

Tactful Visitor, Scientific Observer, or 100 Percent Patriot?

Ambassadorship in the Australia-US Fulbright Program

Alice Garner and Diane Kirkby

The meaning of ambassadorship for scholars lies at the heart of the Fulbright program. As participants in a scheme that straddled the worlds of education and diplomacy, scholars were expected to act as unofficial ambassadors for their education systems, the program itself, and their country of origin. Yet the requirements and boundaries of this role were not always clear-cut. Unlike government representatives on foreign soil, who had strict protocols to guide their behavior in a range of social and political contexts, Fulbright scholars had to work things out for themselves, in both casual social situations and formal, public fora.

In the early years, the scheme's reputation rested on the success (or otherwise) of the participating scholars. Initial impressions were crucial at a time when there was growing suspicion around the world of the true motives of the United States in promoting educational exchange. Australia's experience as one of the first countries to participate in the global Fulbright program reveals the often fraught and haphazard nature of those early years for Fulbright scholars and program administrators. The meaning of ambassadorship for academics emerged gradually as the scheme became established. Here, we show how the political context, new understandings about gender and race, and the experiences of the scholars themselves together recast the program's ambassadorial dimension in

response to changing circumstances. Through the stories of individual scholars' encounters, we trace themes of political, cultural, and social change in the particular context of the Australian Fulbright program, which began in 1950.¹

Three years after the Australian-American exchange program had been launched, the small University of Tasmania prepared on June 21, 1953, to receive its second Fulbright scholar. This was a significant event for an institution that was considered something of a remote outpost, situated as it was on a sparsely populated island off the south coast of mainland Australia. It was also an important moment for the binational program's administrators. They selected senior American scholars on the assumption that they could play multiple roles, bringing to their host community not only their intellectual abilities and interests but also exposure to the strength of the American higher education system and, by extension, the United States itself. This was to manifest in their ability and willingness to act as informal ambassadors. Not all were prepared for what this meant.

The chosen scholar for Tasmania was Dr. Walter Krause, an American economist from Utah who planned to study the effect on the Australian wool industry of the introduction of synthetics. This was an issue of great importance to his Australian hosts, whose export economy still rested to a large degree on the sheep's back.² When Krause arrived in the state capital of Hobart, however, a sudden cold snap hit the island, and snow started to fall. He was greeted at the airport by the head of economics, Professor Gerald Firth, and the two men drove to the house where Krause was to live for the next nine months.³ Krause seems to have been underwhelmed by this accommodations and his posting, for, less than forty-eight hours later, he left the island. He traveled north to the national capital, Canberra, and arrived without warning at the Fulbright Commission—then called the US Educational Foundation (USEF), at the time based in the US embassy—telling the foundation's executive officer, Geoffrey Rossiter, that he had left Tasmania because he could not bear the cold.⁴

Krause had, according to Rossiter, “tried living in a hotel in addition to the private house in which accommodations had originally been secured for him,” but the heating was “hopelessly inadequate,” and he found it impossible to work. Rossiter arranged for Krause to stay in Canberra for the next few months, changed his affiliation to the Australian National

University, and organized access to the centrally heated National Library in the hope that he might acclimate and decide to remain for the full term of his award. Once three months were up, however, Krause returned his ticket to the foundation, headed to Sydney, bought himself a Pan Am fare, and flew back to the United States the following day—six months earlier than agreed.⁵

The foundation had only recently faced the premature departure of *another* senior US scholar, the mechanical engineering professor Merl Creech, and it appears that Krause agreed to stay on for the three months in Canberra to avoid causing further embarrassment. Creech had left Australia about a fortnight before Krause arrived, after having spent only *four days* in Australia—in Sydney this time—and his sudden flight had been reported on the front page of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the major daily, under the attention-grabbing headline “Mysterious Departure of US Professor.”⁶ Other newspapers around the nation, from Rockhampton to Adelaide, had then run with the story. The *Morning Bulletin* of Rockhampton titled its article “No Lecture, No Explanation,” while the salacious *Truth* went so far as to claim that the Creech mystery “rivals any bestseller detective story,” the journalist even following his trail home via Honolulu to the United States in the hope of scoring an interview.⁷

It may seem surprising to us today that the early return home of an American academic was considered worthy of national news coverage, but, in early 1950s Australia, academic exchange with a country other than the United Kingdom was still something of a novelty, and overseas visitors were often profiled by the press. A perusal of the newspapers reveals that, in this postwar period of sharpening Cold War tensions, visitors from the emerging economic and cultural powerhouse over the Pacific were of particular interest.

The Creech and Krause departures were troubling events for the US Educational Foundation, which was rolling out its first year of full-strength programming since the binational exchange program’s establishment. The foundation was highly conscious of the importance of publicity for the program in this early phase. Every speck of news coverage counted, whether positive or negative. In a country with a small population and a growing fascination with (combined with suspicion of) all things American, incidents that might seem insignificant in another context could have

serious effects on the reputation of the program. The exchange scheme was seeking (among other things) to foster a more positive appreciation of US educational and intellectual offerings through person-to-person contacts, and the Creech and Krause stories were not helpful. These scholars' responses to their circumstances revealed that ambassadorial skills were not guaranteed.

