It is a great honour to be awarded the Jean Martin Award and I want to thank the panel of judges and the panel’s convener, Associate Professor Adam Possamai, for the hard work they have put into reaching their decision.

Although I never met her, I know from discussion with some of her contemporaries and from what I have read and seen of her achievements, that Jean Martin was a great Australian sociologist and a wonderful person. I am delighted, through this award, to be associated with her name and the continuing recognition of her contribution to sociology.

Jean Martin pioneered the sociological understanding of migration, including Asian migration to Australia. It is highly appropriate, I believe, that a female Asian migrant sociologist be the recipient of the Jean Martin Award. Jean Martin’s research was focused on the international movement of people and their inclusion into the Australian community. The thesis for which this award has been given is concerned with the global flow of knowledge, including sociological knowledge, and the diffusion of ideas into one culture from another. This process has generally been explained either by the power of the ideas and their source or the weakness of their destination.

In my thesis, I developed the concept of the intellectual entrepreneur who not only selects alien ideas but at the same time negotiates the resistance of the receiving culture. In doing so, both the original ideas and the culture that incorporates them are changed. If you find anything of interest in this brief description and you want to know more – and you should – you’ll be able to buy the book developed from the thesis from January next year as it will be published by Routledge in New York and London as Globalized Knowledge Flows and Chinese Social Theory.

The thesis was written at the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney. I want to thank the Institute, the University, and my supervisors for allowing me the freedom to pursue what I believed was important in the thesis. I especially want to thank the University for providing me with a full scholarship that really made the whole thing possible. I also want to thank my family, my parents and sister, for their support. I especially want to thank my husband for his inspiration, guidance and advice not only during the time of writing but for much more. I also want to thank TASA for the Award and for this evening, and for bringing us all here tonight to make the awarding of the Jean Martin Award such a memorable occasion for me. Thank you very much.
Letter from the Editors

SUE MALTA AND CHRISTOPHER BAKER

Welcome to this the first of three editions of NEXUS for 2014. It is also our first edition as co-editors. As we foreshadowed in the last edition of NEXUS, we are passionate about Australian Sociology and the work of TASA. We believe NEXUS plays a vital role in sharing information and ideas, providing advice on awards and achievements, and in being a virtual network linking members of the sociological community both within and without academe.

This first issue of the year follows the national conference of The Australian Sociological Association held in November last year at Monash University in Melbourne. Consequently, this issue is replete with substantive contributions, with acknowledgements and with a multiplicity of sociological perspectives. It includes contributions from two of the conference keynote speakers: John Holmwood and Raewyn Connell. In line with our personal vision to highlight the diversity of sociological endeavour in Australia, we have two invited articles. Dr Peter Robinson from Swinburne University explores his research and writing on work ageing and sexuality. Dr Wendy Scaife and her colleague Alex Williamson, both from the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at QUT, engage directly with the historical and logical pairing of ‘philanthropy and sociology’.

This edition also celebrates and includes contributions from our award winners:
- Jean Martin Award, for excellence in scholarship in the field of Sociology: Xiaoying Sheila Qi
- TASA Award for Distinguished Service to Australian Sociology: Gary Bouma; Evan Willis
- Outstanding Service to TASA Award: Eileen Clark
- Jerzy Zubrzycki Postgraduate Conference Scholarship: Cathrin Bernhardt
- Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities: Janet Congues; Helen Meekosha
- TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarships: Amy MacMahon; Andrew Gilbert; Ashlin Lee; Bronwyn Moore; Toni McCallum.

We commend these award winners to you. Their contributions to NEXUS provide personal insights into the experience of sociology from those who are entirely new to this world through to those who are reflecting on decades of sociological experience and collegiality.

Jo Lindsay, TASA President, points to the unexpected benefits of preparing for teaching, and to the inspiration provided by a recent OECD publication calling on social scientists to play an active role in helping address contemporary social problems. Gary Wickham and Peta Cook engage with the issue of teaching sociology, and as usual, this issue of the TASA newsletter is packed with a range of quality contributions from TASA members, and includes updates on thematic groups, and books by TASA members.

We’d like to acknowledge the work of the previous editors of NEXUS, Kirsten Harley and Nick Osbaldiston. They have done a great job in raising the standard of NEXUS and we hope to maintain their momentum. Thanks also to Kirsten and Nick for their guidance and support. Of course, the production of a newsletter is necessarily a collective effort. We are appreciative of all those TASA members who have made contributions. We are indebted to Sally Daly, Eileen Clark and Roger Wilkinson in particular for their dedication, competence and (thankfully) good humour.

We look forward to our continuing involvement with NEXUS and hope that you can put up with our occasional foray into popular culture.

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President’s Letter

Jo Lindsay

Welcome to the first edition of NEXUS for 2014. I often develop a sense of serene optimism about the world, life and work when I am on my annual summer camping holiday but then the real world intrudes by the time I spring back to my desk in early February. I retain my feeling of optimism about the sociological project in general and TASA as an organisation of course, but confess to a sense of weakness when confronted with growing social problems and the challenge for Sociologists to have an impact on them. So it has been good in the course of preparation for teaching to be inspired by the work of passionate social scientists in the World Social Science Report 2013 Changing Global Environments published by the OECD. The editors argue we need to be bold enough to reframe ‘global environmental change as a fundamentally social process’, to be better at inserting ourselves into ‘real world problem solving’, more reflexive and interdisciplinary. If you need convincing that our work remains as relevant and necessary as ever, I encourage you to give this report a read.

The year ahead is shaping up to be productive and busy for TASA. Karen Soldatic (TASA postgraduate portfolio) is leading the development of an important national event The Future Workforce Of Australian Social Science to be held in July at the University of New South Wales. We will keep you posted as the details are confirmed! I know that planning for other key TASA events is well underway too, including plans for our next conference and thematic group activities. We are in the process of convening panels to judge our two prestigious book prizes, the Raewyn Connel Prize and the Steven Crook memorial prize and this year is also an election year for the TASA Executive.

While we may be hoping that the Excellence In Research for Australia (ERA) scheme will be subject to cuts by the new government, the Australian Research Council (ARC) are working toward the implementation of ERA 2015. The draft ERA 2015 guidelines have been released for consultation but the dates for the ERA have not yet been specified; see http://www.arc.gov.au/era/current_consult.htm. The process seems very similar to last time. There is no new impact agenda and the emphasis remains on quality grants and publications. The proposed changes seem to be technical and minor so at this stage TASA will not be making a submission.

Before closing, a brief update on arrangements for the last year of our contract with the publisher of the journal Health Sociology Review (HSR). The outgoing editors left the journal in very good shape, there is enough copy prepared for the 2014 editions and an editorial assistant is in place to ensure the editing process runs smoothly. James Davidson, the publisher, thanked the Editorial team and Deb King for their ‘thorough and responsible handover of HSR. Authors and readers will greatly appreciate it.’ In the meantime we are continuing our discussions with the publisher about the viability of TASA purchasing the journal and we will keep you posted on any new developments.

Congratulations to Sue Malta and Christopher Baker on this first edition of NEXUS from their editorial term.

All the best

Jo

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John Holmwood is President of the British Sociological Association and co-founder of the Campaign for the Public University, set up shortly after the publication in the UK of the Browne Report in 2010 to defend the principles of public higher education. He organised the Alternative White Paper: In Defence of Public Higher Education and is editor of A Manifesto for the Public University. More recently, he has turned his attention to publicising the wider reduction of public values to the market, by helping to establish a new, free online magazine of public sociology, Discover Society.

In his keynote address to the TASA conference John described the impact of the new marketised regime of higher education in England (a more detailed version of changes is found in an article, ‘From social rights to the market; neo-liberalism and the knowledge economy’ in the International Journal of Lifelong Education and available free online. He explains:

The emphasis on neoliberal policies for higher education are not unique to England and Australia, but have proceeded furthest in those domains. In England, this is partly because the creation of an unified system of public higher education after the Robbins Report in 1963 made it vulnerable to direct government intervention.

The new fee regime in England (post, the Browne Review) removes all direct public funding from undergraduate degrees in social sciences, arts and humanities. It is designed to create a level playing field to allow for-profit institutions to enter the ‘market’ (eg Pearson and Apollo Group) with access to students carrying loans. These institutions do not have to meet the other functions of universities, and, at the same time as spending around 25% of revenues on advertising, provide returns to shareholders and large executive salaries, all of which are funded by student fees. The Government's intention is that they will compete to help keep fees down for the majority of students in higher education, but it is unlikely that this will occur except by undermining the range of functions met by the public universities with which they compete.

For their part, senior managers of supposedly 'elite' universities (essentially the Russell Group) are lobbying for the fee cap to be lifted. They describe their universities as 'international' and their wish is to charge fees at the same level as currently charged to overseas students – in other words ‘home’ students will be the same as ‘overseas’ students. There is, of course, no justification for higher fees for the latter, once taxpayer direct funding is removed and the level of overseas students indicates what the ‘market’ will bear.

This marks a shift from education as a publicly funded social right (Robbins Report, 1963) to education as part-public good, part-private investment in human capital (Dearing Report, 1997) to education as a purely private investment in human capital (Browne, 2010). We are now in a thoroughgoing neoliberal regime where the public good and private benefit, including from the financialisation and privatisation of HE are regarded as the same.

However, all the evidence is that the new system will be as costly to taxpayers (in consequence of the likely defaults on student loans repayment – currently calculated at 40% of loans). However, these will not be borne by current taxpayers who are protected from contributing to the benefits of higher education by tax cuts, while future taxpayers, which include the new cohorts of heavily-indebted students, will have to pay.

One reason for this situation is changes in demography and the electoral politics of voting. Younger people tend not to vote, and there are fewer of them than of older people, so it is easy to shift costs onto younger people as a form of generational injustice. For someone leaving home and entering university, £21,000 seems like a high income and 9p in the £ repayment rate not too bad. They do not notice that the Government that introduced it also reduced the tax rate on people earning over £150,000 by 5p in the £ because it was regarded as too much of a disincentive.

These changes are connected to wider issues of social inequality. The UK is now in the top ten most unequal countries in the world, with 27% of children living in poverty. Inequality has widened since 1980 and universities are now part of the production and reproduction of inequality in their role in a global knowledge economy run on neoliberal policies. The country is being run for the benefit of the top 10% and Government no longer act on the basis of an inclusive public interest in securing the well-being of

continued on p. 16
Digital Sociology at TASA 2013
Alexia Maddox, Theresa Sauter and Deborah Lupton

In November, the 2013 TASA conference was the first in Australia to host streams on digital sociology. It was the Association’s 50th anniversary and the inauguration of digital sociology in Australia. Theresa Sauter circulated an expression of interest for papers aligned with digital sociology through the Cultural Sociology thematic group and organised two sessions around the theme, although an engagement with the digital sparked throughout the conference.

The digital sociology sessions were held on Wednesday, 27 November, and were extremely well-attended. The popularity of the sessions and the engaged discussion they generated clearly showed that digital sociology is on the rise in Australia. In the opening presentation, Deborah Lupton argued that digital sociology encompasses all things digital, not just the cyber, and is a new way to enliven sociology. She outlined four key dimensions of digital sociology, including (1) professional digital practice, (2) sociological analyses of digital media use, (3) digital data analysis and (4) critical digital sociology. Deborah’s paper was followed by several interesting case studies that exemplified what ‘doing’ digital sociology might look like. In a joint paper, Timothy Graham and Theresa Sauter considered the ontological provocations of imminent wearable computing technologies through the example of Google Glass. Alerted by Latour to Gabriel Tarde’s concept of the monad, they postulated that Google Glass provides an example through which to trace and make visible entities in a digital network.

Continuing the Google theme, David Collis next conceptualised the Google PageRank algorithm as an autistoid technology that institutes a ‘hyperlink ethic’, which transforms the way information is organised online. Drawing on psychoanalytically informed social theory, his presentation exemplified how to account for the unique structure and agency of digital life. Erin Carlisle concluded the first session with a paper on the Australian political panel TV program Q&A. She questioned the applicability of traditional public sphere theory to despatialised, mediatised communication. Erin’s paper provided an excellent example of how digital sociology can be useful in reconceptualising publics in light of digital developments.

Theresa Sauter opened the second session with a critical perspective on the label ‘digital sociology’. While a keen proponent of the emergence of the sub-discipline or interest area, she cautioned about the use of the label. While viewing the idea of digital sociology as an opportunity to reaffirm the contribution of sociology to the digitisation of social life, showing its willingness to adapt its craft, she brought the critical perspective to emphasise the danger inherent in this discussion of reinforcing binaries between the humanities/qualitative studies and the sciences/quantitative/big data work. She argued that good digital sociology needs to be open to interdisciplinarity and to acknowledge the unique culture, architecture and affordances of the digital, as well as to consider the emergence of new political and ethical power relations in the realm of the digital.

Tristan Kennedy used his research on online heavy metal subcultures to reflect on ethical and methodological considerations surrounding privacy and consent when studying digital communities. Tim Jordan (also on behalf of Kim Humphrey) conceptualised ethical consumption apps. He considered how new moralities emerge in the context of digital interaction, which reconfigure the ideological and material complicity of consumers and disturb the notion of the consumer as agent. Finally, Ashlin Lee presented his theoretical framework for understanding ‘convergent’ mobile technology. He showed how a shift in the materiality and sociality of digital communication and consumption necessitates new ways of conceptualising the entangled reciprocal relationships between humans and technologies.

