

**“Australia from the Heart”:
Envisioning Affective, Environmental, and Material Reparations**

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The articles compiled in this special issue derive from the EASA Conference held at the University of the Balearic Islands from 6 to 8 September 2023. Titled “‘Australia from the Heart’: Envisioning Affective, Environmental, and Material Reparations,” the conference’s main objective was to explore the multiple affective and material dimensions associated with the notion of reparation, and associated concepts of restitution, redress and reconciliation. The conference took place at a particularly important moment in the recent history of Australia because it preceded the celebration of the Australian Indigenous Voice referendum on 14 October 2023. The petition for a First Nations Voice—a representative body—to be enshrined in the constitution and for the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of treaty-making and truth-telling was included in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, issued by Indigenous Australians on 27 May 2017. The statement asserts their status as the first sovereign Nations of Australia, proclaims their pride and determination in their history and culture, invokes their love of their ancestors and children, and, in the spirit of Makarrata—“the coming together after a struggle”—expresses their hopeful plea for a better future, built on a communal project of reconciliation. On 14 October 2023, a majority of the Australian population, in all six states, voted against amending the constitution. Rather than marking an endpoint in the journey towards reparation, this decision brings into sharper focus the urgency for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to rethink their collective future, and challenges them to pursue new pathways for reparative action. The articles gathered in this special issue derive from the many insightful and lively discussions held during the conference and collectively grapple with the many faces of this reparative process, one which—borrowing from the Uluru Statement—must come “from the heart.”

The issue opens with two articles which address the significance of the Voice referendum. **Lars Jensen’s “Speaking to Voice—Indigenous Australians and the Quest for Truth-telling, Treaty and Sovereignty”** offers an overview of the debates that characterised the Yes and No campaigns through a detailed analysis of the speeches given by seven Indigenous Australian representatives at the National Press Club in the months leading up to the referendum, paying particular attention to issues of truth-telling, treaty-making and sovereignty. **Gail Jones’s “Wing-flutter, Air-sweep and Human Breath: The Ethics of Voice and Encounter in Australian Studies”** similarly considers the significance of the referendum “as a sensible return to the politics of reconciliation and a practical means by which to acknowledge First Nations wisdom and advice,” despite its outcome. Through an evocative retelling of several affective cross-cultural encounters—ceremonies, performances and linguistic exchanges—connecting peoples and places, Jones urges us to take up the epistemic challenge of acknowledging other forms of knowing and relating to the world, of establishing creative connections by becoming “new listening subjects.”

The rest of the articles take up this challenge to focus on the various ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian artists, writers and film-makers have imagined formulae for reparation. Collectively, the authors argue that this reparative project must be rooted in genuine, heartfelt connections not only among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, but among

Australians and their environment. Each essay emphasises individually that humanity exists within a deeply interconnected relationship with all forms of life, including non-human entities—animals, plants, stones, ecosystems, and the planet itself. This perspective of interdependence places central importance on the ethics of attention, empathy, love, care and solidarity, which are portrayed as essential for overcoming trauma, guaranteeing survival and healing, fostering recognition and respect, and envisioning a hopeful collective future.

Bárbara Arizti’s “Inga Simpson’s *The Last Woman in the World* as a Transmodern Fiction of Attention” discusses Simpson’s 2021 apocalyptic novel to highlight the role of attention as a generative force, as a form of care for oneself and others. According to Arizti, the novel exemplifies a larger ethical project which entails the realisation of the vulnerability and interdependence of all forms of life, human and non-human, as well as the ethical conviction that they must be attended to, cared for, to ensure survival in the midst of crises. **Irma Krčan’s “Geotrauma in Melissa Lucashenko’s *Too Much Lip*”** similarly reflects on the intrinsic connections between the suffering of human characters and the suffering of Country through the concept of “geotrauma.” Through Indigenous realism, Lucashenko engages with violence and collective intergenerational trauma, while stressing the active role of the land in the process of healing and fighting back, moving away from Western anthropocentric and profit-based notions. **Geoff Rodoreda’s “Of Rocks and Stones That Speak: Animated Landscapes in Australian film”** contrasts representations of rocks and stones in the Australian landscape in nation-building Australian films produced in the 1970s and 1980s and more recent films by Indigenous and non-Indigenous filmmakers arguing that these later narratives offer new readings of the land, no longer presented as empty, incomprehensible or inert, but as emotive and affective, and thus imbued with meaning. **Dolores Herrero’s “Merlinda Bobis’s *The Kindness of Birds* (2021): A Transmodern Ecofeminist Manifesto”** discusses the short story collection by the Filipino-Australian author as a transmodern ecofeminist text and a “limit-case” autobiography that critiques Western anthropocentrism and androcentrism, advocating instead for a “planetary love” that encompasses all living entities and promotes cooperation for healing and survival. Herrero reads the omnipresence of birds as a call for human acknowledgement of our shared status as “nomadic subjects,” emphasising that this recognition of interdependence leads to an ethics of care and attention that amplify the voices of the marginalized.

The interconnections between different cultures and peoples has always been a central concern of **Simone Lazaroo’s** fiction. The special issue closes with an extract from her novel in progress *The Shores of Remembering and Forgetting*, fittingly entitled “**The Lost Voices,**” in which Lazaroo’s unnamed narrator, of Italian descent and now living in Australia, witnesses the transformation and destruction of the coastal land as a result of climate change and rampant capitalism. The narrator notices the disappearance of an old Noongar fisherman who used to camp in the dunes, and ponders on the silences, the untold stories and the lost place names, while imagining a future where everyone “would have to link arms and stand firm” if we are to survive the relentless force of the roaring waves.

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