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Accident or Desire? Linked Archives and the Trans-Tasman Literary Scene

It is my hope that neither accident nor desire may in future make it customary for New Zealanders to avert their faces from the Australian scene when they sit down to write.

— Nettie Palmer, 1944.

In a radio interview in 2017, Kate Grenville described the literary relationship between Australia and New Zealand as a “strange sibling disaffection.”¹ By most accounts, Australians do not read much New Zealand literature and the reverse is also true. On reflection, it seems odd that close cousins would not be interested in the writing each other produces, but perhaps more astonishing is that this is rarely noticed or commented on. In 2001 Lydia Wevers asked whether New Zealand and Australia are part of the same literary community and found that the answer is broadly no, and that the two countries have a “resistant relationship over books and readers.”² More recently, she described this phenomenon as “reciprocal indifference.”³ Generally this is accepted as the inevitable outcome of the two countries’ differing national psyches. The perceived separateness of New Zealand and Australian literatures fits the accepted narratives of distinct, national cultures emerging from under the auspices of more established parent cultures, particularly British.

Although a common assumption is that New Zealand and Australian literary cultures have been separate for a long time, the separation is actually a fairly recent phenomenon. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Australian and New Zealand literary practitioners operated within a single “Tasman world” community created by an interlinked publishing industry and key literary figures such as A. G. Stephens and Pat Lawlor who had interests on both sides of the Tasman.⁴ These connections were strong in the 1890s and 1900s, at the time that prototypical Australian literary nationalism was famously flowering in bush ballad form. Writing published in Australia at this time involved a considerable number of New Zealand authors. Bruce Nesbitt calculated that New Zealanders were responsible for “about 10 per cent” of the total content of the Sydney *Bulletin* between the years 1890 and 1900.⁵ Jock Phillips has said that reading the *Bulletin* from this time gives “the impression of an Australasian cultural world based in Sydney and Melbourne with Queensland and New Zealand as its provinces.”⁶ It was “trans-Tasman,” rather than “Australasian,” in the sense that cities in New Zealand and on the eastern seaboard of Australia arguably had stronger connections to one another than Sydney did with Perth or Darwin. Preliminary research suggests a trans-Tasman literary

¹ Kate Grenville, “The Gap between New Zealand and Australian Writers,” *Standing Room Only*, Radio New Zealand, 15 Oct, 2017.

² Lydia Wevers, “Books: Are New Zealand and Australia Part of the Same Literary Community?,” in *New Zealand and Australia: Where Are We Going?*, ed. Bruce Brown (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 2001), 80.

³ Lydia Wevers, “The View From Here: Readers and Australian Literature,” *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, Special Issue: Australian Literature in a Global World (2009): 3.

⁴ Helen Bones, “New Zealand and the Tasman Writing World,” *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013): 129–48.

⁵ Bruce Henderson Nesbitt, “Aspects of Literary Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand with Special Reference to the *Bulletin*, 1880–1900” (PhD diss., Australian National University, 1968), 87.

⁶ Jock Phillips, “Musings in Maoriland - Or Was There a *Bulletin* School in New Zealand?,” *Historical Studies* 20, no. 81 (1983): 522.

community survived well into the second half of the twentieth century: writers and editors such as Douglas Stewart, Pat Lawlor and Will Lawson kept up a healthy trans-Tasman conversation throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Information about the previously closely linked Tasman writing world is difficult to gather due to the overriding scholarly preoccupation with national literary constructions in Australasia. Although transnational approaches are increasingly common to both literatures, they have yet to focus on links between Australia and New Zealand beyond a few mentions and studies of specific authors.⁷ Understanding the nature and workings of the Tasman writing world, its significance, and the reasons for its decline is a significant scholarly task requiring piecing together details from fragmentary and scattered archival evidence as well as a cultural materialist understanding of the literary infrastructure involved. The “Linked Archives” tool, which is the culmination of a project run by Dr. Jason Ensor at Western Sydney University and funded by the Australian National Data Service (now the Australian Research Data Commons), is designed specifically to meet this kind of challenge. “Linked Archives” is a bespoke software application set up to collect and connect dispersed archival evidence relating to international systems, such as the publishing and literary correspondence networks that underpinned the operations of the Tasman writing world.⁸ In the absence of a strong precedence of scholarship focused on the literary relationship between Australia and New Zealand, “Linked Archives” offers a model developed to harness the explanatory power of manuscript collections and perform large-scale analyses of subjects not constrained by national or institutional borders—a model also widely applicable to similar correspondence networks relating to economic or cultural systems.

