Section One—Mudrooroo: *Wild Cat Trilogy* and 'Finish'

In *Mudrooroo: A Critical Study*, Adam Shoemaker claims: 'It is hard to believe that the Black Australian novel has been so dominated by one individual.'[4] A dictum of this magnitude might seem hyperbolic, yet the proof is well-documented. Mudrooroo has written several novels, two sequences being series, as well as nonfictional texts, and poetry and he has lectured on Aboriginal concerns, over a forty years span. The start was 1965, which, politically was not the most advantageous time for one then denoted as an Aborigine.

> *Wild Cat Falling* is Mudrooroo's first novel and addresses the effects of incarceration of young Aboriginals in Australia's welfare institutions and prison system. The book was published in 1965, just two years prior to the Australian Constitutional Referendum of 1967, until which time Aboriginal people were not recognized as full citizens of Australia under the law.[5]

This history (and clash against it) are central to Mudrooroo's writing. *Writing from the Fringe* states 'Aboriginal Literature begins as a cry from the heart directed at the whiteman.'[6] His fiction incorporates this same anguish. Further, having such emotion is seen by Harold Bloom as an indication of canonical consideration. 'An authentic canonical writer may or may not internalize her or his work's anxiety, but that scarcely matters: the strongly achieved work *is* the anxiety.'[7] Bloom is not saying oddities or controversy concerning the writer is important. Instead, it is what the work produces.

*Wild Cat Falling (*1965), *Doin Wildcat: A Novel Koori Script (*1988) and *Wildcat Screaming* (1992), chronicles the chaotic and anxious events of a sometimes nameless, sometimes incarcerated Aboriginal narrator's life. Prison, in various forms, is his song circle,

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[4] Adam Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo: A Critical Study* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1993) 1.
[5] Maureen Clark, 'Reality Rights in the Wildcat Trilogy,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo*, ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 45.
[6] Mudrooroo, *Writing from the Fringe: A Study of Modern Aboriginal Literature* (Sydney: Hyland House, 1990) 1.
[7] Harold Bloom, preface, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, by Bloom, (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994) 8.

beginning with the narrator leaving gaol. 'Today the end and the gates will swing to eject me, alone and so-called free. Another dept paid to society and I never owed it a thing.'[8] Though sounding rebellious, incarceration has damaged him as he has embraced a certain degree of defeat. 'For me Fremantle jail has been a refuge of a sort. They have accepted me here as I have accepted hopelessness and futility.'[9] Mudrooroo, obviously, understands this mindset, yet transcends its boundaries, for, as has been observed, 'the concepts of place, space and the real are central to the textual world of Mudrooroo, but they are not denoting specificities.'[10] By doing so, he undermines the tenets which have operated to supplant the voices of Aboriginal people. Accordingly, he tells the story of that Other.

In *Wild Cat Falling*, the nameless narrator has a reoccurring, metaphorical nightmare. Later he learns it is not that, but the remnants of an ancient Aboriginal dream. However, since he is separated from Aboriginal cosmology, it has become a haunting, until the explanation is given by an uncle. This elder re-arranges the nightmare, detailing its significance as a means of escaping (Western) limitations. The effect of this knowledge is positive. 'The old voice trails on, but now I have remembered the dream. It has been in some secret part of my mind to which he has given me the key.'[11] Though self-discovery is a positive, overall, the work is still contrarian.

The subject matter and approach are Aboriginally based, yet paradoxically so, for the loner style of the work is shaped to fit nicely into Western sensibilities and literary expectations. Regardless, Mudrooroo writes about this Other intimately, and having been incarcerated himself, truly sees the whole world as antagonistic. He is thus a being who is angry and powerless against Western cultural hegemony (later, missionary zeal, and political/sexual power are also

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[8] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1965) 3.
[9] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 3.
[10] Clare Archer-Lean, 'Place, Space and Tradition in the Writings of Mudrooroo,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Work of Mudrooroo*, ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 203.
[11] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 127.

combatants). These tensions are major themes in his fiction and non-fiction. They can also be seen in his life.

What can be gleamed from Mudrooroo's public racial background and identity is that, even as a young man, he saw himself as a literary voice for the disenfranchised. As Shoemaker writes,

> his debut as an author occurred not in 1965, when *Wild Cat Falling* was released, but five years earlier, in a brief piece titled 'Finish', printed in the literary journal *Westerly.*[12]

The voice in 'Finish' is very consistent with that in *Wild Cat Falling*. 'So the sentence was up, the last stinking minute; or nearly the last minute.'[13] This short sketch of a hopeless ex-convict as a narrator is the palimpsest for the *Wild Cat* series. Curiously, he does not call himself an Aborigine; thus he could be an Everyman, though other (distinctive) component motifs are present.