Outside of these sessions, several presentations in the TASA program covered sociological research into life online, including ethical questions raised by Brady Robards on managing the researcher–participant relationship on social network sites, Alexia Maddox’s research into the social impact of buying drugs online and Sue Malta’s research into older adults’ online dating practices. Muna Al Ghuraibi increased our intercultural awareness of social media use through her research into uses of social media as new pathways to civic participation in Saudi Arabia.

The distribution of digital research across the TASA conference program revealed common questions of ethical practice in the digital environment, exploration of new methods for social analysis and the need for theoretical development to integrate digital social practices. These elements of common
enquiry, across a diverse social research program, from youth to ageing, sexting to online drug purchasing, suggests that a call for the formation of a community of practice around this topic area is timely.

As Deborah noted in her presentation, many sociologists, including those in Australia, have been researching computer technologies and online interactions ever since personal computers began to be available to the general public in the mid-1980s. These topics are not new, but what is new is that the technologies have changed and become ever-more pervasive in everyday life as we have moved from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and now to Web 3.0 (the Internet of Things). The term digital sociology incorporates these developments by encompassing all things digital, and is also a nod to other disciplinary terms now in use such as digital anthropology, digital humanities and digital cultures. A key aspect of adding the digital to sociology is introducing the discussion of how sociological theory, methods and research can evolve to embed an understanding of the digital into their generation and practice.

Who are we?
For those interested in the emergence of digital sociology as a sub-discipline, Deborah Lupton (deborah.lupton@canberra.edu.au), Alexia Maddox (alexia.maddox@curtin.edu.au) and Theresa Sauter (t.sauter@qut.edu.au) have established an Australian Digital Sociology research network. Please contact any of us if you would like to join!

Deborah has been instrumental in developing ideas around digital sociology in Australia and internationally, including numerous posts on her blog This Sociological Life. She has been researching and writing about digital technologies since the mid-1990s. Her current interests in this topic include critical studies of digital health, self-tracking and quantified self practices, big data cultures, the digitised body, using digital technologies as part of ‘live sociology’ and engaging in digital public sociology. Deborah is currently working on a book entitled Digital Sociology for Routledge that is bringing all these topics (and many more) together.

Theresa is a social theorist with an interest in the entanglement of social practices, subjectivities and digital technologies. Her research seeks to develop historically aware, non-technologically deterministic understandings of the techno–social hybrid assemblages that are produced and shaped where human users and non-human technologies converge. The digital enactment of everyday behaviour offers unique opportunities for doing ‘live’ sociology – observing and analysing social practices and interactions as they occur in real time, and capturing and archiving them for future use. Theresa’s work seeks to leverage these opportunities through interdisciplinary and mixed methods approaches, with a focus on developing critical thick descriptions of the unique cultures, architectures and power relations of digital landscapes.

Alexia identifies as a digital sociologist interested in contemporary patterns of social organisation that are global and mediated through ICTs. This interest harks back to her self-classification as an urban sociologist, with the new social terrain being characterised by a digital environment. Her interest in community studies and online connectivity takes the form of exploring research methods, concepts and contemporary trends surrounding the digital experience of community. Areas she is currently attuned to include research into alternative currencies such as Bitcoin, Dark Net Markets, and Hacker communities populated with information libertarians and anarchists. These domains of interest speak to her fascination with dynamic, mobile and distributed open social structures that cohere around ambiguous and frontier social spaces. She is currently working on a book entitled Research Methods and Global Online Communities.

Some useful digital sociology links
Brady Robards’ storify of tweets from the TASA 2013 conference: http://bradyrobars.com/post/68958557991/tasa-2013


BSA Digital Sociology study group blog: http://digitalsociology.org.uk/

Eszter Hargittai's discussion of the Twitter data grants program: http://crookedtimber.org/2014/02/06/wait-so-what-do-you-still-own/

Mark Carrigan's blog: http://markcarrigan.net/category/blog/digital-sociology/

Culture Digitally blog: http://culturedigitally.org/

Selfie research: http://nataliehendry.com/projects-2/the-selfie-project/
I have just finished my thirtieth year as an academic teacher. I recently calculated that since I started at university as a student at the beginning of 1977, I’ve spent about 5000 hours in a classroom (as either a student or a teacher) and about 50,000 hours in writing activities. That’s one hour of teaching for every ten hours of writing. If I count marking, preparation, and supervising, it would still only come up to two hours of teaching for every ten hours of writing. So while I have always been diligent in being an academic teacher, it’s never been a major part of what I do as an academic.

When I first became a university student in 1977, I was 25. I had spent the seven years after leaving school doing various things: training to be a primary school teacher, being a primary school teacher (I lasted less than a year; I liked the kids but hated the school system), doing some short-term jobs. Perhaps because of those seven years, I was no more than four months into my first year as an undergraduate student when I realised I wanted to stay in academia for a long time; to me it seemed like the good life (and 37 years later I still think it is). More accurately, what I wanted to be was an academic writer; I figured if I could get my foot in the door, I’d do whatever else went with the job but focus mainly on the writing.

The last year of my PhD (1984) was also my first year of academic work and was my first serious engagement with university teaching (I did virtually no casual teaching). By this time, I was already aware that where young children (I had my first child at 23) are very keen to learn and usually respond directly to being taught, older kids (I taught Grade 6 when I was a school teacher) are much more idiosyncratic. By age 12 some are already resistant to being taught, some can be coaxed, and a few are still as keen to learn as they were at five, but even those who are still keen learn in their own ways.

In other words, teaching is much more a matter of encouraging people who want to learn to do the learning themselves. This is to say that I think all learning is idiosyncratic in some way or another, whether it’s learning to drive, or learning nuclear physics, or learning Foucault. In my view, then, even with direct instruction, the only teaching that can work is that to a person who wants to learn.

For direct instruction, they themselves have to identify what they want to know and then ask, whether explicitly or implicitly ‘How do I do this?’, even then they’ll interpret what the teacher tells them through their own way of seeing the world.

In sociology, which is so obviously a discipline of arguments with no settled truths at all, I’ve never been able to see the point of trying to teach as if some or other aspect of the discipline were true, in the sense that mathematical equations are true. Sociology teaching, for me, especially lecturing, is about trying to engage with students in a bid to inspire them to engage with the material in such a way that they teach themselves, as it were.

This brings me back to my 30 years of engaging with students. It would be a lie to say that I’ve enjoyed engaging with all my students. I haven’t. Some university students (whether at 17 or 77, and I’ve had them right across the spectrum) want something other than learning from their university experience (whether it’s the qualification, or the socialising, or political activity, or whatever). They want neither to be inspired to learn nor to receive direct instruction in the technical things.

I respect these people’s right to tackle university in this way. It’s their choice (and their money) and university doesn’t have to be what we academics say it should be. I’m kind to them and try to help them get through, but I can’t say I enjoy engaging with them. Their way of ‘getting through’ unfortunately often includes either sitting with ‘dead eyes’ in my lectures or looking at their phones (both heartbreakers I think). Because I have a strict and loudly announced voluntary attendance policy (I beg them to come only if they want to be there), this amazes me. It’s as if they think I’m trying to trick them into failing and/or they figure something will seep into them by osmosis if they sit in a room for a while.

Of the others, I’m happy enough if all they want is some direct instruction in a few things. These are people who’ve formed their views about things and only want to know how best to put them down so as to get the best grade they can. I’m especially happy if they’re frank about this. In truth, I recognise a
lot of myself in this behaviour. My favourite students, though, are the ones who are keen to be inspired to learn and keen to receive direct instruction in how they might put down their thoughts to their best advantage.

To all this I should add that I’ve been very lucky in the topics I’ve been able to teach. While I’ve done quite a few years in first-year teaching, mostly my undergraduate teaching has been in senior courses on matters I’ve been thinking about and writing about for a very long time – especially matters of power, politics, government, and law. In these courses, I can lecture about things with genuine intellectual interest. I’m told this comes across to the students. I hope so.

Sadly, I can see at least some writing on the wall for this way of teaching undergraduates. Australian universities are locked in battle with one another to raise sufficient funds for undergraduate education, which is harder and harder to do. As such, they seem to have less and less tolerance for undergraduate courses that attract fewer than a hundred students and concentrate solely on intellectual matters. In dreadful management speak, these courses do not ‘sweat the assets’ as they supposedly should. The trend seems to be towards big multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary offerings which attract many hundreds of students, whether in person, or, even better, on-line.

I have to say that this trend fills me with dread. Because I often find that the words ‘multidisciplinary’ and ‘interdisciplinary’ are actually euphemisms for ‘without intellectual rigour’, I worry that the main organising principle of such courses is popularity. I guess it’s possible that they could be both popular and intellectually rigorous, but I haven’t seen too many that are. The trend seems to be happening in Honours too, where all students in a school or faculty or even university are compelled to do some sort of ‘advanced skills’ course, sometimes in place of specialist disciplinary courses.

Even at the PhD level, the idea that students must finish ‘on time’ is becoming more and more prominent. Why can’t they take as long as they like and slowly build the necessary intellectual engagement, to their benefit and to the benefit of scholarship more broadly? Sure, workload allocation might have to stop after a certain number of years, but to my way of thinking there is no need to insist that everyone doing a PhD should conform to a supposedly standard way of going about it.

Enough ranting; I should finish by saying something more about the ‘direct instruction’ component of my sociology teaching. Remembering that I think this sort of teaching only works when the students want it, I tend to include things like:

- Mixing primary and secondary sources in sociology
- Learning to argue through the sources and learning how to make this ‘your’ own argument
- The need for care with referencing
- The need to proofread as if someone else wrote what you’ve written
- The need to recognise the fact that once they get going, all pieces of writing take on a life of their own, which demands attention.

That will do from my end. I’m keen to hear your views.

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**2013 TASA Honours Student Award**

The TASA Honours Student Award is available annually for the best Honours student in Sociology in each Australian university. Each winner receives a one-year student membership to TASA, making the student eligible for conference discounts, membership of thematic groups and copies of NEXUS and the e-list. A warm congratulations is extended to the recipients of the 2013 TASA Honours Student Award:

- Sam Loy  
  Australian Catholic University
- Kellie Bousfield  
  Charles Sturt University
- Alexandra James  
  Deakin University:
- Sarah Mander  
  Monash University
- Hayley Mowat  
  Swinburne University of Technology
- Joe Alizzi  
  University of New South Wales
- Megan Sharp  
  University of Newcastle
- Alison Schmidt  
  University of Queensland
- Rebecca Banham  
  University of Tasmania
- Catherine Papadopoullos  
  Victoria University

As Gary looks back at a long teaching career, I am an early career academic on the precipice of becoming a mid-career academic. I started teaching in higher education in 2004, which coincided with the first year of my PhD. I then landed my first full-time academic contract in 2007 when nearing completion of my PhD, which then became an ongoing position (now tenure) when I moved to UTAS in 2009. This career trajectory has been starkly different to many others I have known, and I actively remind my PhD students that this is the result of hard work mixed with good fortune.

My teaching career so far has similarities with and differences to Gary's experiences. First, we both did other things before moving into sociology. I share the experiences of training to be a primary school teacher (I too hated the system, which I felt did little to inspire and foster a joy for learning and knowledge), various jobs that were largely unfulfilling, and I also completed a Bachelor of Photography (but please, do not ask me to be TASA's official photographer!).

Second, like Gary, these experiences – as well as reading sociology books for pleasure – encouraged me to pursue an academic career as a sociologist. However, compared with Gary, I did so under very different circumstances. Neoliberal logic had entrenched itself into higher education, and I was working at a university that, even though it had the slogan of 'the university of the real world', did not seem to appreciate the role of humanities and social sciences in their own right. I came into my career knowing this, and with a strong awareness that I would have a split academic identity: a lecturer, a researcher, and providing ‘service’ (whatever that meant). I also knew these identities would be split across multiple sites – particular university campuses would determine my academic identity and at only one of them was I considered a researcher. When the university abandoned the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Science degrees and the vast majority of my colleagues, I was only 2.5 months into my full time teaching contract. At that point, I also found that my reception at various university campuses substantially changed for the worse. This was how I was introduced to what it meant to have an academic career. For these reasons, I quiver at the terms ‘change management’, ‘reinvigorate’ and ‘restructure’. But I digress.

Similar to Gary, I found that my (pre-service) teaching experiences in primary education were to inform my approaches to teaching in higher education. When teaching Grade 7 students, I found that using their experiences was a way to engage them and get them involved. I also found that if I gave them some flexibility in how they completed tasks, more of the class would get involved and contribute. And teaching this Grade 7 class was also the source of one of my proudest and informative moments. One student – who was normally disengaged and rowdy – voluntarily stayed behind during lunchtime to work on a task I had set. While helping him to complete this task, he shared with me some details on his personal life, which shed significant insight into why he had been disengaged and rowdy. This experience, which occurred in 2000, remains vivid today.

So I agree with Gary that teaching involves going beyond encouraging people. For me, I assume that a range of idiosyncrasies exists in my classroom, and therefore I incorporate a range of teaching and learning strategies (or blended learning). This involves direct instruction, but also many techniques I learnt during my primary education degree, such as scaffolding, modelling, and problem solving strategies. I am also influenced by teachers I had in early primary school (or infants school as I knew it), who identified that my significant hearing problem (that was later fixed) had impact on my academic results and thus they actively sought different ways to assess my knowledge. Through their intervention,
I progressed from the bottom 5% to the top 5% of my year level in four years. This powerful experience means I am acutely aware that assessment needs to cater for different styles of learning, and expressions of that learning. It also highlights that my actions as a teacher can have significant effects on student engagement and their learning outcomes. Lastly, my photography degree has encouraged me to think creatively, and to incorporate creative expression into teaching and learning, which sometimes involves my students in art production.