The impact of early twentieth-century New Zealand and Australian writers and literary institutions went beyond their own national literary contexts, and literary creations reflected a close, collaborative relationship between Australia and New Zealand. An Australasian editorial outlook meant that readers were likely to encounter writing from across the Tasman in newspapers, literary journals and anthologies. Similarly, as demand for locally produced educational material grew in the later nineteenth century, publishers took advantage of the Australasia-wide opportunities that began to present themselves. Key players Angus & Robertson and Whitcombe & Tombs saw both sides of the Tasman as potential markets as well as offering a “pool” of authors on whom to draw.⁹ Whitcombe & Tombs expanded aggressively into Australia, and Angus & Robertson kept an office in Wellington and published the work of a number of New Zealand authors. These broader influences reflected the two countries’ legacies as intertwined parts of the British colonial world and potentially had a profound influence on the cultural make-up of Australia and New Zealand. But despite acknowledgement

⁷ E.g., Chris Hilliard, *The Bookmen’s Dominion: Cultural Life in New Zealand 1920–1950* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006) which discusses the Australian connections of key literary figures. Brigid Magner’s “Trans-Tasman Literary Expatriates,” in *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, ed. Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), and more recently Stephanie Johnson’s *West Island: Five Twentieth-century New Zealanders in Australia* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2019) detail the difficulties faced by groups of New Zealand expatriates in Australia.

⁸ The original version of “Linked Archives” is available at <https://linkedarchives.com/>.

⁹ Philippa Mein Smith, Peter Hempenstall, and Shaun Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008), 145.

of the importance of educational material in shaping national discourse,¹⁰ very little interest has been shown in the origins of this material. Bertie Whitcombe is heralded as one of New Zealand's cultural heroes because of Whitcombe & Tombs's key role in local literary development and because his ubiquitous educational and general publications, such as the "Whitcombe's Story Books" series, "influenced almost all New Zealanders of his time."¹¹ The company's publications were equally ubiquitous in Australia with around 12 million copies of the "Story Books" printed across Australasia between 1908 and 1962.¹² Nonetheless, Whitcombe's impact on Australia has thus far not been deemed worthy of exploration and has barely rated a mention in literary and publishing histories.

It is difficult to study the extent and effects of this joint literary world and its significance for local writing and New Zealand/Australia because this area of cultural history has been largely ignored. A decade ago, considerable progress was made in trans-Tasman historical studies more generally with a number of publications focused on the relationship. At this time, Peter Hemenstall noted that Australian and New Zealand national histories tended to "talk past one another, ignore shared pasts and neglect historical parallels."¹³ In his view, the general trend towards transnational and settler colonial approaches did not necessarily help, as such approaches tended to ignore "the historical construction of mentalités and senses of identity inhabiting the region."¹⁴ Mein Smith, Hemenstall and Goldfinch's *Remaking the Tasman World*, which emerged from the New Zealand Australia Research Centre at the University of Canterbury in 2008, addressed many aspects of shared history contrary to the tradition of national historians on both sides of the Tasman "ignoring each other's existence."¹⁵ In a similar fashion in 2000, Ken Gelder called for a "broadening" of national literary studies in the sense of addressing Australia's region rather than the nation.¹⁶ However, other than scholars fairly frequently noting the striking disconnect between Australian and New Zealand cultural life (Mein Smith et al. describe "mutual ignorance of each other's literature and art, beyond a few internationally recognised figures," as a "constant complaint at the end of the [twentieth] century"¹⁷), this literary "broadening" has not been achieved in the Tasman region.

As Terry Sturm noted in 1985, it is difficult to redress the lack of scholarship about trans-Tasman literary connections as "there is no established discourse about Australian–New Zealand literary relations in the literary historiography or criticism of either country ... let alone any theoretical effort to account for such relations, or for their absence."¹⁸ No one else has convincingly addressed this challenge in the time since and it is difficult because the separation

¹⁰ E.g., by Lorna McLean, "The March to Nation: Citizenship, Education, and the Australian Way of Life in New South Wales, Australia, 1940–1960s," *History of Education Review* 37, no. 1 (2008): 34–47.

¹¹ Dennis McEldowney, "Whitcombe, Bertie Ernest Hawkes," *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3w9/whitcombe-bertie-ernest-hawkes> (accessed 1 May 2019).

¹² Ian F. McLaren, *Whitcombe's Story Books: A Trans-Tasman Survey* (Parkville: University of Melbourne Library, 1984), vii.

¹³ Peter Hemenstall, "Overcoming Separate Histories: Historians as 'Ideas Traders' in a Trans-Tasman World," *History Australia* 4, no. 1 (2007): 1.

¹⁴ Hemenstall, "Overcoming Separate Histories," 2.

¹⁵ Mein Smith, Hemenstall, and Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, 13.

¹⁶ Ken Gelder, "Recovering Australian Popular Fiction: Towards the End of Australian Literature" (paper presented at the Conference of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature, 2000), 112–13.