One element present in 'Finish,' as in several of Mudrooroo's works, is the role of Christianity as a vehicle to control (the powerless/natives).

> Colonisation had to be justified by a Christian people which prided itself on a superior morality and culture. One way of doing this was by seeing a people in possession of a wanted land as being uncivilised, savages or even animals. British colonial expansion was not a blind immoral course of action, but a deliberate policy with an ever shifting ideology of justification behind it.[14]

Or, a useful crutch of sorts for convicts. 'Like most criminals he [Jeff] professed a belief in God—everyone must have something to clutch to or they face void and madness.'[15] But being receptive to the whims of the desperate, he also discusses the situational nature of Jeff's life and religious fidelity. 'Today Jeff was being released—did he thank God? No! All he could talk about

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[12] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 9.
[13] Colin Johnson, 'Finish,' *Westerly* 3 (1960): 30-31.
[14] Mudrooroo, *Fringe* 7-8.
[15] Johnson, 'Finish,' 30-31.

was getting drunk and having a girl.'[16] Jeff's relief seeks to refute the deadly force wrought by what some may well note as another form of oppression.

Mudrooroo views Christian/missionary spheres as 'institutionalized places of segregation, emblematic of the colonial endeavour to confine and control Aboriginal people and their means of cultural expression.'[17] He then co-opts that control, showing the weaknesses and hypocrisy in Western institutions. There is also personal motivation, since he had been placed in a confining and abusive (religious) home for boys. The zeal in such locations, he feels, is pernicious, for they 'have a long history in Australia of being physical places that demarcated limitations in Aboriginal freedom of movement, and mental places that regulated accepted cultural behaviour.'[18] This can be seen in *Wild Cat Screaming,* the third novel that details Wild Cat's life as an inmate; another demarcated space for the powerless. There he describes his younger experience at the Clontarf Christian Brothers' Home with a pun, 'As the Bible says: 'Watch and *prey* lest you enter into temptation,' and so they watched and caught us in temptation.'[19] In this passage, Wild Cat discusses being young and pleasing himself, to wit he and another are caught by those who prey/pray then condemn, being called a 'filthy little sinner.'[20] As the abuse is intensified, the 'interrogator' changes his tactics from whipping him with a strap. 'He throws me around the room and uses his fists and shoes.'[21] The response is muted anger on the part of the narrator. 'I'm filled with rage and pain and I'm silent with rage and hate.'[22] When they are released, they do the act again, the only 'revenge we can have against

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[16] Johnson, 'Finish,' 30-31.
[17] Eva Rask Knudsen, 'Mudrooroo's Encounters with the Missionaries,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo,* ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 168.
[18] Knudsen, 'Mudrooroo's Encounters,' 168.
[19] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* (1992; Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1993) 65.
[20] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming 66.*
[21] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* 66.
[22] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* 66.

those prying eyes.'[23]

Such a display does show a rebellious spirit, but, sadly, it also tells the reader something about the sexual lives of most of Mudrooroo' characters. Very few ever enjoy or are capable of intimacy.

Yet although Mudrooroo honestly critiques the effects of Christian zeal on Aboriginal culture, he does not deny its hold. This enables him to situate male Aboriginal (impotency) fears (literal and figurative) within a model Christians and/or Westerners would understand.

> I comb my hair as best I can. It is in a crew-cut ordered by the chief warder. He must have read that bodgies wear their hair long and decided to do his bit in the fight against juvenile delinquency. Or maybe he remembered the Samson story.[24]

The reference appears again in *Doin Wildcat,* but written in Aboriginal vernacular.

> 'Yuh know,' I say to him, 'yer air's all wrong for the times. It was the mid 'fifties an we were into D. A.s an Tony Curtis Styles—all slicked back with grease an a curl danglin over the forehead [. . .] I could've cried when I saw me curls tumblin to the ground. They fell all round me like dreams. I didn't take it lyin down, though, an kept on tryin to grow em back, but that bastard of a screw kept on escortin me to the barber and I kept on avin no air—an no dreams. I knew what it was like when Samson woke up to find is locks gone.'[25]

Further, as a narrator, creating a tale that transcends its time, being 'nameless' has an additional Christian reference; Moses asking who is speaking to him and is answered 'I am that I am,' in *Exodus* 3:14.

