

The History of Australian Haiku and the Emergence of a Local Accent

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Abstract

Since *haiku* first crossed Australian borders more than one hundred years ago, it has undergone a process of translation, interpretation and transformation. This study examines aspects of haiku's cultural transmission and evolution in Australia from a genre oriented to the early Japanese models, to one which is informed by a growing international haiku community and an emerging local sensibility.

This study will examine the origins of Australian haiku by evaluating the contribution of some of its most important translators and educators and assess the legacy of Australia's early haiku education on current haiku practices. Haiku is still best known as a three-line poem of seventeen syllables broken into lines of 5-7-5, however, contemporary haiku largely eschews this classicist approach and is characterised by a blend of emulation and experimentation. This study presents and discusses a variety of approaches to writing haiku that have emerged in Australia over the course of its development.

One of the strengths of Japanese *haiku* has been its ability to reflect its own culture through the use of *kigo*. This study includes a detailed discussion of the two main conceptualisations of *kigo* (season and culture) and potential sources of *kigo*, or *kigo* alternatives (keywords) in Australia are identified in the context of the depth and resonance they could bring to Australian haiku.

Australian haiku is not occurring in isolation and this study puts the development of Australian haiku in a global context. A number of Australian poets have been active in international English-language haiku, and this study aims to assess the effects of their engagement. Some have pointed to a growing homogenisation of haiku as a direct consequence of globalisation. This study will present a range of haiku being accepted for publication in international haiku journals and make some observations about global haiku practices and the extent to which they have contributed to a perceived loss of Australian identity in Australian haiku.

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I take this opportunity to acknowledge the love and support of all my friends and family in Australia, Sweden and other far flung places, who have, at various times, given me just the right amount of encouragement or inspiration needed to keep persevering with this project.

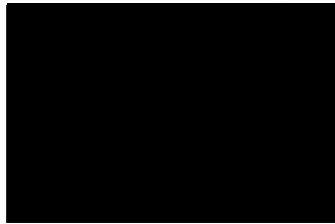
Finally, this thesis would not have been possible without the everlasting love and support of my dear partner, Monika Näslund, who has endured this project as much as I have. During the life of this thesis, we have moved overseas, started new careers and endured a string of life-changing events. I am privileged to have Monika, and our incredible daughter Annika, by my side, providing me with all the love, strength, support and encouragement I need.

Student Declaration

Master by Research Declaration

"I, Rob Scott, declare that the Master by Research thesis entitled, 'The History of Australian Haiku and the Emergence of a Local Accent', is no more than 60,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

Signature



Date

13.3.2014

Prologue to Thesis

Australia's First Haiku?

Precisely one hundred years before the Australian Haiku Society released the first of two anthologies of Australian haiku in 1999, a call went out to Australian poets to try their hand at “some haikais”. A. G. Stephens (aka “The Bookfellow”), editor of the ‘Red Page’, the literary page of the Sydney Bulletin called for submissions for a competition that had been run along similar lines earlier in Britain. Stephens stipulated that the haikais must have an Australasian reference and also informed his readership that, ‘haiku consisted of three unrhymed lines of five, seven and five syllables’ and that ‘the haiku’s style is light and fresh, a swift, fugitive impression more often than not ending with a surprise’ (Bulletin, 8 July 1899, cited in Wooldridge, 2009).

The competition, for which the prize was 10s.6d. (the equivalent to a day’s wage – an extraordinary sum by today’s standards) attracted keen interest, but the overall quality failed to impress Stephens:

None showed remarkable prowess . . . some attempts too closely imitated the models; others were poetical, but unmelodious; a third class were melodious and unpoetical. It does not seem clear that the form is well suited to English . . . But they say the haikai is residuum of a long series of experiments; and genius could no doubt do wonders with it. Local talent has only produced tiny portents’ (Bulletin, 12 August 1899) Wooldridge (2009).

Despite Stephens’ lack of enthusiasm for the standard of the entrants, 14 haiku and 2 haiku sequences were selected and published in the ‘Red Page’, with Sydney poet Robert Crawford declared the winner for his entry:

Flannel-flow’rs dancing
To the dawn on the hill-tops . . .
The Vision of Spring!

with Stephens adding, ‘his third line could be intensified’.

Stephens' blunt commentary makes for interesting reading when seen in the context of the current haiku scene in Australia. His was the first attempt at balancing traditional haiku with Australia's local reality. As the first witness to the tensions to emerge from that hybridism his findings and commentary were prescient. What would he make of the current state of haiku in Australia?

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Thesis

Haiku is currently enjoying unprecedented prosperity and vitality in Australia. This recent burgeoning interest is reflected in the growing number of poets and journals (both online and print) dedicated to the study and enjoyment of haiku, and of course the profound impact of the internet which has not only increased poets' access to the form, but to each other. It has been claimed that haiku is the most popular form of poetry on the web (Barlow and Lucas, 2005). Indeed, haiku has become a multicultural global phenomenon. "As we enter the 21st century, haiku has become one of the most widely written and enjoyed international literatures" (Higginson, 2001).

As such, one theme which emerges almost from the beginning of this research is that Australian haiku is not happening in isolation. Early in this thesis we become aware that Australian haiku, led initially by Australia's premier haiku poet, Janice Bostok's own personal musings, and exacerbated by the growth in communication technology, is developing in a truly global context. Trends in world haiku, and in particular, English Language haiku (ELH) are felt strongly in Australia, and have had arguably more influence than Japanese *haiku* on the writing of haiku in this country. In an effort to reflect this reality, and to provide a more meaningful context for the discussion of Australian haiku's transformation, this thesis has sourced haiku from several haiku corpuses around the world, namely, the US, the UK, Canada, Japan, Sweden and The Netherlands, as well as Australia.

These days, haiku by Australian poets can be found in an increasing number and variety of locations, from dedicated small press haiku journals both here and overseas, to online anthologies, at poetry readings and workshops, in exhibitions on commuter trains, even on fruit juice containers (*The Age*, 1 Nov, 2004). Australia now boasts its own haiku society (HaikuOz) which has produced three anthologies featuring the work of over 200 poets. Numerous groups meet to share and discuss haiku around the country. Australian haiku poets have also made an impact on the international scene, regularly appearing in acclaimed international journals and anthologies of haiku, winning and judging haiku competitions. Haiku has never been more popular in this country and the haiku being written now is far removed from its origins.

It is an opportune time to trace haiku's growth in Australia and make some observations about the transformation of the genre from its early and fragmented beginnings to a readily identifiable form of poetry that has taken its place as a legitimate part of Australia's literary landscape. This thesis will explore this transformation and the course of haiku's advancement in Australia. It will also try to determine whether haiku poets in this country have found their own distinctive voices and, in the Japanese tradition, compose haiku that reflects Australian culture and history.

Lost in Translation¹

It is impossible to talk about haiku without considering its cultural transmission. Haiku poets the world over have, for over a century now, tried to forge a tradition of writing haiku that keeps faith with Japanese bloodlines but which is at the same time acclimatised to local poetics – a balance which has proved difficult to sustain. “It is a commonly held notion and a demonstrably true one that poetry is notoriously difficult to transmit from one culture to another” (Kacian, 2000a). At the core of transmission is, of course, translation. Arthur Waley (1865–1966), an early translator of Japanese literature, wrote:

It is not possible that the rest of the world will ever realize the importance of Japanese poetry, because of all poetries it is the most completely untranslatable (Bowers, 1996, viii).

True or not, haiku scholars have been faced with many challenges, due not only to language barriers, but more critically, the question of how a culture and the principles and techniques of its poetry can be transmitted to a new culture without diminishing its aesthetic. Yoneoka (2008) believes the problem of this ‘cultural hybridisation’ “must take into account the sensitivities and cultural environments of both the original and target languages”. He says (p. 200):

Any creative effort, be it music, art, poetry, literature, or drama, is incontrovertibly linked to and defined by the spatial and temporal culture in which it was conceived. And as translators and interpreters of such products have long known, rendering such creativity outside of its cultural shell to be understood and appreciated by members of a different cultural space and time is generally a task fraught with great difficulty. There are always choices to be made: whether to translate a concept or forego it, whether to emulate the form or convey the meaning, whether to be faithful to the original and add beauty or depth to the derived product. Some go so far as to say that translation is impossible, preferring to use terms such as “rendering” or “recreating” in the new context.

¹ A word about translation – English translations of poems by Dutch poets, van der Molen and Berkelmans which appear in Chapter 3 were done in two stages. Max Verhart provided the initial translations which I then edited with his assistance. Other translations are not my own work and I have cited where appropriate.

There is strong evidence that Australian haiku poets, like their ELH counterparts around the globe, have recreated the genre. Australian haiku poets have spent decades experimenting with and trying to apprehend the principal values and key elements of traditional Japanese *haiku* and the choices they have made have been instrumental in the development of the genre here. And while Australian haiku has typically conformed to a broad understanding of the basic *haiku* elements (brevity, syllable counting and a central focus on nature and the seasons), it has, in recent times, become notable for its divergence of approach. This is perhaps as it should be with an imported culture and language, with styles and approaches changing as knowledge and understanding of it expands as it acclimatises to its new literary surroundings.

A wide variety of styles is to be found in the haiku appearing in all its different media across Australia, from traditional, neo-classicist haiku to modern, one-line haiku and haiku without a seasonal reference, as well as other short poetry 'at the margins' of haiku. It won't be the task of this thesis to justify their inclusion under the 'ambit' of haiku, but discussion of their presence and growing diversity is important in uncovering emerging trends in haiku in Australia.

Conversely, in addition to finding new modes of expression within the genre, there is evidence of the emergence of distinctive traits of Australian haiku. In his review of the Third Australian Haiku Anthology (2011) Paul Miller states:

If one were to stereotype haiku in Australia, it might be to notice that a great many of the poems seem to be the result of an observation, as from a ginko walk. In addition, they like specificities over generalities, which give the poems a strong sense of place (Miller, 2013, p. 146).

The 'generalities' and 'specificities' Miller speaks of, refers to the ensconcing of globalised Western haiku in a narrowly defined set of haiku primers, the by-product of which has been a growing trend towards homogenous haiku, indistinguishable from region to region, country to country, and city to city. Australian haiku has not been able to avoid this orientation, but according to Miller, looks to be finding a way out by crafting its own set of haiku values.

Australian haiku is still in its infancy and this dissertation will examine the propagation of some of those values and try to determine the extent to which we are moving away from the traditions of *haiku* to accommodate the cultural differences of our own literary environment. The migration of the genre from its Japanese origins brought with it a unique approach and new techniques to writing poetry. And despite the widespread acceptance of key aspects of the Japanese tradition, such as *kigo* and *shasei*, there has been a lack agreement and a degree of misunderstanding about its true principles and how to apply its formal techniques to haiku composition.

The core business of this thesis will be to account for Australia's haiku education which has largely been concerned with interpreting and incorporating the genre's Japanese origins with its own poetics. As we will see in Chapter 2, in which key moments and significant individuals of Australia's early haiku history will be discussed, this has been a long and at times arduous journey, inclusive of long stretches of inactivity, resulting in misconceptions and unresolved issues that have shaped the haiku we write in this country. Some of these unresolved issues will be discussed in Chapter 3 with the goal of identifying key characteristics of Australian haiku composition. Finally, Chapter 4 will explore the growth of Australian haiku in the context of the globalisation of the form. Australian haiku spent almost a century coming to terms with the perceived rules and values of its origins which hampered efforts to flavor it with local poetics. We will examine whether its exposure to the international haiku movement, which has added diversity, dynamism and scope, has helped or hindered the emergence of a distinctive voice.

Haiku* vs. *Haiku

At this early point of the dissertation it will be helpful to clarify some terminology. Firstly, *haiku*, for the purposes of this thesis, refers to an ancient short form of Japanese verse. It is traditionally written in 17 *on* (Japanese syllable) in 3 lines of 5-7-5. The verse is characterised by use of *kireji* (cut), to enhance the 'separation' between two juxtaposed elements, and usually contains the aforementioned *kigo* (seasonal reference). There are other well-known characteristics of *haiku* and its various orientations – such as Shiki's direct sketch of nature (*shasei*) and the earlier representations of Zen Buddhist aesthetic concepts such as *wabi*, *sabi*, and *karumi*, championed by Basho, Santoka and others. Traditional Japanese *haiku* inherits a canon of aesthetic experience associated with Japanese literature (Ross, ed. 1993). *Haiku* can only be written in Japanese, by a Japanese person – or by someone with in-depth knowledge of the conceptual and contextual intricacies of Japanese literature and culture. 'If you want to get to know *haiku*, you need to get to know Japan: the country, the people its language and culture' (Lucas 2007). Much more could be written about *haiku* (and some of these concepts will be expanded on throughout the course of the thesis), but for the purposes of this thesis, any reference to *haiku* will be according to this broadly accepted account.

Haiku is the inspiration behind what we call haiku. But haiku is not *haiku*. Haiku is a 'western equivalent' of *haiku*. To paraphrase Lucas, what we know about our haiku is based almost entirely on what we know about *haiku*. What we know about *haiku*, as we will see throughout Chapter 2, has been primarily achieved through translations, as very few haiku poets can claim any fluency in Japanese or intricate knowledge of Japanese culture and traditions. As Gilbert (2000) noted about the North American experience of haiku:

The majority of haikai in the West, while interested in the Japanese *haiku* aesthetic, are not engaged in studies of the Japanese language, and so rely upon translated materials. Japanese scholars addressing North American audiences are likewise rarely well versed in the contemporary North American literary tradition, especially in terms of its vernacular rhythms, free-verse poetics, and other contextual intricacies (Gilbert and Yoneoka, 2000).

The same could be said about the Australian experience. Moreover, when we are talking about *haiku*, we are dealing with approximations – good or bad, close or distant. Similarly, when we are talking about haiku, we are dealing with a divergence of approaches to the key elements of *haiku* and the extent to which *haiku* has acclimatized to the poetic culture of, in this case, Australia.²

So, what is Haiku?

The question ‘what is haiku’ (which leads to the further question of ‘what is Australian haiku’) is a nest of questions. It is not definitive. If one were to ask, ‘What is English Language haiku?’ there could be any number of responses, including the following from UK poet Alan Summers:

An English-language haiku is often written in three short lines and read out loud in about six seconds. They’re written in the present tense, in ordinary language, and work well as two different images that spark off each other. It’s good to include one or more senses such as sound, smell, taste or touch, and not just what we can see. Haiku don’t tell, or merely describe, they allow the reader to enter the poem in their own way. Haiku are ideal for non-fiction observations as a kind of short-hand for remembering events or incidents. They can be therapeutic and they exercise both the right and the left side of the brain. Traditionally haiku are rooted in natural history and the seasons, and make us co-conspirators with wildlife, as nature half-writes the haiku before we’ve even put pen to paper (Summers, 2005).

This description contains many of the elements commonly associated with haiku, and if I was to then write a poem and ask myself, “Is this a haiku?” I would be faced with many questions. Does my haiku meet any of the above criteria? Does it need to meet them all? Is an eight second haiku too long? Is my haiku rooted in nature and the seasons? And if it’s not, is it still a haiku? Most of these questions relate to our understanding of key concepts of the Japanese *haiku* tradition and

² Similarly, *kigo* will refer to any direct reference to the Japanese haiku tradition, otherwise, it will be referred to as ‘kigo’.

the degree to which we can 'keep faith' with our Japanese bloodlines. A more critical question might be: if Japanese techniques of *haiku* were properly integrated in the Australian 'haiku landscape', who in this country would know it?

Australian poets have been doggedly pursuing approximations of Japanese *haiku* aesthetics for much of its history in this country, as reported by Dean (2010):

Australian haiku writers are still experimenting with Japanese haiku aesthetics to see which qualities work best when transplanted into the language and culture associated with our Australian environment. As founder of the Australian Haiku Society, John Bird, explains:

The qualities of brevity and objectivity are firmly entrenched. [Others] being 'trialled' include a lightness of touch (karumi); veneration of the old as evidenced in the patina of rust, mold, weathering, etc (sabi); the valuing of imperfect, ordinary, even useless things (wabi); and the mystery of incomplete explication, a gap which the reader is drawn to fill (kugen).

The nest of questions about 'what is haiku?' and 'what is Australian haiku?' begins here. Is it possible to write Australian haiku without possessing insight into the traditions of *haiku* and what it is supposed to be? And without grounding in Japanese language and culture, what do we really know about haiku, and what haiku are we trying to write?

This thesis will not be a dissertation on Japanese culture or for that matter, Japanese *haiku*. I do not wish, nor can I add, to the many notable studies on Japanese culture and *haiku*. That I am not a Japanese person and have never written or been able to read a *haiku* in Japanese is not only relevant but raises the important question of translation and, more particularly, assessing translation. Much of the material presented here about the Japanese *haiku* tradition comes from translated sources. On that basis alone, it is open to conjecture as to whether a meaningful critique on haiku's cultural transformation in Australia can be constructed. However, it is clear that some of the key concepts of the Japanese *haiku* tradition have been widely employed and reconceptualized beyond their original design. This thesis will consider some of the issues to which early translations and other experiences in the migration of *haiku* have given rise in the hope of providing insights into subsequent developments and the future of haiku in Australia.

Nor will this thesis will be an attempt to provide a definition of Australian haiku. In tracking haiku's development in Australia and, to some extent, in the global context of haiku's movement in various international arenas, I will instead focus on what Australians are getting haiku to *do*, and what, if anything, distinguishes it from haiku elsewhere.

The Problem of Definition

One hundred years into its progress, Australian haiku has neither a definition nor an agreed set of primers. Australian haiku poets, still heavily influenced by the classic Japanese *haiku* tradition, continue to choose from the different techniques of this tradition, as they are understood, to adapt for their writing. Far from representing a crisis, this is, in part, a function of the inheriting culture and it seems reasonable to consider what techniques are available to them in the hope that it will provide a window to the way *haiku* has been interpreted and understood in Australia. But the first one hundred years has also seen the propagation of an international haiku movement, including ELH, which has brought its own set of poetic values. Predictably, in this encounter between languages and cultures, there has been a muddying of the waters, and a subplot of this thesis might be to find out how much *haiku* can be found in haiku. The question is to what extent the techniques used in Australia, from both Japanese *haiku* and ELH, can become ground rules for writing haiku in this country, and whether or not this is desirable. Former President of the Australian Haiku Society, John Bird, believes separation between *haiku* and haiku has already been achieved, and that any prescriptive approach to haiku must be careful not to mix the two:

A major impediment to haiku discourse is careless or mischievous muddling of 'Japanese haiku' and English language haiku. Unless we are clear that English Language Haiku is a separate, albeit related, phenomenon then we will waste our time (or worse) trying to define it (Bird, 2009b).

The question of definition is moot given that current dictionary definitions exist, however narrowly focused and outdated. *Haiku* are famous for their seventeen syllables spaced over 3 lines of five-seven-five, but it is common knowledge among haiku practitioners that both Japanese *haiku* and English haiku dispensed with this rigid requirement some time ago. Yet, most people's broad understanding of haiku remains wedded to the idea of syllable counting, a fixation assisted by the early translations, emulations and teachers of the form.

Much has been written about the difficulties of writing English haiku in 17 syllables from a linguistic, rhythmic and aesthetic standpoint and Chapter 2 canvasses some of these. The reality is that most English haiku are not written in 5-7-5, save for the growing array of zappai, or 'spoof' haiku, written on any number of miscellaneous amusements such as corporate and 'sitcom' haiku. John Cooper Clarke's well known 'spoof' haiku sums up the constraints many practitioners of ELH feel about syllable counting:

Writing a poem
In seventeen syllables
Is very diffic

(Usher, 2000)

The lack of currency among haiku practitioners in both Japan and the West (including Australia) for 17 syllable haiku presents a huge misconception and would appear to turn haiku, or at least a dictionary definition of haiku, on its head. The extent to which this is troubling for haiku depends on the necessity and practical application of definitions. Gilbert (2000) summarizes the continual search for definition of haiku in American circles:

Foment continues within English haiku circles regarding the definition and further evolution of English haiku. There are questions concerning emulation, including whether any formal emulation of the Japanese *haiku* is advisable or necessary; unresolved issues related to season words (*kigo*) and settings (*kidai*); syllable counting; lineation; content; aesthetics; inclusiveness of contemporary Japanese haiku which substantially depart from traditional form – the list goes on (Gilbert and Yoneoka, 2000).

One of the core objectives of this thesis is to find out what Australian haiku looks like. Haiku will be examined as a process, rather than as a definitive term, and what has been accepted as haiku over the course of the past 50 years will be explored. In addition to trying to identify unique characteristics of Australian haiku, this thesis will examine the need for a modified definition to capture the unique characteristics of Australian haiku (if they exist) which might act as a remedy for some of the misconceptions and unresolved issues of haiku highlighted by Gilbert and Yoneoka.

Sato (1999) claimed that it was possible to describe haiku, but not define it. Many such descriptions exist. Haiku has been variously described as a 'one breath poem', a way of life, a type of mind, a keenly observed moment, a brief arrangement of words, a breath-length poem that describes a moment of insight into the mystery of existence, a short poem that uses an image of nature or the seasons to present an intuitive and emotional complex in an instant of time (Verhart, 2007).

It is easy to provide examples of haiku written by Australian poets matching any or all of the above 'criteria', as the selection of poems in Chapter 3 shows. A harder task would be to come up

with a definition that spans the huge range of material being written under the banner of haiku. The vastly different approaches to what haiku *is* and *does*, in the absence of a ruling definition, show that writers are not driven by one. In fact, a case could be made that the lack of prescription to a set of rules is helping the ELH movement to thrive. However, without a definition or formal set of guiding principles, haiku is open to opinion on what it could or should be. On the one hand, this unfettered access to haiku composition could provide favourable conditions for haiku's expansion, particularly for those writers willing to experiment with the form. And there is clear evidence of this happening both in Australian and international haiku waters, as can be seen by the variety of poems accepted as haiku presented in Chapters 3 and 4. However, without a clear idea of the intent and aesthetic of haiku, can we identify haiku as distinct from other short-form poetry, and does it matter?

The practical problem of determining what to include or exclude 'as haiku' is further exacerbated by the tendency of modern haiku journals both here and overseas not to differentiate between haiku and senryu. English haiku has historically differentiated between haiku and senryu based on another piece of muddled translation – that is, the presence (in *haiku*) and absence (in *senryu*) of kigo. Haiku is also said to be primarily concerned with nature while senryu with human nature and humour. Yet, as Gilbert points out:

What has been missed in such a distinction is that Japanese senryu, lacking kigo, can and often do have seasonal reference. Senryu may also contain kigo—that is, words which are kigo in the haiku genre (found in a *Saijiki*), but these words are not treated as kigo, in senryu (Gilbert, 2005).

Continued confusion and modern trends in ELH have forced the hand of editors who, with few exceptions, publish senryu as haiku. A meaningful definition, if one were to pursue it, would also have to take this blending of two distinct types of verse into account.

The Problem of Kigo

This thesis focuses on a detailed discussion of kigo, considered to be one of the 'genre markers' of haiku (Marshall and Simpson, 2006). It will consider two different conceptualisations of kigo – the most common being its associations with nature and the seasons, as well as its accord (or discord) with the culture in which the poetry is created. Kigo is one of the core structural elements of the Japanese *haiku* tradition. It is widely considered essential to the composition of *haiku* (although the contemporary *haiku* Gilbert refers to, not discussed here, makes a significant departure from this) and there are many excellent accounts of how they function. It is widely accepted that Japanese *haiku* and ELH are almost completely different genres, owing mainly to

cultural and language differences. At issue for the purposes of this study is the question of whether kigo are of any practical use in a non-Japanese culture. It is a broadly accepted view that cultures outside Japan cannot sensibly adopt the kigo system and much of the discussion has focused on the differences between kigo and the construction of western equivalents, for example, seasonal indicators.

Kigo, in addition to indicating season carry haiku enriching associations and connotations but these are based on a tradition we do not share. These associations are not easily apprehended by us and can trigger associations we never intended (Bird, J. n.d.b).

The question of whether the importation of kigo is necessary for the composition of haiku in Australia will be examined in a cross-cultural context. Chapter 3, in addition to showcasing haiku written by Australian poets, will also set out to examine the need for kigo and/or seasonal indicators in Australian haiku and the impediments to its use in a foreign culture, including the difficulty of creating a local *saijiki* (dictionary of kigo) in a country of such diverse climates, cultures and languages as Australia. Since one of the core objectives of this thesis is to identify distinctive features of Australian haiku, we will look at some of the kigo alternatives being posited as potential precursors of a local haiku tradition, such as keywords, and on what basis they are being contemplated. Moreover, we will seek to determine the extent to which kigo serve to underpin Australian haiku with the cultural or historical depth that some suggest may be necessary for haiku's survival.

Since the depth and connotations of Japanese kigo are not available to Australian haiku poets, we need a system, perhaps one based on keywords that will allow our small poems the depth and resonance they need to succeed as poetry. Such a system may take many years to evolve but it is in prospect (Bird, n.d.c).

This thesis takes up Bird's concern and poses the question: Can Australian haiku reflect its own culture and does it need to in order to survive? To this end, the haiku selected in Chapter 3 posits several possible sources of 'Australian kigo' and examines their function within haiku, with particular emphasis on the implications of culturally or spiritually significant local phenomena on the conceptual vigor of kigo. In this discussion of the cultural aspects of kigo (as distinct from seasonal factors) we go in search of peculiarly Australian themes to determine if there are additional and as yet 'untapped' reserves of Australian kigo from which to build cultural associations within haiku in Australia.

***Shasei* and The 'Haiku Moment'**

Two modern notions of ELH relevant to this discussion are the aesthetics of direct observation (*shasei*) and the 'haiku moment'. Writing from direct experience (usually of nature) has largely stemmed from wide acceptance of Shiki's technique of objective realist sketching which shunned word play and other forms of abstraction popular in earlier eras of Japan's haiku history. *Shasei* consolidates haiku's strong connection to nature, and nature writing, which will be examined in Chapters 3 and 4 in the context of the emergence (or lack of) a local accent. If Australians are writing from direct experience – and the evidence suggests that they are, most enthusiastically – it would be interesting to know where these experiences are taking place, how they are shaping the kind of haiku being written, and, more importantly, the extent to which they are contributing to the emergence of an Australian identity in haiku.

Relevant to this discussion is the growth of 'World Haiku' and the increasing tendency of Australian writers to write for an overseas audience – which is the central focus of Chapter 4. This set of circumstances has been attributed by some to the loss of identity in Australian haiku and the creation of 'homogenous haiku' in which the writer's sense of place is lost in a kind of 'haikuland' (Bird, n.d.a). If Australian writers are writing about nature, whose nature are they writing about?

Equally, it will be interesting to see how Australians have engaged with the 'haiku moment'. Derived from the Buddhist notion of the world being made anew in each moment, the 'haiku moment', for many, provides the emotional focus of the poem. Renowned American haiku poet, and a pioneer of traditional, Buddhist infused ELH, Robert Spiess says:

The whole of life is in each moment, not in the past, not in the future – and thus a true haiku is vitally important because it is a moment of total and genuine awareness of the reality of the Now (Ross, 1993, xiv).

Closely connected to *shasei*, the haiku moment's very personal method of self-expression and belief in 'the inner-life' of things found an enthusiastic audience among the Beat poets of the United States, and gave haiku its early lustre. It has retained its emphasis in haiku discourse and is often expressed as one of the key elements of haiku both here and overseas.

The counter argument to the 'haiku moment' centres on haiku's ability to talk across time, to reflect on the past in its consideration of the present. Japanese *haiku* owes much of its depth to allusion to an established literary canon. In the absence of a strong haiku canon, Australian haiku would seem limited beyond the poet's personal experience. I will use the discussion about *kigo* in Chapter 3 to help determine the extent to which Australian haiku poetry has the capacity

to reflect its own culture. Ultimately, we will be trying to illustrate the extent to which some of the traditions of Japanese *haiku* have been embraced by Australian poets, and whether their transmission has had any role to play in the degree of Australian-ness (or otherwise) in the haiku being written.

Outline of Thesis

Haiku in Australia has entered a new phase. The range of poems written under the banner of haiku in the past decade is more diverse than in the 100 or so years preceding it. After a long and at times arduous period during which haiku owed all its sustenance to translation and imitation, Australian haiku poets are going their own way. This thesis will attempt to identify and discuss the characteristics of this 'way' in the context of its 'blood' connection with *haiku* and participation in modern 'world haiku'. I will explore the history (and fallout) of Australia's haiku education and how this has shaped the kind of haiku Australians write, their attitudes to haiku and the development of the haiku movement in this country. One of the objectives of this thesis will be to identify features (if they exist) characteristic of Australian haiku composition with the goal of clarifying the existence of an Australian haiku tradition. Central to this discussion will be the extent to which traditional Japanese *haiku* principles and techniques have been adopted, integrated or are relevant to Australian haiku composition.

Chapter 2 will be an exploration of Australia's haiku education and initiation, the origins and key moments, and it will assess the contribution of two of its pioneers in Harold Stewart and Janice Bostok. This chapter will try to ascertain the impetus they gave to this new genre and the extent to which they affected the course of haiku in Australia. Stewart's idiosyncratic use of rhyme in his translations of haiku was Australia's 'first look' at the genre. His Buddhist infused translations, though characteristic of the time, particularly in the United States (see Blyth and Suzuki) were compromised by an almost total abandonment of the form and lack of sensitivity to the aesthetic. In this chapter, his obvious enthusiasm for some of the 'spiritual' underpinnings of *haiku*, which afforded the unknown genre a degree of freshness on these shores, will be contrasted with his conservative and inadequate choice of rhyme as the main tool for translation.

Bostok's contribution will be examined in the context of her role as Australia's first teacher and editor of haiku. We will trace her efforts to re-establish sensitivity to the aesthetic, said to be lacking in Stewart's work, and expand the possibilities of haiku in English. And, perhaps most importantly, her contribution to the development of a local voice will be assessed.

Finally, Chapter 2 will also contain an overview of some of the other key moments of the Australian haiku movement, including the formation of the Australian Haiku Society and an

account of some of the most notable journals (both online and print) and publishers of haiku up to the present day

Chapter 3 will examine the haiku Australians are writing and make some observations about the cultural transformation of the genre. It will assess what Australian poets have made of the genre, how they have interpreted it, how they have incorporated it into their own poetics and what they have done to make it their own. For comparison purposes, a selection of Dutch and Swedish haiku is included as a means of identifying cross-currents in non-Japanese haiku composition. We will seek to discover whether there is such a thing as 'Australian haiku' and how possible, or even desirable, it has been to incorporate some of the key values and traditions of Japanese *haiku*, and the efficacy of 'western equivalents'.

To do this, we need to investigate some of the unresolved issues arising from the migration of haiku to this country and its local evolution. The discussion of kigo mentioned above, will take up a large portion of this chapter. One hundred years into its 'tradition', Australian haiku lacks a definition or an agreed set of principles to guide poets in their writing. Australian haiku poets are writing in a mix of styles based on mixed understandings of critical concepts of Japanese *haiku*. There are numerous compositional considerations including the problem of kigo, the aesthetic of direct observation and the Western notion of 'the haiku moment'. Chapter 3 includes a wide selection of haiku from Australian poets – which is intended to be representative of the diversity in approach taken to writing haiku in this country – with the goal of finding threads and currents which may help in some way towards delineating some of the distinctive characteristics of haiku composition in this country. Commentaries will be provided on many of these haiku to illustrate the degree to which Australian haiku has come to terms with its haiku upbringing, and the impact of adaptation, experimentation and innovation on its progress to date.