¹⁷ Mein Smith, Hemenstall, and Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, 161.

¹⁸ Terry Sturm, "The Neglected Middle Distance: Towards a History of Trans-Tasman Literary Relations," *Ariel* 16, no. 4 (1985): 30.

is so entrenched. When connections have been addressed, it has largely been in the context of a bigger neighbour negatively impacting New Zealand's local literary developments, for example, as evidence of the "homogeneity of the trans-Tasman market" during this period, soon to be rectified by the rise of local publishing.¹⁹ Stafford and Williams argue that the "diffuseness" caused by New Zealanders publishing internationally slowed the "emergence of a local literary culture based on the confident conversation between author and reader."²⁰ There is plenty of evidence of cultural essentialism in the writing and communications of New Zealanders engaged in international literary communities—many writers of the early twentieth century saw themselves as contributing to a unique 'Maoriland' aesthetic, perhaps even more so if being published in Australia where it could be a selling point. Notwithstanding the cultural appropriation that this entailed, publishing overseas did not stunt the distinctiveness of the writing and subjects.²¹

One of the reasons for this gaping hole in our understanding of Australasian literary history is a historical focus on exceptional examples and the search for a national canon (e.g. the "great New Zealand novel" that never seemed to eventuate). Ignoring the bigger picture in this way has the effect of making literary achievements appear to occur in a vacuum, against the odds. As literary history proponents have increasingly advocated, it is necessary to take a broad view of the machinery behind literary texts, beyond the production of "great works." The work of Franco Moretti has emphasised the importance of looking at the whole system of book production rather than the "minimal fraction" of published works that make it into a national canon.²² David Carter, influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's idea of the "cultural field," has argued that texts cannot be separated from the "economy ... field ... network ... circuit ... culture ... [or] community" within which they are created, and that the focus on "remarkable texts" that are held up as national archetypes reinforces the fixation on nationalism in writing.²³ Without a democratic approach to the hundreds of practitioners and publications of early to mid-century New Zealand, the literary offerings can seem very narrow indeed.

There were many factors influencing what was published, how it was received, and the resultant flows of literary ideas and communications. A problem with the national frameworks dominating the history of writing and publishing is that much of the actual business of literary creation happened outside or in-between nations and locales. From the late nineteenth century, the book trade was a complex international system. London was the centre of a world of literary production networks that spread out across much of the rest of the world along lines drawn by colonial expansion. At the 1886 Berne Convention, British publishers carved up the world into trading blocs, claiming English-language markets in Europe and the Dominions (including

¹⁹ Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, "'A land mild and bold, diffident and pertinent,'" *Nineteenth-Century New Zealand Novels Digital Collection* (New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, 2007), <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-StaIntr.html>.

²⁰ Stafford and Williams, "'A land mild and bold'."

²¹ Helen Bones, *The Expatriate Myth: New Zealand Writers and the Colonial World* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2018), 87–94.

²² Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London; New York: Verso, 2005), 4.

²³ David Carter, "Structures, Networks, Institutions: The New Empiricism, Book History and Literary History," in *Resourceful Reading: The New Empiricism, eResearch and Australian Literary Culture*, ed. Katherine Bode and Robert Dixon (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009), 43.

Australia and New Zealand) for themselves.²⁴ This meant that the publishing world was not truly global: even though American publishers did not necessarily sign up to this agreement, the vast majority of dealings between Australian writers and American publishers were arranged via Britain.²⁵

Australian and New Zealand literary culture was sustained by this international trade providing book imports and overseas publishing opportunities, but transnational relationships are rarely the focus of attention for their own sake. Most scholarship that has looked at international ties has done so in terms of their effects on various national contexts, thus still emphasising national frameworks. As in the case of New Zealand's relationship with Australia, British or American influences on Australian or New Zealand literature have often been discussed in terms of regret—as hindrances to the story of autochthonous literary development in terms of the obligation to rely on oppressive foreign infrastructure and preoccupations. Henry Lawson summed up this attitude with his famous lines on the regrettable necessity to rely on the “Paternoster Row machine” and receive “a patronising notice in an English magazine” in order to be successful.²⁶ The works that focus on international literary connections without necessarily taking a negative stance are still likely to be concerned with how these connections affected national literatures. Carter and Osborne's *Australian Books in the American Marketplace* and Jason Ensor's *The Getting of Bookselling Wisdom* both meticulously and convincingly detail the importance of overseas operations and connections but still take the “Australian” novel or the “Australian” publisher as the primary unit of enquiry.²⁷