Another curious aspect from the default name of the narrator in *Wild Cat Falling* connects it to Western iconography. 'The Man with No Name' was a popular character in American/Italian Spaghetti Western films in the 1960s starring, Clint Eastwood, becoming quite popular by 1968. *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For A Few Dollars More* (1965) were both released at or around the time of Mudrooroo's first novel. With *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966),

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[23] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* 66.
[24] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 17.
[25] Mudrooroo, *Doin Wildcat* (Sydney: Hyland House, 1988) 11.

these films became known as the *Dollars Trilogy* or *The Man with No Name Trilogy*. In addition, *A Fistful of Dollars* had its inception with Akira Kurosawa's 1961 film *Yojimbo*. The *Wildcat* trilogy has a narrator who is not centre stage. The concept was one in wide use, if more usually found in other genres and fields. It complicates the discussion of identity and truth, for there does not seem to be a first one, confounding the Western linear notion of origins and replacing it with one that is spiral, cyclical. Such ability is very unique. However, there are problems with the narratives. When the work is not being incredibly theoretical, it becomes extremely conventional—even stereotypical.

Mudrooroo's work is frenetically sexual, as in his describing 'the gates [that] will swing to eject me.'[26] Later, in *Wild Cat Falling* he meets 'bohemian females' (white, young, college age), and immediately desires them. The frankness of his posture is one to note, since the 1960s were not conducive to zestful interracial couplings. People of colour were not thought of as equal to those of European decent. In this manner, Mudrooroo overturns the dynamic encapsulated for him by Frantz Fanon, the black writer from Martinique whose work he had read.

> Mudrooroo has read Fanon carefully, and draws extensively on Fanon's work to explicate and contextualise Aboriginal Literature. In *Writing from the Fringe* Mudrooroo refers to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, and to his description of the three levels of development in the literature of a colonised people.[27]

Fanon wrote of the struggles of blacks from French-speaking colonies, primarily, and of their fractured place within proper French society. In particular, Fanon's encounter with 'pure whiteness,' while in Paris, ends with humiliation and loathing.

> FRENCH BOY: 'Look, a Negro!' It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a little smile.
> FRENCH BOY: 'Look, a Negro.' It was true. It amused me.
> FRENCH BOY: 'Look, a Negro.' The circle was drawing a bit tighter.

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[26] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 3.
[27] Gerry Turcotte, 'Vampiric Decolonization: Fanon, 'Terrorism' and Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy' *Faculty of Arts – Papers* (2005) < http://works.bepress.com/gturcotte/4>. 8 Oct. 2010.

> FANNON: I made no secret of my amusement.
> FRENCH BOY: 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened.'
> FANNON: Frightened! Frightened! Now they are beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible.
> I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all *historicity.*[28]

In *Wild Cat Falling*, the power and control of the gaze is switched, giving 'nameless' agency, privilege of the situation, and control of the exchange.

> I sit up and she smiles across at me as though we two grown-ups share a secret about childish fantasies. I suppose she expects me to smile back, but I scowl. She suddenly sees me as a stranger and stares coldly at the darkness of my skin. I run my eyes over her legs, her hips and her breasts. She glances down, assures herself that there is nothing showing and looks distastefully into my sullen face. So what? If she rejects me, I rejected her first.[29]

This 'rejection' is in stark contrast to how Fanon comments on agency. 'Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him.'[30] However, steeped in Western mythological relationships, Fanon forgot that *his kind* had no one to force recognition. 'But the former slave wants to *make himself recognized*.'[31] Mudrooroo reverses these stances in an attempt to make whiteness (and white people) feel inadequate. Such a switch shows his political leanings, but to what end? Such decisions do not limit the authority of Australian (or Western)—quite the opposite. Dehumanizing of the individual (rather Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal) is corrosive to all involved. So much that something as intimate as sexual activity, instead of being a loving or even fun endeavour, is filled with rage. Not too coincidently, such violence seems very typical in work where the male character *must* be a proper rebel.

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[28] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (1952; New York: Grove Press, 1967) 112. What is interesting is not Fanon's forays into race, but that they were not as pronounced until he was rejected by proper French society. This leaves one wondering if he had been accepted fully, would he still have written such thought provoking texts.
[29] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 37.
[30] Fanon 216.
[31] Fanon 217.

> I want her and hate her for making me want her. I pull off her clothes and take her violently, like it was rape. Hate her. Hate her. Love her. It is finished. I fling away from her and she lies like a discarded doll.[32]

Though is instead of liberation, self-loathing occurs. 'My body is as warm as hers but my mind is detached and cold. This time I don't feel anything like hate or love. Only sick.'[33] There is no positive feeling of liberation.