The degree of Australian-ness in Australian haiku is discussed further in Chapter 4 in the context of the rapid growth of international ELH. In this chapter we consider the globalisation of the haiku form and discuss some of the implications of sharing across cultures on the cultivation of Australian haiku. The rapid growth of communication technology over the past twenty years has put people in almost constant contact with each other from all parts of the globe. One ramification for the communal body of haiku poets has been the creation of a challenging diversity of styles of haiku being written across cultures. Of interest to us is the level of Australian participation in the international haiku movement and its impact on the kind of haiku being written here.

Chapter 4 begins with the results of an international haiku competition in which poets from within and outside of Australia were invited to write haiku on 'Australian themes'. It is hoped this discussion, as well as being instructive about what people consider to be distinctively

Australian themes, is helpful in our discovery of criteria about what constitutes 'Australian haiku'. A wide and historical selection of haiku by Australian poets appearing in international journals is also presented for discussion. The extensive selection of 'model' ELH is presented in order to discover some of the characteristics of 'world haiku', assess the role played by Australian haiku poets on the world 'scene', and discuss some of the ramifications for the Australian haiku movement.

The growth in the international haiku movement, which is almost universally acclaimed for giving 'new life' to haiku, has also been held culpable by some for a perceived growing homogeneity in haiku written across cultures. The increasing globalisation of the genre has led poets on a journey in search of common ground in their poetry, which has sometimes been at odds with engagement with their local surrounds. We consider some of the similarities and differences between the haiku appearing in international journals written by Australian writers and poets from other regions. The focus for this discussion will be on the level of local engagement required for the cultivation (and successful publication) of internationally acceptable haiku. It will ask whether the lure of international publication, in which 'Australian-ness' is perhaps forgone in favour of participation in a new and vibrant form of Western poetry, is placing Australian haiku's survival at risk.

This post-national trend of Australian haiku is considered in light of the origins of Australian haiku and the realities of its haiku education. We reflect on the dual legacy of its pioneer figure Bostok, who was at the forefront of Australian haiku's experimentation both here and abroad. We present the work of some stand-out poets who are managing to balance the competing forces of local and international influences and producing haiku that provides a strong sense of Australia without diminishing their appeal to international audiences.

In the concluding chapter, I reflect on Australia's haiku education and practice in its first hundred years. The transformation of the genre is examined and we consider the implications of these changes on the future of haiku in Australia. Areas of further study are also suggested as a means of further understanding haiku's migration and development in Australia.

Finally, it is important to point out at the outset that I will be using my own poetry as a primary source at times during this thesis. I have been writing haiku for nearly 20 years and my work has appeared in many publications both in print and online in Australia and internationally. Indeed, my interest in undertaking this research emerged from an active involvement in the Australian and international haiku communities. Drawing on my own creative work in a critical practice such as this and clarifying my dual role in the field – as practitioner and scholar – has some methodological implications which are important for the 'research story' of the thesis.

As a practitioner of haiku, much of this discussion is aimed at other practitioners – to examine current understandings and perspectives on haiku; to showcase the haiku being written today by Australian poets in local and international forums; and to highlight some of the current debates and challenges facing haiku poets. I hope that the unique insights gleaned from my experience within the haiku writing community can lend some weight to the discussion of haiku's progress in Australia. Much of this thesis will explore what has gone on before, but I also intend to give emphasis to some of the issues that Australian haiku poets are giving consideration to now, at this present moment.

In some ways, I am a direct product of Australia's recent haiku education – an Australian poet with an interest and working knowledge of some of the key elements of *haiku*, engaged in a kind of 'haiku fellowship' with local and international poets. And like any poet, the style of my poetry is informed by my physical and cultural surroundings. For much of my haiku writing 'career' I have lived outside Australia. I am currently based in Sweden where I have lived for most of the past 5 years, and I have also lived in The Netherlands (6 years) and Japan (2 years). This may account for the frequent lack of overtly Australian themes appearing in my own writing, as is highlighted at various times throughout the thesis. An exception to this is the football haiku I have been writing about Australian Rules football on a weekly basis throughout the official Australian Football League (AFL) season over the past ten years. These poems have appeared in many publications, newspapers and online blogs and a selection of them has been included on the reading list for a Sports Writing unit (ACP2002, Professional Writing for Sport) at Victoria University commencing in 2014. The question of whether or not this lack of 'Australian-ness' makes my haiku any less 'Australian' is a major theme of this thesis.

In a general sense then, my own situation is 'the story' of the thesis – perhaps the story of Australian haiku – in that, for the most part, the haiku I write is informed directly by my own and borrowed perceptions of Japanese *haiku*; a variety of surroundings, both distinctively Australian and distinctively non-Australian; and further characterised by a willingness to engage with a 'foreign' audience. The search for a distinctive local haiku voice will be undertaken very much within this variational context.

Chapter 2 – Key Moments in the Birth and Early Development of the Australian Haiku Movement

Poetry is what gets lost in translation – Robert Frost

Poetry is what is gained in translation – Joseph Brodsky

The history of Australian haiku is a history of literary contortion. For the past hundred years, Australian poets have been writing poems in a genre that has been imported from a foreign culture, translated in the main by people with, at best, limited knowledge of the original Japanese texts, and written by poets conforming to the broad approximations fashioned by those translations, or to a range of Western poetic sensibilities, or a mix of both. From its earliest sighting to the present day, Australian haiku has been characterized by a concoction of emulation and bold variation. Many Australian haiku poets write haiku that keeps faith with the letter and spirit of the translations of original Japanese *haiku*, as they are understood. These ‘faithful renderings’ still make up the (albeit shrinking) majority of haiku found in haiku journals in Australia today. One of the objectives of this thesis will be to account for this and explore the extent to which Australian haiku is still shackled to its early understandings of Japanese *haiku* or in pursuit of its own beliefs.

However competent translations and interpretations might be, alternative views and possible misunderstandings will accompany them. This is the reality of cultural transmission. This thesis will try to account for some of the potential (and in some cases, well documented) misunderstandings resulting from Australia’s haiku education and the impact this has had on the haiku being written here. We will also take a close look at those writing practices to determine if the numerous transformations and variations the genre has undergone are evidence of Australia’s own, distinctive creative expression of haiku. To set the scene for that exploration, the focus in Chapter 2 will be to assess the contributions of two of the leading players in the birth of haiku and its early transformation in Australia – Harold Stewart and Janice Bostok – and the roles they have played in haiku’s near demise, recovery and bright but uncertain future. This discussion will hopefully highlight some of the issues Australian haiku has had to confront in its cultural transmission from Japan, and lay the foundations for a more specific articulation in subsequent chapters of the type of haiku being written here.

Australia’s haiku tradition is modestly short and still at the margins of the poetry establishment, languishing in the aftermath of a long and arduous birth. Up until the early 1970s, Australian haiku existed in the strict traditionalist-classicist world of translation of Japanese

haiku 'classics' and the allure of the Orientalist image of Japan. By the end of the seventies, despite the efforts of a handful of individuals to integrate it into local poetics, the Australian haiku movement had almost completely disappeared. Recent growing interest, stemming largely from the globalisation of the genre, has reinvigorated the form but not assured its future. In addition to assessing the role of two key players in the course of Australian haiku, this chapter will provide an overview of some of the other key moments of the Australian haiku 'movement'. It will give accounts of the comings and goings of poetry journals dedicated to the publishing of haiku, the emergence of its online presence, as well as competitions, anthologies and other currents in which haiku has been found.

The history of the Australian haiku movement can be pared down to some key moments which helped shape and, at various times, paralyse its course. The first took place in 1960, when Harold Stewart released the first of his two books of haiku translation, *A Net of Fireflies*. Taking his lead from Harold G. Henderson and R.H. Blyth in the United States, Stewart was the uninformed but unencumbered poet exploring an unfamiliar genre in the hope of incorporating its values and techniques into the mainstream practice of English language poesy (Kacian 2000). In the absence of a tradition in Australia or anywhere in the West, haiku at the time (and until much later) was measured by its proximity to Japanese models, and Stewart's translations provided the first meaningful discourse about the origins of a foreign and ancient art form. More than a decade later, Queensland poet Janice Bostok edited the first poetry journal solely dedicated to the writing of English haiku in this country. She became the doyenne of Australian haiku (Dean, 2011a) and was to have the most far-reaching influence over the course of haiku in this country up until her recent death in 2011. Through dogged and enthusiastic editorship, writing and teaching over a forty-year period, Bostok steered haiku away from translation and mimicry, imploring a local audience to internalize haiku's origins and find their own voice, helping to unearth a new generation of haiku poets in this country.

This chapter sets out to explore these origins of the Australian haiku tradition, in particular, the impact of Stewart's pioneering and idiosyncratic translations of haiku and Bostok's emergence later as Australia's most recognisable haiku poet and educator. Their contributions will be explored in the context of some of the 'teething problems' of early haiku transmission – the problems of translation and syllable counting. By reflecting on them we may gain some perspective on the stuttering beginnings of Australia's haiku experience, and some insight into subsequent developments.

The latter part of this chapter will track other elements of haiku's development in this country before moving onto a more considered discussion of the characteristics of Australian haiku in Chapters 3 and 4.

Stewart's contribution will be examined in the context of its time, because, as Kacian (2007a) suggests:

It is our tendency to look back upon these benighted times from our position of cultural advantage and regard the efforts and understandings of these people as lacking in certain essential characteristics. Pity them, we condescend to say, for they knew not what they were doing. They did not know the delectation of the kigo, the frisson of the kireji. They, poor fools, were lucky enough merely to get most of the words right, and in something approximating the correct order. They did not know what we know. How can we expect their work to measure up to our own?

Nevertheless, as we shall see, Stewart's work left a void which Bostok initially filled – primarily alone. She gave little weight to the efforts of Stewart and other translators of haiku, taking her lead instead from poets overseas who were actively testing the limits of haiku in English. She helped to steer haiku in this country onto a new, yet sparsely populated terrain. It took many years for Bostok's leadership to make an impact and we will examine her influence on the work of a growing number of new writers.

So at the very beginning, we are witness to the two great tensions that have characterized haiku's progress in this country – the early well-intentioned but misguided translations of Harold Stewart and the modernized and global-minded approach of Bostok. The conflation of these two forces placed haiku in a stasis which slowed its early progress and bestowed encumbrances on the achievement of a truly local genre, from which Australian haiku is only just beginning to emerge.

It is also important at this point, to distinguish between what we will call the 'haiku movement' – the collective pursuit of knowledge to advance an artistic tradition – from haiku musings. Poets, being poets are prone to the lure of idiosyncratic forms and have been dabbling in haiku in this country for over a century. Some of Australia's better known poets – Bruce Dawe (1990), Les Murray (2011), Robert Gray (2001), Robert Handicott (1988), John Kinsella (2004) and John Tranter (2006) – can count haiku or 'haiku-like' poems, including senryu, among their less prominent work. Additionally, many unknown, experimental or novice poets have dipped their toes in haiku ponds along their individual journeys of self-expression. Haiku is familiar to all these people, just as it is to all the schoolchildren who have sat in class, trying to compose 'nature poems' by madly counting syllables with their fingers. Most of us have heard of haiku. Very few, however, have devoted much of their writing lives to it. Much of this dissertation will be focused on the latter group.

The Beginning

Australian haiku shares genetic similarities with the rest of the English-speaking world, insofar as Australian poets came to haiku primarily through translations of the Japanese masters in the early to mid-twentieth century. “Our knowledge of Japanese haiku is based very largely on poetry in translation” (Lucas, 2007, p. 7). But while, for example, the United States’ haiku movement succeeded comparatively quickly in popularising the form by entering the radar of the Beat poets and other influential academics, establishing a haiku community culminating in the founding of the Haiku Society of America in 1968, Australian haiku has, until recent times, progressed at a plod. As was the case in the United States, the haiku movement did not truly begin in Australia until the second half of the twentieth century. In the shadows of the Second World War when Japan opened its shores to the West, early strides were made through translations of key works as countries without a haiku tradition sought access to a comprehensive body of work in order to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of haiku.

Three landmark anthologies were published between 1949 and 1958 (R.H. Blyth’s *Haiku*, Kenneth Yasuda’s *The Japanese Haiku*, and Harold G. Henderson’s *An Introduction to Haiku*). They gained a strong foothold in North America, with Blyth in particular catching the attention of Beat poets Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Gary Snyder, among others, through his Zen-infused translations. The enthusiasm for haiku shown by the Beat poets and other well-known American writers such as Richard Wright did much to popularise the form in the United States. It was also the beginnings of the hegemony the United States has maintained over “world haiku” that has continued to this day.

The Problem of Translation

The first translation work to spark the imagination of haiku poets in Australia was Harold Stewart’s *A Net of Fireflies* (1960). His first book of haiku translations (followed up in 1969 by *A Chime of Windbells*) gained him an international reputation and a certain degree of notoriety for his use of two lines of rhyming iambic pentameter, the ‘heroic couplet’, with titles. Stewart wasn’t the first to use rhyme in translating Japanese texts, as both Henderson and Yasuda provided transliterations into rōmaji of the Japanese texts. Both men also inclined toward rhyming the first and third lines (Trumbull, 2005). Yasuda even encouraged poets to use rhyme in English haiku, as it was one of the greatest poetic resources available to them (Yasuda, 1957). Stewart was not the first person to translate haiku into two lines. Asatoro Miyamori, who released a notable volume of translations in 1932, insisted on using two-line translations. But Stewart was the first (and only) to use an end-stopped rhyme with titles, a translation technique

which attracted both attention and criticism. This marked haiku's uncertain beginnings in this country.

In his article *Let Rhyme Be* (2008), former President of the New Zealand Poetry Society, Cyril Childs, expresses a fondness for Stewart's rhyming couplets, dubbing them 'attractive and memorable' even though "most haiku poets, including me, would struggle to regard these as falling within the ambit of haiku" (Childs, 2008). He cites two examples (absent their titles) from Stewart's *A Net of Fireflies*, both translations of *haiku* by Issa:

The previous tenant's hardships, how he dwelt:
I know it all – even the cold he felt.

I must turn over, crickets, so beware
Of local earthquakes in the bed we share!

He is right. Neither of these would be regarded as haiku as it is currently understood and practiced in the English-speaking world. But Childs' praise is somewhat remarkable given the criteria he sets out in the article for achieving success with rhyme in haiku. In advocating uncontrived rhyme, he stresses that there be:

No sacrifice in the choice of the best and simplest words, and no unusual arrangement of words to force the rhyme . . . [R]hyme is unlikely to benefit a haiku if it appears forced by choice of words or their arrangement. It is likely to be most effective when used sparingly and reserved for those occasions where rhyme increases resonance and depth of meaning (Childs, 2008).

Looking again at Stewart's translations, it can hardly be questioned that they are intentionally arranged to force the rhyme. Rather than the rhyme being employed as a tool to enhance the poem or make it more agreeable for an English speaking audience, it *is* the poem. Childs, then, appears to discard his own criteria in expressing his fondness of Stewart's work.

I agree with Childs' central premise that a poet must choose among all the resources at their disposal, of which rhyme is one, to intensify the effect or beauty of a poem. But fundamentally what Childs neglects to emphasize is that Stewart's writings are translations of their originals *and* bear little or no resemblance to them in form and, to some extent, content. In trying to demonstrate what could be reasonably be gained from imposing a conventional tool of English poetry in the translation of a foreign art form, Childs fails to give emphasis to what might have been lost in terms of aesthetics and other resonances in its transmission from one culture to another. He gives the poems little context and speaks nothing about the difficulty, not Stewart's

alone, in finding the means to connect cultures and traditions when transmitting poetry across borders.

Stewart had plenty of critics, most of them pointing to the limited scope and awkward nature of his translations. A closer examination of what indeed was 'lost in translation' according to these critics will help us develop a clearer picture of what was lacking in Stewart's efforts to deepen our understanding of *haiku*.

Stewart's renderings of classic Japanese *haiku* are another installment in poetry's long history of cross-cultural transmission. Despite the complexities of adopting a poetic form of foreign origin into a new set of poetics, it is possible to identify some common experiences in how it is moved from one country to another. One characteristic common to all is the uncertain hand of the beginner (Fletcher, 1919, p. 130). Stewart's translations of *haiku* bear some resemblance to Sir Thomas Wyatt's 'rough' treatment of the Italian sonetto (Ogle, 1974) when transporting it from Italy to England in the 16th century. Many of Wyatt's early sonnets, which are said to be the first written in English (Merwin, 1989), were translations of the Italian poet Petrarch, and have been criticized for a lack of technical mastery and metrical irregularities (Lathrop, 1905). Wyatt's work was criticized widely for its frequent awkwardness and many have claimed that he deliberately roughened the meter of his poems to assert his own hand in the translations. Moreover, as Glasner (1984) pointed out, "the most conspicuous thing about his sonnet translations (is) the degree to which they are unlike their originals". Glasner may well have been describing Stewart's translations of the original Japanese *haiku* classics.

While Stewart's writings sought to illuminate the Zen-inspired aspects of haiku rather than provide a guide for writing haiku in English, in his introductory essay to *A Net of Fireflies*, he insists the 'heroic couplet' was the ideal medium for translating haiku from Japanese to English, claiming that the couplet provides a sufficient, even appropriate, parallel to the haiku, on the basis that:

Like the haiku, the couplet, with only eighteen to twenty syllables, is the most that can be comfortably spoken in a single breath, and so is best suited to short lyrical exclamations (cited in McLaren, 2006).

While there is little debate that haiku and the heroic couplet share characteristic brevity, much of the clamor flowing from Stewart's work has focused on his handling, or mishandling, of the technical and aesthetic qualities of haiku. Joseph P. Love was one of the first to remark on the inharmoniousness of Stewart's choice of rhyme to translate haiku. When reading through Stewart's translations, Love noted, the idea of haiku being the expression of the Japanese immersion in nature is lost. Rather, the images have been "forced into the language of a resurrected Alexander Pope" (Love, 1963). The end rhyme Stewart favoured in all of his

translations created a 'terse verse' which, despite Stewart's clear devotion to Buddhist teachings, raises questions about the trueness of the translation.

End rhyme simply makes for the eighteenth century couplet, enclosing the image in an iron case, and stating completely – exactly the thing a haiku should not do (Love, 1963, p. 384).

Bob Jones also criticized Stewart's rhymed and titled pentameter couplets as having "only the most tenuous relation to Japanese convention" (Jones 1995b, p. 67), providing the following example:

Suspense

Oh, hanging bridge across the gorge, you twine
Around existence ropes of twisted vine!

Though there may be a valid reason for splitting the haiku in two (most Japanese haiku provide turning points somewhere in the texts), there are very few haiku that divide themselves into equal parts, almost none that rhyme and certainly none that aim at Western iambic pentameter (p. 67–68)

Love argues that rhyme itself is not the problem, but that an end-stopped rhyme in a two-line verse fails to provide enough scope to capture the spirit of an imagistic verse such as haiku. Drawing on Ezra Pound's famous rendition of one of Matsuo Basho's most notable haiku and comparing it to Stewart's translation, Love effectively demonstrates an absence of spirit in Stewart's rendering. Stewart's translation reads:

Autumn evening: on a withered bough,
A solitary crow is sitting now.

(Love, 1963, p. 385)

Compared to imagist Ezra Pound's famous rendition:

People in a Metro station
Petals on a long, black bough.

(Love, 1963, p. 385)

Leaving open the question of whether either of these short poems can technically be considered haiku, Love makes the point that despite steering clear of imitation of the *haiku*, Pound more closely approximates its imagistic qualities (despite his “wretched knowledge of Chinese and his bad translations”, Love, 1963) and adds Stewart to the list of scholars who have failed to duplicate the spirit of *haiku*. As Henderson says: “If, in reading translations, you come across a haiku that does not convey to you any emotion at all, do not blame yourself or the poet. Blame it on the translator!” (Henderson, 2004).

Despite his criticism, Love was clearly impressed by Stewart’s scholarly explanations of the Buddhist backdrop to *haiku*’s cultural tradition, generously suggesting Stewart’s obvious devotion “perhaps just proves that *haiku* are not capable of translation into English as are poems of greater amplitude” (Love, 1963, p. 386).

McLaren (2006) has written extensively about the shortcomings of Stewart’s translations, focusing on some of the inconsistencies in the theory and practice behind his translation methodology. Calling again on his clear engagement with Zen, Stewart, in his essay in *A Net of Fireflies*, nominates the poetic shock of Samvegha as a vital element in the haiku’s effect and formal concentration (McLaren, 2006). But, as McLaren notes, if preservation of the ‘surprise’ element of the haiku was Stewart’s aim, the formal constraints of the rhyme in his translations worked against this. McLaren provides examples of the limitations of this method, where rhyme disrupts the course of the poem towards Samvegha, and in some cases, telegraphs his intent at the poem’s beginning (McLaren, 2006).

One major concern I have with Stewart’s translations of haiku . . . is that his extension of formal requirements to include rhyme, setting up a structure alien to the Japanese form, organizes the otherwise immediate ‘observation of sentiment’ of the haiku into an intellectually considered moment which, when analysed over the two haiku collections, begins to seem a reflex that imposes severe limits on Stewart’s responses to his material (McLaren, 2006).

For McLaren, successful translation of *haiku* requires sensitivity not only to the mechanics of the poetic form, but to its associated cultural resonances, and he uses this broader cultural aesthetic to examine Stewart’s methods of translating *haiku* in *A Net of Fireflies* and *A Chime of Windbells*.

A comparison of Stewart’s translations of *haiku* by Basho with Jane Reichhold, leading American haiku poet and author of *Basho – The Complete Haiku* (2008), illustrates some of McLaren’s concerns about the success of Stewart’s efforts to translate these cultural resonances:

Reichhold:

deep-rooted leeks
when finished washing
the coldness

(Reichhold, 2008, p. 181)

Stewart:

washed by monsoonal summer's rainy weeks
how chill and white, how fresh and green, are leeks!

(Stewart, 1960, p. 46)

in summer rain
the leg of the crane
becomes shorter

(Reichhold, 2008, p. 56)

Patiently fishing in the lake, the crane's
Long red legs have shortened the rains

(Stewart, 1960, p. 45)

Neither Stewart nor Reichhold are fluent in Japanese. We are therefore dealing, as Lucas suggested, with approximations. Nevertheless, despite his best intentions, Stewart's formal requirement to include rhyme dulls the resonance of both poems, diminishing the poetic quality of the work. In the first poem, Basho's leeks, in classic haiku tradition, signify the changing of the seasons with a striking sensory image ending the poem, so typical of the best Japanese *haiku*. Stewart's rendering lessens the sensory power, reducing the observation to a manufactured conclusion. Stewart's unnecessary narrative in the first line of the second poem is another illustration of one poetic form being wrestled into another for the sake of expediency. As McLaren notes:

Stewart's machine-like operation of the heroic couplet interferes with the poetic effect of haiku; rather than a formal and stylistic framework driving creative tensions in his work, Stewart's deployment of the heroic couplet instead deploys him, inscribing a neat predictability of tone, movement and closure across his translations (McLaren, 2006).

While Stewart clearly placed haiku in the context of his devotion to the teachings of Shin Buddhism, echoing the growing fascination for Oriental exoticisms in the West in the sixties, his translations failed to demonstrate the capacity of English as a medium for haiku, and ultimately worked against his efforts to garner a deeper understanding of haiku in this country.

To recalibrate a Japanese form in an English form, as Stewart does, is to radically alter the actual nature of the poem. In this sense, Stewart does not simply annex and occupy the Japanese form but rather renders it, for his own purposes, obsolete (McLaren, 2006, p. 9).

Accounting for the flaws in Stewart's translations is problematic. Despite his clear adherence to Zen principles as they relate to haiku, little of this devotion comes through in the poetry. By imposing his own strict poetics, Stewart loses the thread of his own beliefs in Samvegga and 'places tight restrictions on what his renderings of haiku are capable of expressing or delivering.' (McLaren, 2006). Stewart's basing his work on the earlier translations by Henderson might also account for lapses in the quality of his work. And the inclusion of inappropriate material in some of his translations to achieve the requisite metric bulk displays insensitivity to the aesthetic he is trying to interpret, and installs Stewart's work, in McLaren's view, as "a site for cultural resistance" (McLaren 2006).

Moreover, Stewart's idiosyncratic translations ignored the general consensus about the significance of the relationship between form and content of the haiku in Japanese. In trying to introduce a definitive English language version of haiku, Stewart abandoned the Japanese form on the one hand, while proposing a form of parallelism – its brevity – on the other. In choosing this method, presumably in an attempt to keep faith with the original versions while trying to retain the smoothness of the poetry, he arguably achieved neither. As Laurie Duggan remarked about Stewart's translations:

Translation often means abandoning form . . . I'm sure Harold Stewart's haiku translations are accurate, but they just don't come out as good English poems; the rhymes are wooden and the sensibility thuds (McCooley, 2001, p. 10).

"So what we get," writes Kacian (2007a, p. 47), "in general, is a rendering of the idea of a poem, and a hint, perhaps, of what its magic might be, but not necessarily the magic itself." Kacian (2007a) shares Duggan's sympathy for Stewart and other translators:

'Theirs is a thankless task undertaken in vain,' he says. 'Yet they persevere and permit us at least to glimpse the alchemy of other languages. They deserve more thanks than we can offer' (Kacian, 2007a, p. 46).

There is no doubt Stewart has had a significant and lasting influence on the course of Australian haiku. In outlining his 'significant individual' model for cultural transmission, Kacian proposed that pioneer figures are required to begin the process:

After that, we need to have good models of the idea from the original, so that we may have a way of encountering these values and applying them to our own circumstances. In haiku, this means quality translations of the most important or representative work. (Kacian, 2000a).

Stewart was unquestionably a pioneer in the movement of haiku to Australia, but consensus appears to be that his role in Australian haiku stops here. His translations were genuine and dogged (“Stewart would work and re-work his haiku translations . . .” “from 50 to 100 times over in different ways until I got exactly what I wanted” – Ackland, cited in McLaren, 2006). But they were flawed, leaving his overall contribution to the haiku movement open to conjecture. Perfection cannot be expected from pioneers. But in response to Stewart’s teachings of haiku, Australians were perhaps left wondering, not about what they might be able to offer the world of haiku, but rather, what on earth haiku actually was.

The Problem of Syllable Counting

Stewart’s particular form of brevity also challenged one of the tenets of early haiku discourse, that being the counting of syllables. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *haiku* are commonly known for their seventeen syllables spaced over three lines of 5-7-5, and while modern writers have largely dispensed with this requirement, early translations and emulations of Japanese *haiku* were fixated with the notion of syllable counting. The problematic counting of syllables is a much discussed topic of haiku in the West, with Jones (1993) suggesting it was a ‘misleading’ convention:

The count in question is a tally of *onji*: character sounds, duration units or sound symbols, only broadly related to syllables in the English sense (Jones, 1993 p. 13).

Bowers (1996) puts it more explicitly:

The Japanese language has 50 sounds: 5 short and long vowels (long vowels count as two syllables in haiku) that can combine with 14 consonants. By contrast, English has 20 consonants that combine with 6 vowels. All Japanese words end in a vowel, except for a few ending in a slightly nasal “n” (counted as one independent syllable) (Bowers, 1996, viii).

The first problem here is one of correct terminology. To the haiku enthusiast, *on* (sound) and *ji* (character) are the most recognisable counting terms for counting what English speakers

would call 'syllables.' Japanese *haiku* have traditionally consisted of 17 *on*. (*Ji* is not typically used to count totals of 'syllables' in poems, Gilbert, 2008, p. 275.)

Gilbert (2008) has since put forward that "*onji* is an obsolete linguistic term to define phonetic characters, that is, characters (*ji*) which have sound (*on*) but no meaning. In modern times, this word has been supplanted by the term *hyouon moji*" (p. 274). But despite the renaming convention, neither *onji* or *hyouon moji* have been used to count up syllables in Japanese *haiku* (Gilbert, 2008, p. 275).

According to Tsujimura (1996), English speakers divide words into syllables, whereas Japanese speakers divide words into timing units called *morae*. The problem, particularly in relation to translation, is that the difference between a syllable and a *mora* is considerable. For example, a native speaker of English divides 'London' into two syllables, while a native speaker of Japanese considers the word as consisting of four morae [lo/n/do/n] (Tsujimura, 1996, cited in Gilbert, 2008). *Mora* and *morae* (plural) are terms used by linguists to identify 'time unit sounds of speech'. And according to Gilbert, *on* and *ji* are used to identify these same sounds in Japanese poetry.

Another term that has been used for the English-style syllabification of Japanese is *onsetsu*. It is both a name and a counter, but while it is considered by some to be the closest available Japanese concept of 'syllables,' there are also compelling differences between syllables and *onsetsu* (Gilbert, p.276). The major difference is that *onsetsu* are typically of two different lengths, long or short, whereas English syllables are vastly more variable in length.

While *onsetsu* may be useful in approximating the 'syllable count' of Japanese *haiku*, and *on* and *mora* to distinguish between the separable sounds and time units of speech respectively, translating Japanese poems into English is nonetheless problematic. In a short study on reciting haiku, William Higginson (1985) reported that haiku translated into English averaged more than 60 per cent longer than the same haiku spoken in Japanese 'even though the translations had fewer syllables than the Japanese originals had *onji*' (Higginson, 1985, p. 101). While this can be explained in part by the respective peculiarities of the languages in question, we must also consider the use of grammar and punctuation in Japanese *haiku*, in particular the *kireji*, or cutting word. Along with *kigo*, the *kireji* is a distinct part of Japanese *haiku* and traditionally divides the stanza into two rhythmical parts of 12 *onji* and 5 *onji*. It functions both as punctuation, by creating a distinct pause in the reading of the poem, and sound, and so contributes to the overall 5-7-5 *onji* allotment. As Jones explains:

The great majority of haiku cannot be considered equivalent to 17 English syllables. Consequently, the Japanese often find that English haiku in the 5-7-5

format seem somewhat inflated, pedantically drawn-out, or simply flabby. (1993, p. 14)

Bostok was also attuned to the language differences inasmuch as they applied to the composition of haiku:

Most modern writers of English language haiku agree that the English syllables are longer than the Japanese *onji* or sound symbols . . . therefore, it is reasonable to say that haiku in English should consist of seventeen syllables or less, the stress being placed on less (Bostok, n.d.b).

And she was forthright in her opinion about the relevance of syllable counting in writing haiku:

I have never believed that the form of haiku in the English language should be dictated by a rigid syllabic count. What most writers call 'the spirit of haiku' is more important than its physical form on the page (Bostok, n.d.a).

On the basis of such considerations, Higginson promoted a shortening of English haiku to between 10-12 syllables. Many poets have fallen into line behind Higginson, including David McMurray, in his Haikuist Network column in Japan, who supports a 3-5-3 format, retaining the short-long-short structure.