Prominent book history models that aim to describe holistically the processes and agents of book production and distribution have so far struggled to understand or describe the whole system on an international level. According to Alison Rukavina, Robert Darnton's “communications circuit” is not complex enough to work on an international scale (allowing for multiple international editions, for example) and thus cannot simply be “scaled up” from the national model.²⁸ Other book historians, such as Simon Eliot, have put forward the view that in order to study international links, it is necessary to write national publishing histories first, a view that assumes that comparative histories are the best approach.²⁹ Rukavina, quoting Werner and Zimmerman's “Beyond Comparison”, argues that “an international history of the book should not be “reduced to the sum of the[se] histories” as the “relationships, interactions,

²⁴ Richard Nile and David Walker, “The ‘Paternoster Row Machine’ and the Australian Book Trade, 1890–1945,” in *A History of the Book in Australia 1891–1945: A National Culture in a Colonised Market*, ed. Martyn Lyons and John Arnold (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 7.

²⁵ David Carter and Roger Osborne, *Australian Books and Authors in the American Marketplace 1840s–1940s* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2018).

²⁶ Henry Lawson, “A Song of Southern Writers” (1892), in Martyn Lyons, “Britain's Largest Export Market,” *A History of the Book in Australia 1891–1945: A National Culture in a Colonised Market*, ed. Martyn Lyons and John Arnold (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 25.

²⁷ Carter and Osborne, *Australian Books and Authors in the American Marketplace 1840s–1940s*; Jason Ensor, *Angus & Robertson and the British Trade in Australian Books, 1930–1970* (London: Anthem Press, 2013).

²⁸ Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?,” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 68, in Alison Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade, 1870–1895: Tangled Networks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 9.

²⁹ Simon Eliot, “An International History of Popular Fiction,” Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing Annual Conference. ENS, Lyon, 20 July 2004, cited in Rukavina, *Development of the International Book Trade*, 8.

and circulation” that took place in transnational spaces can be lost.”³⁰ Comparative histories of different national contexts serve to reinforce the importance of national frameworks and artificially obscure the workings of international operations and ideas, lives and activities that existed between nations. Thus, institutions such as publishers and writers are difficult to study because the transnational aspects of their work are missing from the historical record.

Even so-called “national” institutions, though well-studied, have only been partially appreciated because the overwhelming focus on their national contributions has overshadowed their activities outside of these contexts. Angus & Robertson’s role in establishing Australian literary culture is widely celebrated to the point of repetition, and this primary preoccupation is reflected in the titles of works such as Jennifer Alison’s *Doing Something for Australia*.³¹ Similarly, the only book-length treatment of Whitcombe & Tombs (now just a bookselling arm known as Whitcoulls) is called *Books for a Nation*.³² That is not to say that these publishers were not important for their respective national literatures, but there is a large part of the story missing. The sole published work on Whitcombe & Tombs’s Australian operations is Ian F. McLaren’s bibliographical study, filling what he describes as a “vast bibliographical gap.”³³ The impact of Angus & Robertson and other Australian publishers on New Zealand writing also remains unstudied. Australasian literary cultures were interconnected via lines of migration, correspondence, trade connections and journalism and print culture (for example, periodicals with Australasian scope such as *All about Books*, subtitled “For Australian and New Zealand Readers”). However, many of the transnational operations of agents such as publishers and editors remain only partially understood, and, along with them, the impact of this trans-Tasman literary world on writing and culture more broadly. Similarly, the role of the *Bulletin* and similar publications in creating an Australian national community is well documented,³⁴ but how does this picture change when it is recognised that this sphere of influence as well as pool of contributors (and significant editors) included New Zealand?

Clearly it is necessary to go beyond current published scholarship to understand the workings and significance of trans-Tasman literary connections. Rich evidence of transnational correspondence, publishing agreements, reviews and economic arrangements can be found in archive collections throughout Australasia, and farther afield (for example, the extensive publishing archives found at the University of Reading). A reasonably well-known example is the correspondence of transient author Edith Lyttleton. To understand the difficulties Lyttleton had making a living from publication and domicile in multiple countries, it is necessary to examine the letters (which reside in the University of Reading and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington) between her and agents in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. The multiple editions of her books caused her much trouble and worry in terms of negotiating contracts and paying duplicate taxes. In 1933, after dealing with contracts for her

³⁰ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45 (Feb 2006): 43, cited in Rukavina, *Development of the International Book Trade*, 12.

³¹ Jennifer Alison, *Doing Something for Australia: George Robertson and the Early Years of Angus and Robertson, Publishers: 1888–1900* (Melbourne: Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, 2009).

³² Noel Waite, *Books for a Nation: The Whitcoulls Story* (Auckland: Whitcoulls, 2008).

³³ McLaren, *Whitcombe’s Story Books: A Trans-Tasman Survey*.

