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From the Editor

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From the Editor

BEING CREATIVE

Welcome to the combined issue of *Antipodes* volume 35, which features the winners of the first annual AAALS creative writing competitions; a special section focused on the work of the contemporary writer Christos Tsiolkas, guest edited by Barbara Hoffmann; and a *second* special section focused on the book-publishing industry in and related to Australia, edited by Per Henningsgaard. The issue also features poetry, selected under the new editorship of Nathanael O'Reilly, and creative prose works curated by outgoing editor Tiare Picard in conjunction with incoming editor Raindrop Wright.

AAALS PRIZES IN CREATIVE WRITING

This issue highlights the winners of the first creative writing contests sponsored by the American Association for Australasian Literary Studies. The poetry prize was awarded to Rosanna E. Licari for her poem "Drifters." Based in Brisbane, where she teaches English to migrants and refugees, Licari has won multiple awards for her poetry and can now add the AAALS 2021 Poetry Prize. Susan M. Hancock was given the prize for fiction with her work "Hero of My Bones." Born and raised in New Zealand and migrating to Australia by way of Oxford, Hancock has published one novel and has another close to publication, along with a collection of short stories. The judges also awarded an honorable mention in the creative prose category to Catherine Padmore's work "Beach Road." At La Trobe University in Melbourne, Padmore teaches creative writing and literary studies, and she has received national recognition for her work. Together with the AAALS organization, *Antipodes* is pleased to publish and honor these writers.

This competition was made possible by the blind and independent review of two judging panels, and we are grateful for their attentive work with a large number of entries. The poetry judges were Paul Kane, Ann-Marie Blanchard, and Nathanael O'Reilly. The various creative prose entries were judged by Niki Tulk, Vaughan Rapatahana, and Thomas Gammarino.

CREATIVE DISCOMFORT

Barbara Hoffmann initiated and edited the wide-ranging special section on the work of Christos Tsiolkas, extending from his novels to his plays and the presence of his work in the United States and in the classroom. This issue also offers a review of Christos's most recent novel, *7½*. Christos's work is characterized by a brutal honesty and even, as several of the contributors here put it, disgust. In the honest

assessment of the challenges of teaching this “affectively difficult” material, the five teachers’ proposal for teaching this work with a “pedagogy of discomfort and an embedded focus on critical inquiry” warrants attention in the United States, where certain state governments are striving to ban discomfort about facts of history, including chattel slavery, and banning critical inquiry as something not to be taught in school. Perhaps the extremity of Tsiolkas’s work provides an opportunity to think through the value of pedagogic discomfort and self-reflection.

Striking in the essays about Tsiolkas’s oeuvre is the consistent focus on the ways in which the works both repel and attract readers. In a way, the reader is forced to step back, to step outside the immediate concerns of the text and contemplate it in various ways that are unusual for engaging with a work of literature through the willing suspension of disbelief. Tsiolkas demands more than that.

A step back from comfortable assumptions, or simply unquestioned realities, characterizes the second special section, which has an unusual focus for this journal. Several of the articles focus on data collection and analysis (and its current limitations) as well as the presumptions about book publishing and distribution, not only in Australia but also globally (and especially in the United States). This section challenges *Antipodes* readers to reflect critically on the book industry as such, the socioeconomic conditions that influence it, the role of gender, the effect (or not) of prizes, and even indirect consequences of the “cultural cringe” that has long characterized Australians’ sense of their own literary output. Students and scholars of Australian literature revel in the content, analyzing the literary value. However, as we all know but often do not reflect on, what “counts” as literary, what gets published, what gets read, what gets translated into other languages or other contexts—these all depend on external, capitalist, ideological factors. It can be uncomfortable to think about literature in these ways, but it is essential to do so.

As Per Henningsgaard articulates in his introduction to this section, scholarship on book publishing has been limited, so this section offers a rare opportunity for these scholars to engage with each other and with the larger questions of publication, distribution, and reception. It is not surprising that Henningsgaard hosts this “social hour,” as he has worked tirelessly to reinvigorate the study of book publishing and related scholarship. His essay contribution to the Tsiolkas section demonstrates the crossover potential of book publishing with literary and cultural studies.

The two guest editors of this issue are also my colleagues as officers of the American Association for Australasian Literary Studies, where I currently serve as president, Barbara Hoffmann as vice president, Per Henningsgaard as treasurer, and Ann-Marie Blanchard as secretary. As editor of *Antipodes*, one of my goals is to grow the existing relationship between the journal and its sponsoring organization, so I am particularly delighted to have these two committed members of the organization creating these special topic sections. I also encourage any reader of this journal to consider proposing a special topic, beginning with an informal inquiry

to me at antipode@hawaii.edu. Although this issue does not include general essays, *Antipodes* welcomes work on any topic related to the literature, film, and broadly conceived culture of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. We also proudly continue to publish creative writers with a connection to this region and continue to diversify our selections within *Antipodes*.

I now invite you to enjoy this creatively crafted double issue of *Antipodes* in all its diversity.

Brenda Machosky, Editor
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In editing this journal from the island of O`ahu, I acknowledge the kānaka maoli and the `aina (land) that is rightfully theirs, despite the overthrow of a sovereign government. We also acknowledge the Native American peoples on whose rightful lands many of our contributors live and work and the Ojibwe, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes of the Detroit area, where this journal is published. We acknowledge elders past, present, and future of the Aboriginal and Māori peoples, offering our respect for these traditional owners whose culture and literature are often the objects of our study.