This short discussion on syllable counting in ELH, including Bostok's own personal views, suggests that counting syllables is an inherently non-viable emulatory technique or definition for haiku in English (or any non-moraic language). This didn't stop many enthusiasts from adopting the 5-7-5 method, but as we shall see in later chapters, syllable counting has largely been ignored in contemporary practice and cannot be offered as definitional of the genre in English, though it may appear superficially as a sweet solution (Gilbert, 2008 p. 271).

The Bostok Years

Bostok's refusal to adhere to strict syllable counting is not her most significant contribution to the haiku movement in Australia, but is an example of her determination to bring a cultural perspective to it. She is the most important figure to emerge in the history of Australian haiku. Sharon Dean, in her PhD thesis, 'White Heron: The Authorised Biography of Australia's Pioneering Haiku Writer Janice M Bostok' (2011) claims that:

Over four decades, more than four thousand of Bostok's haiku have been

published, together with sixteen collections of her haiku-related work. She has won many awards, edited journals, mentored two generations of haiku writers, judged national and international haiku competitions, and conducted numerous haiku workshops (Dean, 2011b, iii).

It took a decade after Stewart's attempt to bring haiku an audience on these shores for Australia's first publication devoted solely to haiku to emerge – Bostok's *Tweed* (1972-1979). Bostok, who had discovered haiku writing to a pen-friend in the United States (Dean, 2011b), hadn't been writing for long prior to calling for submissions for *Tweed* but had quickly established herself as a prominent voice, enjoying regular publication in haiku journals abroad, particularly in North America.

Like most novices, Bostok's bloodlines in haiku were translations of the masters of Japan, but she soon found new inspiration from afar:

In the 1970s, I began receiving haiku journals from America. One haiku that touched me deeply was from the 1950s, and was written by a man called O Mabson Southard.

The old rooster crows . . .
Out of the mist come the rocks
and the twisted pine
(Dean, 2011b, p. 135).

Bostok, who had a strict Christian upbringing, had something of a religious experience on reading Southard's poem:

For the first time, I recognised a mysticism and a spirituality that wasn't based on Christian religious teaching. And while I'm not criticising anyone's beliefs, I just had not been exposed to such natural acceptance of the world about me . . . The old rooster crows . . . and lo, the sun comes up! The haiku embodies a childish innocence. The sun is the giver of all life. The daylight gives us back the rocks and the twisted pine, which the darkness took from us (Dean, 2011b, p. 135).

Bostok also found strong kinship in the likes of renowned American haiku poets Michael McClintock and Marlene Mountain, the latter sparking her interest in one-line haiku, a popular rendering of the form nowadays. Perhaps not surprisingly, given Bostok's rising status abroad

and the general lack of real curiosity about haiku in Australia throughout the lifetime of *Tweed*, North American submissions dominated most editions (Higginson, 1985). Locals, as well as being uninterested, were dismal, whether trying to imitate the masters or drowning in the allure of practicing an exotic art. Whatever it was that they were dabbling in, the outcome according to Bostok was not poetry, and it certainly wasn't haiku. Bostok laments:

What interest there was was sadly bad haiku-like verse . . . Most of the so called haiku were in strict 5-7-5 syllable pattern and rhymed. They were top-heavy with simile and metaphor and personification. This was not what I had been learning from the then modern pioneering haiku writers overseas (Bostok, n.d.b).

Bostok also chimed in with criticism of Stewart's earlier writings. On Stewart's version of Basho's famous poem:

old pond
frog jumps in
water's sound

which Stewart translated into the following rhyming couplet;

The old green pond is silent, here the hop
Of a frog plumbs the evening stillness: plop!

Bostok took offence to what she saw as an echo of William Porter's early nineteenth century translations which were heavily influenced by the poetry of the day – Victorian Rhyming verse, adding, "it sounds rather comical because of the rhyme and length it adds." She writes:

The Victorian influence still clung to haiku in the 1970s. Every second haiku I received had one line which said: Harbinger of Spring! It began to drive me crazy. If I could have found that harbinger of spring, I would have shot the little beggar! (Bostok, n.d.b).

Bostok as a Role Model

Bostok, who quickly established a reputation for radicalism, spent decades railing against what she viewed as dull and lifeless renditions of Japanese *haiku*. She labelled much of what she saw

in haiku journals as thin reflections of their Japanese origins. Indeed, her own haiku and teachings were a relentless pursuit of loosening the stranglehold of imitation and translation on haiku in Australia and the world.

The persistence in continuing to mirror Japanese haiku can be clearly seen when writers stubbornly use cherry blossoms and Buddhist temples in their Australian haiku. We live in the best country on earth. We have wonderful imagery everywhere. (Bostok, n.d.b).

Denouncing syllable counting was not the only example of Bostok's 'divergence' from classicist thinking:

While a number of Australian haiku writers would like to see a distinctively 'Australian Haiku' develop, I am more cautious. I prefer to call myself an English Language Haiku writer. In embracing the Japanese Haiku art form each country will eventually internalise the poem's cultural origins and make the 'spirit of the haiku' its own. I don't believe any literary form, which has a highly creative level, should be reduced to doggerel – particularly 'ocker' doggerel in 5-7-5 syllables. (Bostok, n.d.b).

Here, we are witness to Bostok's global mindedness, a constant attraction for her throughout her writing career. In so doing, she promoted a sense of caution to Australian haiku poets looking to inject local flavor into their writing. In her assessment, the kookaburras, Holdens and Hills Hoist references that she often encouraged Australian poets to capture in their haiku lens, needed the 'haiku treatment', lest they become mere cliché. On the one hand, she encouraged a 'breaking of the shackles' attitude towards the hold Japanese *haiku* had over Australian haiku composition. On the other, she was more circumspect when it came to the expression of a true Australian identity in the context of the global ELH movement when outlining a possible course for haiku exploration in this country.

Here we start to see the full context of Bostok's influence on Australian haiku composition and the competing affections. Her being published overseas and gaining prominence in the US before she did in Australia afforded her an international perspective on haiku that she never really lost. Despite this, she was clearly enamoured by Japanese *haiku* traditions and sought to provide clarity to Australian haiku enthusiasts about the importance of *haiku* traditions in the cultivation of a local movement. Moreover, and as we shall see, Bostok's own writing, punctuated by her celebrated use of one-line haiku, opened people's eyes to new possibilities of

haiku. All of these aspects both defined and limited her influence as a role model to Australian haiku poets.

During the life of *Tweed*, Bostok released three collections of her own haiku, including *Walking Into the Sun*, a collection of haiku and tanka, which won the Haiku Society of America Book Award in 1974. With *Walking Into the Sun*, Bostok announced herself as a truly modern practitioner of haiku, balancing traditional imperatives with western experimentation. Reviewing her book, McClintock writes:

She has developed a language and a tone which, with few words, is large and quiet—so large and so quiet it becomes invisible. It cannot be heard; it cannot, either, be explained. Bostok has managed to write a book of poetry wherein the language quietly erases itself . . . The art of her poetry is not obvious—that is because it is art (Ungar, B. 1978).

Some examples from *Walking Into the Sun* (1978) are presented below:

pregnant again . . .
the fluttering of moths
against the window

in summer meadow
this bird silence

fetching firewood
I open the door
to moonlight

in evening stillness
the sound of bird wings
stroking air

McClintock's comments highlight one of Bostok's achievements as a haiku poet and teacher. Her writings, devoid of the superficiality and mimicry present in other writings at the time,

showcased the capacity of English as a medium for haiku. From the above sample, we get a sense of the shift in focus Bostok brought to haiku, in form and content. Overt and clumsy Oriental references are replaced by refreshingly local imagery. Gone are the syllable counting and rigid three-line structure, at no cost to the smoothness of the poetry. Also gone, most notably, is the rhyme.

Indeed, Bostok's emerging style was strongly influenced by McClintock himself, who was a strong advocate of breaking the shackles of Japanese *haiku*:

Jan also supported Michael's argument for becoming less dependent on Japanese subject matter in English-language haiku, a topic they would have an opportunity to discuss again more than fifteen years later in a formal interview in Stylus Poetry Journal.

It still amazes me how many [haiku writers] sit around writing Heian court poetry in the front room of a Los Angeles or New York City apartment. But there are many poets writing haiku and tanka about their own time in history, their own homes, their own ordinary lives. There has been a discovery that we do not need to mimic Japanese (Dean, 2011b).

One of Bostok's most recognisable traits was her predilection for one-line haiku. Considered avant-garde at the time of writing and modeling her work on the influential U.S. haiku poet Marlene Mountain, whom she visited in Tennessee in the seventies, Bostok saw fresh opportunities for expression without line breaks or punctuation. Writing 'one-image' haiku in one line was, to Bostok, not such a radical departure from classic Japanese *haiku*, which was traditionally written in one vertical line down the page. Dean again:

While Jan was aware that most English-language haiku were written in three lines (a form that corresponded to the metrical division of traditional Japanese haiku), she also understood that Japanese haiku are usually printed in a single vertical column. And she knew it was with this vertical column in mind that poets like Marlene (as well as Matsuo Allard and John Wills) had begun writing haiku in one horizontal line. Marlene's work inspired Jan to try her own experiments with one-line haiku, and she believed that – largely due to Marlene's efforts – the one-line form would eventually become established in English as a major alternative to the typical three-line haiku format (Dean, 2011b).

For five years in the 1980s, Bostok wrote nothing but one-line haiku, "largely in tribute to Marlene Mountain" (Dean, 2011b). The following is a sample of her work in this vein:

stopped to allow geese crossing some idiot honks

(Dean, 2011b, p. 282)

violin concerto outside a butcher bird goes solo

(Bostok, n.d.)

pottery class her lopsided mugs on everyone's lips

(Dean, 2011b, p. 282)

wind blows a glimpse of ducklings through reeds

(Dean, 2011b, p. 145)

fox slinks into pampas grass plume trembling

(Dean, 2011b, p. 282)

muzzle of the drinking cow glides across still water

(Dean, 2011b, p. 287)

Bostok's acceptance of this radical divergence from 'orthodox' ELH practice was underscored by her publishing Mountain's essay, 'One-Image Haiku' in *Tweed* in 1978, which was reprinted 16 years later in *A Haiku Path*, a book covering the history of the Haiku Society of America between 1968-1988.

For a genre that had claimed its eminence for its already diminutive size, one line haiku represented near mutiny. Her penchant for radicalism so early in her haiku years suggests that she desired a clean break from what had gone before. She had become bored with syllable counting and the persistence of those in 'continuing to mirror Japanese *haiku*'.

The English language is a beautiful language. We should be using it in exciting and modern ways. We write haiku about kookaburras, kangaroos, rotary clothes hoists, holdens, akubras, and the mountains and terrain of our own country. We do not claim to write Japanese haiku (Bostok, n.d.).

By the late seventies, Bostok was at the height of her powers as a haiku poet. Not only had she become Australia's most prominent and prolific writer, she also seemed intent on changing the course of haiku history – by changing the form (writing predominantly one-line haiku), the subject matter (consciously omitting references to season words and 'blending' haiku and senryu), and going out of her way to correct some of the simplistic notions from the past.

Bostok's success in gaining a foothold in the burgeoning haiku movement in the United States where, conversely, Stewart's work was "not much valued by mainstream American haiku poets" (Trumbull, 2006), elevated her status here as Australia's preeminent voice in haiku. She had quickly become a leading figure, not only through introducing Australians to the latest trends in world haiku, but also through providing a vehicle for determining what Australian haiku could be – by embracing Japanese traditions while encouraging Australian poets to find their own voice.

Meanwhile, *Tweed* had caught the attention of some well-known poets, such as Dorothy Porter, Robert Gray, Larry Buttrose, Andrew Taylor, Les Wicks, Lyndon Walker, Rae Desmond Jones, Dane Thwaites, Chris Mansell, and many more and at one stage boasting five hundred subscribing contributors (Dean, 2011b). Despite this it ultimately failed to reach a core audience at home and closed its doors in 1979. Bostok's efforts to build momentum for the haiku movement in Australia, though not in vain, struggled to reach an audience, let alone a knowledgeable one. There were some proud moments for her, however, as Dean (2011, p. 319) explains:

One of Jan's most satisfying *Tweed*-related moments, however, was when she published the work of Marcella Caine, the American poet who had introduced her to haiku.

Would I have known him
if I'd passed him on the road –
Bashō – trudging by?

Tweed's demise was undoubtedly disappointing for Bostok, yet it most probably came as no surprise. Interest in haiku was demonstrably scant and Australian haiku practitioners, in

Bostok's direct experience, were still coming to grips with its basic elements. Bostok, herself, was also facing some difficult personal circumstances;

Very few Australian poets seemed interested in haiku, and I was finding that I was publishing more and more American haiku writers in *Tweed*. My handicapped son was growing older and harder to manage. By 1980, I was emotionally and physically exhausted. I needed a break from life in general. I moved into a second house on the farm, ceased publishing *Tweed*, and stopped sending out my own work for publication (Dean, 2011b, p. 367).

The Australian haiku movement, then, in the late seventies, had reached a near stand-still. A number of factors had coalesced to bring on this bleak period. Stewart's noteworthy intervention was everything but a call to arms. His writings were more a marketing exercise than a road map for the practice of writing haiku. And in the ensuing period of relative inactivity, an isolated poet (Bostok) assumed the mantle of the country's leading haijin primarily through casting her gaze abroad. Through *Tweed*, Bostok tried to haul haiku off the carpet and onto the writing desks of poets across the country. And while *Tweed* was locally produced, the pages were often filled with poetry from her international admirers. On reflection, her influence as a role model in this early period may well have been compromised by her rising profile overseas. In a sense, Bostok was dividing her loyalties – with one eye on the local scene and the other keeping watch for trends abroad. For such a marginalised form of poetry yet to rest on the pillars of its own tradition, this was a precarious balance for her to maintain. Little wonder that Australian haiku, impoverished in number and direction, had reached a crossroads.

A Turning Point

After the demise of *Tweed*, Bostok enrolled in the University of Queensland and received a BA in English literature in 1986.

Having been absent from publishing for a decade, Jan was disappointed to discover there had been very little development in English-language haiku during that time. As Jacqui Murray would later write, 'Haiku in Australia was in the doldrums for quite a time after Janice M Bostok's pioneering work. By the late 1980s only a few isolated poets were still engaged with haiku (Murray, 2008, cited in Dean, 2011b, p. 376).

Two years later, a full decade after the disappearance of *Tweed*, Australian haiku experienced a watershed moment in terms of levels of interest, with Japan Airlines' sponsorship of a haiku contest for children during the Brisbane expo in 1988. The competition attracted thousands of entries "from schools as far apart as the Gold Coast, Mount Isa in the far north-west and Thursday Island in Queensland's far north" (Murray, 2008).

Three Queensland-based haiku writers – Jacqui Murray, Ross Clark and John Knight – were entrusted with coordinating and judging the competition. Bostok would have been approached as well, "but, unfortunately, no one knew where she was then living" (Murray, 2007 – cited in Dean, 2011b, p. 376). The competition appointed a collection of renowned international haiku writers including Jack Stamm, an American-born long-term resident of Japan, Professor Kazuo Sato, Professor of Comparative Literature at Waseda University and Kaneko Tohta, president of Japan's Modern Haiku Association to oversee the judging and conduct master classes for Jacqui, Ross and John. Visits from such haiku literati generated great interest in the competition and gave haiku a stage in this country it had not previously enjoyed. The success of the competition was reflected in JAL's continued sponsorship of children's haiku competitions over the next 10 years, providing a valuable training ground for haiku in schools in which Bostok actively took part.

The JAL competition's deeper significance was its role in the formation of the Paper Wasp group by Clark, Knight and Murray – a pivotal moment in Australia's haiku movement. The group was opened for public membership in 1994, with Bostok joining soon after. They released their first journal in 1995, surprising readers with an entire issue devoted to erotic haiku. Bostok's opening sequence set the erotic tone (Reeves, 1995). Lyn Reeves, in her review of the first issue, described the contributors as "at the forefront of the Australian haiku movement" and the *paper wasp* journal as a welcome new outlet for the development of Australian haiku expression (Reeves, 1995).

Bostok co-edited *paper wasp* in its first year of publication. Over a period of twenty years, it has become Australia's longest running and arguably most important haiku journal, attracting prominent local and overseas haiku poets. It also sponsors the popular annual Jack Stamm Haiku Contest (renamed the Janice M Bostok Haiku Award, following her death in 2011) now into its 12th year. With an international subscription list, *paper wasp* has considerable status on the international haiku scene, being one of the sourced journals for the prestigious Red Moon Anthologies, an annual publication chronicling the year in world haiku (since 1996). *paper wasp* maintains a strong antipodean flavour, and has been responsible for unearthing a number of local writers. The following is a sample.

flooded road
a soft drink bottle
turns left

Lorin Ford (*paper wasp*, 11 (4), spring, 2005).

midday sun
the yellow box stump
beaded with sap

Rob Scott (*paper wasp*, 11 (2), autumn, 2005, p. 15).

wood smoke
last week's bushfire news
into recycling

Sue Stanford (*paper wasp*, 12 (4) spring 2006, p. 11).

I peel potatoes –
outside, a butcherbird
cleans its beak

Quendryth Young (*paper wasp*, Vol. 12, No. 4, spring 2006, p. 2).

high beam
all the roadside trees
ghost gums

Dawn Bruce (*paper wasp*, Vol. 12, No. 4, spring 2006, p. 12).

the snap
of the lettuce
hot summer day

Greg Piko (*paper wasp*, Vol. 13, No. 2, autumn 2007).

kookaburra
calls daybreak out of the glow
of a full moon

Jacqui Murray (*paper wasp*, Vol. 16, No. 3, winter 2010, p. 1).

midday heat
the barefoot man's
fast hobble

Nathalie Buckland (*paper wasp*, Vol. 16, No. 1, summer 2010, p. 15).

While *paper wasp* has dominated the haiku scene in recent years, other journals under Bostok's guidance enriched the haiku movement along the way. The 1990s was a landmark decade for Australian haiku, and an active one for Bostok, with several journals appearing (and disappearing). The year 1994, indeed, was unprecedented in terms of the number of poetry journals publishing haiku in Australia. In addition to *paper wasp* opening its doors to Australian haijin, *Hobo Poetry Magazine* began circulation. Bostok co-edited the haiku pages with Dane Thwaites. The haiku supplement in *Famous Reporter* (which recently closed its doors after 20 years in circulation) also began in 1994.

The haiku pages in *Hobo* included linked forms (e.g. renga) and attracted submissions from local and international haijin. Bostok also contributed a series of teachings on haiku-related topics called 'Gum Tree Conversations', a series of articles demonstrating the relevance of haiku to the Australian experience and landscape (*The Age*, 2011).

A quick glance at Issue 16 of *Hobo* (March 1998) reveals a plausible, if not, palmy presentation of the genre. It is certainly not prolific. Of the twelve pages devoted to the haiku pages, just over two of them are solely devoted to haiku, with the remaining pages consumed with Bostok's ruminations, two pages of commentary from Greek-based poet H.F. Noyes and a

four-page kasen renga. Within that relative pittance of haiku, there is a precarious diversity. Most are written in the traditional three-line form, though there is a smattering of one and two-liners like this one from Cecily Hill:

night of passion full moon glowing too

The tone of the collection ranges from the humorous:

Red nose day
Even the battleship
has one

Kate McMaugh

to the bleakly pithy:

daybreak
clothesline
same colour

Chris Newton

And there is also a nod to the syllable counters (5-7-5):

Deep in the forest
Sitting through the green silence...
Leaves falling on leaves

Phyl Wilbe

Darkening meadow;
A birch stretches to moonlight
Out of its shadow

Yvonne Sullivan

Though its range in styles and moods reflects a widening scope – a far cry from rhyming couplets – this sample shows that the net cast by *paper wasp* to attract Australia's best exponents of haiku did not extend as far as the editor's desk at *Hobo*, perhaps reflecting an embryonic and thinly spread Australian haiku culture at the time.

Famous Reporter, one of Australia's longest standing small press poetry journals, which had been in operation since 1992, also added a haiku section in 1994, edited by Lyn Reeves. Based on a similar formula to *Hobo's* haiku pages, *Famous Reporter* devoted approximately 10–12 pages of its journal to haiku, open to local and international poets. Perhaps reflecting its wider readership, *Famous Reporter's* haiku supplement flourished and, like *paper wasp*, assumed a position of national haiku importance due mainly to its longevity. It had also sprung from arguably Australia's richest haiku hamlet, Tasmania, which also boasts Pardalote Press (run by Lyn Reeves) specialising in haiku and haiku-related forms. A number of Australian haiku poets have surfaced in these pages (Beverley George, Ron Moss, Peter Macrow to name a few) and a regional focus is more strongly detected, as the following brief anthology displays:

highway sunset
my hand out the window
surfing hot wind

Ron Moss (*Famous Reporter*, 30, 2004, p. 3).

deep in the forest
the lyrebird's call
mimics the chainsaw

Michael de Valle (*Famous Reporter*, 30, 2004, p. 5).

heat wave
the dog bites at shining
hose water

Sue Stanford (*Famous Reporter*, 30, 2004, p. 4).

country town
a scuff of dust
behind the schoolboy

Beverley George (*Famous Reporter*, 31, 2005, p. 2).

long after
the sandfly –
its bite

Quendryth Young (*Famous Reporter*, 31, 2005, p. 4).

empty kitchen
the ceiling fan
slicing heat

Mary Hind (*Famous Reporter*, 31, 2005, p. 8).

Bostok was a regular contributor and her footprint is visible in the work of other contributors. A strong sense of place obtains in the above examples. Nature, haiku's premier informant, is present in all of them. But more than merely using nature as a paint brush and easel, each is a carefully drawn meditation on the Australian landscape – a distinctively Australian landscape, rich with local imagery – (a theme explored in greater depth in Chapters 3 and 4). The above poems are from writers who have not been lured from their natural environments and who are not compromised by the form's Japanese origins. Imitation has been abandoned, but the haiku aesthetic is present in all of them. What is more, they resonate at a level beyond what is exclusive to Australia and Australians. They are poems that speak to Australia and the world. They are haiku in the Bostok mould.

Bostok also had a strong hand in *Yellow Moon*, a designated haiku journal founded by Beverley George and Pat Kelsell which entered the fray in 1997. Bostok was one of the contributing editors and advisors, overseeing the haiku and related forms of poetry as well as judging competitions. George would take over editing duties in 2000 until *Yellow Moon* closed its

doors in 2006, at which point she founded *Eucalypt*, Australia's first tanka magazine. George later served as President of the Australian Haiku Society in 2006–10. In 2009, she convened the *The 4th Haiku Pacific Rim Conference*, which was the first international haiku conference to be held in Australia. The Haiku Pacific Rim Conference was conceived to broaden the understanding of haiku internationally by gathering together haiku writers from all countries around and near to the Pacific Rim (George, 2007). George also presented papers at the *3rd Haiku Pacific Rim Conference* in Matsuyama, Japan in 2007, and on Australian tanka at the 6th International Tanka Festival, Tokyo 2009, making her one of the key figures to emerge on the Australian scene in the past 20 years. Today she edits *Windfall*, Australia's most recently established haiku journal.

Other journals publishing haiku emerged around the same time. *FreeXpresSion* opened its doors in 1993 and like *Famous Reporter*, contained a regular haiku column, 'Haiku Xpressions', edited by Cynthia Rowe and more recently, Quendryth Young.

In 1997, twenty years after the release of her previous collection of haiku, Bostok published *Still Waters*, a book of haiku with illustrations by Cornelis Vleeskens. She followed this with *A Splash of Sunlight*, released the following year. She also published a book of renga and co-authored a book of haibun in the same period. In 1999, Hiroaki Sato, the Japanese poet, translator and past president of the American Haiku Society, cited 30 of Bostok's one-line haiku in a landmark essay, *The Agonies of Translation* (The Age, 2011). Another book, this time of tanka, called *Dimmed The Mystery*, was published by Snapshot Press in 2000.

Jan's most popular book by far, however, was *Amongst the Graffiti*, a collection of mainly three-line and one-line haiku. Published by Post Pressed in 2003, *Amongst the Graffiti* received flattering reviews from some of the world's most esteemed English-language haiku writers.

In a tribute featured at the front of the book, for example, John Bird notes: Jan Bostok is a world class maker of haiku. As publisher, editor, teacher and judge, she has made a matchless contribution to haiku in Australia. Her haiku is beautifully crafted, honest and grounded in her landscapes. This book will surely set the benchmark for haiku publications and be the definitive source for study of haiku in Australia. (Dean, 2011b).

Meanwhile, in the Foreword, William J Higginson observes:

Jan Bostok has been the spirit of haiku and senryu in English in the southern hemisphere for over thirty years. Since I have known and admired Jan's efforts almost from their beginnings, I thought I knew something of her work. However, this omnibus collection brings to light more than I knew, by far, and I rejoice to have it now before me. With publication of *Amongst the Graffiti*, Jan takes her place among the truly outstanding creators of world haiku (Dean, 2011b).

Bostok was at this point Australia's most prolific writer and editor of haiku and haiku-related poetry and had asserted herself as Australian haiku's most significant voice with her poetry, editorship and teaching.

Bostok and the formation of The Australian Haiku Society

Nearly forty years after Harold Stewart's translations opened the door to haiku in Australia, the *First Australian Haiku Anthology* was launched online in 1999, with a print issue released in 2003. Edited by Bostok and John Bird, the anthology was conceived as a snapshot of haiku written by Australians at the end of the twentieth century. Rather than an historical record of haiku written by Australians, it was regarded by its editors merely as a broad representation of Australian haiku poets – "a vehicle to bring haiku written by Australians to the world stage and to promote a sense of collegiate within Australia" (*First Australian Haiku Anthology*, 2003).

The anthology was the basis of the formation of the Australian Haiku Society (HaikuOz) in 2000 which is now into its fourteenth year of activity. The AHS became the first formally structured organisation devoted to the enjoyment of haiku in Australia which now boasts regional representatives in each state and territory (except the ACT) as well as a strong online presence. The *First Australian Haiku Anthology* (2003) was followed up with a *Second Anthology of Australian Haiku* in 2006, also co-edited by Bostok, Katherine Samuelowicz and Vanessa Proctor. The *Third Anthology of Australian Haiku* was released in 2011 and was edited by Jacqui Murray and Katherine Samuelowicz.

Online Presence

If Australian haiku poets were becoming aware of their overseas counterparts towards the end of the twentieth century, the internet turned them into electronic pen-pals. Thanks to the world-wide web, Australians could freely and frequently converse with haiku poets around the globe through joining a chat-room style haiku mailing list, reading, submitting or starting their own electronic journal, emailing each other, or more recently, starting a blog. "The Internet revolutionized the study and exchange of haiku and globalized what had been a localized activity" (Trumbull 2006).

Australian haiku poets have maintained a presence on the internet from the very early days. The *First Australian Haiku Anthology* was originally an online publication for HaikuOz, and was regarded as “one of the best online anthologies of haiku featur(ing) some 60 Australian poets” (Higginson, 2001). Dhugal J. Lindsay’s *Haiku Universe* first appeared in 2000. It was a blog-style potpourri of haiku-related materials, containing mostly essays and commentary by Lindsay but also with links to important articles by others, back issues of Lindsay’s journal *Fuyoh* (“Rose Mallow”), and useful links to other web sites (Trumbull, 2006).

By 2002, Bostok, like many others, had turned her attention to the internet and found a growing haiku community there. She edited the haiku pages of *Stylus Poetry Journal* from 2002–08, overseeing a burgeoning growth in the writing of haiku and its related forms. By this stage, Bostok had procured a loyal following, and some familiar names, both local and overseas, appeared in these pages. But the internet’s global reach meant that many more were now being attracted to haiku. *Stylus* has gained recognition as a quality poetry journal, and is one of a few electronic journals sourced for UQP’s *The Best Australian Poetry* series (in 2007, edited by John Tranter), a prestigious annual print anthology. The haiku pages have distinguished themselves too, with Australian writers taking the lion’s share of its contents.

More recently, many budding and experienced haiku poets have taken to the internet and social media to create new avenues for the genre. In 2008, a group of poets in Western Australia (W.A. Poets Inc.) started producing a quarterly online haiku journal, *Creatrix*, as well as awarding an annual haiku prize since 2009. Australian haiku poet Lorin Ford became haiku editor of the international online journal *A Hundred Gourds* after performing an editorial stint with another online journal, *Notes from the Gean*. A number of web blogs have also surfaced, with Graham Nunn’s ‘The Lost Shark’ the most prominent of these (until a recent plagiarism scandal, Fitch, 2013). *Australian Haiku Dreaming*, edited by former President of the Australian Haiku society, John Bird, is an online collection of haiku written about Australian themes. As we will see in Chapter 4, Bird’s intention is to ‘stockpile’ a collection of haiku that addresses what he perceives is a loss of local identity in Australian haiku composition.

Haiku Groups and other Publishers of Haiku

One of the traditions of Japanese *haiku* practice is writing in groups. Haiku poets meet throughout the year, in most cases led by a ‘teacher’ (*sensei*) and go for haiku walks (*ginkos*) in the local area to write and exchange haiku. This has been replicated in Australia and notable groups include Mari Warabiny (Perth), The Red Dragonflies (Sydney), Watersmeet (Tasmania) and Cloudcatchers (NSW). In some cases, this organised practice of writing haiku has spawned local presses who publish haiku and its related forms. The *paper wasp* journal which formed out of the Paper Wasp group is an example of this practice. Pardalote Press is another, and has

published several titles by authors from the Watersmeet haiku group, including *Walking the Tideline* by Lyn Reeves and *Oil Slick Sun*, by Peter Macrow. Other notable publishers of haiku in Australia are Micropress Oz, which produces *The Mozzie*, edited by Gloria B. Yates.

Conclusion

A hundred years after haiku made its first unsteady appearance, Australian interest in the form has undeniably grown. Harold Stewart's translations represented the first attempt by an Australian poet to capture the essence of *haiku* for an English speaking audience. His translation methodology of the Japanese classics provided an impetus for the appreciation of the genre, but did little to further its understanding or propel a literary movement. Haiku had become a familiar import thanks to his efforts, but very few Australians tried their hand at it until Bostok's intervention as a haiku poet and teacher a decade later. Bostok did much to reinvigorate the form, trying to forge a tradition of writing haiku that keeps faith with Japanese bloodlines but which is simultaneously acclimatised to local poetics. In her own words:

I don't see myself as having adopted haiku; I think I've adapted it. I write the type of poetry I imagine haiku would be if it had developed in English, in Australia . . . and in that sense my work has its own distinct spirit even while embracing the essence of Japanese haiku (Dean, 2011b).

Bostok was a keen student of Japanese *haiku* aesthetics and understood the importance of coming to terms with the genre's origins in order to successfully adapt it. But while she grounded her work in her own landscapes, she also sought inspiration from afar, and it was through her efforts that Australian haiku was brought into 'international haiku waters' – a balance which has proved difficult to sustain and left a lasting, albeit contorted, legacy, as we shall discover in Chapter 4. Bostok has, nevertheless, left a considerable legacy for Australian haiku, providing guidance to Australian haiku poets on the kind of haiku to which they might aspire. To her credit, the Australian haiku movement has steadily gathered momentum under her tutelage, and her influence can be seen in the growing number of arenas in which haiku can be found nowadays, and the considerable changes in the style of haiku being written.

