is presented as an area where the child protagonist is able to reap psychological benefits, moral growth and financial reward. Once the protagonist emerges from the woods, a new, more “authentic” individual materialises – a child that encourages a harmonious relationship between the human and the natural realm.

Alexander Thom

University of Melbourne

“READING THE FOREST: ECOLOGICAL LEGIBILITY AND AS YOU LIKE IT”

The reading of Shakespeare’s *Forest of Arden* has commonly been limited to its position relative to the pastoral (or counter-pastoral) conventions of *As You Like It*. I wish to suggest that neither this reading, nor the similarly popular biographical approach, properly satisfies the numerous critical and theatrical difficulties presented by Shakespeare’s depiction of the forest. Instead, I will begin with the suggestion that the early modern forest ought to be characterised in a more nuanced manner than through the typical dichotomies — namely between the civilised and the uncivilised, the industrial and the inspirational, and the lawful and the lawless. The difficulty in establishing whether Shakespeare’s *Forest of Arden* is intended as pastoral or counter-pastoral itself suggests that such oppositions are unsustainable. The complicated position of woodland within the juridical, economic, and social matrices of early modern English society compels a reading that attends to the problem of ecological legibility. I contend that this, in combination with an understanding of Elizabethan theatrical conventions, offers a novel approach to this topic. I will suggest the *Forest of Arden* is a space that remains an imperceptible diageic element, whose mediation expects and enforces its own illegibility to both the characters and the audience.

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