A New Language of Ambassadorship

The original Fulbright Act (PL 584) passed by the US Congress in 1946 made no explicit reference to an ambassadorial role for Fulbright scholars—indeed, its text did not even refer to *mutual understanding*. Senator Fulbright, who designed and cleverly shepherded the bill through to legislative approval in a difficult time, envisaged that program participants would act as interpreters of their cultures abroad and then of their host culture on return. Yet he knew that, in order to get his bill passed without adverse attention from isolationist congressional colleagues, he must avoid the language of international peace or idealism. When introducing the first version of the bill, he did refer to the proposed use of credits from the sale of surplus property abroad for educational exchange as serving the “promotion of international good will,” but this was apparently vague enough not to cause concern and did not appear in the final text of the act.⁸

Once the bill was passed, however, and the newly formed US Board of Foreign Scholarships (BFS) began to set general program policy, the senator's goal of international understanding came to be articulated more fully, for example, in selection and programming guidelines. The term *mutual understanding* featured prominently in the US Information and Educational Exchange Act (or Smith-Mundt Act) of January 1948, which, though it governed other US government exchanges, had some areas of administrative crossover with the Fulbright program. It played an important part in publicly identifying educational exchange with cultural diplomacy and thus promoting the notion of scholarly ambassadorship.⁹

The Australia-US executive agreement of November 1949 adopted this language, stating clearly the two governments' common desire “to promote further mutual understanding between the peoples of their two countries, by a wider exchange of knowledge and professional talents through educational contacts.”¹⁰ Although the agreement did not men-

tion the concept of unofficial ambassadorship specifically, its wording implied that individual scholars were expected to contribute actively to the furthering of mutual understanding.

Person-to-person interactions between scholar and hosts lay at the heart of the scheme, but, for these to have a broader reach, program administrators sought to nurture media contacts. The establishment phase of the global Fulbright program coincided with the professionalization of the public relations profession in the late 1940s and the 1950s.¹¹ This was driven to a large degree by US practitioners, and the early shapers of the Australian program sought to build their capacity in this unfamiliar territory.

Realizing the need to spread the gospel about visiting US scholars, the foundation's staff and, in board meetings, the binational directors discussed how they might reach a broad Australian audience.¹² Several months before the Creech and Krause departures, in February 1953, the foundation had looked into making better use of the US Information Service (USIS), whose officers, based in the US embassy and consulates, sat on the foundation board. It decided to begin trialing a "system of coordinated press releases" about its scholars' activities and movements.¹³ When a group of twenty American Fulbrighters—the largest contingent to come to Australia since the program had begun—set sail for Sydney in March on the ship *Aorangi*, foundation and USIS publicity machines went into full swing.

Newspapers across the country reported the scholars' impending April arrival. The scholars even starred in a newsreel produced by the Film Division of the Australian News and Information Bureau. In "Fulbright Scholars Extend Knowledge in Australia," we see a group of mostly middle-aged, bespectacled men and women wandering around the Royal Sydney Agricultural Show patting cows. Cut to the group standing around rather awkwardly and chatting in scraggly bush land while chunks of skewered meat sizzle over a campfire, a voiceover enthusing over the low cost of Australian meat. The newsreel ends with a shot of the visitors looking out over the sweep of a Sydney beach, one scholar stripped down to a stylish one-piece bathing suit.¹⁴ Such newsreels were usually screened at Saturday cinema sessions for the general public. These academics were surely unused to having a celebrity spotlight trained on them. It was only two months after this media campaign that Krause and Creech arrived in

Australia, which helps explain why their early departures were so widely publicized.

If comfortable obscurity in the halls of academe could not be guaranteed when on a Fulbright trip, what kind of scholars would be fit for the demands of this role? Our focus here is primarily on US scholars because the US Department of State and other bodies that were involved in Fulbright selections were all very conscious of the potential cultural diplomacy effect of American scholars' experiences. Unlike their US counterparts, the Australian Department of External Affairs and Australian universities engaged in Fulbright selection procedures did not yet seriously consider the possible ambassadorial role of Australian scholars going to the United States; this would occur sometime later.¹⁵

The foundation was keen from the start to attract high-caliber senior American scholars who would kick the Australian program off to a good start and generate some positive publicity. USEF executive officer Rossiter claimed in his first annual report (of 1952–1953) that, although the first American grantees who came in 1951 were “for the most part . . . excellent representatives of their country” who did “much for cordial Australian-American relations,” few were “world class academically.”¹⁶ For Rossiter, the best kind of scholar-ambassador was a genuine leader in his or her intellectual field. The problem was, world-class scholars were in great demand at this time—from, for example, US universities coping with a massive postwar influx of students boosted by the GI Bill and other Fulbright partner countries around the world. All sought to snare the most impressive academics they could to head growing departments and launch new teaching and exchange programs.

Australia found itself lower down in the pecking order of desirable countries for Fulbrighters than, say, France, Italy, or the United Kingdom.¹⁷ Although Europe was still struggling with postwar shortages and only slowly rebuilding, it had a cultural cachet and intellectual pull that Australia struggled to match. As one Australian resident in the United States put it in 1950: “Most students apply for European education, where there are centuries of culture and art to delve into. It is not easy to think of something sufficiently attractive . . . as justification for study in Australia.”¹⁸ Australia was considered something of a backwater, when anything was known about it at all. Australians themselves, in what came to be called the *cultural cringe*, often saw their country in this negative light,

leading the intellectually ambitious to travel abroad for further study.¹⁹ In some cases, senior scholars awarded early Fulbright trips to more remote and less desirable countries like Australia may not have been at the cutting edge of their discipline.