³⁴ E.g., Julieanne Lamond, “Communities of Readers: Australian Reading History and Library Loan Records,” in *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*, ed. Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012): 27–38.

book *Pageant*, she wrote to Stanley Unwin to say “I’m so sick and disheartened with the whole business that I wish I wasn’t a writer at all.”³⁵ Terry Sturm estimates that out of every £100 she earned she actually received about £16 once she had paid Australian and American taxes and fees, and this was before paying New Zealand tax.³⁶ Because the archival evidence is often widely scattered, writers’ transnational lives may require extensive work to weave back together.

The editor and writer Pat Lawlor was one of a number of literary figures who operated on a trans-Tasman basis. He moved back and forth between New Zealand and Australia and acted as a go-between for writers (he was the New Zealand agent for the *Bulletin* and *Aussie* magazine as well as Endeavour Publishing). Jane Mander wrote to Monte Holcroft in 1934 recommending Lawlor’s services, saying “though he pub-crawls at intervals he is a live wire on the selling side.”³⁷ His extensive correspondence files at the Alexander Turnbull library display the breadth of his involvement in Australasian literary circles. But herein lies another obstacle: a smaller collection of his papers can be found in the National Library of Australia (NLA). Going by the Library’s collection statement, items are collected because they “document Australian history, society and culture.”³⁸ The impetus behind archive collections, especially those found in National Libraries, is to serve a particular national agenda: material “of interest” to Australians. The National Library of New Zealand has a similar mandate revolving around “collecting, preserving and protecting documents, particularly those relating to New Zealand.”³⁹ These policies have the effect of artificially severing evidence of transnational networks and spheres of influence, such as that operated by Pat Lawlor. Although the NLA’s Lawlor collection description states that “correspondents include many noted Australian writers and journalists of the last 40 years,” it is not possible to draw a neat dividing line between the two literary cultures. Folder 7/03 of the Turnbull’s Lawlor collection is titled “Letters from noted Australian writers,”⁴⁰ and a number of “Australian” writers had New Zealand origins as well.

The problem of gathering and understanding the connections of people like Pat Lawlor, with large collections scattered across multiple institutions, is exactly the kind of problem “Linked Archives” was set up to solve. The “Linked Archives” tool offers a method of harnessing and extracting information from vast and disparate manuscript evidence that would not be possible using analogue methods alone. The tool allows, via digital images of archives, a reimagining of the documentary record as a constellation of connected documents, allowing understanding, analysis and visualisation of the past connections and relationships that they represent.⁴¹ Capturing and tagging Pat Lawlor’s literary correspondence with information about origins and

³⁵ Edith Lyttleton to Stanley Unwin, 15 June 1933, Allen and Unwin papers 6/229, University of Reading Special Collections.

³⁶ Terry Sturm, *An Unsettled Spirit: the Life and Frontier Fiction of Edith Lyttleton* (G. B. Lancaster) (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), 208.

³⁷ Jane Mander to Monte Holcroft, 26 June 1934, MS Papers 1186/6, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

³⁸ <https://www.nla.gov.au/collection-development-policy/what-we-collect-unpublished-collections>.

³⁹ <https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/strategy-and-policy/collections-policy/national-library-of-new-zealand-collections-policy>.

⁴⁰ Lawlor, Patrick Anthony 1893–1979: Papers, 77-067-7/03, Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁴¹ Helen Bones, “Linked Digital Archives and the Historical Publishing World: An Australasian Perspective,” *History Compass* 17, no. 3 (2019).

destination, creator and recipient, topics, tone and date created will allow a new level of analysis to be applied to the operation of his literary networks and how they evolved over time.

To truly make progress when it comes to studying the international book trade, a collaborative approach is required, which “Linked Archives” can also provide. Many projects, though worthy, suffer from an inability to be added together to be part of a larger contribution, and datasets never get beyond a single project. But as Franco Moretti has said, “a field this large cannot be understood by stitching together separate bits of knowledge about individual cases, because ... it’s a collective system, that should be grasped as such, as a whole.”⁴² The considerable intellectual work that goes into an archival investigation—collecting material, annotating and writing up—is often abandoned to languish in someone’s office or on a hard-drive once it has answered the questions it was required to (and the resultant work is published). “Linked Archives” offers the opportunity to build upon previous work, and to make the work available to other researchers (it has been conceived in order to facilitate the broadest possible investigations of the material without presupposing what questions researchers will want to ask of it). A future version of the project could allow for different “Linked Archives” collections to be linked together in a virtual mega-repository.