Bostok has been widely regarded as Australia's first haiku teacher. Therefore, it seems reasonable to try to assess what Australian poets have learnt under her guidance. Chapter 3 will explore, in more detail, the transformation of haiku in Australia. Focusing on a discussion of *kigo*, it will assess the extent to which Australian haiku is still wedded to its Japanese inheritance and exploring the possibilities that Bostok envisioned. Moreover, Chapter 3 will look at various approaches to the writing of haiku in Australia and make observations about the extent to which

Australian haiku reflects its own culture rather than the increasingly outdated perceptions of an imported one.

Chapter 3 – What is Australian Haiku?

In this chapter I will present a selection of contemporary Australian haiku and offer some observations about the transformation of a genre rooted in perceptions of traditional Japanese culture to one which is becoming increasingly reliant on its own cultural attachment for its import. This chapter will examine haiku written by contemporary Australian poets in an attempt to discover how they have understood and interpreted some of the key aspects of the genre and discuss some of the obstacles and opportunities they have encountered. Central to this discussion will be the question of kigo and how it has been perceived, interpreted and adopted in this country. Before presenting examples of contemporary Australian haiku, I will discuss some of the key concepts of kigo, how it has afforded Japanese *haiku* with the depth and resonance required to succeed as poetry, and the different approaches to it in Western haiku.

Kigo provides Japanese *haiku* with a major source of its depth and allusion, courtesy of strong cultural associations and traditions not shared outside of Japan. In Australia, as in other countries, kigo are widely used as seasonal indicators only, which offers much in terms of shared experience between poets, nationally and internationally, but which has limited use as a touchstone for enhancing the depth and resonance of their poetry. Moreover, Chapter 3 will set out to discover the different approaches to kigo and examine the need for it in Australian haiku. This requires examination of how kigo function in Australian haiku and identifying the impediments to its use in a foreign culture. Drawing on Shirane's cluster of associations model (2000), we will also look at some of the kigo alternatives being posited, such as keywords, in an effort to determine whether Australia's historical, cultural and literary past is a potential source of kigo, or kigo alternatives, from which its practitioners of haiku could add greater depth to their poetry.

We will also consider some of the other phenomena informing the haiku written in Australia. This includes some of the normative practices of *non*-Japanese haiku writing, such as the three-line sketch of a naturally occurring scene (the aforementioned *shasei*) and the juxtapositional structure, or internal contrast (Murray, 2008, cited in Dean, 2011b). The global predominance of these norms has led to claims of a growing homogeneity in haiku across cultures as 'haiku citizens' seek fellowship in the global haiku community – an issue which will be given greater focus in Chapter 4. This global reach has also led to the discovery of new techniques which Australian poets have started to share and accommodate into their writing, and some of these will be given coverage here.

To put Australia's particular version of non-Japanese haiku into a global context, this chapter will also include, for comparative purposes, a sample and discussion of haiku from two other countries (Sweden and The Netherlands) as a touchstone to what type of haiku is being written

in other non-Japanese (and non-English speaking) countries and, more specifically, how they are managing the migration of Japanese haiku aesthetics and developing their own style, if any, that reflects the culture in which they live. If it is not possible to incorporate the perceived values and traditions of Japan, how have Australian poets, and those from other countries, come to terms with their haiku education and constructed western equivalents?

The two major forces confronting the incipience of a distinctive Australian haiku – the degree to which Australian haiku is shackled to its Japanese origins, and the more recent, but growing clout of international haiku (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) – have been recognised for some time. In reviewing '*Wattle Winds: An Australian Haiku Sequence*' featuring authors Jacqui Murray, Ross Clark, John Knight and Jack de Vidas, Helen Bowers (1994) writes:

For me, the most exciting and interesting haiku in this collection are those which carry an unabashed 'Made in Australia' tag; exciting and interesting because they point the way to a distinctive local voice, one acknowledging but not hamstrung by the form's Japanese origins and unconcerned by the dictates of American practitioners, who, having adopted the form enthusiastically, tend to regard themselves as arbiters of its practice and development. Confidence in the worth of our own experience, idioms and nature words is, then, evident in these robust haiku:

wattle winds
combing jacaranda leaves
into the pond

Jacqui Murray

marching
up the bush track . . .
white toadstools . . .

John Knight

this koala
busy thinking not moving
gum tree Buddha

Ross Clark

(*Social Alternatives*, Vol. 14 No. 1, January 1995 p. 65).

Bowers' comments suggest Australia was only just beginning to emerge from a haiku slumber in the mid-1990s, one in which haiku was capable but reluctant to express its own voice. In this chapter we will examine some of the potential barriers to the propagation of distinctively Australian haiku and identify potential sources of fertile ground in which such a concept could flourish.

The Question of Definition

The focus of discussion in this chapter will be on the emergence of techniques and aesthetics of haiku written in Australia, with the discussion intending to provide some insight into considerations of form and thematic content. The context for this discussion is the 'transformation of the form' from its country of origin, with particular emphasis on how specific aspects of *haiku*, in particular, *kigo* and *shasei*, have been translated and interpreted in Australia. There will not be an attempt to define Australian haiku. Standard definitions of haiku can be found in dictionaries and a wide range of descriptions of haiku also exist, including those held by editors of haiku journals whose preferences for particular kinds of haiku are sometimes confused with statements of fact when they are merely viewpoints of what haiku should be.

In 2007, in response to the growing popularity and interest in the genre in this country, largely through the intervening presence of the internet which connected Australian writers with the globe, the Australian Haiku Society (AHS) asked its former President, John Bird, to "advise the Society on definition(s) of English-language haiku". As part of the study, a public call was issued on the AHS website to Australian and international poets to answer the question, 'What is Haiku?' The objective, according to Bird, "was not to arrive at a consensus definition but to better appreciate how our peers see haiku" (Bird, 2009a).

In April 2009, Bird reported on the AHS website that 71 people (including 57 Australians) had responded to the call. A variety of views were put forward, and the "near-universal view was that a haiku is a poem whose most distinguishing feature is brevity" (Bird, 2009a). A final report on the study is yet to be released, and without trying to pre-empt its findings or enter into debate about the merits of definitions or the elements of 'true haiku', it would appear that Australian haiku remains in a discovery phase. This is reflected in the wide range of material being accepted and published as haiku. We are likely to see much more discussion about definition in the decade ahead, but it is not the central focus of this study.

With no haiku tradition to guide them, Australian poets are still sampling from the techniques available, informed, still to a large degree, by their (many and varied) perceived ideas of Japanese sensibility. Local idiom and themes are emerging which has encouraged the prospect of an Australian distinctiveness revealing itself. But as the discussion that follows demonstrates, the current phase in which Australian haiku finds itself in could be characterised as one that is

less concerned with the definition of haiku than one which is attempting to find a coherent expression of it.

Normative Practices

In its short history in Australia, haiku has already undergone numerous transformations – from Stewart’s two-lines of rhyming iambic pentameter, the imitations of Japanese haiku found in early journals such as Janice Bostok’s *Tweed*, Bostok herself with her periodic preference for one-line haiku in the nineteen eighties, and contemporary haiku being written by a growing number of writers in an increasing range of styles. Arguably, though, haiku’s main identity is its three-line layout and syllable counting. While counting syllables has become less fashionable in recent times, as discussed in Chapter 2, the three-line layout has remained the most dominant form, and, as Higginson points out, it can come in different forms:

Half to two-thirds of mainstream haiku today have longer middle lines, but about one-fifth have much shorter middle lines (Higginson, 2001).

Three-line translations of haiku date back to the late nineteenth century and despite a number of contenders along the way (including Stewart’s), remain the normative practice in modern non-Japanese haiku writing. Though the Japanese original did not contain any physical line breaks, it was given a voiced punctuation that separated the *haiku* into three divisions containing 5, 7 and 5 *on* respectively. It is this tripartite division, translated into 3 lines, which has become standard practice in English haiku, while the syllable counting, as discussed in the previous chapter, has almost completely lost favour.

Another normative practice in non-Japanese haiku, and the one that will be given most stress in this chapter, is the use of *kigo*. In Japanese *haiku*, *kigo* goes far beyond a simple seasonal reference and has provided the form with not only its most important structural element, but also a cultural depth that has inspired and confused haiku practitioners in the West. We will examine these two conceptualisations of *kigo* in this chapter.

The shared experience of *kigo* in terms of recording seasonal experiences with nature has been one of haiku’s most enduring qualities, despite the restrictions imposed by the different climates existing across and within countries around the globe. Haiku’s codification, underpinned by the nomenclature that *kigo* provides, has created problems outside of Japan, with many questioning the efficacy of season words in connoting sufficient meaning to the non-Japanese haiku writer. Curiously, Japanese *kigo*, which have limited cultural relevance beyond Japanese borders, have continued to proliferate in non-Japanese countries where seasons are usually perceived differently. It will be instructive to look at some examples of haiku employing

seasonal references and, in the absence of a kigo culture, try to assess their importance to haiku in Australia.

Predictably, haiku's maturity in the West has led to experimentation to the norm, with more techniques being used leading to more different types of haiku being written. Given the short history of ELH and the lack of Western equivalents to many aspects of the Japanese *haiku* tradition, Western poets have gone in search of alternative philosophies and styles of writing reflecting different poetics. The growing range of haiku reflects the increasing maturity of the genre, with some haiku containing elements of the traditional style, often employing kigo, but sometimes not, and perhaps most notably, a blurring of the distinction between haiku and senryu.

For decades, the subject matter of haiku in English has been fought over, and broadened in the process. While some try to write the closest thing they can to traditional Japanese haiku, others write poems the Japanese would call senryu – humorous poems, mainly presenting human foibles in the condensed haiku form (Higginson, 2001, p. 22).

Other new types of haiku have emerged out of reconsiderations of form, such as monoku (one-line haiku) and other free-form haiku including vertical lineations. Haiku has matured to a point where no 'standard' haiku are being written. Writing objective realist haiku with seasonal references is still the norm, but haiku poets themselves are increasingly discovering different approaches and callings, giving new shape to a traditional form. This chapter will show how this is being done both in Australia and other non-Japanese countries.

How Much *Haiku* can be Found in Haiku?

It is important to acknowledge, albeit briefly at this point, that Japanese *haiku* itself, despite clinging to its own traditional continuities, has a history of reconsideration and transformation. Bob Jones, who studied under Norman Talbot at the University of New South Wales, devoted much of his dissertation, 'Haiku Nature', to the transformation of the haiku aesthetic from the spiritual expression of the Buddhist perspective given to it by Basho, the visual artistic expression of Buson and the humble simplicity of Issa, through to Shiki's dogged expression of realism.

The word "*haiku*" means, literally, "play phrases" or "amusement composition." In this is reflected haiku's origins as a playful, free-spirited, light-hearted and (for early traditionalists) somewhat lowly or vulgar form of poetry. But in later development, the "play" in question becomes quite serious (Jones, 1993, p. 11).

Japanese *haiku* has undergone many changes in style and approach and has not been as restricted in form and content as the broad prevalence of Shiki-style depictions of objective realism in ELH would indicate. A lot of what we now think of as “classic” haiku (the nature observation, the Zen moment of enlightenment) was a relatively modern incarnation, originating in the late nineteenth century, primarily through Shiki’s influence. Pre-Shiki, the Japanese tradition of haiku was almost entirely imaginative and fictional literature, with poets participating in the linked verse of *haikai* knowing the topic in advance of writing. In pure contrast to objective realism, *haikai* (or linked verse, *renga*) was a form of escapism from the ravages of war during this period (Shirane, 2000). Shiki, influenced by 19th century Western poetry, condemned *haikai* as an intellectual game and stressed objective realist sketching as the key component of haiku composition.

Writing haiku based on direct observation – particularly of nature – is therefore a modern view of haiku (Shirane, 2000) and one not universally shared in Japan before or after Shiki. As Shirane and Jones point out, the most important aspects of Basho’s *haiku*, steeped as it was in the imaginary literature of comic linked poetry, were metaphor and allegory. Shiki, in denouncing this strain of haiku, stressed concrete images from direct observation. Though, as Jones discovered, the delineations were not always clear:

As Buson sometimes seems to straddle the balance-point between haiku as spiritual expression and haiku as sheer artistic display, Shiki straddles the balance-point between traditional and modern Japan. His attitude is infuriatingly ambivalent. He values Basho’s poetry for its realism, yet faults it for not making greater use of imagination (Jones, 1995, p. 55).

Nevertheless, it is the modern era of haiku in Japan, characterised by Shiki’s tendency toward realism rather than classicism (Jones, 1995), that gained wide popularity in the new, Western world-conscious Japan. It has fundamentally remained the norm in Western haiku practice ever since, despite the recent emergence of the more experimental styles mentioned above.

Two tenets of this ‘modern’ approach are *kigo* and *shasei*, which we will consider in this chapter as the basis for discussion about orthodox and divergent approaches to haiku in Australia. It is these two ‘genre markers’ of Japanese haiku which have been consistently adopted in English language haiku, and which form the conceptual basis around which most haiku in this country has been written.

As for *kigo*, we will consider the two principal conceptualisations of it, namely seasonal reference (the most common) as well as cultural references. We will assess the practicalities of

using kigo in haiku, their function within Australian haiku and identify potential sources of Australian kigo as a means of providing Australian haiku with a distinctive character. Moreover, another central concern of this chapter will be to examine whether or not Australian haiku, with the assistance of this 'kigo habit' is able to reflect its own culture and surrounds, thereby approximating a kigo, or even haiku, tradition similar to that which exists in Japan.

And if, in this process of discovery, we are to reveal any distinctive features of Australian haiku, it would be helpful to know what it does or does not share with haiku practitioners from other countries and cultures. For comparative purposes, we will briefly review (translated) haiku from two non-Japanese countries (namely Sweden and The Netherlands) to gauge trends in non-Japanese haiku across cultures.

The Question of Kigo

Seasons have been a central focus in the haiku tradition, dating back to the early *haikai* sequences, the precursor to haiku (Jones, 1996b). Haiku have long been regarded as a narrative of the seasons and kigo is still widely regarded as an essential component of haiku, both in Japan and the West. Evoking the season has given the Japanese a 'rich poetic texture' and tradition and the West has embraced it even though it is not part of our own tradition (Gurga, 2000).

Kigo was inherited by the West as part of the haiku culture, and the seasonal indicator (as the kigo has come to be known in the West) forms a large part of haiku's identity along with a largely uniform approach to *shasei* and the emphasis on concrete images. Most haiku in English, by novices and experienced poets alike, are located in seasons through the liberal use of seasonal indicators. We can see this by opening any number of haiku journals in Australia and abroad.

Nature and seasonal references offer much in the way of shared experiences between countries and cultures and provide an important entry point to haiku. Seasonal patterns across cultures are plainly visible, the fullness of summer, the decline and mellowness of autumn, the end of growth in winter and the renewal in the spring. Jones suggests the probability that "the poets of every culture have observed this pattern and noted that our own lives follow the same phases" (Jones, 1996b).

There is, however, a broad acceptance in the West of the practical limitations of kigo and many poets have opted to dispense with season words (Jones, 1996a). As Kacian and others have pointed out, the shared experience of kigo can be restricted by the diversity of climate and different timing of the onset of particular natural phenomena (e.g. cherry blossoms, autumn colours). Australia is no exception. It is unlikely, for example, that an Australian *saijiki* (collection of kigo words) could be agreed given the climate extremes from region to region. Even the number of seasons varies from one end of the country to the other.

The problem of transferability of the seasons is well documented. Australia's seasons do not correspond with Japan's seasons and vary greatly from region to region.³ The diversity in nature and seasonality between places like Hobart and Broome makes an agreed list of season words unlikely or, at best, contrived. The number of seasons is different for a start – two at the top end, four in Melbourne and Hobart, and what about the seven seasons observed by Aborigines in the south-west of Australia? Moreover, similar to the cherry blossoms in Japan, wattle is said to be blooming somewhere in Australia every day of the year. What season for wattle then? (Bird, n.d.b.) Another example is the popular past time of surfing. Surfing is a recognised activity the world over. Here in Australia, it is most commonly regarded as a summer activity and recognised throughout the world as a symbol of our long hot summers. Yet many surfers around Australia can be seen in multiple locations throughout the country at all times of the year, even in winter. What season for surfing then?

This reality is not unique to Australia, as Japan is also a climatically diverse country, stretching further longitudinally north to south than does Australia. The blooming of cherry trees, one of the most culturally significant events in the country, occurs at different times in different regions of Japan, snaking its way up the country as the warmer temperatures gradually make their way north. But differences in the onset of blossoming cherry trees are offset by the unifying cultural symbolism of the event, celebrated uniformly throughout the country. And it is these experiences, not the specific times or dates, that the poet records which place these experiences in a specific and instantly recognisable context.

Transferability is also complicated by the personal habits of people within different cultures. People write from their own experiences, for different needs, and undoubtedly with different ideas of what haiku and kigo are. This kind of localism requires writers to pay close attention to their immediate surrounds, responding in their own way to natural phenomena in their environment and seasons. Again, this is complicated by the diversity of the seasons across Australia. That which might be considered a seasonal indicator in one region may not be the case in another, or may indicate a different season altogether. For example, the onset of rain in the far north, where the wet season coincides with summer, would be experienced vastly differently to the onset of rain in the southern states, which would be more associated with late autumn or early winter. The experience of summer in the north, too, differs wildly between people living on the coast and those based inland, perhaps near a watering hole, or a mountain range. The

³ In the summer month of January, 2013 (while I wrote this chapter) the state of Tasmania, a cool temperate climate, experienced bushfires and snow. In the same month, Sydney recorded its highest ever temperature (46C), the state of Victoria experienced bushfires and extreme heat, whilst the northern states were flood-affected for the second consecutive year.

difficulty of delimiting the seasons and selecting meaningful seasonal indicators, suggests that 'seasonal references' and 'kigo' are not one and the same. As Gilbert notes:

When we look for seasonal reference in English haiku, a non-season-specific nature image, such as migrating birds, would likely not meet the definition, as we cannot determine a single season for migration—however, “migrating birds” is an autumn kigo, in Japan. This simple fact offers a first clue that “seasonal reference” in English, and “kigo” in Japan may not rest on the same conceptual basis (Gilbert, 2008, p. 204).

In terms of the Japanese experience, *kigo* goes beyond the reference to the seasons. *Kigo* don't simply supply the most important structural element of the form, they are an evocation of the way Japanese people perceive the universe (Kacian, 2000b). The perceived understanding of Japanese sensibility as it relates to kigo has 'muddied the waters' in Western haiku practice, leading to misunderstandings about its true function in haiku. The vast majority of Western poets employ kigo despite, as Kacian points out, the Japanese experience not being universal. Haiku's global growth, he says, depends on a more universal 'inclusiveness', rather than being limited to the truths and observations of one culture (Kacian, 2000b). It is hoped that an examination of some contemporary Australian haiku will bring some understanding of the function of kigo as well as some of the impediments to its use.

Shirane (2000) in his landmark essay “Beyond the Haiku Moment: Bashō, Buson, and Modern Haiku Myths”, suggests there is no equivalent to kigo:

In Japan, the seasonal word triggers a series of cultural associations which have been developed, refined and carefully transmitted for over a thousand years...In short, while haiku in English is inspired by Japanese haiku, it cannot and should not try to duplicate the rules of Japanese haiku because of significant differences in language, culture and history (Shirane, 2000).

According to Shirane the major challenge for kigo in ELH is to find an equivalent to the Japanese cluster of poetic associations found at the core of their season words. Haiku, in Shirane's view, should draw on the poet's historical, cultural and literary past in order to create a “larger communal body of poetic associations” (Shirane, 2000). These associations, based on the experience of generations of poets, oblige writers to compose in a way that will preserve the poetic essence of these associations. Many of them are based on famous places in Japan.

These famous poetic places provided an opportunity to commune across time with earlier poets. Like season words, famous places functioned as a direct pipeline to the communal poetic body (Shirane 2000).

Shirane's view is evidence of a broader function of kigo, which has been widely discussed since. The function of kigo, according to Miller, goes well beyond the delineation of seasons. Kigo are "the initial grounding to the reader," (Miller 2006, p. 64) locating the poem in time and space. But their function goes much further. Miller provides an example of kigo functioning as a powerful tool, infusing the poem with numerous cultural associations not specifically spelled out in the poem and therefore lost on most Western readers. He writes:

For example, when Matsuo Basho wrote his famous old pond poem in 1686,

an old pond
a frog leaps in,
the sound of water

he made use of the traditional spring kigo 'frog.' According to the renga handbook *Gathered Gems* (Renju gappeki shu; 1476) its associations are "globeflower [yambuki], lodging together [aiyadori], beneath a hut [kaiya ga shita], water bed for rice seedlings [nawashiro mizu], living in water [mizu ni sumu] and song [uta]. These background associations make sense: plants found by the water, the way frogs gather in groups, the life-giving power of fresh water, and in a poetic way the songs they sing. These initial associations allow the reader to ground themselves in the poem, giving it a larger context, so that when Basho pulls his haiku twist at the end – the sound of a splash instead of the expected frog song – the educated reader is better prepared and thus able to appreciate it (Miller, 2006, p. 62-63).

Some of these cultural associations of kigo, according to Miller, are logical and transferable, and most kigo can be placed in a season intuitively, not requiring special knowledge (Miller, 2006). Taking the above as an example, the word 'frog' in English haiku carries very few of the associations mentioned beyond the natural phenomena of spring and perhaps water. We can locate the word 'frog' in the season, but we know little of its other connotations. Miller regards many of these associations as 'illogical and contrived' and also highlights the Japanese tradition of allusion – each haiku referencing the poems that came before it – as adding further 'baggage'. Basho's frog poem, for example, is linked to all previous frog poems. Miller wonders how much tradition and 'back-story' a poem can bear, and argues that the baggage that this creates for each

individual kigo threatens to overpower the immediacy and objective reality of a poem – something Western haiku is more concerned with.

If the kigo is going to be shaped to suit western poetic needs, it will need to lose its illogical historical associations and especially the vertical axis with its heavy accompanying baggage . . . Like it or not, the Western tradition is different from the Japanese . . . because we are a different people with different goals and a different cultural history. As such, our haiku require different tools. The use of Western kigo is one such tool (Miller, 2006, p. 65-66).

Miller offers a 'stripped-down' Western kigo, allowing the reader to be grounded in haiku tradition and the emotional landscape of the seasonal cycle, without sacrificing immediacy. This 'stripped down' version requires readers to be knowledgeable of its traditional season, but does not require them to be familiar with its more contrived meanings: "In fact, since most kigo can readily be placed in a season intuitively, this special knowledge may not be needed" (Miller, 2006, p. 66).

Miller is implying the need for greater universality across cultures in order for kigo to reach a truly global audience. The best known translation of Japanese kigo for a global audience is William Higginson's *Haiku World – An International Poetry Almanac* (1996) and its companion volume *The Haiku Seasons* (1997). Together, these two volumes are part-anthology and part-saijiki, categorising haiku and season words according to the seasonal calendar. Higginson's work was the first attempt at introducing some universality to global haiku practice by creating a list of season words which had commonality across cultures.

In *Haiku World*, Higginson presented hundreds of season words (kigo) and, using more than 1,000 haiku as examples, demonstrated how these concepts are employed by poets around the globe (187). For the first time English-speaking haiku poets had adequate tools for studying the Japanese kigo system and could debate the adequacy of these conventions for non-Japanese haiku (Trumbull, 2005).

Higginson sets out how to create and use a saijiki as a way of maintaining haiku's dialogue with its Japanese origins. His objective was to underscore the importance of kigo, highlighting haiku's fellowship with nature and the seasons. In doing so, he is promoting haiku's inexorable link with kigo and the notion that season words are essential for haiku composition – a global trend that has continued, though not unchallenged, until today.

The widespread adoption of a 'season-word' culture in English language haiku in the absence of a full appreciation of the *kigo* culture it is derived from is the central focus of Gilbert's (2008) account of the function of *kigo* in Japanese *haiku* and the challenges involved in instituting a *kigo* culture in ELH. Gilbert suggests there is little commonality between the 'kigo' as is currently used in English and the *kigo* as found and practiced in the contemporary and classical Japanese traditions. For Gilbert, the central problem of *kigo* and seasonal reference, from an Anglo-American perspective, is that the two terms are treated synonymously.

The trouble begins when we confuse the idea of "season words" as we have it in English, imagining the context of (Japanese) *kigo* as virtually identical to ours: that the main and indeed only function of *kigo* in Japan is likewise to present and delimit seasons – just as in our haiku tradition (Gilbert, 2005).

In Japan, a writer knows whether certain natural phenomena are assigned to particular seasons by consulting a *saijiki*. Importantly, the season to which particular words are assigned is based on historical antecedents which are not obvious outside of Japan. But Gilbert says the conceptual base of *kigo* is its culture, not its season, and that the culture has not been translated along with the *kigo* words. He argues that English haiku doesn't have a *kigo* culture.

Simply put, *kigo* exist in Japan and do not exist in English. In English, we have a season word/phrase tradition that began with translations from Japanese into English, which "interpreted" *kigo* into non-*kigo* literary culture – our literary culture, which does not have the conceptual or historical frame of *kigo* (Gilbert, 2005).

Echoing Shirane's cluster of associations model, Gilbert believes Japanese *haiku* are not, at their core, images of nature, real experiences or moments of heightened awareness. They are about the language and culture underpinning these experiences. The challenge for the 'young genre' of English haiku is to move away from objective nature writing and "forge a refreshed sense of culture with regard to nature" (Gilbert, 2008, p. 214).

Later in this chapter, we will examine potential approaches to both conceptualisations of *kigo* – culture and season – and discuss potential sources of Australian *kigo* and the extent to which Australian haiku poets are relying on cultural attachment for greater depth and resonance in their poems.

Shasei and Juxtaposition

The emphasis on nature in ELH, as illustrated in the above discussion on *kigo*, has resulted in the *shasei*, or 'sketching from life', approach becoming the aesthetic basis of ELH composition.

Championed by early English haiku pioneers such as D.T Suzuki and R.H. Blyth who gave prominence to the Zen-diffused thinking that haiku should be written about a directly observed scene without abstraction or imagination, shasei-style haiku has predominated in global editorial selection since the 1950s. Shasei embraces the ideal of *ari no mama* (depiction “as is”) and *kosho yubi* (“noble grace”) which Jones likened to Hemingway’s “grace under pressure.”

The comparison with Hemingway is not remote, for Shiki’s work often shows the same terseness, the same unflinching observation of hard fact . . . and the same stoic acceptance of it (Jones, 1995a, p. 55).

Gilbert (2008) sampled two leading American haiku journals in 2003 and found that shasei-style haiku accounted for about 90 per cent of the poems in those journals. Typically, this nature sketch is written in two parts, containing a juxtaposition of images or an internal contrast. This stems from the Japanese use of verbal punctuation or ‘cutting’ (called *kireji*), used in one-line Japanese haiku to emphasise a ‘gap’ between two images. In Western haiku, which are mostly written in three lines, the juxtaposition is usually signaled by line breaks, sometimes with punctuation (eg. ellipsis) in order to create greater depth and resonance in the haiku. To Jones (1992), resonance refers to:

A wide range of haiku effects, including internal comparison, fragrance (*kaori* or *nioi*), echo (*hibiki*), and ultimately the use of *kigo* or season words. All of the above are instances of a single device whereby objects, situations and events that have no obvious or necessary connection are nonetheless presented as essentially related (Jones, 1992, p. 10).

Before discussing how Australian poets have approached, interpreted and transformed some of these techniques of haiku, it may be instructive, if only for comparison purposes, briefly to consider how other non-Japanese countries have encountered haiku. The observations we can make about the type of haiku being written in other countries, and how sensibly they have adopted and adapted the Japanese *kigo* system and other techniques, may help us in better apprehending the trends in Australian haiku, perhaps even uncovering any cross-cultural normative practices, as well as the distinctive approaches, if they exist, of Australian haiku poets.

Swedish Haiku

In 2006, the Swedish Haiku Society released a bi-lingual issue of their journal, *Haiku* to commemorate the Second European Congress of haiku which was to be held in Sweden in 2007. Many of the haiku submitted were in English only, some already having appeared in English

language haiku magazines. The collection also contains translations of Swedish haiku into English, alongside the originals.

Before looking at some individual examples, some general observations can be made about the collection of poems in the anthology. In terms of form, every haiku in the book (almost 100 in total) is written in three lines. Almost all are written in the 'short-long-short' format, with a good proportion of 5-7-5. There are no one-line haiku and very few senryu in the collection. The majority of poems contain one or more seasonal references and the kireji is liberally used. There is also a strong preference for Shiki-like objective realism, with many of the haiku appearing to be based on the author's own direct experience of nature. The use of the cut also puts in motion one of the other bedrocks of non-Japanese haiku – juxtaposition. To many haiku practitioners in the west, haiku succeed and fail on the strength of their internal contrast. On the surface then, the Swedes appear to be adhering to a traditional approach by strongly favouring a three-line, juxtapositional structure in their observations of, predominately, natural phenomena.

In relation to the thematic content, some observations can be made about the seasonal indicators used by Swedish poets. Much of the Swedish population lives near a body of water. The shared experiences of people's relationships to lakes, rivers, shores, ponds, boating, fishing and, of course, ice, is reflected in the haiku they write about it, including the following examples:

Inte ett ljud hörs –
Den nytjärade ekan
Slukas av natten

Without a sound
the fresh-tarred rowing-boat
slips into the night

(Johan Bergstad, *Svenska Haiku Sällskapet tidskrift*, 11/2006, p. 9).

morgonsol
ett tåg glider fram
genom snölandskapet

morning sun
a train glides
through the snowscape

Månsken
en ensam narciss
speglar sig i dammen

moonshine
a sole narcissus
reflects in the pond

(Tore Sverredal, *Svenska Haiku Sällskapet tidskrift*, 11/2006, p. 23).

Seglet rött
ett örgonblick
i solnedgången

The sail is red
for a moment
at sunset

(Kaj Falkman, *Svenska Haiku Sällskapet tidskrift*, 11/2006, p. 10).

Barnet betraktar
senvinterssolens effekt
snögubbens knäfall

A child considering
the power of late winter sun
a snowman, kneeling

(Madeleine Ågren, *Svenska Haiku Sällskapet tidskrift*, 11/2006, p. 28).

This is as it should be. This is what is going on in Sweden and this is what the poets see. For the purposes of our discussion, the haiku written in Sweden reflects its geography and natural surroundings. Swedes are writing predominantly in the shasei mould, sketching the world in which they find themselves. The local surroundings give these poems a local flavour which make them recognisably, if not distinctively, Swedish.

From the above examples it is easy to see why kigo, if viewed simply as a seasonal indicator, is so easily shared across cultures despite diverse geographical contexts. All of these scenes, despite their obvious connection to the Swedish landscape, are recognisable across a wide range of cultures. Most North Americans and northern Europeans, for example, could relate to the references to snow. While the seasonal indicators provide comparable thematic contexts, the actual season they indicate is less clear. In Sweden, there is a strong theme of the transformation and interweaving of the seasons. For example, in parts of Sweden it can snow for more than half the year – which has a large impact on the kind of kigo or seasonal indicators that can be used. For example, in Bergstad's poem, the season is not obvious. Boating is traditionally a summer activity, but it is not uncommon for boats to be taken out in the spring to take advantage of favourable fishing conditions. The darkness of the night in this poem could easily place it in the spring, given the long days usually associated with northern European summers. Similarly, the snowscape in Sverredal's poem could be found anywhere in Sweden –in the middle of winter or well into spring.