Rossiter argued that “the programme, at least in the eyes of the Australian universities, will defeat itself to some extent unless some really top ranking research scholars and lecturers are brought out.”²⁰ As for post-graduate students, Rossiter continued, those “with no serious academic purpose” brought “discredit on the programme and on American academic institutions.” It was openly acknowledged in Australian and US diplomatic circles dealing with the exchange program that Australian universities did not look on the US education system with favor, in comparison with that of the United Kingdom. The Fulbright Foundation needed to work hard to prove the value of an exchange experience—in both directions.²¹ Rossiter noted: “In some academic circles here, it is a fact that the standard of American education, particularly at the college and university level, is regarded as open to question, even though this attitude may be without justifiable foundation. In view of this, the Foundation believes that it is of the utmost importance that the academic standing of visiting grantees, particularly in the lecturer and advanced research scholar categories, should be of the highest order possible.”²² Being a standard bearer for an entire higher education system was something not all academics were cut out for (or, perhaps, prepared to take on).

Some scholars were both disappointed and disappointing in this regard. They may have been experts in their field but were perhaps ill equipped to handle the intellectual and physical isolation of their Australian posts and their separation from home, and thus not in a position to represent the US university system with much success. Some early American Fulbright visitors *were* able, however, to handle the emotional test of taking up a post in this far-flung land and to promote an image of a robust US education system among their hosts. Although faced with an array of social and environmental challenges, they thrived and established strong, ongoing relationships with their Australian colleagues. The exchange experience would always be a test of individual character as well as of a scholar’s intellectual (or ambassadorial) qualities, particularly as navigating the ambassadorial role was left to individuals.

Mapping Out a Role

The stories of two early scholars who helped steady the Australian program's record around the time of the Creech and Krause incidents are revealing. Kenneth Brill, a geologist from Missouri, arrived in Hobart three months before Walter Krause's short sojourn to take up a visiting professorship. Finding that the University of Tasmania "consist[ed] chiefly of a number of slab huts in a paddock," he was, unlike his compatriot, happy to live with the limitations of his host institution, perhaps in part because he spent much of his time out in the bush rather than sitting in an unheated office. He discovered, however, that he could not carry out his field research in the manner he had expected to be able to. He had intended to make "lithofacies studies of the Permian strata" in Tasmania, but it turned out that Tasmania had not yet been mapped "in sufficient detail to permit the stratigrapher to do detailed work." This meant that he had to spend much of his time "beating the bush for outcrops that were rumored to be present, mapping areas where no geological work had been done, and making structural studies in regions that had been incorrectly mapped."²³ Brill might have predicted this state of affairs, considering that the map of Australia that he received from the Australian Government Tourist Bureau before he left the United States "didn't even have Tasmania on it" (an extraordinary oversight). Instead of despairing, however, he plunged in and carried out this basic mapping work, thus contributing a resource of great value to his hosts and subsequent researchers.²⁴

Brill's resourcefulness and adaptability, hidden away in the Tasmanian bush, caught none of the press attention afforded the two more troublesome American professors, but some other visiting lecturers more than made up for this lack of media coverage. A fortnight after the media jumped on Creech's premature departure, some fifteen American women came to Australia under Fulbright auspices (up from seven in 1952), including eight postgraduates, five schoolteachers, and one senior scholar, Professor Mary E. Murphy, who made a particularly big impression. Murphy, who held the chair of economics and business administration at the Los Angeles State College of Applied Arts and Science, was, according to an article in *The Argus*, not only the first woman in the United States to become a certified public accountant but also the first woman ever to address the International Congress of Accountants in London. She con-

sidered her selection as the first Fulbrighter in accounting (from the United States to any country) to be “revolutionary” and praised Australian accountants for “being willing to accept a woman in what was usually regarded as a man’s sphere.”²⁵

A journalist writing for the Adelaide *Advertiser* claimed that Murphy was one of the two most successful Fulbright “ambassador” scholars to date, the other being Harriet Creighton, a professor of botany and the first woman to be appointed secretary of the Botanical Society of America, who had come to Australia in 1952. Murphy traveled to every Australian university (of which there were only seven at the time) giving talks guaranteed to pique interest not only among accountants and commerce students but also among women and men in the broader community. The *Advertiser* reported that, during her tour, she “studied our economic and industrial set-up at first hand,” spoke to “businessmen, bankers and administrators,” and, “in short,” spent most of her time in “a man’s world.”²⁶ But she also talked to Australian businesswomen and made some pronouncements that seem, from our twenty-first-century perspective, quite radical for Australia in the early 1950s.

The Argus reported Murphy as saying that Australia was “approaching the stage where women will automatically receive equal pay for equal work.” She claimed, somewhat controversially (and, it has to be said, inaccurately), that, in the United States, equal pay for the sexes was “taken for granted in all the professions” and that, although Australia was twenty years behind the United States, it should not take another twenty to catch up.²⁷ A month later, she went further with her message, proclaiming: “Equality for men and women, in job, home and national life is Australia’s quickest road to peace, prosperity, and a satisfactory place in international affairs.” She also quoted a UN Human Rights Report revealing that “Australian women were taking a smaller part in public and professional activities than the women of India,” where, for example, the health minister was a woman. She pointed out that Australia had no female Supreme Court judges, queen’s counsels, or magistrates.²⁸

Murphy’s criticisms and exhortations were given surprisingly positive coverage by Australian journalists. Here was an unexpected ambassadorship—a feminist voice for which the all-male Fulbright board in Canberra was, one imagines, unprepared. After all, it was not until 1973 that an amendment was made to policy documents substituting

the word *family* for the word *wife* in clauses dealing with scholars' travel companions—showing a built-in assumption about scholars' expected gender. In 1983, a US Information Agency report on the programming and selection procedures of the Australian Fulbright program criticized it for being run like an “old boys' support system.”²⁹

