

Introduction: The Limits of Responsibility

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And let us not forget that an inadequate thematization of what responsibility is or must be is also an irresponsible thematization: not knowing, having neither a sufficient knowledge or consciousness of what being responsible means, is of itself a lack of responsibility.

Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death (p. 25)

Appeals to responsibility are routine in contemporary neoliberal society. Slippages in the meaning of the term are compellingly complex and encompass both the injunctions of greater responsiveness (to others) and accountability for one's own actions. As the state has retreated from its previously central role in the provision of comprehensive welfare, individuals and collectives are urged to recognise and act on a duty of care not only for their 'others'—often those who are disempowered or on the margins of our society—but also for their 'own', through channels such as privatisation, philanthropic appeals, the corporate social responsibility movement, and the revision of historical power relations between settler-colonial states and indigenous peoples. Politicians and nations are called on to accept responsibility for historical and recent actions (whether by apology or reparation), and the past quarter-century has seen a worldwide proliferation of reconciliation tribunals and the ritualistic confessions of responsibility these have involved. What is at stake in such processes is also a responsibility to memory and the memorial narratives that, very often, become the 'truths' of history. Inevitably, however, it is those with power and authority who remain in the position to choose to be responsible for those who are marginalised.

The multidisciplinary essays gathered in this special issue of borderlands extend discussion of the concept of responsibility, exploring its theoretical dimensions, political efficacy and social uses. They explore what Derrida refers to as the link between 'theoretical

consciousness' and 'practical conscience', engaging with the question of 'what being responsible means' and with the responsibilities of history and memory. The contributors are Emily Beausoleil ('Embodying an Ethics of Response-ability'); James Meffan ('Against Levinas'); Allen Meek ('Cultural Trauma, Biopolitics and the Limits of Responsibility'); Simone Bignall, Daryle Rigney and Robert Hattam ('Colonial Letters Patent and Excolonialism: Forgetting, Counter-Memory and Mnemonic Potentiality'); Nicholas Allen ('Memory Shards: A Site of Hope in post-Apartheid South Africa'); and Walescka Pino-Ojeda ('Ethics of Responsibility or Ethics of Principle? Trauma and Neoliberalism in Latin America: The "Periphery" Gone Global').

Introduction

What significance should we attach to the seemingly ubiquitous appeals to responsible behaviour in contemporary (Western, neoliberal) society? To give a glimpse of the apparently distinct contexts in which responsibility has been invoked, consider two contemporaneous examples from recent New Zealand history. In 1998, the New Zealand government sent a document to all households called the *Code of Social and Family Responsibility*. A cross between a charter and a survey, it called for New Zealanders to acknowledge and apply their personal responsibilities in declarative terms. It set out 11 obligations in the form of normative statements, such as 'people should love, care for, support and protect their children'; 'people will do all they can to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy'; 'parents will take responsibility for bringing their children up to be law-abiding members of society'; and 'people will manage their money and meet the basic needs of themselves and their family'. Although over 94,000 responses were received, the survey results were never published and the government quietly shelved the project. Just a few months earlier, the same government had signed off a very different document where, instead of reminding citizens of their responsibilities it was, conversely, being called to account for failing a group of its own citizens. Prime Minister Jenny Shipley signed the settlement agreement with the Ngāi Tahu iwi for compensation and cultural redress following repeated historical breaches by the Crown of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. The necessity to take responsibility was also invoked in this process, most notably in the apology that Shipley read aloud at the settlement ceremony. The text of the apology cites a petition to Queen Victoria in 1857 by Ngāi Tahu ancestor Matiaha Tiramōrehu, who had articulated the iwi's belief that the Crown was responsible for ensuring 'that the white skin be made just equal with the dark skin'.¹