As mentioned previously, *kigo* in Japan carry cultural connotations that cannot be apprehended fully outside of Japan. Japan is commonly regarded as a homogenous country in which kigo has played the role of the symbolic word, full of shared emotional meaning which is highly metaphorical (Michiko, 1996). Looking at these examples of Swedish haiku, it is tempting

to draw some conclusions about a deeper, cultural association that these poems might be pointing to, including the role played by natural phenomena. It is arguable that Sweden's geography affords it a level of cultural centrality and, like Japan's, many of its rituals and holidays still relate to the marking of the seasons – and this may be a possible source of a shared context between the two countries. But this is a question for another study.

For the purposes of this study, this small sample of Swedish poems highlights the popularity and potential pitfalls of adapting the kigo system. It also shows that Swedish haiku, to this point, has not strayed far from haiku's traditional values.

Dutch Haiku

The story is quite different in The Netherlands. Willem Lofvers' bi-annual international haiku journal, *woodpecker*, showcased many Dutch haiku poets alongside their international counterparts. There is the familiar range of styles, from the traditional (though less-so) to the more experimental. Dutch poet W.J. van der Molen, founder of *Vuursteen*, the first haiku magazine in Europe, was very influential in the development of haiku in The Netherlands. Far from imitating classic Japanese haiku, van der Molen's haiku were a clear attempt to assimilate the spirit and characteristics of haiku with his own poetics.

*Elke keer als ik
probeer te lachen laat ik
ook mijn tanden zien.*

Each time
I try to smile I also
show my teeth.

*Aarzelend tussen
twee gouden scarabeeën
kiest mij het masker.*

Hesitating
between two golden scarabs
it's me the mask chooses.

*Een klein streepje zon
tussen de gordijnen door:
stof op mahonie.*

A small line of sun
between the curtains:
dust on mahogany

*Wij blijven praten
over de schaduwen heen
in elk van ons.*

We keep on talking
across the shadows
in each of us.

*als je heel stil ligt
en je slaapt bijna ben je
mijn tedere afgrond*

when you lie very still
and are almost asleep you are
my tender abyss

*alleen de roest
op een ziel – de vochtplekken
te hebben geleefd*

only the rust
on a soul – the damp spots
of having lived

*Een zilte zomer;
al de smaken van de zee
in de niçoise.*

A salty summer;
every taste of the sea
in the niçoise.

(W. J. van den Molen, n.d., *World Haiku Association* website).

There is a distinct lack of kigo in the above samples. Most of them deal with the human condition, which places them closer to senryu. Objective realism is interspersed with the abstract and other forms of alterity such as paradox, as in:

*alleen de roest
op een ziel – de vochtplekken
te hebben geleefd*

only the rust
on a soul – the damp spots
of having lived

On face value, this represents a substantial departure from the classic Japanese haiku most would have been exposed to at the time of writing it. So what makes them haiku?

Taking the above as an example. Firstly, it looks like a haiku, written in three lines and containing a 'cut', albeit mid-line, splitting the haiku into two clear and juxtaposed parts. If one were to translate this haiku back into what is commonly understood as classic Japanese haiku, rust is a common kigo associated with autumn. Yet this is where the association ends, and it is not the real thrust of the poem. This poem is both metaphorical and paradoxical. Rust in this poem is a metaphor for the human process of aging. The subject of this poem is perhaps in the

'autumn' of their life, regardless of the season in which they find themselves. Rust can only occur through the passage of time, but the seasonal phenomenon is subverted into a human condition, which is where the poem most resonates. The use of the kire (cut) is noteworthy. This poem contains three visible fragments. Van der Molen punctuates his poem, unusually, in the middle of the second line to create the first cut, but follows it with an unpunctuated pause between the second and third lines, creating a 'double cut'. This creates a multi-layered experience of a realistic (albeit abstract) image. It is not a naturalistic poem, and contains a degree of distortion. But even without the seasonal indicator, it has the 'sense' of a haiku. His creative use of imagery and form is suggestive of some of the more contemporary haiku seen nowadays in journals in North America, and indeed, Australia, as we shall see later in this chapter.

Van der Molen has had a clear influence on more recent poets, such as Max Verhart. He was perhaps taking his lead from developments in North America, where experimentation with the genre had gained momentum, through the works of Marlene Mountain and Nick Virgilo, among others. Some of Verhart's haiku are presented below:

no other sound
the church bell rings out
through the Milky Way

fog
and my breath -
both gray

windless morning
motionless the reed
ready to rustle

in the grass
a softly buzzing
cola tin

(All poems from *some breath*, 't Hoge Woord, Netherlands, 2000).

Another member of the Haiku Kring Nederland (Haiku Circle Netherlands), Frank Berkelmans, wrote in a more traditional format (almost exclusively 5-7-5) and almost all containing kigo:

WHA:

*Tussen de oren
wordt hij het eerste kaal
het knuffeldiertje.*

Between the ears
he gets bald first
the cuddly toy.

*Het jaar is voorbij
in elke slag klinkt het mee
een vriend verloren.*

year's end –
every stroke resonates
another friend gone

*Achter veel ramen
knikken de vrouwen hem toe,
bejaardentehuis.*

Behind most windows
the women nod at him -
old people's home.

*Het gras van vandaag
onder mijn voeten – morgen
staat iemand op mij.*

Today's grass
beneath my feet – tomorrow
someone steps on me.

*De maan is al vol
grote glanzende ogen
van twee hazen.*

Full moon
the big shiny eyes
of two hares.

(Berkelmans, n.d., *World Haiku Association* website).

There is more than a touch of Issa in the following haiku by Berkelmans:

Verwerk het verdriet

En kom opnieuw naar buiten

Kleine huisjesslak

Don't die of grief

but come outside again

little snail

(Berkelmans, n.d. *World Haiku Association* website).

As to whether there are any consistent defining features in the above examples of Dutch and Swedish haiku, this short sample shows that non-Japanese haiku is characterised by a mix of emulation and experimentation. There is evidence from a conservative or traditionalist viewpoint on an insistence on the three-line format and seasonal reference, but that is not always the case. Kigo, or the *idea* of kigo – in the sense that it is related to haiku's central concern with the objective natural world – has provided a connecting link for all international practitioners of haiku, providing a clear structure for writers by anchoring poems in time and space, even in the absence of a *saijiki* (collection of internationally agreed season words)⁴. But as some of the poems above have demonstrated, poets are finding other ways of writing haiku which have opened up new possibilities for exploring the genre.

The Australian Experience of Kigo

Despite a continued fascination with kigo, signs of frustration in the Australian haiku community with how meaningfully to apply it have been apparent for some time. Ross Clark (1993) pointed out that “although Australian poets are increasingly becoming interested in reading and writing haiku, there is not, as yet, a theory of haiku appropriate to this hemisphere and this climate” [Clark, 1993]. This is a clear reference to the limited reach of kigo outside of its country of origin. Although many of our experiences of nature and the seasons are shared globally, they are not universal. Haiku's reach outside of Japan will be limited if it is restricted to the truths and observations of a single culture (Kacian, 2000b). Yet, kigo continue to proliferate both in Japan and here, which speaks volumes about their importance to the structure and traditions of haiku. Clearly, Australian writers of haiku want kigo, but what kind of kigo have they got?

⁴ An international *saijiki* called the World Kigo Database, created to provide haiku enthusiasts with “an opportunity to deepen the understanding of kigo issues and to appreciate the climate, life and culture of many different parts of the world” is an ongoing project coordinated by Dr Gabi Greve of Daruma Museum, Japan. She has been collecting words from poets from around the world, the tally currently totalling 6000 season words.

If kigo equals nature and haiku is a form of nature writing, then one only needs to pick up any haiku journal produced in this country over the past thirty years to find examples of haiku containing Australia's natural flora and fauna. But in reflecting on haiku in this country and the forces shaping its evolution, Reeves (2006) questioned "whether current haiku practice expresses a uniquely Australian flavor." She noted:

A scan of work published in Australian outlets over the last ten years shows a trend towards simpler, more concise expression, with more emphasis on the spirit or mood behind the poem, rather than on strict rules and syllable counts . . . To flavour Australian haiku with the feel of our hemisphere and climate we draw not on the dictionaries of season words compiled by Japanese poets to indicate the time of year they are writing about, but on imagery familiar to Australian readers and which evokes the particular feel of our surroundings.

Reeves makes a good point in highlighting another problem of the transferability of *haiku*. Where does emulation stop and assimilation begin? To begin the discussion on Australia's experience with kigo, we will examine four acclaimed Australian haiku taken from various sources as a discussion in point;

climbing the bush track,
a bulldog ant going down;
the spring morning

Norman Stokes (*First Australian Haiku Anthology*, 2003, p. 50).

flooded road
a soft-drink bottle
turns left

Lorin Ford (*paper wasp*, 2005, Vol. 11, No. 4, spring, p. 3).

record heat
a soon-to-be mum
backs into a wave

Ron Moss (*With Words International Online Haiku Competition*, 2009).

bushfire season
from dry leaves
the crackle of lizards

(Vanessa Proctor, *Second Australian Haiku Anthology*, 2006, p. 38).

Like their Dutch and Swedish counterparts, there is a strong presence of emulation, with all of them rooted in nature and oriented towards shasei-style objective realism. The form and content of these haiku is heavily derivative of classic Japanese haiku, written as they are in three lines, most containing a seasonal reference, with Stokes even employing the traditional 5-7-5 syllable count.

The use of kigo and local imagery invites closer inspection. Each of the above haiku contains easily identifiable kigo phrases ('spring morning', 'flooded road', 'record heat', 'bushfire season') placing them firmly in one season or another. In addition to these classic kigo phrases, the authors use identifiably Australian imagery that affords the poems the local flavor Reeves was positing. Stokes encounters a bull ant on a bush track on a spring morning walk; Ford captures the devastation of the rainy season with a simple, stark image; Moss's image of the sweltering summer heat is accentuated by the presence of a pregnant woman trying to cool off at the beach.

Proctor's poem is even more notable for the presence of a 'double kigo'. 'Bushfire season' is juxtaposed with the visual and aural texture of lizards scampering around the local terrain. 'Dry leaves' would qualify as a summer season word in any *saijiki* north of Coolangatta, yet in Proctor's poem, it is reduced to the status of additional imagery. In her poem, and the others, the local flora and fauna is not a structural imperative for the poem, as kigo is, but mere, albeit local, scenery. Here, we are witness to the literary contortionism of English language haiku, where kigo and seasonal references, while producing fine haiku, are not necessarily one and the same thing.

As we will see below, in the absence of a kigo culture or an agreed collection of season words, Australian writers have attempted to make some accommodation with it. The majority of Australian haiku are 'nature poems' with seasonal references, but the question is whether their

haiku, with or without the assistance of a prescribed approach to kigo, are able to reflect their own culture and add the depth Shirane and Gilbert speak of.

Australian Idiomatic and Aboriginal Language

An obvious starting point in the search through Australia's historical, cultural and literary past is language. The type of everyday language used offers valuable insights into the culture and historical perspectives of a country. Slang and other colloquialisms have been integral to Australia's vernacular throughout its history, including convict times.⁵ The gold rushes and the First and Second World Wars were notable periods during which the language was infused with rich slang which has had a lasting impact on Australian English. 'Digger', 'swag', 'fossick', 'dinkum', and 'mate' are popular words from these periods that are still in common use today, occasionally appearing in haiku:

rivergum shade
the bushie's laptop
on his swag

Quendryth Young ('maple leaf', *Jack Stamm Anthology*, 2006/2007).

Aboriginal language has also had an important influence on Australian English, with internationally recognisable words such as 'boomerang', 'billabong', 'Uluru', 'didgeridoo', 'kookaburra', 'kangaroo' and 'koala' used commonplace, and appearing regularly in haiku:

spring dawn
the day starts with laughter
of kookaburras

Alma Bird (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 2).

⁵ For example, a 'paper man' was a convict who had been granted a conditional pardon, with documents as proof. 'Magpies' and 'canaries' described the black and yellow, or straight yellow uniforms worn by convicts.

Slightly more solid
than the twilight, kangaroos
crossing the firebreak

Andrew Lansdown (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 26).

bush camp
the moon snagged
on a coolibah

Quendryth Young (*paper wasp*, Vol. 13, No. 3, winter 2007, p. 8).

from the tourist coach
their first koala
bloated road-kill

Ross Clark (*Stylus Poetry Journal*, online edition, June 2004).

the false dawning
of the kookaburra
graying into day

Janice Bostok (*Stylus Poetry Journal*, online edition, June 2004).

Uluru -
barefoot children
kick at stones

Lorin Ford ('Kitchen Window', *The Paper Wasp Jack Stamm Haiku Anthology*, 2008, p. 10).

billabong –
a sacred kingfisher
shatters its image

Lorin Ford ('Kitchen Window', *The Paper Wasp Jack Stamm Haiku Anthology*, 2008, p. 8).

midday heat
the drone of cicadas
and a didgeridoo

Dawn Bruce (*paper wasp*, Vol. 16, No. 4, spring 2010, p. 13).

Most of the above examples are haiku in the orthodox English haiku tradition, being realistic objectifications of nature. But it is interesting to consider the function of the peculiarly Australian words in each of the haiku. The first two examples, by Bird and Lansdown, contain clear seasonal references. One of the arguments for the use of seasonal references is that they help to ground the poem in some objective reality, setting the scene for what is to come in the poem. Bird's poem does that with a classic, anchoring, kigo-inspired first line, whereas Lansdown's seasonal indicator is the very last word, 'firebreak' (notwithstanding that bushfires don't always strictly occur in summer).

Bird's poem, by utilising an internal contrast or juxtaposition, leaves us, quite deliberately, with the lingering experience of kookaburras at dawn, an iconic image of 'Australia'. Lansdown's poem also employs an internal contrast and inverts it, leaving us with a combined image of kangaroos skipping through a bushfire.

If just having a seasonal reference serves English haiku well enough, then Bird and Lansdown's poems can be considered haiku, even without mention of the native fauna. The question is what cultural significance and depth the addition of aspects of the local environment adds to the haiku, and whether this qualifies them as kigo equivalents or alternatives. It is arguable that the presence of the koala and kangaroo further help to define the haiku by anchoring the poems in a clear natural setting. Thus the imagery of each haiku is enhanced. These two animals are highly symbolic of this country's heritage. But, again, does that qualify them as kigo?

Kigo and season words, says Gilbert (2005) are apples and oranges. He says:

In English a wild duck is a wild duck. In Japanese haiku a wild duck is *kigo*, and *kamo* (wild duck) is a summer duck. *Kigo* are not “natural,” but rather, nature reified.

In Australia, to borrow Gilbert’s expression, a kangaroo is a kangaroo. If *kigo* equals nature, despite Gilbert’s claims, then a kangaroo has claims to *kigo* status. It may be, however, that the kangaroo and koala have a kind of symbolic, poetic culture implicit in natural phenomena that contributes in drawing a core of cultural associations that Shirane speaks of. The kangaroo is a national symbol and a very visible part of Australian literature and song including in Aboriginal Dreaming. Therefore, if *kigo* is partly defined by the language and culture underpinning experiences of nature, as suggested by Shirane and others, the kangaroo has strong claims to *kigo* status. But without a *kigo* culture in this country kangaroos and koalas have no *kigo* status. Nor are they seasonal indicators, but simply uncontestably Australian fauna that help to anchor the poem in Australian nature and a larger body of poetic and cultural associations. Indeed, if kangaroos, koalas and kookaburras are not *kigo*, then very few of the haiku in the above examples could be said to contain *kigo*. We might then ask, ‘can haiku exist without *kigo*?’

In Japan, haiku without *kigo* are called *muki* haiku. However, as Gilbert points out:

We cannot rightfully apply this term to haiku in English which lack seasonal reference. It would seem that all English haiku are *muki* from the Japanese point of view, as the context of *kigo* culture does not exist. Rather, in English we have haiku with or without seasonal reference (Gilbert, 2005).

The question is whether poems without *kigo* or seasonal reference can be called haiku. Returning to the above sample, a seasonal feeling attaches to Clark’s poem despite its lack of a seasonal attribution (the word ‘tourist’ could arguably be considered a summer season word, since most people travel during the summer months, but this is not self-evident) and the poem is further opened up by the image of the dead koala. It has other haiku elements: it is a closely observed sketch of natural phenomena and the poem has the emotive impact of a haiku. It also contains two unmistakable elements of Australian fauna, the koala and roadkill which, together, provide the pivot of the poem.

Bostok also employs a ‘*kigo*-like’ opening with ‘false dawn’, which provides an appropriately muted setting for what is to follow. The addition of the apparently silent kookaburra on an otherwise dull morning sketches a barren scene (reminiscent of Basho’s crow) which, despite the lack of a clear seasonal reference, is full of haiku elements in the careful layering of the ordinary reality of the scene. A seasonal indicator would be redundant here and would arguably reduce the poem’s depth and energy.

Ford's poem, 'Uluru' is a powerful sketch of the outback and the lives being led there. Uluru is an important landmark in terms of its cultural and spiritual significance as well as its natural beauty. By using such an iconic setting, this poem works in the tradition of haiku which calls upon a larger context than even kigo can supply for their impact (Kacian, 2000b). A seasonal indicator here would be of secondary importance to the chief characteristics of this poem and would detract from its natural force. Similarly, 'billabong' places us in a seasonless scene where we are witness to, like Basho's frog, a timeless image of nature.

Bruce's poem is a multi-layered, multi-sensory poem, opening with a 'classic' kigo phrase 'midday heat' which places the reader in an unpleasant cauldron, accentuated by the activation of the aural senses by the collective dirge of the cicadas and didgeridoo. The first two lines constitute a double kigo in respect of seasonal reference. Added to them, with a kind of 'triple whammy' effect, is the dirge of the iconic Aboriginal instrument. This poem contains both seasonal and cultural references and is rooted in the natural Australian bush, but which of these elements is the real kigo?

These haiku, with or without seasonal indicators, are flavoured with Australia's nature and climate, as well as its indigenous cultural history. Moreover, the use of these broadly understood versions of the local vernacular ('Uluru', 'boomerang' etc) might qualify as what Natsuishi, Kacian and others have called keywords, or kigo replacements.

Any replacement for kigo must function in the same fashion as kigo, that is, must be omnipresent and yet particular, emotive and yet self-contained, suggestive and yet free, expansive and yet confinable; in short, a replacement for kigo must contain as much information and structure as kigo do. Or else, such a replacement must function in some completely different fashion (Kacian, 2000b).

Australian Migration and Other Tensions

The examples above relating to idiomatic and Aboriginal language demonstrate that making cultural connections may be an important step in reconciling kigo in this country *and* that such connections are possible. Difficulties remain, however, in separating seasonal from cultural references in determining the 'true' kigo in poems. This problem aside, the above discussion highlights that expressions of cultural attachment have the capacity to provide haiku with an intrinsic importance that generic season words do not.

In addition to language, another considerable part of the Australian experience peculiar to its cultural and literary history, is migration and movement, both *to* and *within* Australia. Australian literature and history is dotted with the experiences of immigrants, documenting

their travels to and within Australia, their encounters with their new surroundings and the impact on Australian culture and society.

One of the underlying problems of the transferability of kigo from Japan may be that it originates from a relatively static culture. An Australian kigo culture, if there ever was to be one, would be unlikely to be characterised by its homogeneity or uniformity. For an Australian kigo culture to develop and prosper it would need to capture the diversity of its culture and inhabitants, and touchstones such as migration and movement, the possession of land and conflict, and other similar cultural themes relevant to Australia, are potential sources of such kigo, or kigo replacements.

Of course, no account of migration is complete without due consideration of the experience of Aborigines displaced in the process of the first migration to Australia. The following haiku have been selected primarily as they relate to this experience, and how the exclusion and suffering of Aboriginal people has become embedded into Australia's culture and psyche.

Australia Day
dot by dot she paints
yam dreaming

John Bird (From the sequence, *The Long Paddock*, first published in *Songs of the Unsung Heroes*, 2002, Australian Workers Heritage Centre).

Sorry Day
a breeze stirs
the gum's leaves

Carolyn Cordon (*Haiku Dreaming Australia*, 'The Dreaming Collection', online, 2007).

red dawn –
the aborigine casts
a long shadow

Ken Daley (*Haiku Dreaming Australia*, 'The Dreaming Collection', online, 2007).

dark interior –
Namatjira's ghost gums
shadow our tent

Lorin Ford (*paper wasp*, Vol. 14, No. 1, summer 2008, p. 13).

Arrernte mother and son
sit with their interpreter –
breeze stirs the dust

John Bird (From the sequence, *The Long Paddock*, first published in *Songs of the Unsung Heroes*, 2002, Australian Workers Heritage Centre).

in the town mall
blacks and whites
sharing cigarettes and beer

Katherine Samuelowicz (*paper wasp*, Vol. 13, No. 2, autumn 2007, p. 16).

'Australia Day' and 'Sorry Day' are emotive haiku. They do not contain traditional kigo, nor do they have any connection with natural phenomena. There is strong symbolism in each of them and they rely on cultural attachment for their effect, which is where traditional haiku, and kigo, derives much of its energy. 'Australia Day' and 'Sorry Day' occur annually in the calendar year, which places them in a delineated season. But these words have no overt connection with the season and their purpose for inclusion is not to represent a season. They refer to a constant in Australian history – the possession of land and conflict – to which the entire Australian population, including its practitioners of haiku, have a close cultural attachment. The use of landmark cultural phenomena such as these unquestionably 'opens the poem' to the reader in the manner that Kacian (2000b) might have been suggesting, and may even be closer to what Natsuishi was seeking when he embarked on a model of kigo alternatives, or 'keywords', making the following blunt remarks in relation to the future of kigo :

If what can be entrusted in this short poetic form [i.e., haiku] were no more than the feelings of the seasons captured in a diary mode, that would be terrible. The sort of poem

that can't deal with matters that go far beyond the seasonal feelings—the world, the universe, and man – can go to hell (Natsuishi cited in Hiroaki Sato, 1990).

The remaining poems in the above sample (by Daley, Ford, Bird and Samuelowicz) do not resonate any less, but finding kigo alternatives in them is more problematic as they use other techniques to gain their impact and to remain haiku. The shasei technique is detectable in each of them as is a strong internal contrast. But other non-typical haiku writing techniques are evident. As in 'Australia Day' and 'Sorry Day', there is strong symbolism in each of these poems. Daley uses the metaphor 'casting a long shadow' to underscore Aboriginal people's lost influence on their land and Ford uses surrealism to generate a similar emotive response. Samuelowicz though uses pure shasei to sketch a tenuous picture of the contemporary urban Aborigine.

Symbolism, metaphor and surrealism are techniques that the more conservative forces of international haiku have criticised as being improper for haiku composition but which are gaining wider use today as global haiku citizens explore the haiku landscape for ways of incorporating their local languages and culture. Clearly, this practice is going on in Australia.

This discussion demonstrates that in the absence of a universal approach to kigo, Australian haiku poets have the option of drawing on their history and culture to enrich their haiku. Contemporary haiku is not limited to the theme of nature as narrowly defined by 'season words', which refer only to the four seasons of Japan. Moreover, season words, according to Natsuishi (1999) are merely local keywords which can be used to create a cluster of associations that are communicable to haiku poets and their readers through the composition of what I would call 'culture haiku'. These non-seasonal keywords remove some of the constraining influences of traditional kigo, opening up possibilities for haiku poets to explore phenomena beyond nature, including urban settings. The danger in this is that culturally specific references, as we know from the Japanese experience, can be difficult to translate into other languages and cultures. Given the comparatively embryonic stage in which ELH still finds itself, this needs to be balanced against the potential these cultural references have for enriching the poems in the country in which they originate.

If the haiku in the above sample could be classified into a keyword subset of 'culture haiku' under the possible title of 'possession of land and conflict', then the haiku that follow below could be categorised similarly according to another pivotal cultural theme in the Australian experience, that is, 'movement and migration'.

The haiku in the following sample are not about the experience of migration, but contain the byproducts of it, namely, the language. As with Aboriginal language, immigration has made a vital contribution to the local vernacular, with many words of foreign origin becoming part of everyday language and which have inevitably found their way into local haiku. Words like 'café',

'cappuccino', 'latte', 'bouquet', 'brunette', 'déjà vu', 'khaki', 'lingerie', 'malaise', 'melee', 'rêverie', 'sombre', 'connoisseur', 'patio' are all instantly recognisable and high frequency words in English and English literature that have their origins elsewhere. Being so embedded as they are into the Australian, and indeed global, landscape means that they are almost unrecognisably foreign. Similar to the previous sample, none of the imported vocabulary found in the following examples function as season words or kigo. They don't set the mood for the poem, but their presence alone is a nod to Australia's past, indeed, a nod to different pasts.

coastal café
she suckles in the shade
of mum's cowboy hat

Sharon Dean (*paper wasp*, Vol. 14, No. 2, autumn 2008, p. 3).

winter rain
minestrone specks
circle the pot

Rob Scott (*frogpond*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2009, p. 29).

Cockatoos scream overhead.
A yellow feather
on my patio.

Jean Frances (*SAHA*, 2004, p. 15).

in the gale
a fallen khaki bin
opens closes

Ross Bolleter (*SAHA*, 2004, p. 4).

reverie
quiet snip of scissors
in the barber shop

Nicholas Barwell (*SAHA*, 2004, p. 1).

teatime
a noodle dangles
from the magpie's beak

Nathalie Buckland (*paper wasp*, Vol. 14, No. 2, autumn 2008, p. 8).

kids reenact
the First Fleet arrival
boat people

Ken Daley (*Haiku Dreaming Australia*, 'The Dreaming Collection', online, 2009).

In Daley's haiku, 'First Fleet' and 'boat people' are idiomatic terms synonymous with the history of Australian migration, old and new. The contrast that Daley creates between them is full of ironic intent, to highlight the discord that exists between Australia's 'multiple histories'. And he includes the innocence of children at play very effectively into the mix. Once again, no seasonal indicators and almost no natural phenomena are included in this poem, but it is an example of how much intrinsic benefit language, cultural, geographical and historical references can bring to poetry.

The sample of poems below explores 'movement' in Australia beyond the context of migration. The vastness of the Australian landscape is a shared experience among Australians in a variety of contexts. The distances people sometimes have to travel for work, the remote location of many towns and places, the number of families scattered around the country, and the amount of time people spend simply travelling around the country, means that Australians generally share an understanding of the size of the land and its contrasts through experiencing it in some fashion. A crucial part of the story of migration in Australia is a festering tension between city and country, owing to the forced movements for some families in search of work

and having to leave behind their lives in the country, or more recently in the case of mining, the city. Once again, there are many reference points to such a broad concept as 'movement' and the following haiku depict various scenes related to the phenomenon of movement, and point to a degree of cultural attachment to it.

country town
a scuff of dust
behind the schoolboy

Beverley George (*Famous Reporter* 31, 2005, p. 2).

moving to the city
the cat starts
at every noise

Vanessa Proctor (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 37).

homesick –
beneath a Jacaranda blue
Hobart sky

Lyn Reeves (*Walking the Tideline*, 2001).

more summer rain
a carload of campers
escapes to the city

Myron Lysenko (*Famous Reporter*, 30, 2004, p. 5).

stationary bus
talking we visit places
within each other

in my suburban loneliness
the incessant spinning
of the rotary clothes hoists

‘overtaking lane’ my heart keeps overtaking my head

Janice Bostok (*Wagtail*, 25, 2003, p. 12).

against the breeze
the caravan door
left open

Rob Scott (*Hermitage*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring-Summer, 2004, p. 56).

falling asleep
in your guest room
an unfamiliar window
frames the moon

Ross Clark (*paper wasp*, Vol. 15, No. 1, summer 2009, p. 1).

the calf’s fur
licked into curls –
woodstove smoke

Lorin Ford (*frogpond*, Vol. 30, No. 1, winter 2007, p. 9).

George and Ford’s poems depict familiar scenes of Australian rural life. The imagery in ‘country town’, drought, isolation and heat, is so recognisable as to be almost clichéd. We have seen this scene repeated *ad nauseam* in movies, stories and song (including music videos). As

emotive, insightful and plausible as it is, its perceived overuse may burden the poem with a slightly diminished quality. This raises an important issue in the discussion about the use of kigo or keywords, particularly in relation to their selection. Kigo, according to Kacian “are the leavening which makes the dough of haiku rise” (Kacian, 2000b). They are unquestionably central to the structure of haiku and the selection of kigo replacements therefore must reflect their value and importance. But the selection of keywords is a subjective process, particularly for the type of ‘culture haiku’ we have been discussing here because of the different value people place on various phenomena, no matter how widely shared an experience of them might be. One of the dangers of trying to select phenomena that have broad cultural significance is oversimplification or, at worst, appealing to shallow stereotypes – raising the spectre of the ‘doggerel verse’ Bostok cautioned against in Chapter 2. While the imagery in George’s poem doesn’t contain the kind of ‘haiku fodder’ that would burden the poem in this way, she depicts a scene, however honest, however truthful, and notwithstanding its considerable craft, that is bordering on the ‘over familiar’, potentially reducing its local cultural impact.

Proctor’s poem takes us from the country to the city, depicting another familiar, in this case, urban, setting. The opening line, ‘moving to the city’, is full of idiom and connotation, and strikes an immediate emotional chord through the revelation of transformation. The reader is propelled into a sense of change, and even before the second line, is anticipating metamorphosis or renewal of some kind. Proctor plays on that anticipation by expressing fear of change in the next two lines of the haiku through the ‘eyes’ of that most urban of creatures, the domestic cat. This haiku has a confessional quality which is very effective in drawing a sympathetic emotional response from the reader, especially one who shares an understanding of the expressed uncertainty. This is not a uniquely Australian experience, but one which is familiar to many Australians who have experienced migration from the bush to the country.

Similarly, Reeves uses homesickness to express another byproduct of change brought about through moving from home. Her haiku manages to combine seasonal, geographical and idiomatic references as well as utilising a double cut, to produce a haiku rich in imagery and emotion. Reeves and Proctor, whose haiku are characterised by a degree of urban lyricism, owe much for their effect to the shared socio-cultural experience of movement in Australia and offer another example of the importance of these cultural experiences in enhancing and enriching poetry, even in the absence of ‘traditional kigo’.

Ford’s haiku about Australian rural farm life combines several key elements of haiku composition including strong imagery, juxtaposition and seasonal references to create a ‘model’ ELH. This poem, though expertly crafted, raises further issues in the discussion concerning Australian identity in haiku. Ford’s poem depicts a scene rich in imagery and connotation, a scene which would be repeated in countless rural communities throughout the country.

Australians, whether they live in the city or the bush, are no strangers to this scene, either directly through their own experience of it or indirectly through stories old and new. However, Ford's poem, in the absence of any recognisably idiomatic language or specific cultural or geographic reference, could just as accurately depict farm life in any country in the world. This has the effect of extending the cultural boundary of the poem, one of the aims of the proponents of 'world haiku', increasing the poem's global reach and primary audience. The question for the haiku community then, is whether global reach equates to a lack of local identity, and whether selecting kigo/keywords is a form of cultural internment. Ford's apparently genuine attempt to locate her poem in the place she 'found' it must be trusted and respected, and there is little doubt that the scene it depicts echoes Australian rural life. The degree to which it contributes to a distinctive kind of Australian haiku, though, is less certain.