While Gary has been lucky to teach in areas that align with his research interests, I – like so many early career academics – have been stuck teaching units that ‘need to be taught’. From 2005 to 2013, there was only one year that I have not been the unit coordinator for first year sociology, and that was when I took study leave (2012). While teaching first year sociology has been very rewarding and has greatly improved my own sociological knowledge, it has also been restricting. The rationalisation of course and unit offerings has also meant that there are units that ‘need to be taught’ to meet major requirements, and therefore the possibility of teaching in my research areas – science and technology studies, and health and illness – has (so far) been impossible. Until recently, I had new units every Semester 1 to teach that were outside of my knowledge, and I would only be one week ahead of my students. Depending on program needs, I may teach my favourite unit, *The Body in Society*, once every two years. So while I hear a lot of rhetoric about the teaching–research nexus, I am yet to see it translated into reality for sociology, even in a large sociology program like the one I am fortunate to be part of at UTAS. Nor am I likely to, given the predominant focus on maximising student load and eliminating small classes (or, as I’ve heard it called, ‘minimising waste’).

The ‘writing on the wall’ that Gary mentions is here. Added to this mix are breadth units with hundreds of students. As a critic of generic graduate attributes (see my article in NEXUS, 25(2): 22–24), I am yet to be convinced of their relevance and utility. Perhaps this will change when they are implemented at UTAS (this year, I believe). I do wonder what these units are really meant to deliver to students, apart from delivering very basic, seemingly meaningless skills, which, if they are indeed generic, should be fostered, within discipline-specific areas in any case. And, to make Gary shudder, it is likely they will be delivered entirely online, probably as a ‘flipped’ classroom. However, what is more concerning in the neoliberal higher education sector is what they may mean for first year (sociology) enrolments, particularly given the ongoing pressure to increase enrolments. There seem to be some contradictions in these discourses.

And yet, as usual, these bigger developments tend to mean very little for what my students and I actually do in the classroom, though they could make for interesting learning exercises……

To return to the issue of online teaching, this has also been the reality of my teaching career. When I first started teaching in 2004, online teaching and learning websites were generally repositories for lecture slides, some readings, and perhaps audio recordings of the lectures. For some, it remains this way. However, there are also many teaching and learning websites that are much more dynamic and with more interactive content. Certainly, the expectation seems to be to provide more on line, and to make it as interactive as possible. There is also a presumption that academics can easily translate all we teach into an online environment and, if we cannot, then it’s our problem – we need to adapt and change. Of course, any training we do is generally not counted in workload calculations. I should say, however, that I am not resistant to online forms of teaching and learning. I see it is another way students can learn and it greatly assists my large cohort of distance students. Furthermore, from discussions with my students, they don’t want face-to-face teaching replaced with online forms of learning, but they do want options. They want flexible learning, and that is not the same as simply moving everything on line. Lastly, what are concerning and highly disturbing are management discourses implying that, somehow, online learning and teaching is less time consuming and easier for academics to manage than face-to-face forms of teaching and learning, that it maximises or saves resources, so that we (a resource) have more time to do other things. It is these elements that we must push back against.

Some of my piece could be construed as whinging, but it is not intended that way. These are some of the tensions we face as academics in the neoliberal higher education sector. Some of it seems separate from what I do; some of it impacts on what I do – but I still get on with what I need to do.

Overall, I agree with Gary – being an academic is the good life.
The Times They Were A-Changing: Australian Sociology in the Sixties

Notes from Raewyn Connell’s plenary address, TASA Conference, November 2013

The Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand was launched in 1963, at the high tide of post-war nation-building and industrialisation. With the British Empire loyalist Bob Menzies still in control, that year also saw nuclear bomb testing at Maralinga, jets replacing propellers on Australia’s trunk routes, and The Beatles and Johnny O’Keefe on the airwaves.

The university system was expanding, as part of the nation-building effort, and sociology was what a modern university needed to have. The group who founded SAANZ thought Australia and New Zealand were making a ‘late start’ with sociology (that’s debatable in world terms, but their eyes were on the USA and UK). They were, mostly, academic outsiders, though White, middle class, and almost all of them men.

Within a very few years, a remarkable feat of institution building was accomplished. Departments were founded (eleven, by the second half of the 1970s), the Association was set up and quadrupled in membership in five years, a respectable academic journal was founded, a pop sociology best-seller appeared, a textbook on Australian Society was produced and went through multiple editions. Teaching programs doubled and tripled in size as a flood of students came in, research programs and higher degree enrolments took off, and a literature of research monographs began to flow.

All this is well documented in the pages of the early Journal and in the founders’ own narratives; they were proud of this growth and recorded it carefully. But what was the intellectual and social project that underlay the institutional growth?

One clue to this is the rhetoric of “myth busting” that was common in Australian sociological writing of the 1960s. Time and again, the sociologists claimed to be confronting myths about Australia, especially the myth of Australian “egalitarianism”, with the hard facts produced by research. In much of their writing there was an insistence on the scientificity of sociology. This was reflected even in the style of writing, which was usually formal, serious, and abstracted.

The guarantee of scientificity was conformity to the methodological canons established by sociologists in the global metropole, especially the USA and UK. Indeed much of what was published in the Journal under its first editors was essentially replication of studies from those countries. A common title was “X in Australia”, where “X” was any phenomenon already documented in metropolitan social science – stratification, religion, women, elites, occupational prestige, and so on. It was enough to show that such a phenomenon could also be found in Australia and documented by approved research techniques.

What made a random collection of data-collection exercises into “sociology” was that they were seen as contributions to the empirical documentation of the entity that was the new science’s object of knowledge. This was named in the title of the first textbook: Australian Society. The conception of “a society” was borrowed from American functionalism, and Australia was understood to be one of the species “modern society” – urban, democratic, industrialized; i.e. it was the same thing as modern society in the USA, UK, France or Germany – the main difference being that it was smaller and at another map reference. Identification with the metropole justified the habit of taking concepts, methods and research findings from the metropole as immediately applicable to Australian life. The practices of the founding years left a legacy of intellectual extraversion, i.e. colonial deference to the intellectual authority of the global North, that is still with us.

At the time, the project launched in the years around 1963 was exciting and illuminating. It pictured an Australia without corks on its hat, recognizable to people living in cities in the age of atomic bombs and rock ‘n’ roll. Sociology was thought radical, even revolutionary. That’s why students flooded into sociology courses in the 1960s and 1970s, which gave them, for the first time in the history of Australian universities, the chance to make a systematic, informed and critical study of their own society.

Most of the academics who founded SAANZ were far from being revolutionaries – the new discipline gave them a pathway into the established institutions, not against them. But they certainly saw sociological knowledge as an important contribution to social reform. Leading professors of sociology including Sol Encel, Jerzy Zubrzycki and John Western conducted policy research and did have an impact on public policy.
And though much of what was published in the *Journal* and in the monographs was pedestrian, some very fine sociology was also produced, especially the work of Jean Martin. She was the founding professor of sociology at La Trobe, coming from a background in the zone between anthropology and sociology; she had studied at Chicago as well as in Australia. From the 1940s to the 1960s she produced beautiful ethnographic studies of kinship, community life and migration, in both rural and city contexts.

A high point of her work was *Refugee Settlers* (1965), based on two waves of interviewing of post-war refugees who wound up in an Australian country town. In this tightly-written book, Martin conveyed the tension and tragedy of refugee life, as well as the multiple narratives. She also conveyed a striking image of Anglo-Australian society in the 1950s as seen from below: closed, racist, hierarchical and self-satisfied. It is a book with more than one message for the 2010s.

But there were also absences and contradictions in the project of making Australian sociology. Many of the students in the overflowing sociology courses were involved in the intense struggle against Australian complicity in the American war on Vietnam. Australian sociology said almost nothing about where the appalling violence of that war came from. State terror, official lying, racism and institutionalized brutality weren’t part of the narrative of modernity. The younger sociologists’ demand for a sociology that spoke to realities of violence and exploitation was part of the conflict in SAANZ that boiled up at the 1972 conference and led to a changing of the guard in the Association.

Because modernity was understood by contrast with the non-modern and the non-advanced, Australian sociology in its early years said almost nothing about colonized people, who were understood to be the business of Anthropology or perhaps History. Therefore Australian sociology did not see its object of knowledge, ‘Australian Society’, as a settler–colonial society with a formative relationship with imperial history and Indigenous societies. Strikingly, the most powerful statements about Aboriginal peoples’ marginalisation in Australian Society, in the early pages of the *Journal*, were written by a US sociologist, Leonard Broom.

Fifteen years after the foundation of SAANZ, the project of the founding generation was being displaced. In the institutional space that the founders had created, a range of more radical projects was under way – feminist sociology, class analysis, critical health sociology, industrial sociology and early cultural studies among them. By the late 1980s, these projects were meeting the chill winds of neoliberalism as it transformed the Australian public realm.

By the turn of the century the universities, like the national government, had abandoned the nation-building project and were rapidly moving into an era of corporatisation of institutions and commodification of knowledge. TASA has resisted the more toxic consequences of these changes and has seen new perspectives and initiatives – the formation of an Indigenous Issues group in 2006 being a particularly important step. We will continue to change, I’m sure. In grappling with the dilemmas of our New Times, a critical understanding of how Sociology came into institutional existence in this country in the New Times of the 1960s is worth having.
The heightened emotions during the standing ovation that followed Raewyn Connell’s valedictory lecture at the 2013 annual conference made one feel that this is the end of an era for Australian sociology. The baby boomer generation has finally retired, but it is not clear what comes next. Connell gave a view of the history of Australian sociology, from a reformist to a radical discipline, and how it should develop through engaging with critical voices in the South. She also encouraged us to hold firm during cuts and restructuring in universities.

Although Connell might disapprove of this approach, one way to understand these changes is to consider debates about the history of the discipline in the USA. We still get many of our ideas from the USA even if we may like to feel there is a distinctive Australian sociological imagination. I will summarise recent contributions by Stephen Turner, Mathieu Deflem and Bryan Turner, and give my own views on what might be happening.

Stephen Turner: do-gooders or scientists?
In a recent critical history of American sociology, Stephen Turner identifies a conflict or tension going back to the late nineteenth century between those who see sociology as an activist campaigning discipline of a similar character to social work and those who wish to establish sociology as a social science. Turner argues that the scientific project failed, leading to a dramatic fall during the 1980s of enrolments in sociology majors in American universities, and in membership of the American Sociological Association. There has only been a revival since the election of Michael Burawoy as President in 2003, through re-branding the discipline as "public sociology".

Turner’s argument is slightly more contentious, because he explains declining standards as arising from feminisation. Campaigners and reformers in the late nineteenth century were mainly women such as Jane Addams who had little interest in theory, and he sees continuity in how the discipline is developing today. To complicate matters, Turner views quantitative sociologists as not being scientific, because most do not engage with big issues. At present, the discipline is divided on gender and age lines in that “silverbacks” (a rather disparaging term for older male sociologists who see sociology as a science) continue to occupy key positions.

Mathieu Deflem: a decline in standards?
Mathieu Deflem makes a direct link between structural changes in how sociology is taught in universities and the intellectual character of the discipline. He argues that the rise in enrolments took place because administrators saw sociology as a soft subject. Sociologists have responded by reducing content, resulting in a new generation that knows little about theoretical and methodological issues. Deflem complains that the “success of the sociological profession [measured in increasing enrolments] has taken place with an extremely underdeveloped group of sociologists who are educated and skilled with less distinction than ever before”. He also suggests that the American Sociological Association is to blame in placing too much emphasis on marketing, and the pursuit of increasing numbers at all costs.

Bryan Turner: novelty or standardisation?
During the 1980s, Bryan Turner saw competition for status and rewards in a limited job market as a cause of fragmentation into new sub-fields and approaches. Most recently, he has blamed auditing for standardisation and a lack of creativity in Britain and Australia, but sees America as protected by the size of the discipline. Despite the efforts made to promote public sociology in the USA, he notes that most sociologists write for narrow audiences. Other disciplines, such as psychology and economics, are producing popular books that incorporate sociological ideas.

The current state of the discipline
Like other sociologists with an ideological bias, these critics shift tack when faced with inconvenient facts, and offer what Mike Emmison has described as a caricature of how sociology is actually taught and practised. The critics dislike both critical theory and feminism, but also interpretivism and postmodernism. Nevertheless, they still offer many interesting observations and ideas on the state of the discipline. Stephen Turner reminds us, for example, that despite feminisation, and a commitment to diversity, there continued on p. 23
Putting the Social into My Sociology: Confessions of a First-Timer

PENNY O'SHEA
University of New England

I couldn't help it. I had to wonder if I really belonged here. Only five minutes ago, I had briskly walked past the sign that announced I was now on the Caulfield Campus of Monash University and here I was standing between Building H and Building K in the early morning sunshine. I was here to attend TASA's Annual Conference, here to celebrate TASA's 50th birthday, and it was my first time on a university campus...ever.

I imagine that this peculiarity is something that could only occur in the new millennium, in the digital age of distance education, at a time where middle-aged women are encouraged to pursue something that was not available to them in their youth and in an era of increased opportunity where, despite gender and age, a door opened. I was 50 years old when I decided to commence an undergraduate degree. It had been 32 years since I had last studied, for my HSC, and in the intervening years, I had married, raised three children, and was now grandmother to another three. All that didn't matter – I had a thirst for learning and dived headfirst into my part-time off campus Bachelor of Social Science at the University of New England (UNE), juggling study with full-time work, family, and life in general. There was no sensible and discerning decision process used to choose to study by distance; although I live in Newcastle and could have studied on campus at the University of Newcastle, when I googled 'sociology degrees', UNE was the top hit and my fate was sealed.