At times Mudrooroo's work leans heavily on Western, racial phallocentricity. An example occurs when the nameless narrator encounters a white female who arouses him. 'She lies stretched out in the sun and her skin is golden brown. Swell doll. Long and slim with firm small breasts tightening the fabric of her white swim suit. I realize jail has not killed my sex urge.'[34] One might see here, the stereotypical narrative of dark/black man lusting for white woman, and vice versa, a phenomena black American film maker Spike Lee calls, 'Jungle Fever;' also the title of the film.[35] The problem is not sex, or sexuality, but what/how images/conventions are used, a sentiment Mudrooroo has long argued against—unless the charge was angled towards him.

In an interview with Shoemaker, Mudrooroo had remarked, 'the problem is that I don't think white feminism has that much to do with black women.'[36] The rebuttal seems geared to deflect the accusation by saying it is feminist—read White women, who, arrogantly espouse Indigenous women's complaints—and, therefore, not relevant. But does the person or theory matter if the analysis is accurate? His work does depict women in an unfavourable light, or as playthings. Further, native women fair even worse than those of European decent. If he argues

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[32] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 59.
[33] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 93.
[34] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 38.
[35] *Jungle Fever*, dir. Spike Lee, perf. Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra, Universal Pictures, 1991. An American film dealing with identity, race and infidelity. The two 'races' in question are 'Black' and 'White.' Lee has become influential in the field of racial cinema because of his sharp work, yet the women are seen in a similar light as Mudrooroo's. Very few have as dynamic a role as their male counterparts.
[36] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 158.

that Western discourse has forced Aboriginals to the periphery, and that is a problem, why should his own behavioural patterns be excluded?

At times Mudrooroo seems oblivious to (potential) symbolic, sexual exploitation in his work. One can look at the depiction of a nameless' mother after her oldest children are taken away as proof.

> Mum cried when the Welfare took the older ones away. She was soft about her kids. She didn't take up with anyone until Mr. Willy came along. He was pretty old but he was white and earned a decent enough crust from his wood-cutting.[37]

The same type of predicament is seen in his family life—though the spelling of the step-father's name is slightly different.

> For reasons unknown, Elizabeth and her two children, Colin, then an infant, and his sister, a small child of two, later moved to the small to country town of Beverly, where they were destined to spend a number of years. During their time in Beverly, Elizabeth and her two children lived in a house owned by Mr. William Henry Willey. Willey was much older than Elizabeth.[38]

Elizabeth was fairly destitute by then. 'Elizabeth Barron's status as daughter ensured her exclusion from the inherited wealth and power that is transmitted from father to son in oedipalized patriarchal cultures.'[39] As with Mudrooroo, the nameless narrator does not sympathize with his mother. Instead there is a disconnection. This is, perhaps, so for Mudrooroo's 'outsider' status is complicated with the high status (within) his maternal family. The mythos required to being a rebel is that one must be of a lower station, but will not be cowered by that predicament.

Mudrooroo's birth mother was of Irish decent. Further, there seems to be an animosity towards the fictitious Aboriginal mother equal to the ambivalence felt toward his biological

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[37] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 9.
[38] Maureen Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death of the Mother,' *New Literature Review* 40 (2003): 83-102.
[39] Maggie Nolan, 'Identity Crises and Orphaned Rewritings,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo,* ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 122.

mother.

> So now she has gone back to die with them and be buried in that back part of the cemetery in a nameless Noongar grave. Serves her right. She had it coming to her, pretending to be better than the rest of them, keeping me away from them, giving me over like a sacrificial offering to the vicious gods of the white man's world.[40]

The nameless narrator does not seem to acknowledge that such actions as hardships encountered by Indigenous women. Thus, there seems to be another layer of disenfranchisement, the belittling of women by men of the same group.

The lower category is reminiscent of John Lennon's controversial song, 'Woman is the Nigger of the World.' This is a notion or trait seen in his other works. In *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*, Trugeranna (the fictitious wife of Wooreddy; in real life the Tasmanian Truganini), and Ludjee, in *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series, are raped, but not too much sympathy is elicited from the narrator or from the Aboriginal protagonist.

Conversely, the males are not as disenfranchised. They are able to interact (regardless of the extent and albeit, in sometimes, limited measures) with their surroundings. The narrator mimics this: 'I go through the actions of life, like in a dream. Actor and audience. Split personality. I can get outside my skin and look at myself.'[41] In 'Finish,' the same sentiment occurs.