These documents bore little resemblance in their audience and form of address, but their co-occurrence and mutual appeal to responsibility suggest something of the rhetorical and moral freight that the concept is able to convey. The *Code of Social and Family Responsibility* might be dismissed readily enough as a clumsy piece

of pedagogical governance; members of the public presumably thought so, given the massive swing to the opposition party at the general election one year later.ⁱⁱ But the blatancy of the *Code* remains instructive if we want to understand one influential definition of responsible behaviour: to act 'responsibly' is to avoid becoming a burden on the state, or, more particularly, to avoid burdening the all-important, beleaguered taxpayer. The signing of the settlement deed represents an alternative sphere of responsible action, one which takes effect through the whole apparatus of historical justice and restitution. The settlement not only acknowledged wrongdoing by the Crown and formalised the transfer of financial restitution, but also sealed a commitment to a renewed relationship between the Crown and the tribe based on more equitable grounds. In this sense it represented a local example of a global mobilisation of responsibility in which nation-states and powerful institutions have acknowledged systematic injustices against political and ethnic minorities. Efforts to make reparation, to recognise and affirm the rights of the claimant group and to commit to ongoing relationship operate within a politically potent combination of rights discourse, historical revisionism, and quasi-covenantal undertakings between responsible agencies and their constituencies. In the *Code* the state sought to *transfer* social responsibility to the individual, whereas in the apology the state was forced to *accept* and *acknowledge* responsibility for its actions. The apology was made due to the pressure put on the state by the collective political action of the aggrieved group and their supporters. The neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility, then, can be seen as an attempt to contain and undermine civil rights struggles and demands for restorative justice.

Further appeals to responsibility are so widespread across multiple sites that the current cultural conjunction has been deemed the 'age of responsabilisation' (Shamir 2008). Witness, for example, market-oriented initiatives such as the burgeoning Corporate Social Responsibility movement, financial literacy programmes, and calls to act wisely as consumers, shareholders and stakeholders. In the sphere of governmentality, we are enjoined by 'social good' campaigns to avoid numerous non-criminal evils: obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy, the overconsumption of sugar and salt. In the courts, restorative justice initiatives operate on the basis that offenders will front up to the people that they have harmed. Philosophers and political activists debate the responsible exercise of collective memory, the ethical challenges presented by digital, genetic and biologic technologies, and the responsibilities of humans to each other, to all sentient beings, to whole ecosystems, and to planetary life itself. Even primary school children these days are required to monitor their effectiveness as responsible learners, as precepts that used to be written as lines for punishment ('I must not get distracted in class', 'I must contribute to a collaborative classroom environment') are now laid out by students in their homework books as personalised key learning objectives.

The concept of responsibility is based on the premise that we as individuals not only have the capacity, but also the innate drive, for self-aware moral action through the exercise of prudent yet self-expressive choices. In contrast to 'mere compliance with rules', responsibility 'presupposes one's care for one's duties and one's uncoerced application of certain values as a root motivation for action' (Selznick, cited in Shamir 2008, p. 7). To this extent it is, therefore, a continuing aspect of reflexive modernity, in the historical decline of traditional sources of normative action such as religious instruction or social custom. Such an understanding of responsibility arose in the late nineteenth century along with a liberal account of personhood based on the rational exercise of choices conditioned, on the one hand, by legal constraints and, on the other, by the dictates of conscience. From this time, responsibility was deemed to rest on the triad of imputability (the ability to attribute actions to a clear, autonomous agent), accountability (the necessity to answer to authorities for these actions), and duty (the obligation to undergo punishment for the adverse consequences of agential action).ⁱⁱⁱ The concept of responsibility in this well-established sense holds people accountable for their intentional actions, as measured by normative standards of behaviour and exercised to ensure some larger imperative: honour, the national economy, the dictates of natural justice and equality, the prevention of harm, the preservation of peace.