Fast forward two years and here I was, halfway through my degree, and for the very first time soaking up the atmosphere of a 'real' campus, not the 'virtual' one I had experienced thus far. Don't get me wrong, I love studying externally where flexibility is the key and the support is strong. For me, there are no obvious drawbacks to studying online. I have done well, won a Vice Chancellor's Scholar Academic Development Award, and as a result was standing here waiting for the next phase of my 'education' to begin.

It is hard to describe the wonder and excitement that followed over the next four days. It was like I had 'come home'. I loved every minute of the conference and tried to capture my exhilaration in a daily blog that I posted for family and friends. I was fascinated by the speakers who gave an overview of employment opportunities outside academia for working sociologists. I did have the jump on the postgraduates though – they were looking for a job to complement their study while I was studying to complement my job! (I work for a Federal Government department who support me by paying my tuition, and in return I am keen to look for research opportunities to support the work they do.)

After an enjoyable beginning to the conference, I stayed for the welcome drinks and chatted to a few other delegates. While it can be a bit overwhelming to find yourself in a room full of people who seemingly know each other when you know no-one, my experience across the whole conference was one of friendliness and inclusion. Many people went out of their way to talk to those who were standing alone and thus make them feel welcome.

My experience the next day must have seemed almost laughable to other delegates. This was a day of firsts. The day I sat in a lecture theatre for the very first time, the day I first sat in a tutorial room taking notes, my first time rubbing shoulders with others who, like me, valued education, knowledge, thought and learning. I was in heaven. I can still recall my sense of anticipation as I read over the options for the thematic group concurrent sessions. I had no 'area of interest', I had no experience, I had little knowledge, but what I had was oodles of enthusiasm. With so much to choose from making the ultimate decision so difficult, I decided to focus on what interests me – economic life, digital sociology and youth studies. They were all wonderful and, in perhaps my proudest moment, on the last day I finally got up the guts to ask a question … and no-one laughed at me!

Another highlight of the week was meeting (and dancing with) Raewyn Connell at the TASA 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner. Earlier that day Professor Connell had reduced me, and many others I suspect, to tears with her keynote address that culminated in a hugely emotional rendition of 'The Times They Are A-Changin'. She received a much deserved standing ovation, a memory that will stay with me for some time.

So how did a fifty something undergraduate that had never before stepped foot on a university campus find the 2013 TASA Conference? She found it bloody marvellous…and she found that she belonged.
the Prize was established to honour the memory of Professor Stephen Crook in recognition of his significant contribution to Australian sociology. Each round, the recipient of the Prize receives:

- $500, a certificate and trophy
- Free conference registration to attend the TASA conference at which the Prize is presented
- An invitation to discuss their book at a Meet the Author session at the TASA conference
- A free publisher’s stand at the conference for the purpose of promoting the book
- An invitation to submit a short paper for the NEXUS newsletter on the book
- Extensive publicity through the TASA membership and wider social science community

Nominations for the 2014 round close 30 April


The Prize is to honour the work of Professor Raewyn Connell in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Australian Sociology. Each round, the recipient of the Prize receives:

- $500, a certificate and trophy
- Free conference registration to attend the TASA conference at which the Prize is presented
- An invitation to discuss their book at a Meet the Author session at the TASA conference
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its citizens. This is, in part, because our economic elites now live offshore (see issue 3 of Discover Society).

Because only a minority of funding – primarily for research – comes from public funds, the Minister responsible already states that the system is private, even if the institutional form is primarily that of a not-for-profit charity (indeed, the government is interested in universities adopting for-profit corporate forms). The commercialisation of knowledge and the privatisation of the public university have fundamental potential consequences for the social sciences.

Public funding of research is directed toward research that has an ‘impact’, primarily in terms of its commercial exploitation or for its relevance to public policy. Here the agenda of ‘big data’ looms large, with the possibility of monetising data and the use of commercial firms in developing analytics for the re-mixing of various data sets to provide the means of evaluating performance and new opportunities to discover markets. The language of openness disguises a new programme of commercial enclosure.

In this context, government is interested in ‘what works’, but as a series of interventions for behavioural change rather than in the transformation of social structures of power and inequality (to modify their effects on health or educational outcomes, for example). The concern is what works, given current levels of inequality, while universities are embedded in the reproduction of that inequality. Funding and government interest will potentially turn toward the anti-social (structural) sciences and away from critical social sciences, like sociology.

The fate of sociology and the fate of the public university seem to be intertwined, an association indicated in the very idea of public sociology. Effectively, neoliberalism seeks to reduce publics to the market. Whereas a public is constituted in other-regarding dialogue, the market aggregates self-regarding individuals. The reduction of higher education to market processes is part of a wider concern to reduce functions of the state to the market, too. What is at stake is democracy itself, and it is being played out in reforms to higher education, by the reduction of the purposes of education to investment in human capital and economic growth that no longer serves an inclusive public interest precisely because of widening inequality.
Postgraduate Completions

If you have completed your postgraduate qualification, why not celebrate it with NEXUS? Please forward your completion information to Karen Soldatic (k.soldatic@unsw.edu.au) for inclusion in our next issue! Our congratulations go to the following people on their achievements.

**Sue Malta**  
Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Swinburne University  
**Love, sex and intimacy in new late-life romantic relationships**  
August 2013  
Supervisors: Associate Professor Karen Farquharson and Professor Michael Gilding

**Summary:** This study investigated romantic relationships that began in later life – after divorce or widowhood, or for those who never married – with a special focus on relationships mediated via online technology. The partnerships were meaningful, important and sexually intimate. However, very few progressed to cohabitation or marriage, with most of the older adults preferring to date or live functionally separate – even when their relationships were long-term and committed – in order to avoid providing care-giving and instrumental support. This phenomenon, which is known in Europe as living apart together (LAT; Levin & Trost 1999), is only now coming to the attention of the Australian research community and only in a quantitative sense (see Reimondos, Evans & Gray 2011). With its qualitative focus, my research therefore presents novel information.

There has been very little in the way of empirical investigation or theorising of older adult late-life romantic relationships. Perhaps this is because older adults represent a population that is socially insignificant and is therefore outside the remit of ‘major sociological explanatory frameworks’ (Aschham 1995: 88)? Regardless of the reasons, the fact remains that theorising late-life romance is problematic. I therefore draw on the orthodoxy of the sociology of ‘personal life’ or what Gilding has argued was once known as the ‘sociology of the family’ (2010: 757) to illuminate the stories within this thesis. I pay particular attention to reflexivity and individualisation in today’s contemporary relationships, especially the work of Giddens (1992) and Bauman (2003) and their concepts of the ‘pure relationship’ and ‘liquid love’ respectively.

My findings indicate that these older adults were looking for, and finding, egalitarian ‘pure’-type relationships based on emotional and sexual equality but not necessarily based on cohabitation or monogamy. I argue that these older adult LAT relationships embody a new family form within Australia and one that will only become more prevalent as society ages. As such, these LAT relationships represent the new orthodoxy of personal life in their focus on individualisation and the maintenance of autonomy. At the same time, they continue to represent the past orthodoxy of the family as an institution, as evidenced by their continuing focus on children and grandchildren in terms of care giving and inheritance issues.

**John Cianchi**  
School of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania  
**I talked to my tree and my tree talked back: radical environmental activists and their relationships with nature**  
November 2013  
Supervisors: Professor Rob White, Dr Max Travers

**Summary:** This thesis is about the relationship between radical environmental activists and nature. It investigates whether, for forest and whaling activists, nature is experienced as an active, as opposed to passive, participant in the construction and shaping of their identity and activism. Two research questions guide the investigation: what are radical environmental activists’ perspectives and lived experiences of nature, and what identity and meaning-making processes are involved in the relational dynamics between these activists and the nature they are defending?

The concepts ‘nature’, ‘self-identity’ and ‘more-than-human agency’ are developed into an analytical framework to support the investigation. A phenomenological perspective guides the inquiry’s focus on the research participants’ lived experiences of defending nature, their changing self-identities and the ways they construct meaning about their lifeworlds.

Forest activists engaged in direct action campaigns designed to prevent clear-felling of old growth forests in Tasmania, and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society activists undertaking campaigns in the Southern Ocean to protect whales, participated in indepth qualitative interviews. A thematic analysis was employed that aims to uncover the phenomenological themes, or experiential elements, of the participants’ experiences.

The inquiry’s findings contribute to environmentalism scholarship and the study of nature–human relationships. They also demonstrate the need to appreciate the role of nature as an active contributor to activist self-identity and culture.
Talk given at the Women’s Drinks, TASA Conference

SARAH MANDER
Monash University

Thank you, and good evening to you all. I am flattered to have been asked to come here alongside JaneMaree Maher and Suzanne Franzway. In the spirit of the conference, I’ll be sharing a few of my thoughts, reflections and aspirations with you tonight.

Allow me to make a brief introduction to qualify myself. I’m the new kid. I completed my Honours in Sociology this year under the tutelage of Catherine Strong and JaneMaree here at Monash. My thesis concerned the representation of the Third World in the form of children and animals, in relation to White First World females, through the visual discourse of volunteer tourism organisations, and looked at the way in which the Third World is represented as a commoditised plaything for the often well-intentioned but fundamentally neoliberal desires of the first world.

As I’m sure those of you who remember your Honours year fondly understand, it is a year that is both challenging and ultimately rewarding. I recall at one supervisor meeting this past July being near tears because I had found an article published that month, in fact that week, which was almost exactly the same as my very specific and unique Honours subject. And I remember Catherine saying to me that that was perfectly normal and alright, and as her Honours supervisor had once told her, part of becoming an academic is realising that we are forever standing on the shoulders of giants. Since then I’ve realised this is one of the things I actually love about the university environment. There is this constant recognition that we are ever-learning and working in an always expanding field of knowledge and understanding and that, of course, we give ourselves room to be human sometimes.

I made it through this year with a not insignificant reliance on coffee and the invaluable support of my partner, family, friends and peers, and I have managed to come out the other side relatively unscathed and, remarkably, still hungry for more. In March, the task of writing 18 000 words seemed positively terrifying, yet now in November, now it’s all done, dusted and submitted, I almost feel like I’ve only just dipped my toes in and that there’s so much more out there to be curious about – and it’s a really exciting and energising feeling! While I’ve made the decision to take twelve months off to re-centre myself and gain a greater amount of work experience, my Honours year has really calcified for me my aspirations for something more at university.

In addition to studying at Monash, I am also involved with the university’s Equity and Diversity Centre as a Project Officer, where I work on a variety of social inclusion programs that involve campaigns around anti-racism, disability support and advancing women in the workplace.

For the past six months, I have had the privilege of working alongside my Director, Kay Gardner, in initiating and facilitating the establishment of an Ally Network. This is a voluntary support, information and referral network for LGBTIQ staff and students within the university. Training for network members draws on the research of Australian academics including Raewyn Connell and David Plummer, and begins by deconstructing hegemonic masculinity to reveal an underlying foundation of anxiety and frustration, homophobia and misogyny. The training for Allies details a list of the characteristics associated with homophobic labelling among primary school aged children. This extensive list includes traits such as being immature, not joining group sports, being perceived as gentle, pacifist or lacking physicality. So, in essence, the list boils down to a system of sanctions which police young boys’ behaviour not to act like girls lest they be irrevocably labelled as ‘gay’. So, in this context, when you say to a young boy “don’t act gay”, what you actually mean is “don’t act like a girl”. As the trainer says so precisely at this point: “What kind of society is this that we live in, where at least 50% of the total population is female, and yet the second worst thing you can be called (apart from gay) is a girl?”

I feel this really hits the nail on the head. It is this question that we, as female sociologists in our varied and diverse fields of interest and through different lenses, voices, discourses and forms of inquiry, are always seeking an answer for.

While preparing for tonight’s talk, I conducted some quick empirical Google research about women and academia, and the results returned a plethora of less than encouraging articles detailing the foreboding challenge that lies before me.

Let me read out some of my favourites from the top results:

• Female Academics Pay Heavy Baby Penalty.
• Why do Female Academics Give Up on Becoming Professors?
Female Scientist or Scholar? You Might Want to Hide Your Name Behind an Initial
Three Cheers for the Token Woman!

This, I might add, is before we bring in intersectionality and traits such as age, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, immigration status, single parenthood the list goes on when we talk about things that might inhibit one's academic career trajectory.

So why on earth would I want to become one of these women in academia?

Working in the practice of Equal Opportunity, I try to remind myself every day that the work I do isn’t about key performance indicators or rankings and stacking up against everyone else in the Group of Eight. The achievements of our work cannot always be measured by percentile or profit and there’s not always a clear way to make sure we’re doing it just as well as they are at Melbourne Uni. My work, and certainly the work of everyone else in my Unit, is fundamentally rooted in feminist theories and principles of social inclusion, equity, enablement and egalitarianism and seeks to level the playing field for those disadvantaged by a culture which is infused with both conscious and unconscious bias towards intersections of disadvantage. Of course, we all know that the practice does not always fit with the theory, and the theory certainly does not always fit with the practice, and that there is a constant to-ing and fro-ing from many grand sociological theories to the applied practice of equity. However, I always find myself humbly going back to the theory. I want to continue learning and understanding the depth of these theories and I want to keep pushing the conventional boundaries and frameworks of knowledge to reimagine a world where being a girl is not such a bad thing.