The report that Murphy submitted to the foundation at the end of her seven-month stay reveals something of how she interpreted the ambassadorial role. It was a thorough and bracing account of her activities in and impressions of Australia from the perspective of a high-powered, publicity-conscious professional. Murphy thought that the foundation needed to do more groundwork to “encourage host Universities to extend a welcome hand to the visitors.” She would have appreciated being given “names of people, for instance, favorable or unfavorable to the Fulbright Plan.” This observation confirms a continuing level of resistance to or suspicion of the program among some Australian academics. It also indicates Murphy's willingness to act in an openly ambassadorial fashion for the program itself. In response to a question about the program's success in realizing its goal of furthering mutual understanding, Murphy reported finding a “variation of interest in the Fulbright Plan”; she thought that the foundation needed to work harder “to ‘convert’ certain universities or Departments . . . to the efficacy of using the Lecturers assigned to the greatest extent.” This may have been a comment on the gender imbalance she was exposed to in academic circles. She also proposed that the foundation publicize the scheme more widely among the general public, informing them of the “background of the Plan, how it is used,” and “what the professional qualifications are of the people brought out.”³⁰

Murphy's hope that the foundation might do something about the attitude “prevalent” in Australian universities that an Australian BA was superior to an MA or a PhD “granted by an English or an American university” is particularly telling. She considered this attitude “antipathetic to the advancement of scholarship here.” At the same time, she recognized that this condescension went both ways. “There is still the feeling,” she wrote, reflecting on her colleagues back home, “that Australia is a land far away from America cut off from the rest of the world, and rather lagging behind England, America and Canada.” The Australian sense of educational superiority that she and others identified sat somewhat confusingly alongside the simultaneous antipodean impulse to pursue further studies

abroad (the cultural cringe); both were surely products of physical and intellectual isolation. Murphy thought that Americans were often reluctant to accept a Fulbright appointment in Australia because they felt that “little can be learned or contributed to University life here.” She had found this to be quite untrue and argued that Australia presented “a great challenge to the serious teacher or student, and the best representatives of American education should be given the privilege of coming here in the years ahead.”³¹ Her offer to share her new knowledge and appreciation of Australia back home was the perfect manifestation of Fulbright’s vision of a two-way exchange.

The impact of women like Mary Murphy in the early years of the Fulbright program is notable. Nevertheless, in contrast to the fascinated media response to her talks in Australia, the official Fulbright records of the Australia-US program over this period display no particular consciousness of the effective ambassadorial contribution that female scholars were making. Despite the effectiveness of several female scholars in the first half of the 1950s in advancing the Fulbright vision, the language of administration reveals the usual masculine biases of this period.³² Could it be that the reluctance among senior male academics to travel to the antipodes opened up more opportunities for female scholars from the United States? The successful ambassadorial work of these pioneers in turn probably contributed to a growing interest in Australia back in their home country. The irony is that female scholars seemed not to benefit from this success: the next two decades saw a dramatic drop in the number of women participating in the Australian program, to the point that the number of female awardees dropped three-quarters from the 1950s to the 1970s.³³ Only in the 1980s and 1990s, when steps were taken to ensure the appointment of women to the binational board and to selection committees, did a measurable improvement in the gender balance of selected scholars ensue.³⁴ Further analysis of the gendered dimension of ambassadorship is undoubtedly merited.

Ambassadors Navigating the Cold War

Murphy surely understood what was being asked of her at this particular moment in time—it was, after all, the height of the Cold War. In 1953, American scholars coming to the end of their Australian exchange period

were instructed to outline their academic activities and findings and then asked: "During the course of your stay in your host country, how much opportunity did you have for more informal social contacts, such as visits to homes?" Did they find these contacts "important in furthering international friendship and understanding," and did they think that the Fulbright program was realizing this goal? They were then directed to list any "misconceptions" held by Americans about Australia, and vice versa, and asked "in what ways, if any," they might have "contributed to clearing up any of these misconceptions" during their award period. The importance given to this last question was highlighted by the request that they "be as specific as possible" in answering it.³⁵ These report form queries show the extent to which American scholars' informal social relations were considered fundamental to their contribution to Australian-American mutual understanding. Not all scholars responded with Mary Murphy's enthusiasm to these questions; some were no doubt uncomfortable with the expectation that they be so actively and obviously working at bilateral diplomacy in their social relations.

Indeed, for many Americans participating in the first years of the Australian program, their ambassadorial role required them to explain the excesses of McCarthyist anticommunism to a world looking on in horror. The final US scholar reports of 1952 and 1953 reveal the damage wrought by the red-baiting senator on the international image of the US political system and the American people. One American grantee reported that Australians regularly asked him why Americans "let McCarthy get away with it." Another noted a "common misconception . . . [that] McCarthy is the most important person in the United States." A research scholar in government and constitutional law found that "many of the more thoughtful Australians are just now more interested in and fearful of America's Internal Security program and her foreign policy," while a social worker reported that Australians were most interested in "household appliances, clothes, and book-burnings or witch-hunts."³⁶ In other words, scholars quite often found themselves in defensive mode, which encouraged some honest reflection on the nature and pitfalls of this ambassadorial role. Anti-American sentiment already had strong roots in the Oxbridge-oriented Australian university world, and congressional witch hunts made visiting Americans' task of explaining their country all the more challenging.³⁷