However, the contemporary resurgence of responsibility discourses also raises new areas of concern. One notable development is the apparently expanding chronological span of personal and collective responsibility, reaching ever further into the past and even into the future. Calls for historical justice by colonised peoples addressed to the former centres of empire, for example, have reached back into the more distant past, now encompassing claims for damages from a slave trade that was formally abolished, in the British Empire at least, as far back as 1807. Thus the actions of the past are routinely put to trial under contemporary standards of responsibility and responsiveness, with a stronger understanding that these actions were often experienced as violent and invasive acts that were considered wrong by those who suffered them at the time. Looking in the opposite direction (at least in unilineal concepts of temporality), acting responsibly has come to mean not only accountability for the consequences of one's imputable past actions but also anticipating the possible negative future consequences of one's actions, or even the actions of somebody else who has been under your care and influence. As Paul Ricoeur pointed out in 'The Concept of Responsibility: An Essay in Semantic Analysis' (first published in 1994), the 'proliferation and dispersion of uses of this term ... go well beyond the limits established for its juridical use' (p. 11). While the underlying notion of obligation remains, he suggests, it has changed to become 'an obligation to fulfill certain duties, to assume certain burdens, to carry out certain commitments', which together are designed to protect against risk for some larger collectivity (p. 12).

The need to consider our collective legacy to future generations is one moral standard by which to judge our present-day actions, particularly in the more distant future where consequences will almost inevitably be the result of multiple actions by multiple actors, rather than simply attributable to a singular subject. More narrowly, we are subjected to governmental demands to avoid foreseeable harm to ourselves and others by managing risks, even those which do not seem immediately under our personal control—such as the onset of mental illness or the future criminal actions of our children, to recall the dictates of the *Code of Social and Family Responsibility*. Stan van Hooft summarises the complex dynamics of responsibility for future wellbeing as an emergent ‘confluence of a generalised juridical notion of responsibility in which the community as a whole holds and accepts responsibility without imputing fault to individuals, and a generalised moral notion of responsibility in which individuals hold an apparently unlimited range of responsibilities for the future’ (paragraph 13). As with other aspects of the contemporary mobilisation of responsibility, the sense of responsibility for future outcomes can take quite divergent political and institutional valences: it underpins the call to ‘think globally, act locally’ across a range of progressive causes, but also drives the stultifying mechanisms of audit culture and risk assessment, and, in the workings of social abjection, can be associated with a form of moralised shaming for those deemed not to have prevented ‘risks’ to others by managing their life chances in optimal, self-sufficient ways.

A further line of particularly intensive debate in the current political arena concerns the complex inter-relation of responsibilities with rights. Here the semantic duality of the term ‘responsibility’ becomes particularly pertinent. To meet one’s responsibilities can entail a quite limited exercise in fulfilling the duties of one’s position, narrowly construed, as one might perform the duties set out in a job description. However, this limited conception is ‘casuistical’, merely ‘safe-guarding good conscience’ to the detriment of a larger context (Bernasconi 2008, p. 146). The greater ethical challenge is to exercise responsibility in a way that answers to norms deriving from what are considered to be higher principles or an aspirational greater good. In legal contexts, such higher norms are often expressed as universal human rights or forms of natural justice that override municipal laws, even when those laws have been constituted by due internal process. State apologies and compensation to Aboriginal peoples of Australia for the stolen generations, to Japanese Canadians for internment and confiscation of property during World War Two, to Māori for appropriation of land, and to Chinese New Zealanders for the racially-imposed poll tax—all are examples of retrospective denunciations of systematic and intentional injustices that were lawful at the time when they were imposed. Janna Thompson has observed that, as ‘the primary reference point for moral demands’, human rights discourse rests on a framework of accountability, in the sense that justice requires the identification and punishment of a violator, along with particular acts of repair (2015, p. 48). As she points out, ‘the concreteness of this relationship—as opposed to abstract appeals to social justice—is one reason why appeals to reparative justice can be

so powerful' (p. 48). Hence where rights become recognised, the state can be called to its responsibility to provide restitution, however limited and imperfect that restitution may be in political actuality.