> I dress in my wonderful suit and I look at myself in the mirror; the colour suits me, so I comb my hair, adjust my tie and tell myself I'm someone (that is, someone who has success in the world: whatever that means); but I know I'm a young ex con who is just getting out of boob.[42]

In *Wild Cat Falling*, 'Still, I have this tiny hope that someday someone will listen and nearly understand.'[43] For his perspective is not positive. 'We are nobodies.'[44] The two works mirror

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[40] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 123.
[41] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 4.
[42] Johnson, 'Finish,' 30.
[43] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 39.

aspects of the narrator's despair in wanting to be seen. Again in 'Finish'—

> An ex con who is sick of life, of the world and who wants to go outside full of hope to become more disillusioned and then come back in tears full of despair with all my dreams gone even before I had a chance to dream: and so I contemplate a life in prison—see myself with the rest talking about the jobs I did and the money I had; but I look so vague and lazy, broken down, so nobody believes me—not even myself.[45]

The tone is not uplifting, but creative. This strategy enables Mudrooroo to engage a wider discussion (and assembly) concerning identity and discourse—as long as the reader understands the perspective is universal, that of, primarily, male natives. Such a position might seem more pragmatic than political, but to Mudrooroo, perhaps the goals are the same.

> An important point is that there is not an attempt to rehabilitate traditional culture as such and which, after all, might be an impossible project; but to utilize our traditional storytelling content and structures in an effort to gain a wider readership.[46]

Nonetheless, being familiar with political/satirical literature (especially in a postmodern context), this larger audience is a very sophisticated one. As such, they will still expect a measure of mimicry.[47]

> Mimicry has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. This is because mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, and uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized.[48]

Further, as with Mudrooroo's historical texts, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* and *Master of the Ghost Dancing*, the parodying hue of

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[44] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* 15.
[45] Johnson, 'Finish,' 30.
[46] Mudrooroo, 'Maban Reality,' *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 12.1-2 (1998): 223-237.
[47] A typical post-colonial definition is listed. What should not be lost, however, is since V. S. Naipaul made the term popular with *The Mimic Men* (1967), the term can represent personal dilemma in reality and/or fiction. The conundrum is if one wants to be deemed successful, performing as a coloniser is important, but counter-balancing that is the need to remain 'true' to an ancestral identity.
[48] 'Mimicry,' in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998) 139.

Western 'civility' is very exacting. It must also be acknowledged, however, that there is weakness in this approach. Looking at Wildcat, in *Doin Wild Cat*, he 'returns to the now defunct prison to film a cinematographic portrayal of the book which he wrote about his experiences,'[49] but he does not 'control' his story. In the instance of the film, he is not the director, again in Aboriginal vernacular.

> We elect to believe im, after all ee is the biggest an whitest director/producer we've ever seen, an come all the way from America to spend big bucks an mix with us Abo's to make a filim based on me book. Ee's even told me that, as a special concession to 'you [p]eople', ee would allow me—the writer—to be on the set to see ow a movie is put together.[50]

The same type of pragmatic compromise is shown when thinking about his life. 'I'm caught in memories of those times, those times that enter into me as if it were appenin again, as it did appen again, an then again.'[51] The narrator then, seems lost, barely attempting to make an 'Aboriginal' path for himself. Because of this, the nameless narrator struggles to keep himself unconnected to the urban, Western world around him.

> I soon relax behind the wheel and begin to enjoy myself again. I have a sense of fusion with this machine and have to remind myself how I am always separate and alien from everything and everyone. No ties any more, not even to my mum. That was the hardest to break I guess, but nothing left now since the last time I was out.[52]

Hence he has failed. What helps him detach is one of the more Western, modern iconic symbols of urban life: the automobile. Such surprises are sprinkled throughout the work. When solely ironic, forces the reader to contemplate what type of world this character inhabits. In regard to the formatting, though, the result is less rewarding.

The manner in which the novel is written, often times forces the reader to fill in gaps that a standard format would not require. 'The entire novel takes the form of pastiche of impressions

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[49] Archer-Lean, 'Place,' 205.
[50] Mudrooroo, *Doin Wildcat* 3.
[51] Mudrooroo, *Doin Wildcat* 5.
[52] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 113.

and recollections—flashbacks intermingled with action in the present tense—from a wide variety of sources.'[53] At times these decisions stifle the work. The form does not always hold steady. The result pushes the reader to examine any and all discrepancies for extra clues. As if trying to solve a riddle—instead of immersing oneself into this very strange, sometimes apocalyptical landscape. Additionally, the repetition of maxims and *aperçus* (albeit interesting), undermines the ambitious nature of the text.