Open-ended search parameters, metadata tags and Linked Open Data formats enable the extraction of customised datasets from large manuscript collections to allow for new kinds of questions to be asked of historical material.⁴³ Such interventions are important if archival researchers intend to hold the historical record to account rather than simply take it at face value. A literary archive, like historical manuscript archives in general, reflects the power dynamics and structures within which it was created. It is a representation of privilege, such as that of Pat Lawlor: a well-connected person of means with a certain amount of power to enable others’ work to be published, or not. The points of view of people like Pat Lawlor are overrepresented in the preserved documentary evidence. The ability to extract information from the historical archive in formats that allow it to be interrogated with reference to other data sources is important for avoiding merely recreating the “gaps, omissions, and rehearsal of colonial dynamics” present in the analogue record.⁴⁴ In the case of Australasian literary connections it may be just as interesting to know to whom Pat Lawlor was not writing as to know those with whom he was regularly in contact.

“Linked Archives” facilitates the collection of information about interactions across networks, which may be the best way to understand the workings of the international book trade. Others have suggested this but baulked at the magnitude of the task. In her study, Rukavina advocates for use of a social network model to conceptualise the complicated transnational operations of the literary world. She explains: “‘Heedless of borders,’ book trade agents negotiated, collaborated, and competed as the international book trade developed, and a potentially useful conceptual model for this activity is to think of it as a social system or network.”⁴⁵ This model only takes Rukavina so far, however, as she believes that “it is unlikely every connection and node can be traced, but an academic can start with one node and follow the flight of the line as

⁴² Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 4.

⁴³ Bones, “Linked Digital Archives,” 8.

⁴⁴ Roopika Risam, *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and Pedagogy* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 4.

⁴⁵ Rukavina, *Development of the International Book Trade*, 9.

connections multiply.”⁴⁶ While “any attempt to draw a social network would run into the difficulty of too many connections and lines, leaving a scribbled mess on a page,” she espouses tracing the connections of one particular person, in this case Edward Petherick, London-based agent for Melbourne publisher George Robertson.⁴⁷ Her careful study of the correspondences and movements of one member of the system relies on narrative rather than systematic visualisation and analysis of connections.

There are two reasons why it is not necessary to stop there. One is that advances in technology mean that it is possible to collect information about correspondence networks and other interactions on a large scale. Secondly, social network analysis does not rely on merely visual interpretations of networks to be useful. “Linked Archives” works on a system of carefully designed metadata categories and a controlled vocabulary that allows a researcher to tag documents with information such as creator, recipient, destination, date and so on and then extract this data across the whole or part of the collection in formats easily adapted for use in social analysis software. The letters are treated as interactions or edges within a social network and the writer and recipient as nodes. Currently this process is semiautomated using an electronic version of printed documents to match keywords, and further down the track it may be possible to improve this automation further using machine learning to extract certain parts of the document based on the standard format of the letter—the letterhead, greeting, signature, and so on—to automatically tag documents on a large scale.

“Linked Archives” ties in with other correspondence-based interventions into history and the interlinked printing and publishing world (such as the Colenso Project, based at Victoria University of Wellington, and Stanford University’s “Mapping the Republic of Letters”), but is unique in its potential to harness the explanatory power of any number of large archive sets and produce data in various exploratory formats. While this kind of intervention can only achieve a broad overview (“fuzzy, blurry pictures” revealing “the general shape of things, orders of magnitude, and large-scale trends,” in the words of Dan Edelstein et al.),⁴⁸ it will allow for an overarching understanding of literary networks in terms of the centrality of certain actors, density, clustering and geographical distribution, how these aspects changed over time and who is not represented in the data. In combination with granular approaches to particular trans-Tasman activities and case studies such as the career of Pat Lawlor, this will be useful for understanding how trans-Tasman literary connectivity evolved over time, and, in combination with other datasets and historical information, why that might be and what the significance is.

Understanding the composition and change over time of transnational publishing and writing networks is necessary to determine definitively the cause and timing of the decline in trans-Tasman literary connectivity. This exercise is likely to reveal that various factors contributed. Although they transcended national boundaries, book trade networks did not operate “heedless of borders” as Rukavina, citing Robert Gross, claims.⁴⁹ In fact, it is “the effect of borders and

⁴⁶ Rukavina, *Development of the International Book Trade*, 29.

⁴⁷ Rukavina, *Development of the International Book Trade*, 30.

⁴⁸ Dan Edelstein et al., “AHR Forum: Historical Research in a Digital Age: Reflections from the Mapping the Republic of Letters Project,” *American Historical Review* 122, no. 2 (2017): 408.