As I stand in front of this group of highly accomplished academic women, many of whom I have admired and looked up to over the years, whose work is grounded in these same, idealistic and sometimes utopian values of social justice and transformation, I am reminded that of course it is possible. The more that I am inspired, the more I am encouraged, the more I push and the more I make it possible for myself, the less daunting it might seem when, maybe, it comes the time for someone to stand on my shoulders.
I first became interested in how sexual identity might affect a person’s ageing prospects when I turned 40. In my late 40s, I enrolled in a PhD to examine gay men’s experiences of ageing. I collected so much data from 80 interviewees aged 20–79 that my thesis transformed into a study of how changing social circumstances affected gay men’s lives in the period 1950–2000. An edited version of this was published in 2008 as *The Changing World of Gay Men* (Palgrave Macmillan), and included a chapter on gay ageing, entitled ‘Life as an Old Gay Man’. This revealed that the lives of the 22 men over 60 I interviewed were generally lived positively and with optimism and showed relatively little evidence of social isolation. I was still interested in how age and ageing affected gay men’s social and relational lives, that is, I wanted still to investigate how ageing affected their experience and views of relationships and friendships.

Between 2009 and 2011, I collected interviews from gay men in Australia, England, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, and the United States, the result of which was a second book, *Gay Men’s Relationships Across the Life Course* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Here, I looked at how age and ageing affected gay men’s relationships, including their intimate relationships, friendships, fatherhood, cohabitation and marriage, and generational responses to the effect of HIV–AIDS on gay men’s identities. The book was based on interviews with 97 men aged 18–87 in Auckland, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, and Sydney. With the publication of *Gay Men’s Relationships*, some might say that my job was done and mostly this was so, except that one aspect of the research I began when working on my PhD remained undone. This concerned the working lives of gay men and, as neither the first nor second book had really examined the aged/ageing experience of gay men in depth, I proposed a final book on gay men’s working lives, retirement and old age, which Palgrave Macmillan accepted in November 2013.

Because this phase of my research touches on the connection that I think exists between sexuality and ageing, I want to spend the rest of this article looking at it in more detail. The proposal I made was to use unanalysed data I had collected for my first two books and examine the shape of interviewees’ careers, their working histories, and how they anticipated retirement and old age.

In my view, gay men’s working lives are exceptional for at least three reasons. First, there are special circumstances such as being ‘out’ in the workplace, and growing old with HIV, which are mainly the lived experience of gay men and will affect their working lives, retirement and old age. Second, their work histories and careers are often overlooked when politicians, public servants, and the media speak of the male workforce, male occupations, the ‘breadwinner’ and other heteronormative terms used to distinguish between workers on the basis of gender. I would argue, therefore, that one of the stories the book will tell of men at work is that not all men who work are heterosexual or have families to support in conventional settings. Third, the book will provide a forum for a different set of males to speak about their experiences in the workforce, a cohort that until now has not been asked to speak or has chosen not to speak (up) or distinguish itself from the generality of men.

The second half of the book will examine retirement and men’s expectations and experience of old age, as well as the very special experience and needs of a group of gay men who are growing old with HIV. It will also consider the care needs of gay men who are living or planning to live independently in old age, and those who are living or expect to live in residential aged care when they are old.

A large cohort of people living with HIV–AIDS are moving into early old age and these people have social, health, and care needs that differ from those of other groups of people in early old age. In addition to their special care needs, I would argue that many of these men experience a particular loneliness because they are growing old without the company of friends from their youth who died from AIDS during the worst years of the epidemic in the West (1983–96). The issue of ageing and HIV draws on a number of narratives, therefore. There is the narrative that is uppermost in the mind of one group of researchers, which concerns the health and care needs of men (and women) growing old with HIV and the effect that this is likely to have on their ageing experience. Another narrative concerns the disenfranchised grief of a cohort of men who, like a war generation, is growing old without the company of friends from their youth. Unlike soldiers and other people affected by war, these men’s grief is hidden, unrecognised and therefore ‘disenfranchised’—to use the term coined by Kenneth Doka (2002) for such experiences.

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Researching and Writing on Work, Ageing & Sexuality

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I was still interested in how age and ageing affected gay men’s social and relational lives.
In terms of gay men's concerns about ageing and old age, early analysis of my data suggests two principal narratives. The first relates to general fears about old age that members of the general population hold, such as loss of mobility and independence, living alone after the death of a partner, loss of sexual potency, having to move into a nursing home, or the risk of dementia. The second narrative concerns fears about heterosexism and homophobia. At the top of their list of worries was the heteronormativity they feared in nursing homes, that staff and/or residents would be homophobic and this would force them back into the closet. Other men held a similar concern—of homophobic Council workers providing in-home care for those men who wanted to live independently at home.

To conclude, my research into gay men's working lives, retirement and old age will complete unfinished work that I said I would undertake in my second book but put to one side when I realised that my research and writing were focused on the men's relational lives. Having written a book on generations and the historically contingent nature of the gay identity (2008) and a book on gay men's relationships (2013), this third book will complete the circle by examining gay men's working lives and how they anticipate and are living life after work and in old age.
In philanthropic studies, we hear about a growing academic discipline of ‘philanthropic psychology’ but, arguably, there is an equal role for ‘philanthropic sociology’, from both a research and a teaching perspective. This commentary begins by noting the early links between philanthropy and sociology. It then introduces a few Australian studies that show how sociology is enriching an understanding of philanthropy, its institutions and its place in society.

Few realise that the concepts of philanthropy and sociology share strong historical links. Philanthropy practice dates from earliest times across most cultures and religions, and history provides ample research opportunities to study human life, groups and societies. Some early and current writers regard sociology and philanthropy as inextricably linked. In the *Annals of Sociology*, Wines (1898) asserts an interdependence between the philanthropist and the sociologist, urging in picturesque terms that ‘…the philanthropist who takes no pains to know what may be and is known of social structure and function is no better than a social quack…’ (p. 49) and that ‘teachers of sociology will find their most appreciative audiences not in the class-room of the college or university but in the charity conference…’, because ‘charity is a fine thing, but justice is finer’ (p. 56). He champions the view of philanthropists as people informed about the impact of their actions on groups and society rather than individuals alone, and portrays philanthropists as protesters against existing social conditions who work in ‘the laboratory of life’ (p. 55).

Just a few years on, Gray (1908) reinforces the usefulness of a philanthropy/sociology tie, suggesting that philanthropy must be extended to become a ‘doctrine of society’ and ‘the philanthropist a sociologist’ (p. 38). This sense that ‘developments at the academia side as well as at the philanthropic practice, amplify each other’ (Schuyt, Bekkers et al., 2010) is still a theme of sociologists who explore philanthropy today. There are myriad ways that philanthropy and sociology mesh, including social movement and social network theories, institutional theories that shed light on resource dependency, or political sociology. An interesting angle is the capacity that philanthropy has simultaneously to combat but also reinforce social inequality, and sometimes to maintain the social order rather than change it.

The applicability of a sociological perspective is evident in some of the language of philanthropic practice. For example, in the contested but widespread talk about the ‘theory of change’ a philanthropist might use or demand a grantee. Similarly, social theory is implicit in the ‘change not charity’ mantra of the so-called (more engaged and less ‘chequebook’) ‘new’ philanthropy. The unequivocal naming of social change philanthropy as a major stream of the field is another prime example. As Rabinowitz (1990) points out, social change philanthropy aims explicitly to facilitate the changing of social institutions.

Where and how does sociology inform philanthropic studies in Australia? In Australia today we see the emergence of a critical mass of researchers interested in philanthropy, and like our colleagues around the world, our analysis of philanthropy might be from an economic, political, psychological, marketing or sociological view. Two examples of research teams are the Centre for Social Impact in various locations, and our own Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (ACPNS) at QUT.

A mix of qualitative and quantitative work is evident, as is appropriate to different research inquiries. Reflecting on our own work in philanthropy at ACPNS, the major part has been qualitative, mostly in-depth interviews and focus groups. Encouraging individuals of high net worth to fill in surveys is notoriously difficult. Limited local academic work exists, so qualitative inquiry is a valuable tool for
preliminary exploration, but also for unearthing what needs exploring, to set a future research agenda. Philanthropy is an intriguing subject to investigate empirically because our research population is hard to define in size, shape and often even name, because of the anonymity of some givers and philanthropic organisations and an historical absence of mandatory reporting. Often we encounter the challenges generated by a research-shy and time-poor sector. A consequence has been the embedding of research into practice, to build profile and relationships and potentially funding where appropriate. For instance, our academic centres are blessed with some support from philanthropic funders but academic independence is carefully preserved. Likewise, there is the question of being a part of, but apart from, industry bodies to achieve research outcomes.

What types of studies exist in our body of work? Examples include a forthcoming study *Faith, Hope, Charity – and Measurement?* that looks less at methods of data collection, measurement or analysis, but rather at the motivations and values that are shaping the debate. It finds that performance measurement in philanthropic foundations is heavily influenced by normative pressures, the increasing size and professionalism of the Australian philanthropic sector, and trends from the USA and the UK. *Foundations for Giving* set out to look at the very personal, sometimes veiled decisions behind establishing and operating a philanthropic foundation, but along the way found extensive evidence of institutional, peer, family, government, board and grant seeker interactions that shaped the range of individual pathways.

Another study of sociological interest investigates philanthropic *giving to Indigenous need*. A key finding is the importance of cultural competence if philanthropy is to provide positive input. Another small study of *philanthropy's interaction with government policy* shows the stark contrast between government and philanthropic funding cultures. Other research has taken a gender perspective, such as a *pilot survey for the Australian Women Donor's Network* about a lack of giving, and thought about giving, to women and girls. *Another study* considers how national cultural values apply to giving, considering the sociocultural dimension of giving and comparing US and Australian print media coverage about philanthropy.

These are a few examples from our Centre, and our colleagues in other universities have also started to build a corpus of Australian data and insights. Sociology is indeed a diverse discipline and philanthropy is a topic that both benefits from and adds to sociological endeavour.

References are available from the editors or author.

Waiting for the Next Big Thing continued from p.14

are still very few African American members of the American Sociological Association. This suggests that there is something limited, even bogus, about the apparent triumph of progressives and the expansion of higher education: there is still a long way to go. There is also something valuable about the complaint that sociologists have "lost their nerve" or no longer have big ideas. This seems true for the moment, in that few really compelling books have been published about the challenges of our own times, which include climate change, globalisation, the audit society, demographic and technological change. These critics identify a problem in the discipline, but make no suggestions for intellectual renewal.

References are available from the editors or author.
Thank you very much for this honour in receiving a TASA Distinguished Service to Australian Sociology Award. I am grateful to those colleagues who nominated me and to the TASA Executive who saw fit to make this award. It is a special moment for me, so thank you all.

This location (the MCG) has been the scene of another special moment for me and my family. On a warm March evening in 2006 as part of the Track and Field program for the Commonwealth Games in this magnificent stadium, my nephew Nick Willis took home a gold medal for New Zealand in the men’s 1500 metres. I recall I had quickly to write out the words of the New Zealand national anthem for my kids so they could sing along in the medal ceremony!

Johanna and I arrived as migrants to these shores in 1975, securing our first full time academic jobs with honours degrees. First in Armidale, then in Melbourne, we have made our lives here with frequent sojourns and visiting appointments in the UK, back in NZ and in Canada. I was a decade at Monash and then a quarter of a century at La Trobe! TASA and its conferences have been important to us not only as a source of professional identity but also giving the opportunity to visit many parts of the country to attend. From TASA have come the two biggest boosts in my career; winning the Jean Martin Award in 1983 and then my book Medical Dominance (based on that PhD) being placed in the Top 10 Most Influential Books competition.

Most of my TASA activity has been in the health section where I have worked with wonderful colleagues such as Kevin White, Fran Collyer, Alan Peterson, Stephanie Short and of course Jeanne Daly. Together and with many others as well, we have worked hard to build the strongest section of TASA over many years with journals, conferences, to provide a space both for debates as well as mentoring younger colleagues.

On the teaching front, I have just ticked over 40 years at the chalkface. I did not intend to become a specialist first year teacher of large classes but it happened that way; at its peak one year, 1180 students. I have already had the experience of more than one student coming up after a lecture and saying I had taught their mum! Maybe it is time to get out before someone informs me I taught their grandma! On the teaching front I have had the privilege of teaching with some outstanding colleagues including Ann Edwards at Monash; Anne Maree Sawyer, Pauline Savy, Chris Peterson and most recently Sara James at La Trobe.

But it is to my partner Johanna Wyn that I owe the most gratitude since we were students together in Wellington more than 40 years ago. Her support and counsel have been very precious over that time. So thanks very much again and I’ll let you get on with the rest of the evenings activities!

This award is made to a TASA member who has demonstrated outstanding, significant and sustained service to Australian sociology over many years. While not necessarily a lifetime achievement award, candidates for the Distinguished Service Award would usually be nearing the end of their careers. The Executive are calling for nominations for 2014, with nominations closing 31 May. If an award is to take place, it will be presented in November at the TASA annual conference in South Australia. Full details of the Award are available on TASAweb:

My story as a sociologist begins at my birth. I am a second-generation sociologist and remember my father struggling with Durkheim and Weber, which he had to read in French and German. I was inspired by his trenchant critique of social justice issues and analyses of the location and use of social power. He was also adept at finding gracious alternative readings in the Bible to counter those who would use it to defend their power positions or forms of oppression. Sociology in the 1940s was largely inspired by the traumas of the Great Depression and the Holocaust on the one hand and by the optimism of the New Deal, and social engineering to build a humane society on the other.