Mudrooroo is comfortable with experimental creative writing. One example is the decision to keep the nameless character so devoid of an identity another marginal figure, an 'old rabbiter,' must proclaim his 'place' and family. Yet, even when being 'Jessie Duggan's boy,'[54] he is still separate. Even from the prisoners he knew: 'The others still have their hopes.'[55] As dissembling is a survival tactic, his apathy is just as well, for he feels there is no positive direction to his future. 'Hope is an illusion for squares. I don't fall for it. Don't care any more. I trained myself this way so no phoney emotion can touch me.'[56] The nameless narrator, here, as in, 'Finish' is someone without a space.

> We marched across to the gate. The screw opens it, we pass through. We are free, which is a big joke for we realise that we're out in a society which hates us, with no place to go, with no plans and with sadness tearing at our hearts.[57]

That work, 'Finish,' serves as a blueprint for the type of narrative Mudrooroo wants to explore. His work shows Aboriginal people, who, though largely adrift, want to re-connect with their past, and an Australian society that only wants to govern them and their bodies.

Ultimately, 'nameless' does make a connection to his tribal family. Or, rather, the connection is made for him.

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[53] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 21.
[54] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 121.
[55] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 3.
[56] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 4.
[57] Johnson, 'Finish,' 31.

> I look at the broad, black face in the growing daylight and memory sounds a clear note. The old rabbiter who used to come to our house sometimes—the one my mother warned me about.[58]

By now, he has shot a police officer and is on the run, and coming back to his home town, meeting the old man his mother told him to be leery of—

> He doesn't look dangerous now and probably never was. I expect it was just this tribal relative idea of his that worried Mum. Maybe it was even true, but that side of my heritage must be kept from me at all costs. I must live white and learn to think with a white man's mind.[59]

The old rabbiter tells him about his mother residing at the Noongar camp, and then gives him more insight into his dilemma and heritage.

> WILDCAT: 'I have a dream,' I say, 'but I don't remember when I wake up. A sort of falling dream.'
> OLD RABBITER: 'Might be your granny teach it when you been a little fella. Desert country [. . .] . Belong dreaming time,' he says. 'That cat want to live a long time like the old crow. 'How you don't die?' he asks. I fly up high, high up to the moon. I get young up there, then come down.' That cat look sorry then, 'I got no wings.' The old crow laugh carr-carr. You don't need no wings. You can fly all right. You try now.' See?'[60]

The lesson learned is a spiritual one, placing him on a higher level of consciousness. He (now) knows how to reach his ancestors. Thus, he is given a place, not unlike the bird call connection with Sally Morgan and her maternal grandmother Daisy, in *My Place*.[61] When he leaves, he asks which way is East and is told 'This country knows you all right, son. You keep to the bush.'[62] The advice further validates his place as an Aboriginal person.

Wild Cat Falling ends with him surrendering to the authorities'—though not in a defeated way. 'Before I've always tried to run away. Why not stick around and face up to something for

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[58] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 122.
[59] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 122.
[60] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 126-27.
[61] In Sally Morgan's, *My Place* (1987; Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1988) 443, Daisy explains the importance of this call when she is close to death. 'It was the Aboriginal bird, Sally. God sent him to tell me I'm going home soon. Home to my own land and my own people.'
[62] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 129.

change?'[63] For his new attitude, he receives the grace of now being told the police officer will live. This is a Pyrrhic victory. He knows he is Aboriginal; enlightened in that manner. Yet he is not going to his people (although by the end of *Wild Cat Screaming* he realises he should create a 'mob'), instead he is back where the novel began: gaol. This grim song circle is now complete.

The *Wild Cat* series is not a linear self-discovery text. Instead, the focus directs the reader to contemplate the physical and metaphysical difficulties of being Aboriginal and the limitations imposed by Australian laws and society. Since being conquered, Aboriginal people—and in a larger context, this is a predicament suffered by most Indigenous groups—have had little to no voice (politically speaking), despite working within and outside Australian (Western) institutions. This is not by chance but part of a larger design and ideology—conquerors do not trouble themselves unduly with the pleas of the conquered. By not being allowed (or able) to control the political and/or economic system, the individual (or group) is the more forced to accept dictated parameters as being correct and inevitable—for the system is so much more powerful, there is no other choice. This is the condition (and place) Mudrooroo crafts for the reader.