⁴⁹ Robert A. Gross, “Books, Nationalism and History,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 36, no. 2 (1998): 110, cited in Rukavina, *The Development of the International Book Trade*, 9.

books bumping up against them”⁵⁰ and the way networks intersected with them that almost certainly provides the explanation for the decline of the Tasman writing world. However porous national distinctions turn out to be in practice, they exist strongly in terms of political and economic organisation as well as in the imaginations of inhabitants, all of which affect transnational activities. In some cases, these borders or distinctions were created by nationalist-minded literary arbiters who were keen to portion off their section of the world and its exceptional qualities. Mid-century New Zealand cultural nationalists, such as the poet and critic Allen Curnow, deliberately set out to ignore Australia and actively overlooked ties to the Australian literary scene. Curnow and his associates claimed to be the vanguard of a new approach to writing in New Zealand that aimed to capture the true essence of the country while being beholden to nowhere else (despite, of course, having multiple overseas connections and influences themselves). In his seminal history of New Zealand literary development, Eric McCormick deliberately “edited out the Australasian dimension of the New Zealand scene.”⁵¹ In 1943 Allen Curnow wrote an article for *Meanjin* that either displays a startling lack of knowledge of previous Australian interest in New Zealand writing and cross pollination or deliberately ignores it, explaining the scene with reference to English and American influences but not Australian. He begrudgingly praised a poem by Douglas Stewart, but claimed to have been “startled” by its “affirmation of our growing experience of identity in place and time” given that the writer was in Australia.⁵² In the first half of the century, several Australasian poetry collections were published, including *The Oxford Book of Australasian Verse* (with editions in 1918, 1923 and 1945). When it came to the 1951 version, however, Curnow and Denis Glover raised an objection to being included in “an Australasian mess with a famous imprint stuck on the outside”⁵³ which was placated somewhat by a change of title to *The Oxford Book of Australian and New Zealand Verse*.

Curnow, Glover and McCormick’s interventions were not enough to kill off the Tasman writing world entirely, however, at least not immediately. In 1947 Curnow referred to Australia and Australian writing as “the neglected middle distance,”⁵⁴ but trans-Tasman ties were still strong well into the 1950s and 1960s. The ties were kept alive, in some part at least, by the continuing contributions of trans-Tasman journalists and writers which meant there was a supply of interested parties involved in key publications to keep the exchanges going. From 1961, Douglas Stewart held a position as “literary adviser” with Angus & Robertson, where he had a “commanding position” in this institution of Australian literary development.⁵⁵ He kept up a number of correspondences with New Zealand and continued to nurture New Zealand writers.⁵⁶ Pat Lawlor was the New Zealand agent for the *Bulletin* until 1965, and in a chapter

⁵⁰ David Carter, “Australia at Last Seems to Have Become Articulate,” *Sydney Review of Books*, 28 November 2018, <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/david-carter-australian-books-authors-american-marketplace/>.

⁵¹ Hilliard, *The Bookmen’s Dominion*, 102.

⁵² Allen Curnow, “Aspects of New Zealand Poetry,” *Meanjin Papers* 2, no. 4 (1943): 25.

⁵³ Curnow to Alan Mulgan, 10 February 1948, Mulgan papers, MS Papers 244-15, ATL, in Hilliard, *The Bookmen’s Dominion*, 103.

⁵⁴ Allen Curnow, “Review of Anthology by H. M. Green,” *Landfall*, VI, no. 2 (1947): 142–50.

⁵⁵ Ivor Indyk, “Stewart, Douglas Alexander (1913–1985),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stewart-douglas-alexander-15726/text26914>.

⁵⁶ Stephanie Johnson, *Playing for Both Sides: Love Across the Tasman* (Auckland: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), 3.

on New Zealand poetry, Terry Sturm notes that New Zealand poets Arthur H. Adams, David McKee Wright and Douglas Stewart were “literary editors of the magazine for more than half the period [from the late 1890s] to 1960.”⁵⁷ In 1960 James K. Baxter wrote to Stewart on the recommendation of mutual friend “Old Pat Lawlor” offering him a poem for consideration in the *Bulletin*.⁵⁸

The cornerstone of this early twentieth-century literary community was the newspaper, and it was no accident that many of the key trans-Tasman literary people were journalists as well as creative writers. Journalism provided a steady job for many writers. Newspapers provided an outlet for writers’ work (and sometimes an income) and had wide circulations, considerably broadening a writer’s reach and networks. Australian writer and critic Nettie Palmer and New Zealand poet Eileen Duggan conducted an extensive trans-Tasman correspondence through the 1920s and 1930s with discussions ranging across the Australasian literary scene. It was difficult to find New Zealand published books in Australia then as now, and Palmer related that she only came across Eileen Duggan’s work in 1924 because of a friend working for a religious weekly in Melbourne—if she had waited for it to materialise in book form “it might have been many years” before she came upon it.⁵⁹ She wrote to Duggan to congratulate her on her work, and in reply Duggan confessed to not knowing much about Australian literature but said she had “seen [Palmer’s] name in the book-lists.”⁶⁰ From such modest beginnings their letter-based friendship blossomed, lasting for several decades.