Conversely, the intertwining of rights and responsibilities may produce exclusionary effects when claims for justice fall outside recognised categories of merit, when victims of injustice have insufficient agency or political capacity to lobby successfully for their cause, or when general social rights are withheld on the grounds that individuals have failed to meet their institutionally-defined responsibilities. Within the neoliberal framework that has reinvigorated the idea that market relations should be installed as the organising principle for all interactions, rights become susceptible to the terms and dynamics of contract. Underlying the *Code of Social and Family Responsibility*, after all, was the implicit mantra 'no rights without responsibilities', suggesting that the magnanimity of the state might be withdrawn from those who do not meet government-defined, normative standards of behaviour. Social relations may thus be reduced to a perverted sense of reciprocity. Similarly, responsibilities that are seen to enhance property or capital become more visible and feasible, where more diffuse responsibilities of social recognition may become harder to articulate and put into effect. The movement for corporate social responsibility has been criticised in this respect. In the context of a broad privatisation of care in which the burden of social provision has shifted from the state toward the market and civil society (Ventura 2012), corporate social responsibility has been seen as one means to rebalance the severely negative impacts of global capitalism on people and the environment. However, the movement relies heavily on a calculation of gains in terms of brand equity: it 'subordinate[s] socio-moral sensibilities to the calculus of possible outcomes, to the tests of cost-benefit analyses and to the criteria of reputational-risk management' (Shamir 2008, p. 14). Conceived of in such terms, responsibility is thin and self-regarding. In terms of the attachment of responsibility to acknowledged rights, Thompson has noted the risk that, in the 'marketplace of claims', injustices that are not property-related, or reducible to adequate compensation, may be less likely to achieve recognition. She raises genocide and torture as cases in point and offers the possibility that the rise of 'responsibility' may be undermining social relationality more broadly.

The discourse of responsibility can be punitive or partial, then, as well as aspirational, dignifying, and just. Through our reflections and actions, how might we recognise and curtail the negative implications of the call to responsibility, while enhancing more equitable ideals and outcomes? Who should we be responsible to, and what are we responsible for, particularly in a context of competing or conflicting duties? Most particularly for contributors to this special issue of *borderlands*, what are the limits of responsibility? Alongside unprecedented acknowledgements of historical abuses by world powers and influential institutions such as the Catholic church, we have also seen flagrant and continuing outrages through wars, both declared and undeclared, that remind us that collective responsibility

often stops, quite literally, at borders of all kinds. Inevitably, it is those with power and authority who remain in the position to choose to be responsible for those who are marginalised. Responsibility is often invoked to find a means to reduce violence and inequality of all forms, but is it possible that the conceptualisation of responsibility itself might ultimately undermine, rather than enhance, the fundamental modes of relationship that would be needed to produce a more peaceful and equitable world? Raffoul's comments in *The Origins of Responsibility* are apropos: 'the unceasing calls for responsibility in contemporary culture are always calls to such agency, to the position of a subject-cause. And this insistence as such deserves scrutiny' (p. 6).

In its immediate 'pre-history', the recent reprise of responsibility has been informed in complex ways by the world-historical events of the mid twentieth century. Through historical justice and the prosecution of crimes against humanity, the enforcement of responsibility has called military and political leaders to account for actions that they authorised or countenanced. Responsibility can thus be used to decry and amend for the worst abuses of modernity in the forms of colonialism, imperialism and totalitarianism. However, searching critiques of the concept also question whether some contemporary applications of responsibility may re-entrench an account of agency and subjectivity that proved to be deeply implicated in these structures of victimisation. As Emily Beausoleil suggests in her article in this volume, to the extent that responsibility continues to be construed in narrow terms as accountability, it may re-inscribe an ethics based on the classification and fixation of identity: 'responsibility is to be *held to account*, to be found and fixed in place, while irresponsibility is to slip the grasp of culpability'. Such an understanding of responsibility tends to assign subjectivities into categories (perpetrator, victim, survivor, witness, bystander) that are inevitably politically mediated. Furthermore, to the extent that it tends to be backward-looking and focused on attributing individual fault, responsibility-as-accountability is manifestly inadequate to combat the unprecedented threats to planetary life in an era where humans wield weapons of mass destructive power, ranging from nuclear warheads to polluting consumer goods and greenhouse gas-emitting processes.