Hence, like the aimless character, the reader experiences a type of dread and impotency. True, this is only the most limited amount of morass, but the experience can still have a lasting effect. More profoundly though, there is no cathartic moment, no escape from the system—either the reader or any and all Indigenous who fall prey to colonialism. This is also the plight Mudrooroo's characters face. Indeed, the most one can say is that Wild Cat, when older, is left alone—not deemed a 'threat' to proper society anymore. Perhaps this is the only hope Mudrooroo can offer, for his other works, ultimately, follow this same pattern.

[63] Mudrooroo, *Wild Cat Falling* 130.

Long Live Sandawara

Mudrooroo's first historical novel was published in 1979. The trajectory follows up with elements seen in the *Wild Cat* series—notably, vulnerable characters who find themselves placed on the periphery by the centre. The tale is set in the 1970s, chronicling the last days of a displaced group of urban, Aboriginal youth and their contradictory relationship with authority. One member of the group, Tom, is an ex-convict and alcoholic; a condition many Indigenous people have lamented as a disease. 'Liquor is described as a curse introduced by White Australians, which has sapped the strength and purpose of the Blacks.'[64]

Tom is a compromised character; one who is acted upon, but does not act—does not defend himself well. 'A heavy white cop fist had smashed Tom in the jaw for dumb insolence; but that was yesterday and today his dole cheque has arrived to ease his pain.'[65] He is also not a welcomed patron. 'He sits at the bar, finishes a beer and orders another from a scowling barmaid.'[66]

Mudroroo's young male characters, sexually active, suffer from not having stable elders for guidance. They are fatherless, specifically so. Curious then, the text begins with Tom, a possible homage to Mudrooroo's paternal grandfather,[67] as the names are more than coincidental.

> Elizabeth Johnson was the mother of two daughters prior to her marriage to Thomas Johnson. During their union, they produced six more children, two boys and four girls, all of whom still survive at the time of writing. The last of the six, Colin, is the prolific Australian author we recognize today as Mudrooroo.[68]

Also fatherless is Alan, the text's hero, or failed/mock-hero in need: a connection to Wild Cat. 'The relationship between 'Jessie Duggan's boy' and old rabbiter in *Wild Cat Falling*, and Alan

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[64] Adam Shoemaker, 'Sex and Violence in the Black Australian Novel,' *Westerly* 1 (1984): 45-57.
[65] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara (*Sydney: Hyland House, 1979) 1.
[66] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 1.
[67] The fascinating history of Mudrooroo's family heritage has been discussed by notables such as Maureen Clark in 'Mudrooroo and the Death and the Mother,' Cassandra Pybus' 'Black Caesar' and Victoria Laurie's 'Identity Crisis.'
[68] Maureen Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death of the Mother,' *New Literature Review* 40 (2003): 83-102.

and the elder, Noorak, in *Sandawara*,'[69] are similar, since

> both of the old *Nyoongah* men are in touch with their country and their cultural traditions; both have a grip on Aboriginal history and a confident sense of belonging to that history which the young characters can only marvel at.[70]

Another link, and just as sad, is that these heroes do not obtain their freedom from Australian/ Western society.

This is not an indictment of Mudrooroo. Locating his work within the confines of historical realism allows him to attempt a more critical view of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal characters (and motivations). For this he is thought of valiantly (family lineage not withstanding), as utilising fiction and mimicry as a political/literary force. This includes the showing the dissonance amongst Aboriginal people and their supposed role models. Therefore the *Long Live Sandawara* storyline features a seemingly ineffective, but promotable native leader: Ken Rawlings. Yet within this ambitious project of uplifting racial themes and re-positioning of mainstream history, stereotypical characterisations resume—especially those concerning sex.

> The youth manages to get the girl on her back. He gets off her jeans with a lot of help, then plunges ahead. He bangs away and Jane lies beneath him wondering why this activity is supposed to be wonderful.[71]

Shoemaker writes,

> when Alan, the leader of the group rescues Sally and Jane at the holding centre, he symbolically and audaciously makes love to each in the dormitory before helping them escape.[72]

They were waiting for a knight, perhaps, to rescue them, but first must pay with their bodies. 'Consequently, because of this traditional connection, he is described as being by far the most

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[69] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 27-28.
[70] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 28.
[71] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 86.
[72] Shoemaker, 'Sex and Violence,' 45-57.

accomplished lover, despite his young age.'[73] These are not complimentary (or new) depictions. Western discourse 'created' an 'Other,' then 'placed' him/her/those people in the category of being not very bright, hyper-sexed, and criminal minded. Regardless of who uses the trope, that is its history and legacy.