Drawing on his western Australian experience, one lecturer in education advised future American scholars in 1953: "Life will probably be happier for the future grantee if he assumes the role of 'tactful visitor' or 'scientific observer' rather than that of '100% Patriot.'" He had found that Australians reacted "quickly and sometimes violently to criticism of any sort" and warned his compatriots about the Australian press, which liked to push for troublemaking comparisons between Australia and the United States.³⁸ A postgraduate sociologist reported in 1954: "One of the greatest hazards to 'understanding' in the first few months of one's stay in a foreign country is the matter of when and what opinions to express." She had often been encouraged to give an opinion when she felt that she had "insufficient basis for forming one" and feared that her honest opinion might "not be well received." She came to the conclusion that "experience is the only teacher in learning how to handle this." While she liked to encourage frank discussion about the United States during question-and-answer sessions at her public talks, she had learned that it was wise "to make it plain that any opinions [she] expressed were those of one person and not Americans in general."³⁹

American scholars were called on not only to explain the excesses of Joe McCarthy but also to counter damaging stereotypes about American people and life. Most scholars felt that these stereotypes and misconceptions were primarily created and perpetuated by Hollywood and the press. John Rose Faust, for example, observed in 1953 that, "while Americans and Australians already have very much in common," it was "essential for Americans traveling overseas to see their country as others see them, and also help Australians to see the United States in its true perspective rather than as pictured by *Hollywood* and *Australian newspapers*." Newspapers, he argued, were doing a "great deal of harm" by playing up "the sensational stories (crime, corruption, and vice), McCarthyism, etc.," while movies misrepresented American life. It appears that Hollywood stereotypes could have specifically gendered consequences for the independent female scholar. The social worker Georgie Travis, who was divorced, wished that she had worn her old wedding ring and packed a black hat rather than a red one to avoid social misunderstanding during her 1953 Australian trip. At the same time, she felt that her presence may have countered popular stereotypes with a dose of reality—that she was "a middle-aged social worker who still washes on the board at home and

worries about the rent on the house and deplors the films, and who seems to be relatively sound professionally”—and that simply being herself “may have helped to overcome a Hollywood idea of Americans!” In a similar effort to counter the popular Australian notion that “all of America is like Hollywood and the colored pictures of American magazines,” the entomologist Barbara Ann Stay “tried not to emphasize American consumption goods.” She hoped that her own presence may have helped “lend variety” to her hosts’ conception of “the typical [American] countryman.” Charles Hartshorne, an American philosopher in Melbourne in 1952, thought that it was useful for Australians to see “that some Americans are neither soldiers, business men, nor Hollywood actors and actresses, but persons with whom they may share universal cultural interests or a love of nature.”⁴⁰

“Not a good place for an American to be”?

The nature of scholarly ambassadorship would come under much closer scrutiny during the Vietnam War period, not least by Fulbright himself. The Vietnam War and the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s brought about a particularly intense questioning of the meaning of educational and cultural diplomacy, with special relevance for Australian and American exchanges owing to their governments’ controversial military collaboration in Southeast Asia.⁴¹ While questions about the extent to which the program was truly educational rather than politically driven had preoccupied some scholars and administrators from the beginning of the program, the war would sharpen these concerns and lead to significant changes.

As campus protest movements grew in strength and breadth in the 1960s, with battles raging over political, intellectual, and personal freedoms as well as foreign policy and militarism, Fulbright administrators inevitably had to reconsider and rearticulate the ambassadorial expectations of program participants. Students and academics were questioning much more vigorously the way in which government programs were impinging on research practices and limiting academic freedom, for example. Fulbright himself contributed to public debates on this subject and was all too aware of the dilemmas facing scholars who had trouble balancing their role as ambassadors for and potential critics of their own country.⁴²

For the Fulbright program's administrators and grantees, serious and sustained political protest on university campuses and on the streets threw up many challenges—as well as opportunities to question actively the significance of their exchange. What might peaceful relations and mutual understanding signify for scholars in this tumultuous period when military engagement by both countries, in alliance, faced growing criticism?

That both nations were fighting in an increasingly unpopular war put Fulbright scholars from Australia and the United States on an awkward footing when they went on exchange, and many came under security surveillance. One Australian researcher, on a Fulbright award to the United States, was an architect who was also a political cartoonist publishing work with strong political messages. He found himself under investigation by the FBI because his cartoons upset the US government. Others found it uncomfortable having to endure anti-Americanism in the anti-war protests. A postdoctoral student from Yale reported: "Melbourne in 1968 was not a good place for an American to be." Meanwhile, others had found congenial colleagues in the transnational antiwar movement. Charles McCoy was a Fulbright senior scholar in political science at Monash University in Melbourne in 1966. On his return to the United States, he became a member of a radical group formed within the American Political Science Association seeking to displace connections to the CIA and encourage members to look critically at their nation's political systems and its weaknesses, particularly at the war in Vietnam, which was "no mistake."⁴³