Kigo has provided Japanese *haiku* with a system that affords the poems the depth and resonance they require to succeed as poetry. As Bird (n.d.c) suggests, if Australian haiku is to succeed in the same way, it needs to develop a similar system, perhaps one based on keywords. The above discussion suggests there is a plethora of sites from which to cultivate such a system of culturally specific references, but their selection requires decisions to be made about what they bring to the poetry and how they contribute to the aesthetics of haiku. Such a system may take years to evolve and is an area worthy of further research beyond the scope of this study.

One-line Haiku

The discussion so far in this chapter highlights the emphasis that ELH, including Australian haiku, places on the concrete image. The vast majority of haiku selected above contain clear, sensory images written in a juxtapositional structure, mostly in the traditional three-line format. The three-line arrangement, as discussed earlier, emulates the three-part structure of Japanese haiku, which is the principle factor in determining the shape the poem takes. Moreover, the line breaks work to emphasise contrasts between concrete images, a format which lends itself to the exploration of natural phenomena.

However, one-line haiku has emerged over recent years as a popular alternative to the mainstream, offering the haiku poet new possibilities to explore the genre. Mirroring its Japanese counterpart, which is mostly written in one vertical line, the one-line haiku is written without punctuation, capitalisation or line breaks in one horizontal line. There are some variations within this, with some one-liners managing to maintain the classic haiku rhythm, divided into three parts but written in one line instead of three, such as in the following:

chilly night the sound of a macadamia dropping on the roof

Janice Bostok (*Wagtail*, 25, 2003, p. 4).

silent dawn the oak trunk glistens with cicada shells

Carla Sari (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 45).

after the rain the eucalypt's white trunk fleshed pink

Lyn Reeves (*Walking the Tideline*, 2001).

eagle at dawn no shadow on the salmon

Greg Piko (*paper wasp*, Vol. 14, No. 3, winter 2008, p. 4).

The lack of breaks and spacing produces a subtle difference to the rhythm of the poems, reconceptualising the notion of the 'cut'. Another variation is to include spacing within the line to emphasise a break in the poem, as in:

cows in the shallows drink themselves slowly

Gloria B. Yates (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 60).

None of the above methods manage to subvert the juxtapositional structure of the poem, despite the absence of breaks. Other more disjunctive one-line techniques have the effect of eliminating spaces, intending the poem to be read as an unbroken line with no forced pausing and often presenting a single image, such as the following poem by Bostok;

ten minutes approaching wheat silos seeing them no closer

Janice Bostok (*Wagtail*, 25, 2003, p. 13)

a loose sheet of roof iron flapping raven

Lorin Ford (*paper wasp*, Vol. 14, No. 1, summer, 2008, p. 13)

clear day turns stars stare back

Rob Scott (*Roadrunner*, Vol. 9, No. 1, online, 2009)

There is greater ambiguity to these poems owing to the multiple pauses and stresses. The hesitancy this creates allows for different interpretations, thus enhancing their dramatic effect. The stops and stresses vary from poem to poem meaning there is no formula to this, rather a choice of emphasis and cadence. The poems are driven by a faster internal rhythm which rushes the poem to its conclusion, thereby subverting the concrete image. This has significant consequences for kigo and the function of seasonal references in haiku. The three-line format facilitates a kind of 'piling up' of concrete images, with the breaks allowing the reader to give pause to their representation in the poem. The one-line variant introduces new rhythm and greater fragmentation of the poem which opens it to wider interpretation and perhaps an increased level of surprise. As a variant to the traditional form, the one-line haiku provides writers with an alternative mode of expression. As the above examples illustrate, there are numerous choices for the poet to make in one-line haiku, between subject matter, speed, fragmentation, rhythm, word choice, grammar and syntax. In Chapter 4, we will canvass more variations to the three-line format that offer more choice still. One-line haiku can be written about natural phenomena, and can therefore contain seasonal references, but this need not necessarily be the central focus of the poem. A variety of competing elements in a one-line haiku contribute to the overall impact of the poem, which of itself, diminishes the importance of the role of kigo.

Conclusion

Despite the increasing variety of haiku being published in this country, much of it conforms to an orthodox approach which has its roots in the perceived apprehension of the key elements of Japanese haiku. Kigo, as far as it relates to the delimiting of the seasons, has been embraced widely, with Australian haiku poets, in the main, writing haiku 'in the season word tradition' despite the absence of an agreed set of seasonal indicators. Increasingly informed by their local surroundings, Australian haiku poets are composing largely shasei-style haiku rich in local imagery in a juxtapositional structure to create 'model' English language haiku. And as long as

they continue to employ *shasei* which values, above all else, the depiction of objective realism, the “interpreted” *kigo* or seasonal indicators which help to ground haiku in the natural world will continue to have currency.

But delimiting seasons is only one function of *kigo*. *Kigo* are also products of its culture and language. Because the full import of the conceptual frame of *kigo* is lost outside of Japan, calls have been made for the transformation of a *kigo* culture to a *keyword* culture, one that would enable more expansive haiku that is grounded in its own language, culture and traditions. Despite the presence of formulaic haiku written for international audiences, there is growing evidence of an Australian ‘seasoning’ in its haiku, not only related to its natural flora and fauna. A growing number of haiku rely on cultural attachment for their effect, drawing on references to native and idiomatic language, as well as some key themes in Australia’s cultural history, such as migration and movement and the possession of land and conflict. The selected sample of haiku related to these themes demonstrates that keywords have not only provided a larger body of associations for poets with which to enrich their writing, but have also replaced, if not substituted seasonal indicators. Locating haiku in a seasonal context is no longer essential for evoking the haiku ‘spirit’ as Australian haiku poets find ways of providing their readers with a haiku experience through shifting the reference point from the seasonal to the cultural. But while many of these cultural references are recognisably Australian themes, they are not unique. This has implications for the development of ‘true’ Australian keywords, as distinct from keywords outside Australia’s cultural boundary.

If locating a haiku within a given season in the absence of a *kigo* culture becomes an end in itself, haiku will struggle to achieve the depth it needs to qualify as poetry. This chapter has shown that Australian haiku poets have, through necessity, matured and moved away from an exclusively translated season word culture and opened up haiku to new vistas. Australian haiku no longer requires seasonal indicators to qualify as haiku, and it certainly doesn’t require *kigo*. While not an original move, since Australian haiku has taken its lead from North America in many of these respects, it nevertheless marks a radical departure for the genre in this country. Australian haiku has ‘come of age’ arguably in the same sense as Kacian described Balkan haiku after the release of an anthology of Balkan haiku in 1999, as haiku that is valued,

not by its proximity to Japanese models, but by its authenticity and trueness to life, value and idiom in its newly adopted land (Kacian, 2000a).

This discussion suggests that Australian haiku has already started the process of breaking the shackles of its Japanese inheritance. On its journey, however, Australian haiku has wedded itself to the global movement of haiku, which has placed further strain on its capacity for a

distinctive and local voice – a voice which reflects its own culture. In the next Chapter, we will explore further Australian haiku's capacity for self-reflection within a global context.

Chapter 4 – Australian Haiku in the Global Context

The days when we could just write haiku and enjoy it are over. We are all part of a worldwide organisation. We have been globalised.

– Gloria B. Yates

The idea of genres travelling is not new. For example, the sonnet and the elegy became important English forms after long migrations from Renaissance Italy and Ancient Greece respectively. Western haiku is no longer a 'branch' of Japanese haiku but is in the process of becoming Western (Bjerg, 2013). The discussion in Chapter 3 outlines the transformation haiku has undergone (including its shared qualities with Japanese *haiku*) since crossing Australia's borders. It looked at the challenging complexities presented to a cross-cultural genre, examining how Australian haiku has dealt with the absence of a pre-existing haiku tradition and drawn on references to its own culture and traditions to provide its sustenance. The discussion in Chapter 3 considered the emergence of distinctively Australian themes and their potential relevance to the cultivation of a distinctive haiku tradition in Australia.

This chapter will explore the identity of Australian haiku further and open with a discussion about haiku submitted to an international competition organised in Australia, in which poets were instructed to write about 'Australian themes'. This will provide us with an opportunity not only to see what poets understand by the term 'Australian' but also to assess the depth of connection haiku poets have to Australian history and culture, and how much of that is reflected in their writing. Following on from Chapter 3, we explore the extent to which the emergence of a distinctive Australian haiku is dependent on connection with the local environment and culture, in the same way as Japanese *haiku* is rooted in Japanese culture. Relevant to this discussion is the rapid expansion of 'world haiku' and Australian haiku poets' participation in the global haiku movement. In particular, we explore the extent to which Australian poets are required to engage with their own surroundings in order to produce poems which are acceptable both here and abroad.

Japanese *haiku* has been instructive in showing the value of connecting poetry to the local environment and culture. Rooted in the history and traditions of its own people, plants, animals and places, Japanese *haiku* provides a link between people and their local environment which poets have faithfully represented in their haiku. These geographic, historical and cultural links, which have afforded the Japanese poet a strong sense of place, have been largely lost on an international audience despite attempts to identify with them and incorporate them into their

own writing. In Chapter 3, in search of a cluster of cultural associations that Shirane suggested would have the two-fold effect of releasing haiku from the narrow and inappropriate Japanese seasonal associations, and enriching a country's own haiku tradition, we looked at some aspects of Australia's historical and cultural history that could pass muster, including idiomatic language, place names, and other cultural themes. We discovered haiku rich in local language and imagery, depicting familiar and undeniably Australian scenes which provided the reader with multiple reference points to enrich their 'Australian experience' of the haiku. This discussion illustrated the degrees of 'Australian-ness' that were possible, but not necessarily essential in the composition of Australian haiku, particularly – as this chapter will demonstrate – in the context of the high levels of participation of Australian haiku poets in the global, English language haiku (ELH) movement.

The growth of Australian haiku has occurred alongside, but not always in step with, the expansion of 'world haiku'. Evidence suggests that Australians have, at times, been lured away from the local scene in their desire to participate in the global haiku movement. This has had an inevitable impact on the kind of haiku being written in Australia. Many poets writing on non-Australian specific themes, raises the question as to the nature or even the very existence of 'Australian haiku'. Indeed, in the context of a global and diversified haiku movement – one in which Australians have been receiving consistent recognition over a long period of time, writing in a range of styles mostly on themes unrelated to Australia – one must consider whether Australian haiku – haiku written about themes relevant to Australia – is desirable at all or even necessary for its survival.

To get an idea of what poets write about when instructed to specifically address Australian themes, a competition held in Australia in 2009 – *The Haiku Dreaming Australia Award*, 'an international competition for haiku which are relevant in and to Australia' – provides us with a glimpse of what 'Australia', or the idea of Australia, evokes in haiku poets. The guidelines for entrants were as follows:

We are not necessarily looking for haiku about kangaroos, wattle or other things exclusive to Australia (but) those that resonate with Australians might be received more sympathetically than those dealing with moose, Dolls Festival, The Thames, and snow at Christmas (*Haiku Dreaming Australia Awards*, 2009).

The *Haiku Dreaming Australia* (HDA) project is a response to what John Bird, its founder and editor, sees as a growing trend of Australian poets to write for an overseas audience through their engagement with a global haiku community.

Most Australian haiku poets delight in world haiku-fellowship and seek to make their mark on the international haiku stage. This engagement is as it should be, but an unintended consequence of writing to satisfy overseas editors and judges is, to my ear, some loss of identity (Bird, n.d.a).

The HDA project therefore promoted itself as a remedy to a perceived lack of local identity in Australian haiku, encouraging poets to write from a clearer sense of place. This intention was made clear in the notes for the competition which included the following caution in relation to ‘world haiku’:

Writing haiku that are relevant to, and understood by everybody, everywhere, can lead us from the ‘here and now’ into a haikuland where we forgo connection to our real world. Haiku Dreaming Australia was formed to encourage Australian poets to locate their haiku where they live, and this competition is part of that effort (*Haiku Dreaming Australia Awards*, 2009).

A sample of the successful entrants in the HDA Award appears below:

the farmer calls
his kelpie home . . .
flame trees darken
Sharon Dean

rainbow’s end—
the crabbing child
empties her pot
Helen Buckingham

beach cricket –
bluebottles linger
in afternoon shadows
Neil Bramsen

Sunday morning
a dog sniffs the base
of the goal-post
Barbara Strang

hot pavement
a swimmer's footprint
evaporating
Angela Smith

night match the scrum leaves behind its steam
Andre Surridge

dusk ...
a butcher bird eyes
the dog
the dog's dinner

Vanessa Proctor (Haiku Dreaming Australia Awards, Results 2009)

The first three poems in the list are the three place getters in the competition. Dean's winning haiku provides a multi-layered 'Australian experience', rich in local flora and fauna⁶ rounded off with a clear seasonal reference. It could be referred to as a 'classic Australian haiku', locating itself in a clear and identifiable Australian landscape as well as meeting the traditional requirements of orthodox western haiku.

Nature, seasonality and juxtaposition, bedrocks of orthodox ELH, are present in nearly all of the above examples, along with an undeniable, though not exclusively (perhaps with the exception of Dean's) Australian 'seasoning'. Most of them are written in the traditional, three-line format, with the last two (by Surridge and Proctor) notable exceptions, displaying evidence that haiku poets are giving new 'shape' to an old form. Surridge opts for the one-line monoku, a style which has gained popularity worldwide largely thanks to North American pioneers, Marlene Mountain, Matsuo Allard and others, as well as Australia's Bostok.⁷ Proctor's more

⁶ Several species of *acerifolius* ('flame tree') can be found in Australia, but other varieties of the species are also native to different parts of South-East Asia, parts of Africa, China and South America.

⁷ Jack Kerouac was the first to experiment with a single-line format in the 1950s. His comrade in arms, Allen Ginsberg, seeking to incorporate a Western attitude into an Eastern genre, created what he called

flexible lineation helps the reader follow the action as it is happening, giving the poem more emotional impact. Taken together, this sample shows the breadth of haiku composition on display today. And, in the very best tradition of Japanese *haiku* in connecting poetry to the local environment, a strong sense of Australia is evoked in all of the poems.

One notable characteristic in the poems submitted to the competition and selected for publication on the Haiku Dreaming Australia website was the almost total absence of place names, despite the main criteria for the *Haiku Dreaming Australia Awards* encouraging engagement with Australian topics and themes. *Utamakura* ('poem pillow') – a category of poetic words often referring to place names (*meisho*) for well-known geographic features such as mountains, rivers, towns and the like – is widely used in Japanese haiku to enhance allusion and intertextuality across poems, adding greater depth to the experience of the poetry. Similar to *kigo*, embedded into these famous places is a core of cultural associations to which each 'returning poet' is obliged to make reference and incorporate into their own poems. *Utamakura* also includes famous Shinto and Buddhist sites, festivals and other places or events to which cultural or other significance has been attached. These places have attained what we might call in the West 'iconic status' and provide an immediate context for the reader. They are valued places and enable poets to share a common 'sense of place' in their writing. The symbolism of places like Gallipoli and Uluru could be examples of Australian *utamakura*. They represent significant sites of Australia's cultural and historical landscape, evoking shared feelings in the community or larger culture, and could bring some intrinsic value to Australian haiku. But they are rarely used.

Since this was an international competition, an absence of specific place names might have been expected to a degree. And despite their absence, there is a predominance of local flora and fauna, with other local themes detectable too, including a strong sense of 'the great outdoors' as well as several tributes to the well-documented Australian penchant for sport – although some of these themes are not uniquely Australian.

Surridge, a native Briton, lives in New Zealand, and his haiku is an ode to the game of rugby, an international sport. His meditation on the game of rugby is universal. It is not just an observation about the game itself, but also the people who play it, and watch it. Sport is a collection of impressions left on its participants and observers. This is unquestionably relevant to Australia, but not unique to it. The same could be said for Strang's poem, which sketches a

"American sentences," seventeen syllables punctuated as usual. This was as much an outgrowth of his own work with long, flexible English poetic lines as any theoretical statement of what lay inherent in haiku itself. Here's a typical example: "A dandelion seed floats above the marsh grass with the mosquitos" (Kacian, 2012).

ritual followed at community sports grounds the world over, whatever the game. The striking third line of Smith's poem too connotes a typically Australian summer scene, but one that could be repeated on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, Cefalu, Honolulu or the Costa del Sol.

Bramsen's poem 'beach cricket' is perhaps the most uniquely Australian poem thematically speaking, despite its colonial connotations, with the native bluebottle jellyfish taking centre stage. Given the diversity of the Australian climate and landscape, as discussed in Chapter 3, Bramsen's haiku may not 'speak' to all Australians, since the bluebottle jellyfish, albeit a uniquely Australian species, is usually only found on northern beaches. The bluebottle jellyfish is unlikely to be included in a *saijiki* for haiku poets based in Canberra. The problematic issue of compiling a collection of Australian kigo was canvassed in Chapter 3. The vast difference in nature and seasonality between places like Hobart and Cairns makes an agreed list of season words unlikely, or at best, contrived.

This discussion highlights two things. Firstly, that there is the lack of clear criteria about what constitutes the core elements of Australian haiku, which we began to take up in Chapter 3. And secondly, that Australian haiku is one of many 'new homes' of haiku, and that we are witnessing a kind of post-nationalism in its spread around the globe in which national boundaries are non-existent and the relevance of local ties is diminished. It will be the business of the remainder of this chapter to explore the impact of the international English-language haiku movement on the local scene; to trace Australian haiku poets' contribution to the global haiku movement; and ultimately determine if Bird's concerns about the lack of 'Australian-ness' in haiku written in this country are well founded.

As with 'world haiku' we might be able to approximate a description of Australian haiku but be less able to define it (Childs, 2004). The results of the HDA competition would suggest that in the search for characteristic qualities of Australian haiku specific place names are not among them. Bird believes that eschewing local place names diminishes the local flavor of the writing and that the desire of Australian writers for readership in the global haiku fellowship has placed Australian haiku on the precipice.

Often, I suspect, Australian subjects are consciously avoided and as a result Australian haiku is the poorer, less fun to write, and less relevant to Australian readers than it could be (Bird, n.d.a).

He is right about the lack of place names appearing in haiku written by Australians or about Australia. The haiku submitted to the *Haiku Dreaming Australia Award* competition mirrors the haiku written by Australians appearing in journals here and around the globe. For example, the *First Australian Haiku Anthology*, released in 2003 (which contains 255 haiku by 60 poets) does

not contain a single reference to an Australian place name. The only reference to Australia by location is the following by Jacqui Murray:

floating
through moon and Southern Cross
the pool filter starts

(*FAHA*, 2003, p. 33).

The *Second Australian Haiku Anthology*, released in 2006 (containing 172 haiku by 48 poets) is also absent Australian place names save for the following;

on Bondi
touching her breasts
my shadow

lying on its side
near the tavern –
Southern Cross

Ross Clark (*SAHA*, 2006, p. 7).

a day's walk
beyond Mt. Solitary
alone at last

Andy Hede (*SAHA*, 2006, p. 19).

The problem of transferability between cultures might be a plausible explanation for the rare practice of mentioning places by their proper noun names in Australian haiku. It could be argued that favouring generic terms, such as 'mountain' or 'beach' over their precise geographic place names (eg. Mt. Solitary, Bondi) enhances the cultural transferability of the poem by releasing it from the confines of its locality. In other words, the number of people 'tapping into'

the shared cultural sensibilities of a poem is limited if that poem is confined to a specific location.

In the above sample, Clark's naming of the famous beach certainly creates a specific and culturally significant setting that is well known to Australians, as well as many non-Australians. Setting the scene is a vital component in haiku and Clark's precise reference, instead of using the more generic term 'beach', establishes a clear physical and mental space that enhances the poem from an Australian reader's perspective. Substituting 'at the beach' for the first line would produce an effective haiku, and one which has arguably more general appeal outside of Australia's 'cultural boundary'. But locating it in 'Bondi' creates a poetic force of its own because of the emotion it arouses among elements of the larger culture that have experienced it or have knowledge of it.

Of course, as a geographic location, Mt. Solitary is not as well-known as Bondi Beach, which may limit its general appeal outside of Australia (or, for that matter, New South Wales). But the actual mountain itself is of secondary importance in Hede's haiku than the poet's reliance on the satirical double meaning of its name for the haiku's main effect. Similarly, Clark's 'Southern Cross' haiku employs a metaphoric disjunction for its effect. In his haiku, unlike Hede's which perhaps fails to ground the reader despite using a place name (perhaps due to a lack of 'iconic' status), the Southern Cross has a greater role to play. The Southern Cross has social, political, and geographic significance in Australia and mentioning it by name does more than merely locate the reader under an Australian sky. It opens the poem up to a series of connections and associations people have with it – as a naturally occurring phenomenon and as a cultural symbol.

In the context of the global haiku movement, the risk of using geographical and cultural allusions such as this is that it may be perceived to shackle the poem to an unfamiliar location, placing restrictions on the scope of poetry. Place names have the effect of fixing a poem in a physical space, which has the potential to limit the associative reach of a poem. Readers outside a cultural border or without knowledge of a particular place name will be limited in their capacity to share cultural or other references in a poem, creating the potential for degrees of disassociation and detachment – as we have seen with the transformation of Japanese haiku in the West. The West's fascination with haiku, however, will attest a certain degree of sympathy between cultures and a willingness to explore. Unfamiliar places are rich sources of curiosity for the 'haiku explorer', so incorporating place names in haiku simply adds to the learning opportunity that people with already vested interests in the poetry will, most likely, actively pursue. Moreover, the 'risk' of using place names and the difficulty in translating them between cultures must be balanced against the potential they have for enriching the experience of readers within the particular culture (Welch, 2006):

Sometimes translations of haiku from Japanese into English are criticized for not being able to capture various deep allusions or multiple meanings, and this is frequently true. However, it can be just as difficult to translate English-language haiku into other languages for the same reasons. Indeed, we have no dearth of opportunity in English to produce effective allusions and multiple meanings, as Klontz's poem demonstrates. The difficulty of *translating* these allusions and multiple meanings from one language to another should not be confused with the potential for poems to *make use of* effective allusions and multiple meanings in the language that the poem was written in. In comparison with Japanese, English has no deficiencies in this regard (Welch, 2006 p. 82).

Place names or other cultural references are tools for further engagement with one's locus, which has the potential to deepen one's association with it. In the case of Australian haiku, there are plenty there for the taking. In Chapter 3 we saw how effective some of the kigo alternatives were in anchoring the poems in a larger body of poetic associations.

Examples of this type of engagement in local surroundings can be seen in the writing activities of haiku poets in some regions of Australia. One of the traditions of haiku that has been replicated outside of Japan is the writing of haiku in local groups. Several groups in Australia have been created with the intention of coming together and writing haiku dedicated to celebrating the local landscape: Mari Warabiny (Perth), The Red Dragonflies (Sydney) Watersmeet (Tasmania) and Cloudcatchers (NSW). One of these groups, Cloudcatchers, meets on the north NSW coast for seasonal ginkos (haiku walks) and other workshops. Their haiku, even the haiku they submit to international journals for publication, is grounded in the immediate environment with a clear emphasis on an appreciation of the local flora and fauna.

beachside
the sky shaped
by pandanus

Quendryth Young (*A Hundred Gourds*, Vol. 2, No. 1, online, December 2012).

sunrise
crab holes
pop open

Quendryth Young (*The Whole Body Singing*, 2007).

eggshell light
the frangipani drops
one blossom

Nathalie Buckland (*A Hundred Gourds*, Vol. 2, No. 3, online, June 2013)

crumbling bark
on a fallen teak tree ...
the ache in my back

Nathalie Buckland (*A Hundred Gourds*, Vol.2, No. 2, online, March 2013).

river bed ...
a blue-tongued lizard
parts waterweed

Leonie Bingham (*Famous Reporter*, 39, June 2009).

Deepening knowledge of one's own territory is very much in the spirit and aesthetic of *utamakura*, strengthening the bond between poet and locus. The poems above reverberate with the poets' local surrounds. They are writing from the world as they know it which affords their writing an authenticity sometimes lacking in modern haiku. The advent of globalisation, which has shifted the poet's gaze to the international stage, has stretched these local bonds to breaking point in some cases.

Globalisation and Homogenisation in Haiku

Much has been written about the growing homogenisation of haiku as a result of its burgeoning popularity in both print and in cyberspace over the past twenty years, as poets have been lured from their real worlds in search of new ones. Bostok, Australia's first recognised haiku poet, was the first to shift her gaze, gaining publication quickly in several journals in the US in the 1970s and in doing so, introducing Australian poets to the accelerated growth of the haiku movement in that part of the world. Unlike in Australia, haiku in America was coming of age by the 1980s. After piquing the interest of the zen-infused Beat Generation in the 1950s, American haiku

experienced steady growth, witnessed by the rising number of journals devoted to haiku, the emergence of some key figures, and the growing coordination between poets through the creation of haiku societies across the country. Many of these journals and societies still exist today, providing American haiku poets with a constant forum in which to exchange poetry and ideas. This situation has flourished with the rapid growth of the internet, which has attracted a new generation of poets and a proliferation of web sites, blogs and mailing lists which have helped to create a haiku movement in the United States characterised by extremely divergent styles and agendas. Says Trumbull (2006):

During the 1990s the American haiku movement in a sense recapitulated its early history. Thanks to the Internet, thousands of new poets were attracted to haiku. In the process of interacting and learning, they trod the same ground that the pioneers of American haiku had traversed in the decades before. The Internet revolutionized the study and exchange of haiku and globalized what had been a localized activity (Trumbull, 2006).

There were downsides to this globalisation. The accelerated trajectory of the movement through greater exchange and discussion created many challenges, including the search for common ground between the new regions practicing haiku. While different styles were flourishing between regions in the 'new haiku world', haiku written in English was already starting to look the same. As Trumbull (2006) notes:

World haiku is a reality, but it still has its strong regional dialects. Although there may be slight stylistic differences among poets writing in English, haiku by poets from the U.S., U.K., and Australia / New Zealand are much more similar to one another than to contemporary Japanese, European, or Latin American haiku (Trumbull, 2006).

Japanese poet, scholar and critic Hasegawa Kai goes further than calling Western haiku repetitive. In his essay about *Gendai Haiku* (modern Japanese haiku), he compares the plight of the two genres:

There are various problems related to the current state of Western haiku. They are not, however, the same problems facing Japanese haiku. Rather, the problems are even more complicated. While the biggest problem facing Japanese haiku is that of how to reconcile haiku, a traditional form of literature indigenous to Japan, with the realism learned from the West. Haiku in the West have, in addition, the even greater problem of how to root

this traditional form of literature indigenous to Japan in the cultural soil of the West. It seems to me that the current state in which “a lot of haiku written today in the English language by Western practitioners fall short of memorability and depth, and appear formula based” has occurred just because they have become the “victim of realism”. I think that there are deeper underlying problems even before that – for example, the problem of the fundamental understanding of what a haiku is (Metz, 2009).

To get an idea of what ‘the West’ perceives as haiku, we turn to one of the first attempts in the fifty or so years of ELH to present haiku from different parts of the world in one place. In 2001, *frogpond*, the official journal of the Haiku Society of America, produced an International Haiku Issue, featuring haiku from poets around the world (approximately 200 poets from 24 countries) including Australia. The unstated purpose of this issue appears to have been an ‘international exchange’ to sample the interest and variety of haiku to be found around the globe. As issue editor, Jim Kacian says, to ‘deepen the conversation’ about haiku. Eight haiku were selected from each country, the Australian haiku selected by Bostok and Lyn Reeves. No submission criteria were provided so it is not clear what editors were looking for other than a sample of the local craft. For the purposes of comparison and to survey the work of Australian haiku poets appearing in this international journal alongside poets from other English-speaking countries, the following is a sample of three haiku each (of the eight appearing per country) from Australian, English and US poets, with discussion to follow:

Australia:

three-quarter moon
the gecko moves
from light to shadow

Sue Mill (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 9).

thundering possums spill over the dry roof

Rosanna Licari (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 8).

almost winter
the press of grape leaf upon grape leaf
how red!

Ross Coward (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 9).

England:

harvest moon
the cat shapes itself
in the empty pot

David Rollins (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 21).

wind-blown rain slotting another stone into the cairn

Stuart Quine (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 21).

thunder at twilight
the rusty tin roof
begins to brighten

Claire Bugler Hewitt (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 20).

The United States:

full
moon
kissing
entirely

Ed Baker (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 48).

leaves look larger
on the stream's bottom
autumn deepens

Burnell Lippy (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 48).

almost winter
the golfer putts
through his shadow

Yvonne Hardenbrook (*frogpond*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2001, p. 48).

These haiku all represent sharply observed insights into nature and human nature, characterised by the brevity and impartiality typical of the genre. Among them are strongly felt moments of beauty, mystery and humour reduced to their essence through the skilled writing of the authors. But on many levels they mirror each other. There is a very similar look and feel to these poems. With the exception of Baker's poem, there is a repetition of form, either three- or one-line, the layouts are generally alike, and a similar rhythm is detectable. Of most interest to us, however, for the purposes of this study, is the subject matter. The content of these poems is remarkably similar, even interchangeable, and it would be a hard task to determine where each of these poems originated without knowing something of the author's biography. The selection criteria for this international collection of poems clearly did not emphasise cultural references, allusions to local place names or poetry typical of the region. Very little distinguishes them as 'Australian', 'English' or 'American'. They point to growing evidence of haiku becoming a transnational genre, crossing borders without a 'passport' of origin. Australian haiku poet Vanessa Proctor, co-editor of the *Second Australian Haiku Anthology*, believes haiku 'expresses universal human experience which cuts through cultural boundaries' (Verhart, 2007). This is a positive state of affairs for those who delight in international publication, but Bird's concern for the loss of local bonds in the process is prescient.

This degree of sharing across cultures is entirely consistent with the development of a travelling genre. Australian haiku is only one of haiku's new homelands, and, like other countries, the haiku it writes will largely be the result of what the poets bring to it themselves. But there is also a global haiku community forming. As the number of 'member nations' grows so too does a global communal poetic body and the range of views about what constitutes haiku.

Certainly, poets acquainted with haiku becoming aware of each other across different cultures and languages promises much for the expansion and cultivation of the genre. But there are clear implications for the local scene, raising the question of how possible it is for both 'world haiku' and 'Australian haiku' to prosper, and even, whether or not they in fact exist as separate entities.

The growth of the world haiku movement has occurred on such a scale, producing such an array of styles that, as Kacian (2007a) noted, it is no longer appropriate merely to ask 'Is it a good haiku?' but 'What type of haiku is it?' Haiku can now be written about nature, or not. It can include kigo, or not. Haiku can be a one-image sketch or a contrast between two or more. Haiku can be about something real or imagined. Haiku can be a combination of any of these things and more. It can even be Australian haiku. Or can it?

Encouraged by the level of innovation and diversity of North American haiku in the late 20th century, Shirane (2000) nonetheless observed some areas of concern for the world haiku movement. Due to a perceived lack of kigo and meisho in haiku outside of Japan, Shirane believed one of the challenges of English language haiku was to find some way of anchoring haiku "not only in some aspect of nature, but in the vertical axis, in a larger body of poetic and cultural associations".