As a counterpoint to theorisations of responsibility focused on intentionality, autonomy and imputability, Bernasconi draws attention to what he calls a 'revolution in ethical thinking' from the 1940s onward, prompted by the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre on 'hyperbolic responsibility' and Emmanuel Levinas on 'infinite responsibility'. 'I am responsible for everything', Sartre announced in *Being and Nothingness* (1942), a maxim that Bernasconi glosses as the belief that 'one can never say of anything, "It is not my responsibility, it has nothing to do with me"' (2008, p. 137). Since we might all have acted at some point to prevent undesirable actions, we can't present ourselves as passive victims and must 'own' each situation in which we find ourselves. This call to action includes re-evaluation of the past, in Bernasconi's view, given that 'we choose the past all the time by determining its meaning through the way we live' (p. 141).

Underpinning the extended concept of infinite responsibility is the idea that 'I am responsible beyond my intentions'. In place of the transparency of accountability, Levinas substitutes the opacity of the Other, who is both unknowable in principle, and yet intimately proximate through the 'extreme sensitivity of one subjectivity to another, the heteronomous responsibility of our subjectivity' (cited in Campbell 1994, p. 467). Hence responsibility cannot be based on decision, because 'the very origin of subjectivity is to be found in its subjection to the "Other"' (Campbell 1994, p. 460). Infinite responsibility is not reducible to punishability and can't be either circumscribed or translated into specific obligations.

Hence for all their differences, both Sartre and Levinas refute the idea that we can put walls around our actions and say 'again and again, this is not my affair, this is not my business, this is not my problem' (Bernasconi 2008, p. 146). Rather, there are no excuses or extenuating circumstances. In filtered and perhaps distorted ways, traces of this 'revolution' in ethics may be discernible in what we have characterised, broadly and schematically, as a shift in emphasis from a notion of responsibility limited by subjective agency as accountable *for* one's imputable actions to one of responsibility *to* (unidentifiable, even unimaginable) others, conceived in a complex weave of intersubjective imbrication. What complicates matters is that both meanings appear to co-exist in contemporary Western society: we are regarded as autonomous, imputable agents, responsible for our actions and liable for reparation or punishment, *and* as social subjects implicated in apparently boundless shared risk with respect to an imperative that makes us responsible to everyone, everywhere, and in the future.

The contributors to this special issue all take issue with any notion of responsibility that is couched within the terms of calculated, self-interested decision-making. In the context of complex and disturbing national histories, they ask how responsibility can serve what is just, not merely what is required by law or politically expedient. The first two articles, by Emily Beausoleil and James Meffan, investigate the idea of responsibility as a response to an Other. Both address the philosophy of Levinas, who locates ethics as not only prior to decision-making, but prior to morality and indeed subjectivity itself. In her article 'Embodying an Ethics of Response-ability', Beausoleil draws on Levinas to propose a 'dispositional ethics' which conceptualizes responsibility as responsiveness to multiplicity and difference. Beausoleil argues that the conceptualisation of responsibility as accountability 'not only fails to exhaust the ways in which responsibility might be conceived, but in fact can prove *irresponsible* insofar as it fails to account for the complexity, dynamism and interrelation of identity and encounter'. Moving beyond conceptions of the self as stable and autonomous, she extends the Levinasian conception of ethics as relational and understands the ability to 'listen to' as the basic preparation to engage in meaningful encounters with difference. 'There is, in short—after centuries of focusing on the right, means and substance of speech—the call to

learn to listen'. To enact such an ethics requires us to ask a series of questions of the self, from moment to moment, as we engage with others: *What does the environment require? Who are the selves that are here? Who am I becoming?* Focusing on 'the *conditions* for rather than the *substance* of the ethical encounter', Beausoleil characterises receptivity as an aptitude, rather than rule-governed behaviour—a disposition to regard other people with 'soft eyes' so as not to re-install the 'closures' of a singular identity.