These encounters reveal some of the challenges of participating in this exchange program during a politically tumultuous period. There were other difficulties that ambassadorship could entail. The historian John Hope Franklin felt that he had been used as a token educated black man invited to join an all-white delegation to the newly independent Nigeria in 1960.⁴⁴ He had at the same time, however, accepted the Fulbright distinguished visitor award to Australia, despite deep misgivings about the country's racist history and ongoing White Australia policy with its race-based immigration restrictions,⁴⁵ because he appreciated the real benefits and impacts of educational exchange. In his memoirs, in which he described his memorable Australian tour in some detail, he explained: "I did not want to be used merely to paper over or mislead the world regarding the state of race relations in the United States. On the other hand, if

the government wished to use me as an example of what was possible, I had no objection so long as I could speak as I wished and my involvement was genuinely in the interest of improving the racial climate in America.” To do that he explained: “I quickly set myself the rule that so long as there was no effort to dictate what I would say, I was amenable to any overture, and I am pleased to say that no one ever asked of me anything that would compromise my professional or scholarly integrity.”⁴⁶

Franklin was ideally placed to appreciate the complex position in which Fulbright scholars found themselves, one that would become only harder to negotiate through the 1960s and 1970s as campuses became more and more politically explosive. Not all scholars were as aware of the complexity of their ambassadorial position—at least before departure. A postgraduate plant ecologist studying in Melbourne in 1966, for example, reported that his exchange period had brought about the “revelation that quite reasonable people, even citizens of one of the United States’ closest allies, may disapprove of quite a lot of American foreign policy,” something that, he admitted “humbly and simply,” he had not understood earlier and that had reshaped his “understanding of international relations.”⁴⁷ In this context, ambassadorship became an illumination to be carried back home.

Meanwhile, a different kind of revelation awaited those US scholars who were already inclined to be critical of their own government’s policies. The BFS attempted to make a clearer distinction between foreign policy and educational exchange, and Fulbright called for Americans to overcome their ingrained “fear of dissent” in his best-seller *The Arrogance of Power*.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, US scholars in this period could find that taking a critical stance was not always well received by their Australian hosts. A senior scholar in life sciences, for example, reported: “Both Australians and Europeans have told me that they are embarrassed by Americans who attempt comradeship by unduly criticizing the United States.” A postgraduate in soil science advised any future scholar visiting Australia: “He should not feel that he should be so open-minded that he can deprecate his own country in casual discussions; Australians seem suspicious of anyone who is not reasonably proud of his heritage. But don’t overdo it!” A delicate balance to achieve indeed. Another postgraduate, studying comparative literature at Adelaide University, explored this social challenge in more detail. “The grantee will,” he said, “meet a good deal of defensive-

ness, especially at first, when he himself is hyper-conscious of the impression he is registering. It will be very difficult to criticize institutions and customs without incurring a good deal of resentment as a 'bloody' outsider, . . . [which] may prove to be a difficult position for anyone who is accustomed to criticizing his own country freely from within whenever he sees a wrong or an injustice." "On the other hand," he continued, "[scholars] will find many people very quick to criticize the United States, sometimes with great justice and insight and sometimes not. It is with this that most of the Americans with whom I have spoken have had the greatest difficulty. It is quite often difficult not to react against it and to be driven into a posture of defense which is not at all a natural one."⁴⁹

Scholars, then, had to tread carefully, adjusting their critical faculties to a variety of social situations and audiences. They were not alone in expressing confusion about how to interpret the goal of mutual understanding at a time when campus and youth culture more generally was changing dramatically. At a seminar sponsored by the Institute of International Education on the Fulbright-Hays student exchange program held in September 1967 in Wingspread, Wisconsin, university, government, philanthropic, and student representatives met and thrashed out questions about the premises, existing policies, and future of the program. One session was titled "The Student Overseas as Ambassador and Interpreter of His Culture." The big question of the day was whether a "hippie" should be "selected out" on the grounds that he might "misrepresent America while abroad." The participants failed to reach a consensus on "where to draw the line between an out-and-out hippie and today's American student who affects, for instance, long hair." They did manage to agree, however, that a crew cut would not be a prerequisite for a Fulbright-Hays grant! They also discussed the changing image of the Fulbrighter, current grantees no longer seeming to fit the old template of the "all-American boy" "patterned after the Rhodes Scholar" who would "go all over the place . . . feeling that he left the world better than he found it, return to campus and re-enter with as little trouble as possible."⁵⁰ There was a sense that, in these troubled times when everything was up for questioning, the old, familiar scholar types had been superseded. What, we might ask, about women scholars as ambassadors? Of them, nothing at all was said, even though women had been active participants in and shapers of the program since day one, as we have seen. The women's movement

had not yet arrived in Wingspread, Wisconsin. What impact it would have on the meaning of the ambassadorial role of Fulbright scholars is yet to be explored.

Conclusion

In the mid-1970s, there was an intense period of review of all aspects of the Fulbright program, with a series of conferences held in the United States, Malaysia, and Australia. US government funding for the program was reduced through the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the face of a dramatic increase in the number of other student exchange programs, Fulbright administrators in the United States and partner countries came together to figure out how existing funds should best be allocated and reconsider how the program should position itself in relation to other schemes. They asked what was (or could be) unique about the program? One of the outcomes of these discussions was a stronger determination to clarify exactly what the goal of mutual understanding meant for scholars. This was echoed in the Australian-American Foundation's own program review in 1982, when Executive Officer Bruce Farrer argued that the foundation should "be more active in directing the Program in ways that would benefit mutual understanding." He then acknowledged the (now familiar) problem: how to "define those ways and produce an operational definition of 'mutual understanding.'"⁵¹

This is a question posed by both administrators of and participants in the binational scheme. It is a question that was unlikely to find a completely satisfactory answer as the program's shape and tenor was susceptible to the changing times and people who carried it. Notions of ambassadorship shifted and changed in response to lived experience. Fulbright scholars who took up academic exchange opportunities in the early years of the program played a crucial role in establishing the reputation of the scheme in partner countries and acceptance of US government motives in promoting educational exchange. Fulbright scholars were expected to act as unofficial ambassadors, but, as their experience demonstrated, the requirements and boundaries of this role were not always clear-cut and had to be negotiated often in very personally challenging situations. The experiences, questions, and impacts of Fulbright scholars and program administrators in the Australian scheme indicate how academics shaped

and at times resisted the program's ambassadorial dimension. Could it be that Mary Murphy's embrace of the ambassadorial role allowed her some room to promote ideas about women's role in society and capacity for leadership positions that may not have had such a positive reception without the imprimatur of her Fulbright grant? Acknowledging the gender dimensions of being a Fulbright ambassador opens up such new questions.