Dad trained me by example to be an activist for social change and social justice. I assisted him in campaigns for civil rights and lost friends during the McCarthy era because of our actions. The Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on our front yard. This occurred shortly after the major ‘race’ riots (blame the victims) in Detroit. The event etched into my soul a commitment to work to end injustice and oppression. The great domestic concern was the fear of race riots. The answer often given was to impose more repression, control and containment. Those working for civil rights were declared to be naïve, sentimentalists and a danger to good order and the American way; all of which sounds familiar today.

As a child, I was at a loss when someone asked me what my father did. To answer, sociology, brought blank stares or charges of socialism. My pressing need to have a clear idea of what defines sociology has deep and abiding sources. It still spawns major conflicts with colleagues.

Some Australian sociologists seem to think that Talcott Parsons dominated American sociology. Not really. Those of us in the mid-West were more of the Chicago School, C. Wright Mills and all that deeply engaged sociology. What good was theory that never touched the ground, did not liberate, or illuminate puzzling areas. We spent much time in the slums of south side Chicago and later I worked in Harlem during the urban unrest of the early 1960s. The consequences of the uneven distribution of social capital and the ways entrenched interests defended their privilege were patently obvious, as were some of the creative ways some people found to negotiate a way out of the ghetto. Sadly, drugs claimed more young lives than the numbers of those who got out.

While at Cornell doing my PhD I visited the opening of the offices of the National Organisation of Women. According to these women, unwanted pregnancies were a serious problem. At this time, for example, the health service at Cornell refused to prescribe the oral contraceptive to co-eds unless they were married and had had one child, lest they promote promiscuity. A critical issue was the lack of avenues to secure safe abortions. A group of us set up the Up-state New York Clergy Consultation on Problem Pregnancy. We operated at two levels. We provided counselling and referral to safe, but illegal, abortions. We also lobbied state and federal politicians, informing them of both the number of abortions we had facilitated and the number of deaths from abortions conducted by unqualified people. At one point I was arrested but let off, when the police saw that we were preventing harm to women.

I have always operated on the assumption that a sociologist should have first-hand familiarity with the subject matter. I learned some of this the hard way when I migrated to Canada. I swore I would leave the USA when Nixon was elected. But I had not given myself the time to learn the new context and made many mistakes. I soon became painfully aware of the yankocentrism of US sociology and how painful it is to try to point out to them that the findings of US research are neither universal nor normative, and that there are other realities, other perspectives and other forms of social life.

I was much more careful when I migrated to Australia. I am deeply grateful for the Australian Census that I have used to fuel much of my career. Being able to map the changes in Australia’s religious profile has been more fun than I could have imagined. It is great to have rich quantitative data to give structure to my deep involvement in highly diverse religious communities.

I have learned that universities are a great place to work. As with all of life, they too change. Nonetheless, the complaints remain the same, standards are in perpetual decline, the way things were is always better, too much is asked of too few for too little, etc. To survive it is essential to learn what has to be done to satisfy the beast, on the one hand, and to have time to do the things that keep your mind alive. Sometimes they overlap. Often not. But this has ever been the case. Publish a couple of articles in top-flight journals and then you are free for the rest of the year. I regret not aiming higher for some of my publications; I do not regret the time and energy spent getting my views out through more ‘engaged’ forms, being a public intellectual and feeding back to those with whom I have done research the results of our efforts.

Sociology is a great profession. It can be, indeed needs to be, found in academia and inspired by critical engagement with people, communities, groups, movements, and policy making. It is out of the confluence of these activities that the best teaching and research flow.

Gary Bouma, Emeritus Professor and UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific, Monash University
I’d like to thank the Executive and members for awarding me this significant honour. When you are in an organisation like TASA, I think the more you put into it, then the more you will get out of it. Perhaps it’s the same as life in general. I have learned so much from my time in TASA and gained so many friends. It’s also been a lot of fun.

We’ve heard this week about the history of SAANZ and TASA, and how things are changing. In the November 2013 issue of NEXUS, the editors wrote about how universities no longer recognise the value of service to professional organisations. We know about the difficulties early career academics have in finding permanent jobs as lecturers, and the Conference’s Postgraduate Day explored the range of careers that are open to sociologists. The great majority of TASA members still work in universities, but I’d like to look into the crystal ball and think about what TASA might look like by the time the next big anniversary comes around.

By then, perhaps, many of our members will be working in areas other than traditional lecturing and research. They will be working in universities as administrators; working for the government; in business or non-government organisations; and as teachers in private colleges, TAFEs and high schools. Obviously, the way these people ‘do sociology’ will be different from what we know at present. Let’s take a look at one of them.

A friend of mine has a degree in sociology from the University of New South Wales, and she became a high school teacher. Now, if you think running first-year tutes is hard work, think about teaching Class 8F on a Friday afternoon. Many of the students at the school where my friend teaches are of low socioeconomic status and from multicultural backgrounds. She told me about a typical classroom exchange during a discussion on the workplace:

‘Please Miss’
‘Yes, Derryn?’
‘My Dad says it’s all these illegal refugees who are coming here and taking our jobs. And the government gives them all houses and cars. It’s not fair. They should go back to where they belong!’

Of course, this is the same racist claptrap we have been hearing for 30 years or more, but my friend used her sociological skills and knowledge to counter it. First, she decided to collect some empirical data, the most basic of sociological skills. She turned to one of the refugee students in the class:

‘Neyzang, is this true? What does your father do?’
‘We’re on a Temporary Protection Visa, Miss. He’s not allowed to work. The government gives our family $270 a week. We’re sharing a two-bedroom flat with two other families because we can’t afford anything else.’

My friend now called upon one of those great classic sociological concepts, Verstehen, putting yourself in someone else’s shoes:

‘Derryn, how would you like to live like that?’
Silence.

The challenge for TASA in the next fifty years is to think about how it can be of service to members like these, and to provide opportunities so they can be of service to TASA.

Thank you very much.

Award for Outstanding Service to TASA- 2014

This honour is accorded to a TASA member who has demonstrated an outstanding level of participation in and promotion of TASA over a number of years. There are many ways in which this can occur, but in all cases the quality of the service is the determining criterion, rather than the quantity alone. The Executive are calling for nominations for 2014, with nominations closing 31 May. If an award is to take place, it will be presented in November at the TASA annual conference in South Australia. Full details of the Award are available on TASAweb:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to convene this short plenary session to celebrate the 50th anniversary of TASA as the opening event of the 2013 TASA conference here at Monash Caulfield.

It wasn’t clear to me at the start why I had been invited to convene this session until I counted up and realised I had probably attended about 35 of those conferences. I considered who else might be present would have been likely to have attended more? I could think only of Raewyn Connell, who has been at every one that I can recall as the only possible person. So I have invited her and Sharon Roach Anleu, who has also been a very regular attender.

I have always enjoyed TASA conferences, not only because I get to visit a range of locations across the country and in NZ, but also because they give a chance to catch up socially with former colleagues and research associates and hear many interesting papers. In a large country like ours, the tyranny of distance means that, unlike in say the UK, where if you see an interesting seminar somewhere in the country you hop on a train and go hear it; in this country, the best we have is annual national conferences.

I’ve also been involved in organising two; both times as deputy to the incomparable Katy Richmond. Once was in Melbourne in the 1990s, and the other, still talked about, in Beechworth in 2004. For those who were not present at this fine event held in a decaying former mental hospital, it became known as the underwater conference for the disruption to proceedings, especially an outdoor social event, caused by a heavy rainstorm. I would want to argue to younger colleagues that organising a TASA conference is something you should do once in your career.

I know there is a danger of preaching to the converted here but I have always found it disappointing the number of sociologists who earn their living from teaching and researching in the discipline but do not feel it appropriate to belong to the professional association that represents their discipline.

Reflecting on the history of TASA, I considered how my anthropological and indeed archaeological colleagues would approach this issue. They would search for artefacts of the discipline. One important one comes to mind that has not seen the light of day for decades. During my New England days in the 1970’s, one of the founding parents of Sociology visited Australia and New Zealand (perhaps the only one to do so?). In 1975, Talcott Parsons, then late in life, gave seminars in a number of locations in Australia and New Zealand. While in Melbourne, he was prevailed upon to lend his name to a trophy for tennis competition between the Sociology Departments at Monash and La Trobe; with Monash the original winner. The trophy then sat at Monash on top of the mailboxes all through the decade I was there in the 1980s until it disappeared into a cupboard from which Sue Stevenson has just been able to retrieve it.

So ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Talcott Parsons Trophy (unveiling to cheering and clapping). Now it has been unearthed again; how shall TASA use and give new life to such an important trophy in the future? I suggest an annual event with the awarding at the conference dinner, for a new competition. The TASA office will be pleased to receive your suggestions as to what this competition might be. The most papers from a department at a conference (relative to size) might be one. Let’s have your ideas for a decision from the Executive.

So hearty congratulations to our professional community and may there be many more TASA conferences to come.
The Youth Thematic Group had a very active and productive couple of weeks, beginning with the Youth Symposium on the 22nd of November at the University of Melbourne, and continuing the following week at the annual TASA conference at Monash University.

The theme of the symposium was ‘Emerging Concepts in the Sociology of Youth’, and it was designed to promote collaboration and discussion among scholars in the sociology of youth who are working between the dominant ‘transitions’ and ‘cultures’ approaches. Drawn from submissions to the Newsletter earlier in the year, the symposium was organised around four key areas: continuity and change; consumption, creativity, identity; the body and embodiment; and space and place. Members of the group organised and chaired each session: Dan Woodman, Andy Bennett, Julia Coffey, David Farrugia and Paula Geldens. Each session featured 3–4 short presentations closely linked to the themes, and provided the context for discussion and debate with those present. Each session also featured a presentation by a PhD candidate in the sociology of youth. These papers were chosen competitively, with each presenter awarded $250 to acknowledge their contribution to the field as emerging scholars. The Symposium and PhD awards were supported by funding from TASA.

PhD Award Recipients:

- Rose Butler, Australian National University: ‘In Fairness We Trust: Children, Families and Economic Insecurity’ (presented in the Continuity and Change session)
- Ben Green, Griffith University: ‘Epiphanies with music: Peak music experiences, feeling and identity’ (presented in the ‘Consumption, Creativity and Identity’ session)
- Valeria Varea, University of Queensland: ‘New methodological approaches to studying the body among Human Movement undergraduate students’ (presented in the Body and Embodiment session)
- Michelle Mansfield, University of Newcastle: ‘Space, Place and Youth Cultural Expression on the Streets of an Indonesian City’ (presented in the Space and Place session)

Dan Woodman, Chair of the Continuity and Change session, began proceedings with a sketch of the field of sociology of youth in relation to dominant and emerging perspectives, based on a book he and Johanna Wyn are currently co-authoring. Steven Threadgold’s presentation discussed the figures of ‘hipster’ and ‘bogan’, and how they feature in the Australian imagination, linking to established class inequalities. Rose Butler’s presentation explored the ways schoolchildren understand and negotiate economic insecurity with notions of ‘fairness’.

Andy Bennett chaired the second session, Consumption, Creativity and Identity. Brady Robards (with co-author Sian Lincoln) discussed how ‘growing up’ narratives are present in both the bedroom and social networking spaces in the lives of young people. Ben Green presented findings from research with young people on their understandings of ‘peak’ music experiences, and the ways taste and identity are formed by social norms. Susan Bird’s presentation described the ways the urban playground can be used as spaces of creative consumption. Eli Golpushezhad outlined the history of rap music and the rap scene in Iran, and explored the different ways rap intersects with consumption and identities for young people in Tehran.

Julia Coffey chaired the session on The Body and Embodiment. Julia’s presentation suggested that embodied approaches are not commonly used in the sociology of youth, and explored some of the ontological and methodological tensions that must be navigated in pursuit of a more ‘embodied’ research. Audrey Yue, a cultural sociologist, discussed the ways that youth sexualities can be understood as sites of embodied modernity for young people living in Asia. Megan Sharp and Pam Nilan presented research with young women in the hard core music scene, and discussed the ways ‘queer’ was mobilised to navigate this emphatically masculine space. Valeria Varea’s presentation discussed the use of visual methods such as photo elicitation in discussing the body in research on bodily ideals and health.

David Farrugia and Paula Geldens chaired the final session, Space and Place. Their co-authored presentation explored the ways space and place have been used problematically in research with young people, and how these require re-theorising in order to understand the intersections of place with...
inequalities. Alan France, with Dorothy Bottrell, presented on the ways youth identities can be understood as formed within their local, specific conditions, but also in reference to a broader political ecology. Michelle Mansfield discussed the ways urban and public space is negotiated and continually reshaped through street art in Indonesia. Chivoin Peou’s presentation discussed the ways that place, tradition and resources impact on young people's transitions to work in contemporary Cambodia.

Each session generated vibrant discussion, and there was great congruence between the different presentations. Familiar themes of class and gender ran throughout, and a growing focus on ‘Southern’ perspectives through the range of work exploring the lives of young people living in Asia. The challenge of using familiar, dominant concepts such as individualisation and a Western focus on modernity to understand the complexity of young people's lives in rapidly changing and diverse contexts, such as Asia, will likely be an ongoing focus for the sociology of youth. The breadth of presentations in the symposium also demonstrated the potential for greater interdisciplinarity in the sociology of youth. Furthering connections and collaborations with scholars working in cultural studies, for example, and other areas of sociology could assist us to respond better to the complexity of young people's lives through developing new conceptual and methodological responses.