Working within the discipline of literary hermeneutics, Meffan's study, 'Against Levinas', offers a more sceptical reading of Levinas, querying in particular the notion of 'infinite responsibility'. In arguing that responsibility and hence freedom are 'antedecedent by an obligation to the other', Levinasian ethics produces the paradoxical effect of diminishing agency by avoiding the concrete necessity to actualise ethical duties through conduct. In the first stage of his argument, Meffan observes that Levinasian ethics seems amenable to an interpretive practice that (in the wake of postcolonialism and the politics of difference) privileges alterity between text and reader, between individual readers, and between one reading and another. Since literary fiction tends to resist closure because of its capacity to generate a range of interpretations, literary theorists have turned to Levinasian ethics as a compatible framework for avoiding finality and absolute meaning—an assumption that Meffan finds problematic, given the apparent paradox that underlying a radical *individuation* of intersubjective engagement lies the *universality* of the demand on my self's responsibility for the Other. In a major turn in his argument, Meffan then makes the reverse case that, in its inherently discursive and agential nature (as a verbal representation of action), literary narrative tends to undercut rather than reinforce Levinas's insistence on the infinitude of the face-to-face relation. Meffan defines ethics, in distinction from morality, as a field of discourse operating on two levels: it generates guiding principles on how to perform obligations through interpersonal conduct, and also requires that we engage in open-ended debate about 'the basis and reach of codes of responsibility'. Meffan faults Levinasian ethics on both levels. Levinasian responsibility is not the result of deliberation, for 'each individual subject is made responsible for all others regardless of any agential choice to shoulder that responsibility'. Hence it tends to position subjects into 'moral patients'—those that cannot exercise either ethical or moral agency. Furthermore, Levinasian ethics reduces the Other to the position of moral patient by 'declining to engage their ethical agency out of concern that to do so would enact a violence on a core of singular selfhood'. Discursive engagement weakens, and with it the possibility for growth, as Meffan argues on the basis of his premise that 'my subjectivity is discursively constructed, and so I must engage discursively to modify it'.

The essays by Allen Meek, Walescka Pino-Ojeda, Nicholas Allen, and Simone Bignall, Daryle Rigney and Robert Hattam, further explore the extent to which the negotiation and construction of social responsibility is embedded in discursive, institutional and

technological power. Broadly, they chart a trajectory from retributive justice, evidenced most famously in the Nuremberg trials following World War Two, through to a more conciliatory and restorative understanding of justice. Whether driven by or creative of new ways of conceiving the linked notions of agency and responsibility, this shift indicates a move away from notions of responsibility as (agential) accountability for past wrongs, towards an emphasis on community, intersubjective relationships, and the repair of harm in the interest of collective future 'health'. Put too simply perhaps, this is a move away from notions of responsibility (as individual accountability) *for* past actions towards a notion of responsibility (as responsiveness) *to* a shared, communal future. We say 'too simply' because for some (including Pino-Ojeda, below), this shift is itself deeply irresponsible and comes at the cost of justice—justice understood as punishment for agents whose past acts were deeply, immorally criminal.