In the early days, in award-offer documents, the scholar's ambassadorial role was hardly mentioned (if at all) but fully fleshed out in report form questions. More than sixty years later, the reverse is true. Scholars in the Australia-US program are told up front, even before applying, that they are required to act as "goodwill ambassadors," but their final report forms are mute on this score. Scholars are given an open-ended invitation to write a narrative of their "Fulbright journey." There are no questions about clearing up misunderstandings or requests to report on informal conversations in people's homes. The focus has shifted to the personal transformations and career-related developments experienced by scholars during their exchange, a shift reflecting other social, economic, and educational developments in the transnational relationship. The meaning of ambassadorship continues to be an outcome of scholarly negotiation, a complex interplay of lived experience and programmed planning for transnational mutual understanding.

Notes

1. There are very few scholarly studies of the Fulbright program in countries other than the United States and none that analyze the problem of ambassadorship. For British Commonwealth countries, see N. Dawes, *A Two-Way Street: The Indo-American Fulbright Program, 1950–1960* (Bombay: Asia, 1962); Joan Druett, *Fulbright in New Zealand* (Wellington: NZ-US Educational Foundation, 1988); and Alice Garner and Diane Kirkby, *Academic Ambassadors, Pacific Allies: Australia, America and the Fulbright Program* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

2. Wool was still Australia's major export commodity in the 1950s. See Frank Bingham, "Australia's Trade since Federation," Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, June 2016, 5 (chart 7), <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/australias-trade-since-federation.pdf>.

3. "More Rain and Snow Expected," *Advocate* (Burnie, Tasmania), June 23, 1953, 9. Gerald Firth was an English economist who had migrated to Australia and

played an important role in Canberra in national economic planning for the post-war period. See his Trove (National Library of Australia) profile: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/44696760>.

4. USEF Annual Report 1952–53, Reports on Krause Case, A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, National Archives of Australia, Canberra (hereafter NAA).

5. Ibid. For an internal report on the Krause case, see “Report on Fulbright Research Scholar: Dr. Walter Krause,” September 21, 1953, USEF Memorandum 143 to Department of State (IIA/IES), A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA.

6. “Mysterious Departure of US Professor,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 10, 1953, 1.

7. “Short Stay for US Professor,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), June 10, 1953, 3; “No Lecture, No Explanation,” *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton, Queensland), June 10, 1953, 4; “Puzzle of Vanishing Professor,” *Truth* (Sydney), June 14, 1953, 2.

8. Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 130. For a critical discussion of this early period, see Sam Lebovic, “From War Junk to Educational Exchange: The World War II Origins of the Fulbright Program and the Foundations of American Cultural Globalism, 1945–50,” *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 2 (April 2013): 280–312.

9. Julie Reeves, *Culture and International Relations: Narratives, Natives and Tourists*, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics (London: Routledge, 2004), 53–54; Liping Bu, “Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War,” *Journal of American Studies* 33, no. 3, pt. 1, “Women in America” (December 1999): 393–415, 412.

10. The Australia-US executive agreement was signed on November 26, 1949, in Canberra and was based on the provisions of the Lend-Lease Settlement agreed on three years earlier. See “Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Australia for the Use of Funds Made Available in Accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Australia on Settlement for Lend-Lease, Reciprocal Aid, Surplus War Property and Claims Signed at Washington and New York on June 7, 1946” (typescript), A13307 18/1, NAA.

11. Scott M. Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations: A History* (London: Routledge, 2013).

12. USEF Board Minutes, March 27, 1952, Australian-American Fulbright Commission Archive, Canberra.

13. USEF Board Minutes, February 25, 1953.

14. This two-minute newsreel was one of several stories appearing in Australian Diary 071 (1953), directed by Jack S. Allan, title 67328, National Film and Sound Archive Collection, Canberra.

15. On Australians in the United States, see Sally Ninham, *A Cohort of Pioneers: Australian Postgraduate Students and American Postgraduates Degrees, 1949–1964* (Melbourne: Connor Court, 2011). By the 1960s, Australia grasped the cultural diplomacy approach through its success with the Colombo Plan. See Daniel Oakman,

“The Politics of Foreign Aid: Counter-Subversion and the Colombo Plan, 1950–1970,” *Pacifica Review: Peace, Security and Global Change* 13, no. 3 (2001): 255–72. This is explored further in Garner and Kirkby, *Academic Ambassadors, Pacific Allies*.

16. USEF Annual Report 1952–53, 18.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Extract from Lawrence Power, New York City, to Edgar Russell, Port Pirie, South Australia, August 12, 1950, “United States of America—Relations with Australia—Requests for Information on Fulbright Agreement,” A1838 250/9/8/3 Part 1, NAA.