Many who attended the Symposium also attended and presented papers at the TASA Annual Conference, 26th–28th November at Monash University. The conference celebrated TASA’s 50th anniversary, and was themed around reflections, intersections and aspirations across the 50 years. Keynotes by Professor John Holmwood, Professor Celia Lury and Professor Raewyn Connell explored these themes in relation to the changing higher education landscape and hopes for Australian sociology in this environment. The conference dinner, held at the MCG, was a highlight, in which those who have made significant contributions to TASA and to sociology were celebrated.

As in past years, the Youth stream featured prominently in the conference program, with one or more Youth sections running across every session time. The Youth stream ran eight sessions, with 33 presentations. These sessions ran across themes of well-being, migration, agency and conceptual challenges, culture, place, community and participation, social media, and education and employment. As conveners, we were thoroughly impressed by the quality and scope of presentations across these sessions. The conference and symposium confirmed to us the talent of this group! One of our biggest strengths as a thematic group is the breadth of those working in the sociology of youth; our group is made up of established senior academics, together with a good number of mid-career, and PhD and early career, scholars. The mentorship and contributions provided by our established colleagues fosters the atmosphere of collaboration and support that ultimately strengthens all of our work. It is this environment that will also help us to address the range of challenges that have been identified across both the symposium and conference.

Many thanks to all presenters, session chairs and attendees for your contributions. We look forward to continuing opportunities for collaboration and engagement for the TASA Youth thematic group next year and into the future!

TASA Youth Conveners
Julia Coffey, David Farrugia and Paula Geldens
Blog: http://tasayouth.wordpress.com
Twitter: @YouthTASA
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/TASAyouth/

TASA Sociologist Outside Academe Scholarships

This scholarship seeks to encourage the participation of sociologists working outside academe (in areas such as private industry, government and non-government organisations, and private contract and consultancy work) with The Australian Sociological Association (TASA). The TASA Executive would like to encourage non-academic members who have conducted applied research or written sociological papers on their work to apply for the scholarship.

Applications for the 2014 conference scholarships will close on September 8th, 2014
I have identified as a disabled person for many years, having being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1980. I chanced upon an academic life almost by accident. Although I had been offered a job in the Commonwealth Public Service in 1986, I could not pass the medical examination. I was determined not to hide my disability despite being advised to do so by senior women working in equal opportunity at the time.

I was extremely fortunate that UNSW did not insist on future employees passing medical examinations, so I was employed in 1988 as a part-time lecturer in the School of Social Work. UNSW was a relatively understanding employer, and as my condition deteriorated, I began to use a wheelchair and was given reasonable accommodations.

My first attendance at a TASA (then SAANZ) Conference was at the ANU and there I met Jan Jindy Pettman (later Professor of Women’s Studies) who was to become a close friend and mentor until the present time. I continued to attend TASA Conferences throughout the 1990s and started to present papers on issues relating to embodiment and disability. Yet disability was not at the time considered a valid area of research. Disability was still seen as a belonging to Medicine and Health Sciences and was completely foreign to social sciences, the humanities and even to women’s studies.

For example, I wrote a paper on gender and disability and submitted it to the Special Issue of Australian Feminist Studies on the Body. The paper was rejected on the basis that disability was a ‘practical’ issue and not the subject of theoretical inquiry. I am proud to report that the paper became a chapter and went on to be published in the first ever Disability Reader in 1998 edited by Tom Shakespeare, himself a disabled sociologist in Britain.

It took many years for other scholars who identified as being disabled to attend TASA. Most TASA conferences were inaccessible in many respects. Events were held on campuses and in buildings without lifts. Most memorable perhaps was the 2004 conference at La Trobe University, Beechworth, when I had to take an accessible taxi from the airport at Albury, some 50 km away. The campus was located in the grounds of an old institution, which while being very beautiful was also very inaccessible. I decided I could no longer attend conferences because of inaccessibility and lack of understanding on the part of conference organisers.

The turning point came when I met Karen Soldatic (then a PhD student at Curtin University). She suggested we form a Critical Disability Thematic Group and this was accepted in 2008, with the first ever Disability Panel being organized for the 2008 conference. Thanks to Karen’s dedication, regular newsletters began to flow. The next task was to push for TASA Disability Access, Inclusion and Participation Guidelines. After much hard work by a small group, these guidelines were accepted by the Executive in 2010 and incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding for conferences.

I was extremely happy to receive an accessibility scholarship to attend the 2013 TASA Conference. While I will be retiring from UNSW in June 2014, the scholarship represented a culmination of both my own and others’ hard work over recent years.
In November 2007, I was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome. I was 40 years old. My journey since then has been about discovering who I am as an autistic woman, as opposed to a woman trying to live up to the expectations I thought society had of me. Since that year, I have come to terms with living with a disability, and cherish the opportunity to share that journey with my youngest son.

Attending the 2012 TASA Conference was a major highlight, meeting so many amazing people and especially those in the Rural Issues Thematic Group. Typically, however, by the second day I was seeking space away from people during lunch breaks and on the last day I was unable to attend any sessions, physically or emotionally. I was exhausted.

Earlier this year, I discovered the Disability Services Unit at the Australian National University. They took autism seriously, and believed me when I said I was struggling because of high levels of anxiety associated with accessing strange places. They were able to suggest a range of services that meant that I was able to access the campus stress free. In the process I discovered that as a woman diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, I cannot always articulate what I need, when I need it. It was this experience that gave me the courage to put up my hand and apply for the TASA Accessibility Scholarship.

Winning the TASA Accessibility Scholarship was an honour for me because it meant that I would be able to access the TASA Conference and arrange for somewhere to stay close by, where I would have my own facilities. I was going to be able to share my research journey with others I had met in 2012 and hear new voices. Unfortunately, anxiety blended with a significant change in my parental responsibilities at the last minute meant that I was unable to attend.

I continue to work on my PhD thesis: ‘Farm women and drought in the Goulburn Valley, Australia: Lived experience and policy’, finalising the in-depth interviews with the farming women and moving into the last year of write-up.

Thank you to those at TASA who recognise the importance of accessibility for all.

Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities

This scholarship is an acknowledgement that members with disabilities incur additional costs when attending TASA Conferences. The aim of the scholarship is to help defray these additional costs and promote participation by members with disabilities in TASA Conferences.

Recipients of the scholarship will receive
• registration for the annual conference at the University of South Australia in November
• a certificate for receipt of scholarship
• a listing on the TASAweb scholarship page
• an opportunity to write about receiving their scholarship for NEXUS

Applications for the 2014 conference scholarships will close on September 8th

**Postgraduate Corner**

**Karen Soldatic**

*TASA Postgraduate Representative*

Welcome to 2014! 2013 was a big year for TASA Postgrads. We had a number of initiatives, such as the establishment of the new TASA PG Sub-Committee, the Digital Methodologies Master Class with Assoc. Prof. Robert Ackland from ANU and the Sociology Practitioner one-day workshop at the 2013 annual TASA conference.

**PG Day, 25 November 2013:** I hope that you all enjoyed the Sociology Practitioner one-day workshop. This was the first time we have focused on post-PhD employment at the annual Post Grad day, particularly in terms of labour market options for researchers outside academe. From the feedback you provided it seems as though this is something that you would like TASA to further explore as part of its support to its postgraduate members. We hope to use the day as a platform to further such initiatives that will be led by the incoming Postgraduate Representative in 2015.

Special thanks are due to Alan Scott, TASA Applied Sociology Thematic Group convenor. Alan was an incredible support throughout the year and his knowledge of the area was crucial in gaining industry engagement. On that note, a big thanks to our wonderful presenters who took time out from their work schedules to present papers and participate in discussion panels: Dina Bowman, Mark Feigan, Kathrine Fitzgerald, Kathy Landvogt, Anton Mischewski, Marian Simms, Steven Talbot, Yolanda Wadsworth, Sonia Whiteley, and Zuleyka Zevallos. For those of you unable to attend, some of the sessions were recorded and are now available for you to download at the [TASA YouTube](#) site.

**PG New Sub-Committee:** The new PG Sub-Committee has been active over summer to start to develop its mandate. We are keen to explore ways to support TASA postgraduates’ publication opportunities through a range of e-platforms, such as a blog, postgraduate peer-reviewed journal etc. We are also very keen to develop resources to be available on either the TASA postgraduate webpage or its new YouTube site, and to build effective networks with similar postgraduate international organisations. Thanks to the large crowd of New Zealand postgraduates we have started to develop a dialogue to encourage the sharing of information between SAANZ and TASA postgraduates. We would encourage you also to join the [SAANZ Postgrads](#) Facebook page so you can stay up-to-date with the great stuff that they are organising across the Tasman.

At our first meeting, Ly and Ashlin also felt that it would be good to put out another call for Sub-Committee members. We did this in the February 2014 e-list with a closing date of 30 March 2014. If you would like to join us in building the TASA PG network please submit an Expression of Interest directly to Sally Daly, TASA Executive Officer, at: admin@tasa.org.au

You might be interested in getting involved in activities such as:

- exploring the development of a publication for TASA postgraduates such a PG blog, online academic journal etc.
- developing international networks with similar organisations for the benefit of TASA postgraduate members
- developing, identifying and compiling online resources that can be readily disseminated to TASA postgraduates
- working with TASA to redevelop the TASA postgraduate web pages (perhaps similar to the ASA or BSA postgraduate web pages) to become a useful and timely resource for TASA postgraduates; and finally
- establishing the governance parameters of the TASA postgraduate sub-committee in line with the TASA constitution

We currently have representation from the Universities of Sydney, Tasmania and New South Wales, so, ideally, it would be great to have new members from other universities. It is not a huge commitment; all that is needed is about 2–3 hours per week or one day per month on average over the year.

**Postgraduate Employment Pathways:** In response to your concerns in 2013, I worked with Prof Raewyn Connell and the TASA Executive to apply for a small grant to hold a national workshop with key public policy institutes that draw heavily upon social science graduates for their workforce. The grant application was unsuccessful; however, in discussions with the TASA Executive we agreed that the opportunity was too good not to follow up, given that we had such a positive response from the
institutes to attend. UNSW has also agreed to support the two-day workshop, and we will hold a public lecture on the topic on Thursday, 24 July 2014, open to all. Further workshop details are available on p.39 of this NEXUS issue.

**Travel Funding for Postgraduate and Disability Conference Scholarships:** Thanks to a suggestion from fellow TASA member Farida Fozdar, the Executive has implemented a travel funding component for conference scholarships. In addition to the complimentary conference registration, scholarship recipients will receive funding for travel. The funding amount is determined by recipients’ place of residence in relation to where the Conference is held. For the 2014 conference at the University of South Australia, scholarship recipients residing in Victoria, Tasmania, NSW and the ACT will be reimbursed up to $300 while recipients living in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia will receive up to $500. Thanks, Farida, for looking out for TASA postgrads!

The Executive welcome your ideas and suggestions, so please do email them before their meetings to the TASA Office (admin@tasa.org.au). The next two scheduled Executive meetings are 28 March and 22–23 July.

Thanks for all of your support in 2013. I look forward to continue our efforts in building an active and vibrant postgraduate community.

Karen Soldatic
University of New South Wales

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**TASA Conference 2013: Postgraduate Scholarships**

**Toni McCallum**

*University of Newcastle*

Circa 1982: Orange wallpaper swirls and the steely Careers Adviser is peering down at me. To my innocent 16 year old request to attend the hallowed halls of academe comes the response ‘You are not university material, I recommend a career in teaching or nursing’.

Four children and a new country later, at a TASA conference in Melbourne, I prepare to give a presentation on my Sociology PhD topic on contemporary Australian mothering. And I reflect on the four days and the grit and courage and humour of fellow PhDers.

And the research? Late motherhood and a visceral and fiery introduction into birthing children led me to question. To wonder about how other women experienced this strange state. Did they find it as tricky and bewildering as me? Did they also find it like being in a land with no maps, no reason.

To gain an understanding of multiple perspectives and keen to move beyond the middle class, White perspective of so much of the current research I chose to talk to mothers from all walks of life. For practical reasons I chose to talk to mothers in my city, Brisbane. My primitive maths carves up that city into rich and poor and I was interested in the contemporary phenomenon of fly in/fly out workers in mining (how did the mothers left behind feel?) and in a tilt to gender politics I added stay at home dads into the mix. Did stay at home fathers experience “mothering” differently to women?

Serendipitous access to the Samoan mothers of Logan led to access to the African communities and Burundian, Somali, Rwandan, and Ethiopian mothers.

In another happy stance I gained access to a group of young (one aged 18 was my only teenage mum), working class mothers through a friend of a friend. The privilege of hearing about mothering with no money. No house. Living as a solo mother in a caravan. But always in Logan it was mothering within a web of family support. Of mothering with angels; sisters, aunts, grandmothers. Mothering not as a singular isolated resented experience but as a co-mothering in a supportive community setting. The only literature that made sense to my Logan data was texts by Aboriginal mothers and non-Western mothers.

And then to Ascot I hoofed. To the mothers with mower men, cleaners and full-time au pairs. And their stories of rage and resentment at male, high-earning partners marked by their absence.

I am still interviewing my fly in/fly out mothers and stay at home dads. To weave all this data into a cohesive narrative of the experience of contemporary mothering in Australia is a challenge. My discussions with fellow PhD students helped me see a way through.