This communal body, the vertical axis, however, is in constant need of infusion, of new life. The *haikai* poet needs the horizontal axis to seek out the new experience, new language, new topics, new poetic partners (Shirane, 2000).

Unquestionably, the global reach of the internet has ensured the cultivation of new poetic partners, affording the genre the infusion of 'new life'. Haiku is now written in more countries and languages than ever before by seemingly leaping over cultural boundaries. As Gilbert noted, good haiku:

Seem to possess both magnetism and a near-universal appeal, judging by the many countries and languages in which they now appear. A notable attribute the haiku genre (has) is its ability to overleap borders of language, region and culture (Gilbert, 2008).

It is not within the scope of this research to assess the quality of the different styles of ELH, rather to investigate the level of engagement Australian haiku poets have with the trends and new developments in the genre. The rise of international haiku has implications for the local scene, in particular the degree of 'Australian-ness' to be found in haiku, the central concern of this chapter.

What Shirane may not have foreseen is the extent of the globalisation of haiku, its transformation into a transnational genre, and the speed at which transnational genres, assisted by global electronic communication, can lose their connection to local cultural bonds in favour of universal engagement. If poets are not connecting their poems to their local culture, Shirane's vertical axis is at risk of crumbling, forced to rely for its sustenance on the exchange of universal truisms.

One of the products of the global haiku movement has been the creation of international haiku anthologies, showcasing haiku from poets all over the world. Prominent among these is *The Red Moon Anthology of English Language Haiku* (RMA). Running since 1996, the RMA is an annual selection of the 'finest haiku and related forms published around the world', as selected by a group of editors from a number of international journals, 'without bias towards a particular school or poetic' (Kacian 2004). While originating in North America and sourcing most of its material from there, there is a growing presence of international haikin, with Australian poets among those most prominent. Writing in the foreword to the 2003 edition, Kacian writes:

Previously, haiku poets writing outside North America represented a relatively small percentage of poets whose work was voted to inclusion. This year, we have our highest percentage of non-American poets ever . . . Interest in haiku in all its forms . . . appears to be at an all-time high around the world. More haiku is being published in print than ever before, and the amount of internet activity is astounding.

What hasn't changed is the central focus: haiku itself. Some of the definitions are getting a bit hoary, some of the "rules" are being tested, but the limning of significant moments with beauty and economy remains the basis of our art. If people are finding new means by which to accomplish this goal, the better for haiku (Kacian ed. 2004, p. 4).

The extent to which Australian poets have been 'included' in the international modern haiku movement and are helping to set its standards is clear from the following sample of poems, which displays each haiku by Australian poets (45 in total) selected for *The Red Moon Anthologies* (RMA) between 2001-2012 (excluding 2005 & 2007). The intention of displaying them here in their entirety is not only to illustrate the full range of voices, but also to demonstrate the presence (or absence) of 'Australian-ness', which may assist us in making some observations about the importance of the 'Australian connection' to world haiku.

still no word
the moon
through another window

Rob Scott (*The Loose Thread*, RMA, 2001, p. 60).

reverie
quiet snip of scissors
in the barber shop

Nicholas Barwell (*Pegging the wind*, RMA, 2002, p. 13).

evensong
the cool silence
between chants

Sue Mill (*Pegging the wind*, 2002, p. 54).

school graffiti
the four letter word
spelled correctly

Carla Sari (*Pegging the wind*, 2002, p. 13).

icemelt
the moon drifts
through my whisky

Rob Scott (*Pegging the wind*, 2002, p. 13).

preoccupied –
my hand fills
with the dog nose

Anna Tambour (*Pegging the wind*, 2002, p. 13).

on the wall map a moth crossing borders

Ross Clark (*Edge of Light, RMA*, 2003, p. 22).

now the wisteria
supports the trellis
father and son

Greg Piko (*Edge of Light*, 2003, p. 71).

dry riverbed
a pool in the tarp
of the old boat

Vanessa Proctor (*Edge of Light*, 2003, p. 72).

all day the rain sinking deeper into ground the duck's beak

Rob Scott (*Edge of Light*, 2003, p. 78).

winter sun
the guide points out
celebrity graves

John Bird (*Tug of the Current, RMA*, 2004, p. 14).

lengthening shadow –
above her eggs the hen's heart
beats against my arm

Beverley George (*Tug of the Current*, 2004, p. 31).

garden path
I walk through a gap
in the ants

Vanessa Proctor (*Tug of the Current*, 2004, p. 61).

red sunrise
the bulldozer's engine
revs up

Lyn Reeves (*Tug of the Current*, 2004, p. 62).

summer's end
a boy skips a stone
to the other side

morning frost
your long absence
deepens

Rob Scott (*Tug of the Current*, 2004, p. 66).

country town
a railway station
without tracks

Myron Lysenko (*Big Sky*, RMA, 2006, p. 51).

on my own again
squeezing the toothpaste
in the middle

Peter Macrow (*Big Sky*, 2006, p. 53).

cold tea
in the teacup
no more to say

Greg Piko (*Big Sky*, 2006, p. 69).

arguing about politics
Dad feeds the dog
under the table

spring evening
I walk the moon
to the pub

Rob Scott (*Big Sky*, 2006, p. 77).

salt spray
the taste of peat
in my whisky

Quendryth Young (*Big Sky*, 2006, p. 89).

the bent nail
where garlic hung . . .
winter moon

seashells –
I sort through
my childhood

Lorin Ford (*White Lies*, RMA, 2008, p. 26).

the talk
we had to have
– early dusk

Paul Hodder (*White Lies*, 2008, p. 33).

digging post holes . . .
the bull climbs
another cow

Allison Millcock (*White Lies*, 2008, p. 43).

breastfeeding
the slow drip of rain
on the nursery roof

Vanessa Proctor (*White Lies*, 2008, p. 50).

a few leaves
on their way to earth...
remembering her

John Bird (*Where the Wind Turns*, RMA, 2009, p.20).

a slave ship -
Turner paints light
in the wind

Anne Elvey (*Where the Wind Turns*, 2009, p.30).

what I see in him . . .
a blue flame wavers
in the grate

to seed darkness where a star might go

day moon
the dish rag
wearing thin

Lorin Ford (*Where the Wind Turns*, 2009, p. 33).

valentine's day –
a glimpse of the shop girl's
red bra strap

Paul Hodder (*Where the Wind Turns*, 2009, p.42).

Monday morning
a sigh exits
the lift

Rob Scott (*Where the Wind Turns*, 2009, p.65).

the desert stars . . .
I almost believe
his "forever"

snake country the length of the shortcut

Lorin Ford (*Evolution, RMA*, 2010, p. 29).

full moon
the things I never see
in daylight

Jo McInerney (*Evolution*, 2010, p. 43).

barbed wire –
the heifer inhales
my breath

Quendryth Young (*Evolution*, 2010, p. 64).

on a bare twig rain beads what light there is

Lorin Ford (*Carving Darkness*, RMA, 2011, p. 28).

spring fever
the sparrow fights off
his reflection

Paul Hodder (*Carving Darkness*, 2011, p. 37).

war veteran . . .
lobbing grain
at his hens

Cynthia Rowe (*Carving Darkness*, 2011, p. 63).

deeper and deeper into the foxglove dusk

Lorin Ford (*Nothing in the Window*, RMA, 2012, p. 28).

swinging the axe
sunlight splits
the firewood

Graham Nunn (*Nothing in the Window*, 2012, p. 51).

southern humpback –
miles of ocean
pushing back

Scott Terrill (*Nothing in the Window*, 2012, p. 69).

fog . . .
never coming
to the thick part

Quendryth Young (*Nothing in the Window*, 2012, p. 74).

Again, similar in nature to the snapshot we took of the *First Australian Haiku Anthology* at the beginning of this chapter, of the 45 poems in the sample, not one of them refers to a specific Australian place name. And like the poems selected for *frogpond's* International Issue in 2001, there is little distinctively Australian about them. Excluding the senryu (which accounts for about a third of the poems) nature is the locus of most of the poems, reflecting a largely orthodox approach, with season words liberally used, though, once again, few of them identifiably Australian 'in nature'. Proctor's 'dry riverbed' is the most obvious exception, drawing a painfully familiar scene of Australia's recent and widespread experience of drought. Lysenko's 'country town' is also informed by an Australian sensibility without being uniquely Australian, and the same could be said of Young's 'salt spray' and Ford's 'snake country'. But, in the main, despite nature and seasonal references taking centre stage in many of the haiku, Australian nature is almost completely absent. Instead, there is an emphasis on more generic natural settings, as well as urban themes and other matters such as personal relationships.

Haiku poets are entitled to locate their writing wherever and in whatever reality they choose. Given the success of these and other poems, it seems of little relevance to international editors that haiku written by Australian poets need to be located in an identifiably Australian setting, bush or otherwise. These haiku are obviously meeting other standards deemed constitutive in the composition of haiku regardless of their country of origin – some of which will be discussed later in the chapter – which suggests that haiku with an Australian sensibility is, for the most part, irrelevant or perhaps even undesirable, as far as international editors are concerned.

As a poet seeking publication, it is entirely appropriate to modify one's writing to suit the particular selection criteria of an editor. To be fair, very few haiku editors seek anything that resembles 'national poetry'. Nor do they usually request poems typical of a country or region. A recent exception to this is the Australian haiku journal, *Windfall*, which began publication in 2013, and seeks "haiku which are relevant to the experience of urban and rural life in Australia. Observations that celebrate landform, seasons, and our unique flora and fauna, are welcomed." Some examples which have appeared in these pages:

Cabbage Tree Creek . . .
a goanna passes
from time to time

vanishing bushland
a possum
opens the cat door

Lorin Ford (*Windfall* 1, 2013).

evening hush -
the sound of a wallaby
grazing

Nathalie Buckland (*Windfall* 1, 2013).

summer holiday
a wonga pigeon
counts the seconds

Quendryth Young (*Windfall* 1, 2013).

beach cricket –
a border collie
at silly mid on

Lorin Ford (*Windfall* 2, 2014).

dust bowl
the sheep's head
deep in the trough

Rob Scott (*Windfall* 2, 2014).

Each of these poems contains a clear, and even named, references to the Australian landscape, eschewing the generalised observations present in the haiku appearing in international journals. These poets are clearly engaging in their local surrounds in the way Bird advocates. And although some of these haiku may be less likely to appear in haiku journals outside Australia, this sample suggests it is possible for haiku in this country to simultaneously retain its local flavor and meet its broader 'haiku obligations'.

These haiku have been written in response to prescribed criteria to promote a 'local experience' of haiku, but in the main, despite subtle variations in the submission criteria of editors around the globe, selection generally centers on an acceptance of the broad principles of haiku writing. Allusion to individual experience, however non-specific, is often encouraged.

It is also important to note that most modern publications do not distinguish between haiku and senryu. Much discussion has centred on the differences between the two forms, with some believing the differences, as prescribed in the Japanese originals, are stark, while others contend that these distinctions have been eroded, caused in part by the tendency of Western writers to incorporate elements of both 'cousins' into their writing, creating an interchangeability between them. Senryu has historically been regarded as the poetry of 'human nature' (as distinct from 'nature') with an emphasis on satirical humour, while haiku operates in the domain of nature, kigo and the human connection or interaction with it. However, satire is not forbidden from use in haiku, and nor are nature references excluded from senryu, and it appears that editors have grown weary of trying to classify poems with elements of both.

The poems from international anthologies sampled above demonstrate the extent to which the haiku landscape has been expanded. They cover topics from all walks of life, and are testament to these new selection criteria. As a practical matter, the blending of haiku and senryu, and the reduced necessity to reference nature, together with the globalisation of the genre may have contributed to a diminution of the poet's engagement with their immediate (and natural) surrounds, promoting Bird's assertion of the existence of a 'haikuland'.

At the outset of this chapter, we discussed the emergence of the *Haiku Dreaming Australia* anthology, and competition, which was a direct response to a perceived loss of local bonds in Australian haiku. Lamenting the lack of identity in Australian haiku, Bird asks:

If our haiku refer to nature surely the nature they address should be that where we live, that which we know and routinely interact with, and not that of a foreign country or some virtual 'haikuland'? (Bird, n.d.a).

Bird's comments specifically relating to the advance of international haiku in the early twenty-first century, echo the sentiments of Janice Bostok many years earlier, when she was concerned about the dulling effect locally of the inappropriate emphasis on Japanese seasonal references:

The persistence in continuing to mirror Japanese haiku can be clearly seen when writers stubbornly use cherry blossoms and Buddhist temples in their Australian haiku. The English language is a beautiful language. We should be using it in exciting and modern ways. We write haiku about kookaburras, kangaroos, rotary clothes hoists, holdens, akubras, and the mountains and terrain of our own country. . . . We do not claim to write Japanese haiku (Bostok, *A Hundred Gourds* website, n.d.).

These sentiments reflect the bind Australian haiku has found itself in since it first appeared over a century ago, and the struggle it has faced to display its own, distinctive character.

The Rise of Non-Australian and Australian Haiku

If it is true that the loss of Australian identity in Australian haiku has been assisted by the globalisation of the form, then the origins of this confluence might be traced back (ironically, given Bird and Bostok's comments above) to the release of the *First Australian Haiku Anthology* (FAHA) in 2003. The FAHA was conceived and edited by both Bird and Bostok "in an effort to bring Australian haiku to the world stage", (FAHA, 2003). The FAHA, mentioned earlier in this chapter in the context of the minimal use of Australian place names, will now be considered more closely specifically in relation to a discussion about the state and nature of Australian haiku in the context of the globalisation of the haiku movement.

Clearly cognisant of the global trends in haiku, and with a clear intention to promote a local seasoning, the editors stipulated that to have work considered for the anthology, poets:

Had to be Australian by nationality or residency or have written their haiku while resident in Australia. There were no constraints with respect to form or the inclusion of seasonal references and no distinction between haiku and senryu. Selection was a trade-off between quality and our desire for broad representation of haiku written in Australia (FAHA, 2003).

Despite the lack of place names, as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, there are plenty of Australian themes to enjoy in this collection, including references to beach life, hot summers, drought, bush tracks and local flora and fauna:

old ute
a bow legged Blue
master of the tray

Jacqui Murray (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 33).

eucalypt saplings
filling each shade patch
one kangaroo

Sue Mill (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 32).

crescent moon -
fruitbats streaming into
the mango grove

Bob Jones (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 23).

a sweltering night:
pale moonlight falls cool
across my pillow

Joy Hutton (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 21).

squabbling
a flock of lorikeets
louder than the neighbours

Sue Wilson (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 59).

drought again –
I paint the house fence
green

Joanna Preston (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 36)

As we discovered in Chapter 3, haiku rich in local cultural themes adds textuality to the poems that can enrich the poetic experience. These poems rely on their cultural attachment (through the use of idiomatic language and references to local flora and fauna) for their effect, underscoring the depth that cultural associations can bring to haiku. There is also a smattering of senryu in this anthology, reflecting the more recent interest in this form, characterised by a mix of concrete and abstract images, with an emphasis on humour and urban themes;

invites me
to his fourth wedding
my first sweetheart

Carla Sari (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 45).

graffiti swears from the grey wall

Rosanna Licari (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 41).

tv turned off the room's colours deepen

Lyn Reeves (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 40).

neighbour's arm signals too tired to gossip

Jacqui Murray (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 33).

my old shirt
so comfortably resting
on your young breasts

Ross Clark (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 7).

full mailbox
feeling the weight
of your silence

Rob Scott (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 46).

out of hospital
it's such a pleasure
to swear at him

Gloria B. Yates (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 60).

Because the anthology purports to be a 'snapshot' of Australian haiku at the end of the 20th century we must be mindful of the place of Australian haiku in the global haiku movement at the time. Australian haiku was just emerging from a period of relative slumber, firmly ensconced in a traditional Japanese conceptualisation of the form, with an unbending emphasis on nature and the seasons. Most poets saw haiku only in terms of how they were to make insightful connections between natural phenomena and the human experience of them, either with 'one-image' haiku or by use of the juxtaposition of concrete images. A small number of poets were being influenced by more adventurous progress in other countries, particularly the US, experimenting with new styles and reconceptualisations. Bostok is, again, instrumental here, being the first modern Australian haiku poet to gain international recognition and, in so doing, bring a sense of rediscovery to the form. Her haiku, 'pregnant again', which features in the

Australian anthology, first appeared in the minutes of a meeting of the Haiku Society of America in 1973. It comes from the following sequence, which leading American haiku publisher and critic William Higginson described as 'one of the finest short sequences – and most heart-breaking – that I know of in literature' (Dean, 2011b).

pregnant again . . .
the fluttering of moths
against the window

foetus kicks
the sky to the east
brilliant

tiny coffin
the long winter's
passing

(Bostok, cited in Dean, 2011b, p. 293).

Over thirty years after it was first published, 'Pregnant again' won the 'Seashell Game' in 2002, an award given in the UK for 'leading world haiku'. Pitted against over one thousand haiku from around the world in a competition that derived its name from that of Japanese haiku master Matsuo Basho's first ever book of haiku in which he paired and commented on haiku of his own, Bostok won from another Australian poet, Jean Rasey. 'Pregnant again' is a significant haiku in that it highlights the potency of the contrasted image, now a commonplace technique in English language haiku, exploring the depth that can be achieved, sometimes surreal, in the relationship between two images. This type of haiku, without nature or the seasons as its predominant sensibility,⁸ exploring simple truths in straightforward language, is typical of the modern era. Echoes of it can be heard in the following haiku, also taken from the *FAHA* collection.

⁸ Although, in his description of the haiku on the Haiku Dreaming website, Bird suggests, 'From my first reading I assumed the moths were Australian bogongs, part of the tens of millions of their kind who head south in late spring from breeding grounds in southern Queensland on their 3,000 km journey to spend summer in cool caves of the Southern Alps. This haiku became famous without most people knowing the incredible "bogong story" but for me it enriches the haiku (Bird, 2008).

grandmother's rings
too small
for my little finger

Vanessa Proctor (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 37).

for an hour
the moon hangs
with the singlets

Ross Clark (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 7).

at the dentist
new apartments
filling the sky

Denise Davis (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 10).

the shadows
on the book –
more beautiful than words

Matt Hetherington (*FAHA*, 2003, p. 19).

While these are not haiku 'of Australia' or even relevant to Australia, they are considered haiku of standing in the community because of their use of new techniques characteristic of modern ELH. Moreover, the absence of Japanese imitation and the lack of focus on nature as a subject reflects a clear shift in the Australian haiku course, mirroring trends in ELH elsewhere, and arguably meeting Bostok's call for 'exciting and modern' haiku.

Haiku in this vein, lacking local themes yet reflecting the growing variety and divergence from traditional haiku practices can be found in numerous journals both in Australia and

overseas. The following is a sample of haiku by Australian poets that have appeared in *frogpond* (the official journal of the Haiku Society of America) between 2002 and 2011:

dwindling light
the telephone's silence
deepens

Rob Scott (*frogpond*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2002, p. 22).

midnight swim
she lowers herself
into stars

Rob Scott (*frogpond*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2002, p. 18).

the man bends
and whispers a greeting
her name in stone

Greg Piko (*frogpond*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2003, p. 27).

hopscotch path
evening shadows darken
the worn numbers

Ron Moss (*frogpond*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2003, p. 18)

the sound of a hat
being picked up
from a piano

Myron Lysenko (*frogpond*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2005, p. 9).

the calf's fur
licked into curls
woodstove smoke

Lorin Ford (*frogpond*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2007, p. 9).

night train . . .
I meet myself
in the window

Martina Taeker (*frogpond*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2008, p. 20).

past midnight . . .
the clock
and my heartbeat

Jo McInerney (*frogpond*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2009, p. 15).

each set of eyes
watches the skirt
barber's mirror

Greg Piko (*frogpond*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2009, p. 16).

cloudwatching . . .
my son's small hand
curled in mine

Vanessa Proctor (*frogpond*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2009, p. 31).

stars dot the sky her gap-toothed smile

Rob Scott (*frogpond*, volume Vol. 33, No. 1, winter 2010, p. 27).

deep shadows
a dingo dodges back
into the dreamtime

Lorin Ford (*frogpond*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2011, p. 18).

The blurred distinctions between haiku and senryu are obvious in the above poems with seasonal references again often absent. And while some of them, in true haiku tradition, could be described as poems evoking nature, they go beyond epithet, or mere descriptions of nature. Haiku or not, they are infused with different poetic techniques that help to distil the images and create resonance in the poems. Sometimes, this can be done by way of a 'one-image haiku' as in Piko's 'the man bends'. Or, as in Moss's haiku, greater tension can be achieved through juxtaposition, producing an expansive awareness of time and space to create tension in an otherwise ordinary scene. Moss uses a gentle contrast between nature and humans for effect. In many of the other poems in the above sample, greater intensity is achieved by way of a more pronounced 'cut', producing a dynamic juxtaposition or disjunction in the poems, adding metaphorical (such as in 'dwindling light'), surreal (Ford's 'shades of winter') or other semantic shifts in the sensibility of the poems.

Modern Haiku, also produced in the US, is widely considered to be the flagship journal of ELH, and Australian poets, writing a mix of styles including both Australian and non-Australian themes, have also made their presence felt:

slowly
the earth moves
snails in love

a few notes
from an untuned piano...
autumn rain

what I see in him...
a blue flame wavers
in the fire grate

Lorin Ford (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2009, p. 18).

"Is your cold better?"
my crippled friend asks
smiling with relief

ink on my page
folding its wings
the crow

Carla Sari (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2001, p. 11).

nothing to say
after the long silence
thunder closes in

Rob Scott (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2003).

sharing my view
through this tour bus window
winter fly

Lorin Ford (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2010, p. 19).

the bare branches
alive with cockatoos
she has her good days

Greg Piko (*Modern Haiku* Vol. 40, No. 1, 2009, p. 56).

if someone asks
say I'm still writing...
the narrowing road

Greg Piko (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2010, p. 80).

transit of Venus . . .
something struggles
in the orb weaver's web

Lorin Ford (*Modern Haiku*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2011).

clinging to an old hope the reek of mothballs

Lorin Ford (*Modern Haiku* Vol. 44, No. 1, 2013).

These poems also show a clear shift in focus away from shasei-like sketches of nature with a stronger emphasis on the contrasted image to create the major resonance in the writing. While there is evidence of kigo, few of them have a particular relevance to Australia. Nature is still at the core of many of Ford's poems (and as we will see later, many of her haiku are notable for promoting a resurgent focus on Australian themes) and while kigo, in the sense of seasonal references, are present, they do not provide the poems with their lustre. Instead, most of the poems above are sparked by an unexpected and provocative internal contrast.

These trends in modern ELH are not confined to the United States. Australians have also gained recognition in the United Kingdom in recent years, with some having work published in journals such as the long running *Presence*, edited by Martin Lucas. The following haiku written by Sue Mill appeared in 2001, containing strong echoes of Bostok's 'Pregnant again':

sheet lightning –
a pale moth flutters
outside the window

(*Presence*, 13, 2001, p. 11).

The following sample of poems, also from *Presence*, begins with a haiku written by Vanessa Proctor which was voted 'best of issue' for *Presence* #16, as voted by fellow contributors to the journal:

city street
the briefest touch
of a stranger's hand

Vanessa Proctor (*Presence*, 16, 2002, p. 18).

after the feed
the imprint of your tiny ear
on my arm

Vanessa Proctor (*Presence*, 29, 2006, p. 23).

someone has been here
the room is still breathing

Bruce Roxburgh (*Presence*, 17, 2002, p. 15).

train tunnel –
the sudden intimacy
of mirrored faces

Beverley George (*Presence*, 22, 2004, p. 25).

homecoming –
one by one the pier lights
flicker on

Lorin Ford (*Presence*, 48, June 2013).

steady night rain –
I snuggle deeper
into the sound

Jean Rasey (*Presence*, 19, 2003, p. 43).

after midnight
the winning goal
still in my ears

Rob Scott (*Presence*, 19, 2003, p. 36).

all day the rain sinking deeper into ground the duck's beak

Rob Scott (*Presence*, 21, 2003, p. 37).

The internal contrast is again prominent in many of them, and most would be rightly classified as senryu, focusing on the foibles of human nature, as they do. The following haiku won the Haiku Presence Award in 2003 and was selected to appear in the Red Moon Anthology (2004):

summer's end –
a boy skips a stone
to the other side

(Rob Scott, *Presence*, 22, 2004, p. 3).

Even though I was living in The Netherlands at the time of writing, it depicts a very familiar Australian scene. The judge, British poet and associate editor of *Presence*, Alison Williams however, selected this as the winning poem because it:

Exemplifies that paradoxical haiku mix of simple directness in what is said with something elusive and compelling in what is not. The best haiku convey more than they say, and in so doing they defy logical analysis. Every word of this haiku works for me. The first line 'summer's end', although it is a kigo phrase that has been used many, many times, sets the scene perfectly for the action. A boy skips a stone. The indefinite article repeated helps us realize this could be any boy, any stone. It's immediate and real but it's also universal. It implies a lightness and a transience. The last line is more ambiguous and open. To the other side. The other side of a river or stream perhaps? The phrase "the other side" has associations we may or may not wish to bring to this. It could be mundane or it could be a mystery. Here, it becomes subjective, the reader brings his own meaning to the haiku that is open enough to allow it (Williams, *Presence* #22, 2004, p.5).

This poem, and the commentary that follows it, reflects the prevailing attitudes about haiku at the time, particularly the coalescence of traditional and modern aspects of haiku. For Williams, the poem contains elements of both, with the standard kigo phrase 'summer's end', being blended with the suggestive possibilities of the modern approach – in which haiku open themselves to the reader to make their own connections or associations.

As well as the US and UK, ELH has also had a long standing presence in Japan, courtesy of regular haiku columns appearing in two major daily newspapers, the *Asahi Evening News* and the *Mainichi News*. Canadian born Tokyo based academic, David McMurray has been editing a weekly haiku column, the 'Asahi Haikuist Network' since April, 1995. Many Australians have had haiku appear in his and the Mainichi column over the years, which appear in print and online:

movie ends
next door, credits roll
autumn chill

Rob Scott (*Asahi Haikuist Network*, November 21, 1998).

old photo
father off to war
smiling

Lorne Henry (*Asahi Haikuist Network*, June 21, 2004).

smell of boiled broccoli
on the radio
a string quartet

Lorne Henry (*Asahi Haikuist Network*, March 3-4, 2007).

Local spice shop
the sound of hot gossip
in unknown tongues

Jan Dobb (*Asahi Haikuist Network*, Nov. 30 2012).

corn seed sprouts
in the chicken coop
after monsoon rain

Barbara A. Taylor (*Mainichi Haiku in English*, December 2011).

My thoughts fall
Like a leaf onto a pond
And sail away

Brian Campbell (*Mainichi Haiku in English*, March 2012).

Southern Cross
how far I've come
this twinkle in my father's eye

Mary Hind (*Mainichi Haiku in English*, June 2012).

The following haiku by Jan Dobb appeared in the 'Mainichi Haiku' column in September 2012 and was described by the Japanese editors as describing 'one of the typical Australian scenes':

slow afternoon
dozing in the dapples
a tortoiseshell cat

Without knowing precisely why the editors feel this scene typifies Australia, we can surmise that the summer seasonality that dominates the haiku, and which is so often associated with Australia, lies at the core of the reflection. Even so, this poem and Hind's poem aside, what we are seeing both in these examples and those appearing in the UK and US, is a kind of post-national trend of English language haiku, in which local borders are being dissolved and Australian haiku is less defined by its 'Australian-ness' than in its participation in a new, definable Western form of poetry. Australia is only one of haiku's new homelands in a global, and globalised, community and local distinctions are becoming irrelevant and almost non-existent.

Fertile seeds of this changing climate can be seen earlier in some of the poems appearing in *RawNervz*, a Canadian journal that ran between 2000 and 2005. The journal was edited by Dorothy Howard, a former President of Haiku Canada, who was known for her selection of modern, avant-garde haiku. Australians, again, appeared frequently. The following sample begins with three poems by Bruce Roxburgh, a regular contributor to the journal, who uses a mix of non-standard content and forms in his writing;

the feeling
moves

Bruce Roxburgh (*RawNervz*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2002, p. 31).

a surgeon
to
open
and
close
me

Bruce Roxburgh (*RawNervz*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2005, p. 25).

the trains come closer all night my sleep going past

Bruce Roxburgh (*RawNervz*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2003, p. 26).

after the phone call
in the darkness
nothing

Peter Macrow (*RawNervz*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 2004 p. 22).

the old man yelling again
Mum's cooked all morning
and it tastes like straw

Peter Macrow (*RawNervz*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002, p. 26).

on the window pane
the rain plays
hit and run

Carla Sari (*RawNervz*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2002, p.7).

the latest war news
I drink my whisky
straight

Carla Sari (*RawNervz*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2003, p. 23).

reading a thriller
I look up suddenly
daybreak

Rob Scott (*RawNervz*, Vol. 7, No. 2, summer, 2001, p. 23).

... one more glass of wine
twilight carrying
the world away

Katherine Samuelowicz (*RawNervz*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2001, p. 19).

Many of these poems would qualify as senryu, with satire the most prominent tone, and a strong focus on the characteristics of the human condition also present. *RawNervz* consistently offered material that was provocative in style and content and was one of the earliest publications to blur the lines between haiku and senryu. So-called 'urban haiku' is a popular sub-genre of modern senryu, in that it observes the human condition living in an urban environment, thereby opening the landscape of haiku to topics in almost any walk of life. This broadening of its appeal is evident in the diversity of topics seen in the above poems.

Other forms of short form poetry have also been added to the mix, including sentence fragments, 'found haiku' and more recently, micropoetry, which has largely become associated with new media platforms (for example, Twitter) which encourage the use of extreme brevity due to the limited number of characters available for composing. A precursor to micropoetry can also be found in *RawNervz*, which featured Peter Bakowski's short 'haiku-like' poems which almost defy categorisation:

the letter t

is ready to drop
anchor

(Peter Bakowski, *RawNervz*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2001, p. 16).

the letter v

is the crime
the axe blade commits
upon a tree

(Peter Bakowski, *RawNervz*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2001, p. 26).

the letter Y

invented the slingshot

(Peter Bakowski, *RawNervz*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2003, p. 50).

the letter U

feels empty inside

(Peter Bakowski, *RawNervz*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2002, p. 17).

Advice

Vultures
never
dispense
it.

(Peter Bakowski, *still 2*, 1998, p. 80).

Bakowski's unconventional 'micro poems' (as he describes them) are almost 'anti-haiku' in their disregard for any formal rules of haiku, both in form (eg. the use of titles) and in the pure surrealism of the content. Haiku or not, their appearance in an international haiku journal has helped to give haiku a contemporary edge not only here but overseas.