In recent decades attributing responsibility for wrongdoing has become increasingly embedded in discourses about cultural trauma. Demands by specific groups for recognition of (and reparation for) historical injustices have been displaced by an ongoing analysis of psychological suffering and stress dramatized in various texts and representations. In his article 'Cultural Trauma, Biopolitics and the Limits of Responsibility', Meek questions this attribution of a traumatic past to entire communities such as nations or ethnic groups. His essay offers an account of the rise of the Holocaust as iconic collective trauma that transcends geographical, ethnic and political boundaries and identifies the prevailing trauma paradigm in literary, film, and cultural studies as missing an important connection with biopolitics. Cultural trauma narratives assign moral responsibility to the different roles of perpetrators, bystanders, survivors and victims. Turning to first-hand reflections on the experience of the Nazi camps and commentaries by Arendt and Agamben, Meek reconsiders the ways that so-called totalitarian societies destroy the capacity of individuals to behave as independent moral agents. To the extent that it assumes direct control over the lives and deaths of entire populations, the state has undermined the very possibility of individual responsibility as it is understood in both liberal humanist and neoliberal articulations. Meek argues that cultural trauma narratives fail to address this problem and instead themselves assume a biopolitical role by constructing populations in terms of collective pathologies and therapeutic discourses.

Questions about how to address the wrongs of colonial violence dominate in Simone Bignall, Daryle Rigney and Robert Hattam's essay 'Colonial Letters Patent and Excolonialism: Forgetting, Counter-Memory and Mnemonic Potentiality'. While the issues that animate this essay are very different from those in Meek's, the two essays share a common interest in the communal construction of memorial narratives. In order to draw out the potentiality of what they call 'the responsible work of memory', Bignall, Rigney and Hattam begin by recalling a particular instance of (violent) forgetting, a 'broken promise', in South Australian history: the case of the Letters Patent,

royal documents that set out explicit conditions for the state acquisition of territories of the Ngarrindjeri peoples where the rights of 'traditional owners' were acknowledged. The authors outline the psychic and temporal structures of motivated forgetting on the part of the colonisers, as evidenced through legal reasoning in cases concerning land ownership rights. If we begin by interrogating the 'forgetting' that shapes our present, they suggest, we may be able to 'remember' the past in new, different—and more responsible—ways. More specifically, remembering the original intent of the Letters Patent might recover 'a forgotten promise of political recognition and respectful engagement': *intended* but forgotten. Engaging with several theoretical accounts of memory, sovereignty, history and ethics (Rothberg, Foucault, Bergson, Ricoeur and Todorov), the essay analyses the potential of the Letters Patent for the construction of different memories that challenge traditional colonial histories. The discussion concludes with an account of how recent legal actions and negotiations by the Ngarrindjeri people with the South Australian State are being undertaken in precisely such a spirit of historical responsiveness, 'wilfully recalling a virtual foundation of respectful intercultural relationship' that eschews the conflictual mechanism of 'race war'.

In 'Memory Shards: A Site of Hope in post-Apartheid South Africa', Nicholas Allen addresses a related set of issues of restorative, conciliatory memory in the case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as recalled by its Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Through the collation of the victim/survivor testimony and perpetrator confession before the TRC, it was hoped that a more truthful account of the past would result in the creation of an inclusive, reconciliatory national narrative ensuring a productive multiracial future. Allen proceeds via a reading of TRC Chairman Desmond Tutu's autobiography, *No Future without Forgiveness*, setting this contrapuntally against the work of Miroslav Volf and Paul Ricoeur. Like Bignall, Rigney and Hattam, Allen promotes an engagement with the past that is future-oriented, narrational and communal. In the context of the TRC hearings, acts of remembering and forgetting became morally and politically charged: confessional perpetrator 'recollection' was prompted by the 'carrot' of amnesty for those whose abusive past acts were deemed to be politically motivated and fully disclosed, while victims were burdened with the expectation of willingly offering forgiveness, along with the particular kind of 'motivated forgetting' that forgiveness entails. Allen argues that despite the original attempt to establish 'different orders of truth', the tendency of the TRC was to accept *all* testimony and confession as equal, as 'evidence, an ingredient of the factual truth'. Allen concludes that it was the amnesty offered and conceded to those perpetrators considered 'truthful' in the Commission's proceedings that acted as the main obstruction towards a collective construction of a plural memory, leaving these partial testimonies unchallenged and not allowing for the 'shards' to be joined in a negotiated communal restorative project.