*continued on p.34*
Thank you to the organisers of the 2013 TASA conference for generously giving me a scholarship. The networking opportunities and insights into the many and varied conversations in my field were invaluable. A particular thank you to Kristin Natalier who pointed out that one of my key theorists was getting old now (she was spot on and pushed me to rethink this), to Michelle Brady, who chaired my session and commented very encouragingly on my Logan data and to Raewyn Connell who nudged my thinking from a Eurocentric to a postcolonial perspective.

And to anyone thinking of applying for a scholarship: Apply, apply, apply. And never let anyone tell you, you are not ‘scholarship material’.

**Amy MacMahon**
University of Queensland

I was thrilled to be one of the recipients of a TASA postgraduate scholarship in 2013, to cap off a big and challenging year. Initiatives including the Postgraduate Scholarships and the Postgraduate Day are great examples of the ways in which TASA supports and encourages students. Having spent the last year juggling caring and study, I am very appreciative of this support.

My involvement with TASA began in 2012, when I was involved with helping the 2012 Conference organizing committee. Between directing delegates over the vast UQ campus, I was able to attend a number of sessions, which helped to consolidate my decision to pursue a PhD in 2013. I am now researching the gendered impacts of climate change in Bangladesh, with a focus on food security. Southwest Bangladesh is facing a range of environmental challenges, including salinity, variable rainfall, storms and a drinking water crisis. Through a series of case studies, I am aiming to investigate whether climate change and adaptation is affecting gendered roles, relationships and expectations with regard to household food security.

The paper for which I was awarded the scholarship developed a framework for socially just adaptation to climate change. While Bangladesh has seen an explosion of adaptation projects, organisations and initiatives in recent years, many initiatives are having negative, unintended consequences for people and environments. A social justice perspective draws attention to questions of power, gender and social–natural relationships when crafting and assessing adaptation choices.

I also presented a paper as part of an ARC project that I have been involved with. The project is titled ‘Governing Food Security in an Era of Climate Change’, and is being led by Professor Geoff Lawrence and Dr Kiah Smith. The paper focused on the impacts of the 2011 Queensland floods, on the food supply chain – from farmers to customers. The project has made some tentative conclusions around the resilience of the food supply chain, and the effectiveness of responses made by retailers, governments and other key stakeholders.

During the conference, I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet a number of fellow students and researchers who are pursuing engaging questions on gender, climate change and food security in South Asia. As I prepare for my fieldwork this year, it is great to know that my work will fit amongst a strong body of theory, practice and research.
Ashlin Lee  
*University of Tasmania*

I am honoured and exceedingly grateful for the opportunity to attend TASA2013, and I would like to express sincere thanks to TASA and all those involved for the scholarship. TASA conferences are one of the highlights of my academic year, providing a small glimpse into the diverse range of research topics and projects being undertaken by the Australian sociological community. Getting the chance to meet with other researchers and discuss our research is also very rewarding, helping develop the sociological community and our network of contacts. Postgraduate day was also excellent, with insightful commentary and advice from sociologists outside of academia. TASA2013 also marked 50 years of Australian sociology, and made attendance all the more special.

One of the highlights of TASA2013 was presenting my paper as a part of the inaugural Digital Sociology sessions. In my paper, I argued that the latest generation of mobile technologies, such as tablets and smartphones, are distinct from previous generations of devices, representing what I call ‘convergent mobile technologies’. This distinctiveness comes from the growing range of functionalities and physical capacities that these devices offer, including multimedia functions, computational abilities, and connectivity standards for telecommunication and digital networks. These features have converged into a range of mobile devices that are increasingly popular and integrated into society. With the recognition that material artefacts – like mobile technologies – contribute to the creation of social patterns, it raises the question of whether the latest generation of devices are involved in any form of social changes. My PhD research seeks to explore this question, and my paper gave the rationale and explanation of convergent mobile devices. While I enjoyed presenting my work, the real pleasure of being at TASA 2013 was the feedback I received from the Digital Sociology sessions, and from my discussions with other members of TASA generally. For me, this was my favourite part.

Overall, TASA2013 was a huge success and a really positive experience for me. I would not have been able to experience it without the support this scholarship provided, so once again my sincerest thanks to TASA, the TASA2013 organising committee, and my fellow delegates. Hope to see you in 2014!

Andrew Gilbert  
*La Trobe University*

I’m currently a PhD candidate at La Trobe University, and the 2013 TASA conference was really my first exposure to a large academic conference. Being granted a postgraduate scholarship made it much easier to attend, and helped make me feel accepted into this new world. Being able to go gave me a good insight into what it means to be a sociologist in Australia, both in the sense of the diversity of the field, and in the sense of the academic community. I was able to put faces to quite a few names of well-known Australian sociologists I’d encountered in the literature.

The conference was larger than I had expected, as was clear from the length of the program. There was so much on offer, so I couldn't possibly see everything I wanted. What I did see drove home just how wide sociology is as a discipline in Australia. I have found being a PhD student means prioritising my own small area of study, and the conference allowed me break out of this for a short time and hear talks from right across the spectrum of the sociological field. This complemented my experiences as a member of the Cultural Sociology thematic group where I have met people working in similar areas as me, and asking similar questions.

Overall, I was both thrilled and daunted to speak about my work to a professional audience and have it published in the conference proceedings. It was extremely rewarding as a PhD student, because it challenged me to clarify my work and present it in a cogent way. I have always found that exposing my work to other people, and hearing their input, is absolutely fundamental to its development. Most of all, though, TASA gave me confidence. It was great to be able to participate in something that went beyond the department in my university. Being accepted to speak at TASA, and being funded to do so, has been a real boon for me, and has inspired me to submit work elsewhere, both conference papers and publications.

I was both thrilled and daunted to speak about my work to a professional audience and have it published in the conference proceedings.

*One of the highlights of TASA2013 was presenting my paper as a part of the inaugural Digital Sociology sessions.*
The TASA Best Paper Award for the *Journal of Sociology* (JoS) is a biennial award that uses academic peer review to select papers of outstanding quality published in JoS. The prize is awarded to the paper judged by the panel to be the best published in the previous two years of the *Journal of Sociology*. The recipient for the 2014 round will receive:

- A complementary registration for the TASA Annual Conference and dinner, at the University of South Australia in November
- A TASA ‘Best Paper in JoS’ certificate
- A listing on TASAweb’s ‘Recipients of the JoS Best Paper Prize’
- An invitation to submit a short paper for the NEXUS

I am grateful to the TASA award committee for granting me the opportunity to attend the TASA conference and present my PhD research findings to an expert audience. I appreciate the interest that TASA has shown in my research and the opportunity to get valuable feedback on my findings, which I presented to the Migration, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism Group. The comments from experts in my research area are invaluable for my future research trajectories.

The paper that I presented showcased the main argument of my thesis, entitled ‘Becoming German in Melbourne, Australia: A study of second-generation ethnic identities’. The reason I studied second-generation Germans in Australia is that there is little known about the experiences of adult children of German immigrants, possibly because they are part of an established, well-integrated, and often invisible white ethnic group – a group for whom Gans’ (1979) notion of ‘symbolic ethnicity’ might apply. Yet, given that migrants increasingly live within transnational social fields, I question whether the children of German migrants in Australia ‘feel’ or ‘become’ German. In my thesis, I use interviews with adult children of German immigrants in Melbourne to illuminate the individual experiences of ethnic identity among second-generation Germans in a transnational social space. Through their biographical narratives, I explore the dynamics of ethnic identity over the life course and examine the ways in which the structural relations in the host society and ancestral homeland are important factors in determining the different ways respondents identify with their German background.

In my thesis, the discussion of the participants’ narratives shows that symbolic ethnicity is not the best way of describing these White ethnics. Respondents talked about the familiarity of church services (cf. Fortier 2000), the repetition of Easter and Christmas, the re-creation of recipes and meals and recurrences, but infrequent visits to Germany. These could have been indicators for symbolic ethnicity, because these occasions are what Gans (1979: 8) would term ‘easy and intermittent ways of expressing … identity, … that do not conflict with other ways of life’. However, I argue it is not as simple as that. Instead, the aforementioned repetitive, even though infrequent, rituals, produce and reproduce the respondents’ German heritage, because through these ritualistic everyday practices, the participants’ ethnic heritage becomes internalised and embodied. In this way, participants’ German heritage becomes somewhat more than just a nostalgic allegiance to the past, as Gans (1979) proposes. Furthermore, through these rituals the deeper elements of participants’ German identity become embodied, the ways in which the structural relations in the host society and ancestral homeland are important factors in determining the different ways respondents identify with their German background.

Ethnicity for the people I interviewed is thus both symbolic and deep. The deep structures of their ethnicity are similar to what Bourdieu terms habitus. They are dispositions that are durable, acquired during childhood, and expressed through schemes of perception, thought and practice. In spite of what is often reported about white ethnicity, as a cultural loss through straight-line assimilation, ethnicity does matter for second-generation Germans. This highlights that an understanding of ethnic identity as purely symbolic is neither comprehensive nor does it appear to be sustainable on its own in the long term. Instead, through ethnographic studies that combine interviews with observations, an approach that has been useful in showing how ethnic identity plays out for white second-generation ethnics in this study, I propose a view on white ethnicity as both symbolic and embodied.
The scholarships aim to support postgraduate participation at TASA annual conferences. The TASA Executive encourages postgraduate members to apply. It also encourages academic supervisors to promote the scholarships to their postgraduate students.

Recipients of the prize will receive:
- registration for the annual conference at the University of South Australia in November
- registration for the pre-conference TASA Annual Postgraduate Workshop
- a certificate for receipt of scholarship
- a listing on the TASAweb scholarship page
- an opportunity to write about receiving their scholarship for NEXUS

Applications for the 2014 conference scholarships will close on September 8th.


TASA ‘Sociology of Emotions and Affect’ Thematic Group Report on ‘Measuring Emotions’ Workshop

On 25–26 July 2013, The Australian Sociological Association’s Sociology of Emotions and Affect Thematic Group held its second annual mid-year workshop at Flinders University, Victoria Square Campus. The theme of this year’s event was methodological approaches to researching emotions and affect. The event had a fantastic mix of presenters from Australian universities and a very engaging presentation by our keynote speaker, Dr Jody Clay-Warner of The University of Georgia.

The event proved to be an interesting and open discussion of new and innovative theoretical and empirical approaches to researching emotion and affect. The group was then successful in getting papers from the workshop, along with several additional invited papers, accepted into two special editions of the top-ranking international journal ‘Emotion Review’, to be published in 2015.

At the end of the two days, it was clear that everyone involved had had an enjoyable and meaningful experience. The SEA group looks to be moving forward with strength and a sense of collegiality that will benefit all members in the future. Many thanks go to the organisers of the event: the SEA convenors Jennifer Sinclair, Roger Patulny, and Mary Holmes; project officer Tristan Kennedy; and Mathilde Thorsen at Flinders University for her ongoing assistance. The workshop also saw the departure of Mary Holmes as group co-convenor as she takes up a new position at The University of Edinburgh, UK. Natalya Godbold, who has been providing great assistance over the last twelve months, will take up the role of co-convenor.

Another View of the Conference: Verónica Devenin, PhD Candidate from Chile Studying at Barcelona University

vdevenin@gmail.com

It has been a great experience to present a paper at the TASA Conference in its 50th anniversary year and to share some of the findings from my PhD thesis. In this, I examine the strategies that Chilean Indigenous communities have developed to deal with large-scale copper mining, what I have termed ‘Mining Relations Strategies’. I come from Chile and I am a PhD candidate at Barcelona University, so I have had the chance to participate in different kind of conferences, in very different contexts. It seemed to me that this Conference was the very successful result of strong efforts by TASA to create an inclusive meeting place for all Australian sociologists. Other countries have their own national sociological associations and there are also regional associations such as LASA (Latin American Sociological Association) and the ESA (European Sociological Association). Considering the location of Australia, and its being both a country and a continent, the Conference seems to be a very important event where local and global issues meet, through the research presented and the international guests attending. I hope that future conferences are as successful as this one and that the exchanges between regions increase.

“The Sociology of Emotions and Affect” Thematic Group Report on “Measuring Emotions” Workshop

It was clear that everyone involved had had an enjoyable and meaningful experience.

I hope that future conferences are as successful as this one and that the exchanges between regions increase."
THE FUTURE WORKFORCE OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
Two-day workshop - July 24 - 25, 2014
Hosted by TASA & the University of New South Wales

The future of the Australian social science workforce is facing significant challenges with the changing nature of the Australian university environment. Since the mid-1980s the Australian university sector has undergone major changes, with restructuring occurring across a range of disciplines. The social sciences have been acutely affected by these processes of institutional change. The globalisation of the Australian economy has forced many Australian universities to develop an external focus in a bid to attract large cohorts from the international student market and attract international research funding in areas of high media appeal. This shifting strategy and turn to international markets has in many respects diminished opportunities to develop powerful, locally reflective social science research, and professional practice informed by local research, at a time when Australia is undergoing rapid change. The continuing vitality of the social sciences is critically important for guiding policy and practice in Australia. The social sciences remain the primary disciplinary site that produces key knowledge for understanding, and responding to, a changing Australian society. Lead Australian policy institutions such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, along with Federal and State Government Departments and NGOs, all heavily rely upon the skills, knowledges and competencies of social scientists. This two-day workshop will bring together Australian policy institutions that heavily rely upon the social sciences with leading Australian social scientists and early career researchers. The workshop will gather research and theory relevant to understanding an intellectual workforce, and explore the experiences of early career researchers and teachers. It will develop a critical dialogue on the future of the social science workforce in Australia, and will develop practical proposals for employment pathways for social science graduates.


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