But by the 1950s the heyday of newspapers and their role in literature had waned, with the literary establishment moving to more exclusive quarters within the academy and in the pages of high-brow literary outlets such as *Landfall*. This was encouraged by the rise of local publishing ventures that simultaneously created opportunities for some while cutting them off for others. The newspaper-based literary culture was more democratic and accessible, particularly for women, than later literary circles, which tended to be based in universities.⁶¹ This division exaggerated distinctions between genres, as the university-based scholars favoured realist and modernist modes of expression (excluding genres like popular writing or romance). The contribution of newspapers to local writing was not acknowledged because they became less popular as a medium for “serious” writing: later writers were not so interested in this kind of exposure. Derek Challis mentions the dominance of newspapers in the 1920s, and then their subsequent decline, described by Robin Hyde as a “tragedy to New Zealand scribes.”⁶² It might not have been such a stark contrast but for the intervention of World War II. According to J. E. Traue, “the literary ‘column’ in the daily newspapers ... dominated the literary arena from the 1890s to the beginning of the Second World War.”⁶³ However, this

⁵⁷ Terry Sturm, “New Zealand Poetry,” in *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*, ed. Neil Roberts (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 297.

⁵⁸ James K. Baxter to Douglas Stewart, 26 August 1960, MS4829 (Douglas Stewart Papers), National Library of Australia.

⁵⁹ Nettie Palmer, “New Zealand and Australia,” *Meanjin* 3, no. 3 (1944): 166.

⁶⁰ Eileen Duggan to Nettie Palmer, 1924, MS Papers 801 2/2, ATL.

⁶¹ Derek Challis and Gloria Rawlinson, *The Book of Iris: a Life of Robin Hyde* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002): 153.

⁶² Robin Hyde, *Journalese* (Auckland: National Printing Company, 1934): 191.

<http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-HydJour-t1-body-d1.html>.

⁶³ J. E. Traue, “But Why Mulgan, Marris and Schroder?: The Mutation of the Local Newspaper in New Zealand’s Colonial Print Culture,” *Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand* 21, no.

generous allocation was “slowly strangled by the very strict wartime paper rationing”: newspaper literary pages “never recovered after the war ... and then the new literary periodicals, controlled by a new generation, moved into the gap.”⁶⁴ As it was writers doubling as journalists who were the backbone of the Tasman writing world, this almost certainly had an effect on its longevity.

Along with protectionist measures from the 1930s that made it even harder for Australian publishers to sell books in New Zealand and made New Zealand-published books even rarer in Australia, the decline of the literary page helped to realise Nettie Palmer’s 1944 fears of New Zealanders “avert[ing] their faces from the Australian scene,” and vice versa, in the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶⁵ In 1965 a special issue of the Australian Book Review devoted to New Zealand found “insularity rife on both sides of the Tasman.”⁶⁶ As trans-Tasman mobility increased rather than slowing down in those decades⁶⁷ it seems likely that there were still plenty of writers who led trans-Tasman lives. What changed was that the gatekeepers of literary culture were no longer looking their way. The tendency for critics and readers to “avert” their faces from the other side of the Tasman has potentially led to many interesting literary contributions being ignored or only partially “seen.” For example, Arthur H. Adam’s 1904 novel *Tussock Land: A Romance of New Zealand and the Commonwealth* has been valued only for its successful evocation of “a sense of an authentic New Zealand landscape.”⁶⁸ What more could be gained, though, from examining it as a depiction of trans-Tasman mobility in the time when a political “romance” in the form of New Zealand joining the Australian Federation still seemed possible? Using “Linked Archives,” a concerted effort to map and analyse the connections and networks of Adams and others “between” Australia and New Zealand is likely to throw up all manner of interesting new angles and perspectives from which to view the literary past.

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2 (1997): 114, in Ian F. Grant, *Lasting Impressions: The Story of New Zealand’s Newspapers, 1840–1920* (Wellington: Fraser Books, 2018), 408.

⁶⁴ Traue, “But Why Mulgan, Marris and Schroder?,” 114.

⁶⁵ Palmer, “New Zealand and Australia,” 168.

⁶⁶ Ian Morrison, “Cook’s Choice: Reflections on Trans-Tasman Literary Culture,” in *Books and Bibliography: Essays in Commemoration of Don McKenzie* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2002), 163.

⁶⁷ Rosemary Baird, “Across the Tasman: Narratives of New Zealand Migrants to and from Australia, 1965–1995.” (PhD diss., University of Canterbury, 2012), 52.

⁶⁸ Kirstine Moffat, “Arthur H Adams, 1872–1935,” *Kōtare* 7, no. 3 (2008): 60.