In her article 'Ethics of Responsibility or Ethics of Principle? Trauma and Neoliberalism in Latin America: The "Periphery" Gone Global', Pino-Ojeda discusses the collective trauma suffered by Chile and Argentina as a result of neoliberal economic restructuring under the rule of military dictatorship in the 1970s and 80s. Originally the object of 'explicit political-economic engineering', in the form of neoliberal structures that were imposed on the postcolonial periphery before being implemented in the 'metropolitan' centres, these nations can now model ways in which communal responsibility might be exercised to challenge such structures 'from *within* neoliberal social-political formations'. As in Allen's essay, Pino-Ojeda considers the role of the Chilean TRC which, in the name of re-establishing national stability and re-establishing democracy, failed to achieve social justice and to legally punish the perpetrators of political violence and oppression. Her essay thus opposes an 'ethics of principle', based on obtaining absolute truth and justice for victims, to a politically pragmatic 'ethics of responsibility'. The unsatisfactory compromise between these positions was captured in President Aylwin's declaration that his government would pursue 'justice *to the extent possible*' (emphasis added). Like Allen, Pino-Ojeda raises many concerns about the offer of amnesty to encourage perpetrators to tell the 'truth' about the past, suggesting that introduction of amnesty laws in Chile complicated the possibility of achieving justice for victims and their families. Pino-Ojeda maintains that 'the prioritisation of reconciliation over [punitive] justice' places 'overwhelming demands' on the direct victims of atrocities, further burdening them with the 'responsibility of acting as legitimate agents of reconciliation'. Pino-Ojeda offers examples of civil associations, 'labourers of memory' in Elizabeth Jelin's phrase, who have taken it upon themselves to provide creative avenues to restore communal memory and healing in ways that counter what Pino-Ojeda characterises as the individualisation and privatisation of collective pain within a neoliberal-inflected framework of reconciliation. In the final step of her wide-ranging discussion, Pino-Ojeda considers how two documentary films, *Fernando ha vuelto* (dir. Silvio Caiozzi, 1997) and *Nostalgia for the Light* (dir. Patricio Guzmán, 2010), have presented a memorialisation of social trauma. Like the recent Chilean student movement, these films profoundly challenge the new forms of terror—the fear of social and economic exclusion—ushered in by the irresponsible 'responsibility' of post-dictatorship political paradigms. The 'globe', suggests Pino-Ojeda, has much to learn from these affective, *responsible* performances taking place in the 'periphery'.

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Kim Worthington is a senior lecturer in English at Massey University. Her research interests are in 20th-century and contemporary literature (especially fiction), postcolonial studies, and literary theory, particularly narratological and ethical approaches. She is the author of *Self as Narrative: Subjectivity and Community in Contemporary Fiction* (Clarendon, 1996); many entries in *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*; and various articles and book chapters. Her current research involves an exploration of the contemporary literary and political use of concepts such as forgiveness, confession and apology.

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Notes

ⁱ The full text of the apology is available on Ngāi Tahu's website at <http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/ngai-tahu/the-settlement/settlement-offer/the-crowns-apology/>

ⁱⁱ The political and institutional drivers underlying the *Code* are discussed in detail in *Another New Zealand Experiment: A Code of Social and Family Responsibility*, edited by Judith A. Davey (2000).

ⁱⁱⁱ We are influenced in this formulation by Richard McKeon's account of the history of the concept of responsibility. McKeon points out that the modern use of the term in both English and French dates back to 1787, in the context of the obligations held by political institutions to be answerable to the people who elected them. In the mid nineteenth century, the term came to coalesce around a more personal and individualising capacity, closely associated with punishability. By the late nineteenth century, the term had become overlaid with debates about moral action and personal freedom (McKeon 1990/1957; see also Bernasconi 2008).

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