The abstract and experimental vein of *RawNervz* has gradually found its way into the more mainstream publications such as *frogpond* and *modern haiku*, as well as Australian publications, *paper wasp* and *Famous Reporter*. But it has found itself a champion in the form of the online journal *Roadrunner*, which calls itself a journal of haiku and "short poetry inspired by haiku." Influenced by the gendai *haiku* (or modern or contemporary haiku) movement in Japan, which is characterised by a non-traditional approach, the editors of *Roadrunner* favour a non-realist, surrealist, metaphorical style of haiku – techniques dismissed until recently as un-haiku-like, by many editors. A small number of Australians, including Lorin Ford and myself have found a liking for this style as well:

their wings like cellophane remember cellophane

Lorin Ford (*Roadrunner* (Web) Vol. 9, No. 2, May 2009).

dark star in the ultrasound image her tiny fist

Lorin Ford (*Roadrunner* (Web) Vol. 10, No. 2, July 2010).

something in that moon I'm going to regret

last stop all the trains of thought shuffle out

empty sky all I have are these issues

Rob Scott (*Roadrunner* (Web), Vol. 9, No. 1, February 2009).

down to the last line dusk slides off the table

Rob Scott (*Roadrunner* (Web), Vol. 10, No. 1, March 2010).

As witnessed by Australian haiku poets' level of engagement with the international haiku community, an argument could be put that Australian haiku may be more attuned (and susceptible) to the changing trends of world haiku than to developments locally. Undoubtedly, the spread of haiku to post-colonial Australia was led, in part, by its growth in popularity in its neo-colonial partner, the United States. In its spread around the globe, ELH has acquired much diversity as a result of the range of poetics that have cut across its path. Poets around the world are exploring a range of approaches to haiku and selecting from a growing list of haiku techniques and poetic devices.

One of the issues for ELH is to decide which or how many of these techniques need to apply for a poem to be called a haiku. Some of the poems above bear little resemblance to what is generally regarded as haiku. Their similarities to Japanese *haiku*, or even *senryu*, have been overwhelmed by the ways that they are Western. An argument could be put that many of the poems included in haiku journals are not haiku at all, and are simply a form of short poetry. But in the absence of a definition of Australian haiku this is a moot point.

Returning to the central question as to whether Australian haiku, despite the turbulent global environment in which it finds itself, has been able to forge an identity that reflects its culture and history; there have been some notable recent developments. John Bird's creation of *Haiku Dreaming Australia* is the most recent of several practical but fragmented efforts to address the lack of identity in Australian haiku. These date back to Janice Bostok's "The Gum Tree Conversations", a pioneering series of articles in the 1990s (published in *Hobo* poetry magazine) that demonstrated the relevance of haiku to the Australian experience and landscape (Dean, 2012 p. 15). On a practical level, the creation of the Australian Haiku Society in 2000, of which Bird was also a central figure, is a significant development in the sense of uniting poets

and promoting haiku around the country. Until that time, very little had been done to bring Australian haiku poets together. As Greg Piko remarked at the *The Fourth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference* held at Terrigal, Gosford in 2009:

If you think of our writing as a 'niche' activity, then you can see why Janice Bostok had difficulty running an Aussie journal in the early days and why it would have been difficult to draw together a critical mass of haiku writers in the 1970s and 1980s. Arguably, it was really only with the advent of the internet that this dispersed collection of people was able to communicate, organise themselves, interact with others overseas and function in a sustained way (Piko, cited in Dean 2012, p. 364).

Bird would be encouraged, though, by the recent emergence of some significant Australian haiku poets whose haiku is evocative of their native surrounds and consistently reaching an international audience. One of these poets is Lorin Ford, who has become a central figure in both the local and international haiku communities. Writing haiku that has the stamp of international trends as we have seen in many of the poems above, Ford's haiku also has a characteristic local voice, rich in the imagery that takes us 'smack dab to her native Australia' (Ferris Gilli – cover notes to *'a wattle seedpod'*, 2008). Her first collection of haiku, *a wattle seedpod*, shows a poet clearly engaged in the art of haiku and drawing on her native surrounds, both urban and rural, furnishing her poetry with both local and international appeal. '*A wattle seedpod*' was awarded first place in the Haiku Society of America Mildred Kanterman Memorial Merit Book Awards, 2009 and includes the following poems:

clear water
a magpie's song drops
into the pond

(Ford, *A wattle seedpod*, 2008, p. 6)

flooded road
a soft drink bottle
turns left

(Ford, 2008, p. 12)

parked utes –
kelpie ears point
to the pub

(Ford, 2008, p. 12)

red moon
the calligraphy
of charred trees

(Ford, 2008, p. 19)

heat haze
the miles
of boundary fence

(Ford, 2008, p. 16)

cloudburst
a grey tabby
pours from the shed roof

(Ford, 2008, p. 10)

Similar to the poems appearing in *Windfall* cited earlier, there is a perceptible sense of the Australian landscape, both rural and urban, in these poems. A wide-open, harsh Australian outback is a well-told tale in Australian literature, its imagery familiar within and far beyond its borders. Yet Ford's poems manage to avoid cliché or conventionality, providing freshness and new insights without detriment to her cultural attachment to it. The Australian outback, as discussed in Chapter 3, is a potentially rich source of Australian kigo, or keywords. But without poetic treatment such as in Ford's poems, it can also be the locus of a hackneyed phrase. 'Heat haze' and 'Flooded road', which transport the reader directly to the exasperating vastness of

Australian rural life are, as much as anything, declarations of Australia's dichotomous dangerous beauty. Ford displays a deep connection to this. She also exhibits a profound connection to the art and history of haiku. In 'clear water' we have another artfully sketched and overtly Australian rural scene. Intentional or not, Ford's reference to 'the pond' echoes the famous Japanese haiku of Matsuo Basho:

古池
蛙飛び込む
水の音

Romanisation:

furu ike ya
kawazu tobikomu
mizu no oto

translation:

old pond
a frog jumps into
the sound of water

The similarities in setting, sound and mood of the poem are striking. The movement of the song, 'dropping' into the clear water, almost provides a mirror for Basho's leaping frog, creating an intriguing intertextuality across the poems. Ford's haiku is almost homage to Basho's, in which a simple and truthful scene is adorned with an elegance of composition. 'Red moon' goes beyond providing a mere relationship between texts and creates a stunning and unexpected coherence between genres. Using the striking expression 'the calligraphy of charred trees', Ford draws on all aspects of her haiku education and creates an unimaginable connection across three 'genres' of haiku (Japanese, 'world' and Australian haiku). This poem powerfully evokes the native Australian bush and employs the popular ELH technique of the internal contrast for its effect, but goes beyond that to produce a haiku of great resonance. 'The calligraphy of charred

trees' connects the Australian poet inextricably to the Australian landscape, but also by way of a metaphorical umbilical cord, to haiku's motherland. It is a dramatic association and one which places Ford and Australian haiku at the core of its reality as an imported and transforming genre.

Ford has become very active in international haiku circles, editing online journals, judging competitions both in Australia (including the Haiku Dreaming Awards) and elsewhere. She has become an international haiku citizen, but not at the cost of her local sensibility nor the precision of her writing to record the detail of her insights. Ford's writing is informed by a clear sense of her local environment which she has been able to pay homage to without jeopardising its general appeal. This 'balancing act' between local and international awareness is a reality of a modern, globalised genre and Ford's success demonstrates that sacrificing local bonds is not an essential ingredient for guaranteeing an international readership.

John Bird, who wrote the foreword says of Ford:

Writing skillfully within the popular mould for English-language haiku, Lorin has won endorsement from editors and empathy with readers without losing either her freshness or her Australian voice. This poet does not live in *Haikuland*. She may well become a haijin who helps move English-language haiku closer to poetry (Bird, cited in Ford, 2008).

Also in the foreword, Bird recounts Ford's original engagement with haiku, which she credits to the following haiku by Dhugal Lindsay:

picking up a jellyfish...
my lifeline
clear and deep

(Ford, 2008, Foreword)

Ford says of reading this poem,

The effect was immediate – a physical quiver of recognition. The memory of my original experience was vivid and unmediated by overt authorial presence . . . This was a happy accident. It made me realize that haiku are meant to be 'seen through' by us as readers, to our own experiences in the world (Ford, 2008).

Her nomination of Lindsay as an important influence is telling. Lindsay occupies a unique place in Australian haiku. He writes haiku in both Japanese and English, owing to extended periods of living and working in Japan. He has been writing haiku since the early 1990s and was one of the first Australian haiku bloggers with his web page 'Dhugal's Haiku Universe' first appearing in 2000. His first haiku collection, *Mutsugoro* (The Mudskipper), was published in 2001, and won the Nakaniida Haiku Award for best haiku collection by a developing poet (a unique event, as it was the first time a non-Japanese had ever won a haiku award competing with other haiku poets composing in Japanese). Kaneko Tohta, Chair of the Modern Haiku Society of Japan described Lindsay as "the first Westerner I have come across to make haiku of substance in the Japanese language." The following haiku appeared in the online journals, *Roadrunner* in 2009 and *Simply Haiku*, 2007:

暗黒の我が喉通る深層水

ankoku-no wa-ga nodo tooru shinsousui

through the pitch dark

of my throat it passes

deep sea mineral water

心音のかすかに聴こえ薺摘む

shinon-no kasuka-ni kikoe nazuna tsumu

my heartbeat

just perceptible... i pick

some shepherd's purse

数珠玉を手に颱風のくる気配

juzudama-o te-ni taifuu-no kuru kehai

Job's-tears
in my hands a typhoon
gathers strength

Dhugal Lindsay (*Roadrunner* (Web) Vol.9, No. 1, February, 2009)

プクリームのやうな雲浮く仏の座
hoippukuriimu-no you-na kumo uku hotoke-no za

clouds float
like dollops of whipped cream –
nipplewort

カンガルー一気に川を去年今年
kangaroo ikki-ni kawa-o kozokotoshi

kangaroo
clears the creek in one big leap
New Year's Eve

初声はハロー黄巴旦御辞儀して
hatsugoe-wa harou kibatan ojigi shite

first birdsong of the year
"hello" as the cockatoo
bows

Dhugal Lindsay (*Simply Haiku*, (Web) Vol.5, No. 2, 2007).

Lindsay was introduced to haiku by Japanese poet, Yoko Sugawa, his Homestay mother, on his first visit to Japan in 1991. Sugawa, who was haiku *sensei* at Tokyo's Fuyoh (Rose Mallow) haiku school, became his first haiku teacher, guiding him in the principles and aesthetics of

Japanese *haiku*. He went on to co-edit *Fuyoh*, the school's magazine, and has also been associated with other haiku groups in Japan since. Following a desire to write 'true haiku', Lindsay now writes the majority of his haiku in Japanese and his poems conform strictly to the 5-7-5-syllable structure that the poet believes is essential to true (Japanese) *haiku* (*Japan Times* article, Jul 20, 2002). Lindsay's writing is informed by a deep exploration of the connection between humans and the natural world, emanating from his work as a marine biologist. With few exceptions, he does not write what we could call 'Australian haiku'. Writing in Japanese and being so embedded in Japanese haiku aesthetics, it is difficult to apprehend much of Lindsay's work. What is clear though is that Lindsay's unique perspective offers much to the development and understanding of haiku across cultures, which, with Western haiku still undergoing enormous transformation, is as important now as it was twenty to thirty years ago.

Conclusion

The growth in popularity of Australian haiku is due in part to the globalisation of ELH. At the turn of the century, despite the efforts of a dedicated few, including Australia's premier haiku poet, Janice Bostok, Australian haiku was an obscure poetic form practised by a small and fragmented group of enthusiasts. Before being exposed to new trends and directions in world haiku, Australian haiku was largely concerned with the imitation of Japanese haiku, with an emphasis on nature and the seasons at its core. The growth of world haiku, emanating mainly from North America, and facilitated by the global reach of the internet, has had a significant impact on Australian haiku, in particular, on the kind of haiku Australian haiku poets write.

Through the participation of its poets in the globalised haiku arena, Australian haiku has been exposed to reconceptualisations and an increasing diversity of styles. Australian haiku poets are writing haiku about topics real or imagined, with or without kigo, mainstream and experimental. The broadening of the scope of haiku has led to increased participation in the writing of haiku, both in Australia and overseas and a small but growing number of Australian poets are gaining international recognition in a range of world haiku arenas, which has been highlighted in this chapter.

But one of the consequences of this increased activity in 'international haiku waters' has been a perceived loss of Australian identity in haiku. The vast majority of haiku written by Australians appearing in international journals contains references to universal themes rather than identifiably Australian ones, which suggests that Australians are being lured away from their local surroundings, which in turn, reduces the importance of Australian themes, including nature, in Australian haiku. The lack of Australian-ness in Australian haiku has been brought into sharp focus by a number of initiatives. This chapter has focused on some of these, including the

Australian Haiku Dreaming Award, and anthology, as well as the *Windfall* journal, both of which focus on the broader strain of an increasing sense of Australia in haiku.

Australian poets should expect to live in a world free of unnecessary rules and restrictions on their writing. Their international success is something that should be commended and acknowledged for its contribution to the haiku movement as a whole. But the emergence of poets such as Lorin Ford, whose haiku strikes a genuine balance in sensibilities between Australian and world haiku by containing vivid reflections of her native homeland, has demonstrated the depth and resonance to which haiku can aspire if attachment to local culture is encouraged and nurtured. Whether the example set by Ford, and others, translates into the establishment of something approximating 'true' Australian haiku, will be determined by the value the poets, both in Australia and elsewhere, ascribe to it. But until such time as the criteria for what constitutes Australian haiku are settled, Ford's work and that of many other Australian haiku poets will continue to be regarded more in the context of their contribution to the global haiku movement than, specifically, to the haiku movement in Australia.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Wake Butterfly

It's late, we've miles

To go together

– Matsuo Basho

The history of Australian haiku to this point in time could be characterised as a continual search, not for its own identity, but for a true understanding of its development. It is impossible to talk about Australian haiku without considering its translation and cultural transmission, and the core business of this thesis has been to account for Australia's haiku education which has largely been concerned with interpreting and incorporating the genre's Japanese origins with its own culture and poetics. Australia isn't the only 'new home' of haiku. The cultural transmission of haiku has occurred on a global scale and the course of the Australian haiku movement has been shaped considerably by the various expressions of haiku internationally.

Over five hundred years, Japanese poets have contributed to their own *haiku* tradition, rich in idiomatic, symbolic and other references to its culture and history. Western perceptions of this tradition have been crucial to how Australian poets have apprehended and approached the writing of haiku and one of the central questions of this thesis has been to examine the extent to which Australian haiku poets, simultaneously aided and limited by these perceptions, have succeeded in writing haiku that reflects their own culture.

The role of translation, and translators, is central to the transmission of any poetic form to a new culture, and the early translations of haiku in Australia are the focus of discussion in Chapter 2 about key developments in Australian haiku, in particular, the role of two prominent figures in Stewart and Bostok. Prosperous cultural transmission of poetry requires the development of a means of communicating ideas between one culture and another. As Kacian (2000a) explains, in discussing the development of haiku in the Balkans:

It requires a pioneer figure . . . to begin the process. After that, we need to have good models of the idea from the original, so that we may have a way of encountering these values and applying them to our own circumstances. In haiku, this means quality translations of the most important or representative work .

Unquestionably, Stewart was Australia's pioneer figure in introducing haiku to this country. While there were some sightings of haiku prior to his foray into translating Japanese *haiku* into 2 lines of rhyming couplets, *A Net of Fireflies* represented the first serious attempt to find some

common ground, albeit skewed, between the two cultures. But translation of a poetic form presupposes the modeling of the original form in a fashion that retains its substance and nuance in the new context. The way in which it is translated has a large bearing on the character, intended or otherwise, of the new, recreated version. Yoneoka (2008) summarises the predicament of the translator:

Any creative effort, be it music, art, poetry, literature, or drama, is incontrovertibly linked to and defined by the spatial and temporal culture in which it was conceived. And as translators and interpreters of such products have long known, rendering such creativity outside of its cultural shell to be understood and appreciated by members of a different cultural space and time is generally a task fraught with great difficulty. There are always choices to be made: whether to translate a concept or forego it, whether to emulate the form or convey the meaning, whether to be faithful to the original and add beauty or depth to the derived product. Some go so far as to say that translation is impossible, preferring to use terms such as “rendering” or “recreating” in the new context.

“The danger”, warns Kacian (2000a), “with any great interpreter, of course, is that he will have his own particular hobbyhorse.” In an effort to ‘spin’ haiku for a non-Japanese audience, Harold Stewart’s use of rhyme in his translations of Japanese haiku in the 1960s is almost universally considered flawed because of his disregard for the cultural nuances of the original poems. His translations appeared to be more ‘faithful’ to his intended audience than the culture in which the poems originated. This was both an understandable and not unreasonable course of action. But by rendering haiku into two-line rhyming couplets, Japanese *haiku* were neither emulated nor meaningfully conveyed to their new audience, to use Yoneoka’s criteria. Stewart’s personal interest in Buddhism and Zen, which undoubtedly led to a fascination with haiku, failed to flow into his translations, which ultimately failed to find the means of communicating it.

Flawed translations are nothing new in poetry (the sonnet’s travails in its move from Italy to England a case in point) and Stewart’s experience highlights the importance of the role of pioneers in finding common ground between the borrowing culture and the ‘host culture’. The overall impact of Stewart’s work is difficult to assess, but the lack of haiku being written in the intervening decade between the appearance of *A Net of Fireflies* and the first edition of *Tweed* (Australia’s first journal exclusively dedicated to haiku) is perhaps indicative of the generation he ‘inspired’.

But also typical of a travelling genre is the propensity for change. Styles and approaches shift as knowledge and understanding of an imported culture expands as it acclimatises to its new literary surroundings. Chapter 2 also considers Bostok’s intervention as Australian haiku’s first

interpreter and teacher and the extent to which it propelled the Australian haiku movement forward. Her efforts to drag Australian haiku away from misinterpreted and irrelevant Japanese classics deserve much credit. She was more responsible than any other individual in Australia for opening haiku to new possibilities and encouraging Australians to develop a more local sensibility to their writing, promoting the relevance of haiku to the Australian experience and landscape (Dean, 2011a). Shortly before her death in 2011, Bostok expressed a degree of encouragement, albeit cautiously, about how much Australian haiku had changed:

‘This is a process that will take time,’ she’s saying. ‘But things are changing. Back in the 1970s and ’80s, writers in Australia often mirrored Japanese haiku; they’d write about clichéd Japanese subjects such as cherry blossoms and Buddhist temples. But now, more Australians seem to be writing in exciting and modern ways about the here and now . . . which means there’s a distinct shortage of cherry blossoms.’ Jan laughs. ‘What’s wonderful is that now we’re at least writing haiku about subjects like kookaburras, pubs, Holdens, and the mountains and terrain of our own country. We’re addressing us – where we are, on this day, with this day’s weather – and haiku is becoming more relevant’ (Dean, 2011b p. 301).

Bostok is reflecting here on the transformation of Australian haiku from being a ‘branch’ of Japanese haiku to one possessing more ‘home-grown’ qualities, which she viewed as vital for the future of the genre in Australia. The early decades of haiku in Australia, characterised by writing that was highly derivative of classic Japanese haiku, were rooted in a shasei-style objective realism, with nature and the seasons at its core, a style which, despite the recent emergence of a range of ‘unorthodox’ approaches, still accounts for the majority of haiku found in Australian and international journals today. Unquestionably, Australians are nowadays writing more diverse and experimental haiku. The question is whether the growing diversity signifies the arrival of a local/cultural/national voice in Australian haiku, and whether this can be translated into a post-colonial/ multicultural and globally focused Australia, which is the focus of Chapters 3 and 4.

Despite the growing diversity, ‘mainstream’ Australian haiku has largely held fast to a perceived concept of Japanese *haiku* and its elements, and Chapter 3 explores the bridge between *haiku* and haiku, and the extent to which haiku in Australia is pursuing its own ‘voice’. Focus in Chapter 3 is given to a discussion of kigo, considered to be one of the ‘genre markers’ of haiku (Marshall and Simpson, 2006). It considers two different conceptualisations of kigo – the most common being its associations with nature and the seasons, as well as the cultural aspects underpinning these associations, given recent emphasis by Shirane, Gilbert and others. Central

to this discussion, again, is the efficacy of translation – the interpretation and misinterpretation of key aspects of Japanese haiku techniques and traditions – and the impact this has had on the kind of haiku being written in Australia.

Since Westerners began translating Japanese haiku, inherent differences between cultures have brought with them many challenges and given rise to misunderstandings about Japanese haiku aesthetics, including the function of *kigo*, that have shaped the haiku being written outside of Japan. Australian haiku has traversed through a number of different phases in its efforts to apprehend these aesthetics and incorporate them into their own writing. According to Dean (2010) they are not there yet. According to Dean, Australian writers “are still experimenting with Japanese haiku aesthetics to see which qualities work best when transplanted into the language and culture associated with our Australian environment” (Dean, 2010, p. 53).

Some of these aesthetics (such as *wabi*, *sabi*, and *aware* – which have not been the focus of this research) have no direct translation in English but are commonly referred to in teachings of Japanese haiku aesthetics, particularly in relation to their pervasiveness in Buddhism, and are included among the *pot pourri* of Western haiku sensibilities. *Kigo* is one haiku aesthetic that has dominated Western haiku discourse largely because of its more ‘translatable’ qualities. *Kigo*, or the *idea* of *kigo* – in the sense that it is related to haiku’s central concern with the objective natural world – has provided a connecting link for all international haiku poets and Chapter 3 includes a brief anthology of haiku from Sweden and The Netherlands for the purposes of comparison and discussion. The predominance of ‘season word’ – based haiku has reinforced the objective-realist hegemony over haiku composition both in Australia and in the West, and the parallel prominence of another haiku aesthetic, *shasei*. The three-line sketch of a naturally occurring scene with a seasonal reference within a juxtapositional structure has become normative practice in Australian haiku, with the emergence of more identifiably Australian imagery the major distinguishing feature compared to previous emulations.

However, this one-dimensional view of *kigo* has come in for criticism, prompting discussion about its true role in ELH. Many issues for *kigo* relating to its function in ELH are discussed in Chapter 3: the problem of transplanting a *kigo* culture outside of Japan; the practical issue of delimiting seasons and the question of transferability in a country as diverse as Australia; and, perhaps most importantly, the absence of a *kigo* culture in Australia and what Australian poets have done in an effort to accommodate it.

With no *kigo* culture or haiku tradition to guide them, Australian poets are still, as Dean (2010) suggests, sampling from the range of techniques, old and new, that are available. This ‘discovery phase’ has given rise to new conceptions, such as the ‘aha moment’, whereby the internal comparison of two concrete images creates a spark of realisation, similar to an epiphany. This reconceptualisation of haiku as a ‘sudden grasp of reality through transcendental

perception' (Lucas, 2002) relies heavily on the juxtaposition of images and the 'cutting' of these images in order to create a shift in the poem and an emotional response from the reader. Not a significant departure from classic, season-based haiku, this version of the two-image haiku is a popular iteration of the form. But not all haiku are written in this way, and other techniques are emerging, such as the one-image haiku and sentence fragments, all of which are given coverage in Chapters 3 and 4.

Through these reconceptualisations, haiku has undergone substantial change, in keeping with the tradition of travelling genres, and in so doing has produced a combination of 'orthodox' and experimental haiku. There is a prevailing view, however, that Western (including Australian) haiku lacks local cultural, historical or literary references (MDW, 2006; Shirane, 2000). To this end, one of the objectives of this thesis has been to measure the extent to which Australian haiku has been infused with its own culture and poetics, and the latter part of Chapter 3 explores possibilities for Australian poets to make such connections in their haiku, as a way of reconciling kigo and adding necessary depth and resonance to their writing.

The history of Japanese *haiku* demonstrates that haiku has the potential, primarily through kigo, to reflect its own culture. In Chapter 3 we identify several sources of cultural attachment in Australian haiku, revealing poems rich in local and idiomatic language and depicting themes relevant to Australia which evoke a greater 'Australian experience' of the poems. Central to this discussion is Gilbert's contention that the conceptual basis for kigo is culture and not season, a point of view which reframes the importance and relevance of kigo in Western haiku. The poems presented in Chapter 3 illustrate the point that locating haiku in seasons is no longer essential for the writing of haiku. The 'suffocating' aspects of season words (confining the writer in time and space) have been mitigated by the comparatively liberating qualities of 'keywords' or alternative kigo, opening up possibilities for haiku poets to explore not only natural phenomena, but other phenomena relevant to a particular culture for the specific purpose of maximising resonance.

Distinctively Australian phenomena are identified and offered as potential sources of 'cultural kigo' in Chapter 3. These include idiomatic and Aboriginal language, references to local flora and fauna and, of course, Australian place names (*meisho*). Recognisable plants and animals such as kangaroos, koalas and wattle are shown to do more than enhance the natural setting from a local perspective. When included sensitively to haiku poems, they have the capacity to act as anchor and symbol, providing a local and allegorical context and drawing the cluster of associations Shirane and others have deemed vital for the creation and sustenance of a local haiku tradition. Moreover, themes relevant to Australia, such as migration and movement and the possession of land and conflict, are offered as potential sources of 'keywords', reflective of

the different conceptualisations of 'Australia' and underscoring this significant reconceptualisation of *kigo*.

The inclusion of culturally or spiritually significant local references indeed has serious implications for *kigo* in Australian haiku. By providing haiku with sufficient 'cultural merit', these keywords have in some cases relegated seasonal references (the key cultural ingredient of Japanese *kigo*) to the role of background scenery, allowing the full import of a significant cultural association to resonate. Haiku are being written, and still considered to be haiku, even though they 1) lack a seasonal reference, or 2) contain seasonal references that do not function traditionally as *kigo*. In other words, the seasonal importance of *kigo* has, in some cases, been supplanted by the cultural resonance of keywords, which not only provide the haiku with a feel of Australia's nature and climate, but tie it to a cluster of cultural associations which enhance its poetic depth.

A danger in this is that cultural references, as we know from the Japanese experience, can be difficult to translate into other languages and cultures. But given the comparatively embryonic stage in which Australian haiku still finds itself, this needs to be balanced against the potential these cultural references have for enriching the poems in the country that they originate. This is an area that is clearly worthy of more study if something approaching an Australian haiku tradition is to be imagined and formulated.

There are many fine examples of poets making the sort of cultural connections that some believe will add the depth that haiku requires to be considered serious poetry. Yet many poets still largely eschew them, writing non-Australian-specific, in some cases, formulaic ELH, suggesting that Australian haiku doesn't depend on its own culture for survival. There is strong evidence that the recent sea change towards greater homogeneity in haiku across cultures points merely to the upshot of Australian haiku poets' seduction to the appeal of the world haiku movement, which is the central focus of Chapter 4.

Unquestionably, Australian haiku has been strongly influenced by developments in the world haiku movement. This is consistent with a post-colonial, globally focused Australia. The globalization of haiku has had an impact on the number of people writing haiku and the number of different types of haiku being written – both increasing markedly. Assisted by the internet, more people are writing and exchanging haiku than ever before, via email, blogs, online haiku groups and social network sites, as well as through the traditional means – journals, workshops, conferences and haiku groups. People are more readily exposed to international trends and this has manifested itself in the type and variety of haiku being written.

Chapter 4 presents a large selection of poems by Australian poets appearing in a variety of journals around the world, including the US, the UK, Canada and Japan. The sample demonstrates that Australian haiku poets, like their international counterparts, are writing

haiku in new shapes (for example, in one-line, concrete and sentence fragments) and exploring new techniques. Their collaboration has led to the creation of an international fellowship of haiku, witnessed by the growing number of haiku competitions, workshops and conferences held around the globe devoted to the sharing and discussion of haiku. Despite the continued hegemony of traditional or orthodox practices, much of the haiku appearing in local journals now is unrecognisable from what was customarily served up to the local audience in the 1970s and 1980s, ushering in the kind of change Bostok and others were calling for. But whether the maturation and transformation of haiku in this country has spawned a strain of haiku that is identifiably 'Australian' is open to debate.

One of the repercussions of active participation on the global haiku scene is a shift in focus away from the local landscape. It is suggested in Chapter 4 that this may in part be attributable to Bostok's split legacy – on the one hand, railing against outdated Japanese emulation in favour of haiku more relevant to Australia, but on the other hand, being the first notable Australian haiku poet to cross international borders and promote an international connection. Many writers have followed her lead and have collectively made a significant contribution to world haiku, writing, in the main, though, haiku lacking in distinctively Australian themes. Chapter 4 presents a large selection of poems appearing in various acclaimed international collections of haiku, which is characterised by an absence of identifiably Australian nature, suggesting that world haiku, like Australian haiku, is not dependent on an evocation of the storied local landscape.

But this lack of a distinctively Australian focus in haiku composition in the context of the global haiku movement can also be explained in part by what now constitutes 'new haiku'. The discussion in Chapter 4 posits that the new haiku is symptomatic of a post-national trend in ELH, in which national borders are dissolved and the haiku written by Australian poets has been added to a melting pot of world haiku. In this context, many of the old rules and classifications do not pass muster as haiku undergoes its transformation to a new definable form of Western poetry. One of the first distinctions to be blurred in this context was that between haiku and senryu. Very few editors nowadays differentiate between the two, as poets find new ways of constructing haiku poems that evoke the haiku 'spirit' without overt references to nature and the seasons. The predominance of senryu-like poems has reduced the preoccupation of haiku poets with nature, which has in turn played a role in the lack of Australian-ness, as illustrated in the lack of *meisho* (place names) appearing in Australian haiku. Poets are leaving nature and specific locations aside and finding other ways of giving haiku its lustre. This new range of techniques and classifications has opened up new possibilities for haiku, creating greater diversity and helping to produce a more dynamic genre. It has helped to give haiku both in

Australia and overseas, a spirit of renewal. Despite this, the emergence of criteria for definitively Australian haiku remains elusive.

The potential that the reconsideration of kigo has for forging a more localised identity in Australian haiku has not yet given Australian haiku its own voice, though it is in prospect. Many poets are still adhering to the 'tried and trusted' traditional methods of haiku composition, based heavily on emulation of the Japanese models, thereby placing in jeopardy the existence and even the desirability of 'true' Australian haiku. There are some notable exceptions. The poetry of Lorin Ford and others, as well as the efforts of John Bird with the Haiku Dreaming Australia project and the recent arrival of a new haiku journal, *Windfall*, bring into sharp focus the potential that evoking a strong sense of Australia can add to haiku in Australia. And while a distinctive voice is not yet required for the survival of haiku in Australia, its continued emergence will only strengthen the quality of haiku Australia can offer the world.

One hundred years into the journey, Australian haiku is still forming its identity. Australian haiku poets themselves are responsible for determining what haiku is, and what it will become. They are defining the form by writing it and responsible for changes they make to it. Their writing is laying the foundations for an Australian haiku tradition, but they are not there yet. The question 'what is Australian haiku?' is still a nest of questions. There is no definition of Australian haiku, and in the present absence of one, the current phase of discovery will continue. This condition is helping to produce haiku of great diversity, and in bringing life to an old, misunderstood genre without its own definitive voice. Diversity, change, experimentation and conservatism are not unfamiliar concepts in a post-colonial and globally engaged Australia, and the haiku produced in this country over the past fifty years reflects this. This thesis has been an attempt to present some of the key moments, central figures and notable poems of Australia's foray into haiku as a way of revealing some of the key issues to have emerged, and to lay the groundwork for future study. There are many issues worthy of further study, and, while Australian haiku is riding an enormous high, this would seem an opportune time to pursue them.

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