19. On the cultural cringe, see Rollo Hesketh, “A. A. Phillips and the ‘Cultural Cringe’: Creating an ‘Australian Tradition,’” *Meanjin* 72, no. 3 (2013), <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/a-a-phillips-and-the-icultural-tingei-creating-an-iaustralian-traditioni>.

20. USEF Annual Report 1952–53, 18.

21. See, e.g., [12] I. “The Situation” USIE Melbourne, I-A Local Factors Affecting USIE, in 31 Dec 1952 FSD, AMConsulate Sydney to DOS, Subj: IIA: Transmitting Combined Evaluation Report for the Period Dec 1 1951 to Nov 30 1952 (includes reports from five USIS posts in Australia), DOS 59 Central Files 511.43, box 2359, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

22. USEF Board Minutes, October 26, 1953.

23. Kenneth Gray Brill Jr., Report, 1953, 3, in “United States of America—Relations with Australia—United States Educational Foundation—General,” A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA.

24. Brill published several articles based on his research in Tasmania, including “Cyclic Sedimentation in the Permian System of Tasmania,” *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 90 (1956): 131–40, in which he thanked his hosts “for the many courtesies shown” during his stay. He returned in 1978 and published another paper in the same journal in 1982, evidence of ongoing collaboration: “Palaeoenvironment of the Darlington Limestone (Early Permian) Tasmania,” *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 116 (1982): 67–84.

25. “Equal Pay for Sexes in Sight,” *The Argus* (Melbourne, Victoria), June 30, 1953, 4. On her claim to being the first American Fulbrighter in accountancy, see “I Have Enjoyed Every Moment in Australia,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), October 2, 1953, 15.

26. “I Have Enjoyed Every Moment.”

27. “Equal Pay for Sexes in Sight.” The wage gap in the 1950s between men and women was 31 percent. See June O’Neill, “The Trend in the Male-Female Wage Gap in the United States,” *Journal of Labour Economics* 3, no. 1, pt. 2, “Trends in Women’s Work, Education and Family Building” (January 1985): S91–S116, S91.

28. “Equality as ‘Quickest Way to Prosperity,’” *The Argus* (Melbourne, Victoria), July 15, 1953, 6.

29. US Information Agency (USIA) Memorandum, August 16, 1983, quoted in AAEF Board Minutes, November 10, 1983, AAFC Archives, Canberra.

30. Mary E. Murphy, Final Report, "United States of America—Relations with Australia—United States Educational Foundation—General," A1838, 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA.

31. Ibid.

32. USEF Board Minutes, *passim*.

33. USIA Memorandum, August 16, 1983, quoted in AAEF Board Minutes, November 10, 1983.

34. See, e.g., minuted item "8. Gender Balance in Board Membership," AAFC Board Minutes, August 24, 1998, AAFC Archives.

35. These questions appear on Murphy, Brill, and other 1950s scholars' reports in A1838, 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA.

36. The first two reports are in A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 3, NAA, and the last two in A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA. Only a small number of grantee reports have survived from the early 1950s and 1960s. Most were destroyed by the Australian-American Educational Foundation (AAEF, the successor to the USEF) in 1970. AAEF Board Minutes, June 5, 1970.

37. Alice Garner and Diane Kirkby, "Never a machine for propaganda? The Australian-American Fulbright Program and Australia's Cold War," *Australian Historical Studies* 44, no. 1 (March 2013): 117–33.

38. Scholar Report, 1953, in A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA.

39. Scholar Report, 1954, in "United States of America—Relations with Australia—United States Educational Foundation—General," A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 3, NAA.

40. John Rose Faust and Barbara Ann Stay, Scholar Reports, A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 3, NAA; Georgia Travis Scholar Report, A1838 250/9/8/4/2 Part 2, NAA; Charles Hartshorne Scholar Report, A1838 250/9/8/3 PART 3, NAA.

41. Paul A. Kramer, "Is the World Our Campus? International Students and US Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century," *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 5 (2009): 775–806, 783, 796–97.

42. See, e.g., the senator's correspondence with Leo Marx, reprinted in "The Responsibility of Intellectuals by Leo Marx and J. W. Fulbright," *New York Review of Books*, November 9, 1967, 5.

43. John Playford, "Political Scientists and the CIA," *Australian Left Review*, April–May 1968, 14–28, 24.

44. Ray Arsenault and John Hope Franklin, "Pioneers of History: The Sage of Freedom: An Interview with John Hope Franklin," *Public Historian* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 35–54, 42.

45. The *White Australia policy* was the term commonly used for the Immigration Restriction Act, which came into law on December 23, 1901, one of the first acts of the new Australian federal parliament. This racist law began to be dismantled in practice, quietly, only in the mid-1960s under Prime Minister Holt and finally formally in 1973, under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. For an account of the sig-

nificance and history of the policy, see Gwenda Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia* (Carlton: Scribe, 2005).

46. John Hope Franklin, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005), 184–85.

47. “Reports by Visiting American Fulbright Scholars,” A463 1965/2313, NAA.

48. J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Vintage, 1966).

49. Grantee Report in “Reports by Visiting American Fulbright Scholars,” A463 1965/2313, NAA.

50. G. P. Springer, *A Report on the Fulbright-Hays Student Exchange Program Seminar, Sept. 20–22, 1967, Wingspread, Wis.* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1968).

51. AAEF Board Minutes, February 25, 1982, item on program review.



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Author/s:

Garner, A; Kirkby, D

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