As successful and creative as Mudrooroo's works are, they have not displaced ingrained forms of racial ideology. More, it can be said, it has helped sustain it, which is the problematic, yet symbiotic relationship between the colonised and coloniser. 'The colonised's predicament is, at least partly, shaped and troubled by the compulsion to return a voyeuristic gaze upon Europe.'[74] This produces 'the creative failure of a less than total liberation.'[75] In *Writing From the Fringe*, 'the native writes to show the colonists that he or she has mastered the genre.'[76] His work *has* forced a certain (re)thinking of what is possible within the discourse, by focusing on Aboriginal youths and their being trapped within a colonised system, but not revolutionised the fight.

The novel concentrates on a 'mob' (for Mudrooroo this is a term for grouped Indigenous people) of young people, with Alan, their nominal leader. Others include Tom, who appears a bit of an in/outcast, with Sue, a love interest. A more dynamic though untrustworthy friend to Alan is Ron, who has been credited as being a 'non-Aboriginal.'[77] However, Noorak, re-incarnated as an elder Sandawara, thinks he is Aboriginal. 'Somehow, he's always liked the kid, even though he is a boong,'[78] and Gary, 'a middle-class Anglo-Indian youth running away from his strict

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[73] Shoemaker, 'Sex and Violence,' 45-57.
[74] Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction to Theory* (New York: Columbia UP) 11.
[75] Gandhi 21.
[76] Mudrooroo, *Fringe* 29.
[77] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 42- 43
[78] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 167. Slang for an Aboriginal person. The term is used as well by Sally Morgan's sister, Jill, in *My Place* (1987; Freemantle, Western Australia: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 1988) 121.

dad,'[79] is the only member of the group who is not dependent on the mob. Also, these two, Alan and Gary are not killed.

Of the youth who follow Alan, Gary, the most outsider of the group, does not 'need' Alan's 'leadership' as a substitute for parental guidance. Instead, he has a father who rose to the rank of Major in the Indian army, and comes to take his son away from the mob, all of whom 'crash' at Gary's flat.

> 'Yes Dad,' the subdued Gary answers weakly, thinking that this is as good a way out of the mess as any other. Besides, if he doesn't like the airforce, he can always desert. Consoled by this, he surrenders. 'I'm ready Dad,' he says.[80]

This novel, written after Mudrooroo's positive stint in India, 'I started writing *Long Live Sandawara* when I came back from India,' [81] might be the reason for Gary's withdrawal before the mob attempts a bank heist which culminates in their deaths. But this points to a troubling conclusion: the only types of outsiders who have a chance to lead successful lives are those who have the freedom of movement. This is nearly impossible for many Aboriginal people. Having the ability to voluntarily re-locate presupposes agency—something the down-trodden do not enjoy. In this manner, this 'mob' is as flawed as their 'plan' and leader.

Alan is not entirely trustworthy, as Tom alludes to this at the start of the novel. 'Arrh, you know our Alan, Tom laughs. He'll be weeping, saying he's sorry and denying everything all in one breath. He's a cunning little snake and can con a rabbit out of its burrow.'[82] It is a point to note that in none of Mudrooroo's texts do the minority clearly win and/or are left alone, not to be incorporated into 'proper' Australian society. However, it is a goal to strive for.

This outside wanting inside dilemma/dynamic has been commented on by many other

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[79] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 3.
[80] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 99.
[81] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 156.
[82] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 2.

thinkers. Thus—

> In *For Marx*, Louis Althusser argues that ideology is not an illusory veil (false consciousness), but a 'system of representations' (images, myths, ideas or concepts) through which we live, in an imaginary way, our real conditions of existence. Our lived experience is 'imaginary' in the sense that it takes place within, and is mediated through, language and representation.[83]

There is a chasm, then, between the action and how it is recognised by one's being.

> There is no 'true' ideology (implicit in Marx's notion of false consciousness). Language and signifying practices mean we *must* (author's emphasis) live our 'real conditions' in an imaginary way.[84]

The images, in addition to the re-imagery, are as problematic as the author in creating a positive outcome.

The novel, then, cannot portray Sandawara, accurately. Further, the real Sandawara was not always a hero. He was a police tracker who later *turned* rebel, combating the system, releasing prisoners and fleeing into the Kimberley Ranges. This means Alan's 'skinwalking'[85] into a less complicated, mythical younger Sandawara, and Noorak's into the older version are examples of James Procter's trap.[86] Worse, this younger Sandawara does not achieve any glory or fame, settling on infamy. 'Rather than sacrificing himself for his people—as Sandawara did in the 1890s—Alan sacrifices his people for himself.'[87]

The supposed impetus behind Alan's mob's machinations is to secure a location of their own. They do not have a defined place, except when at Gary's crash pad. Being parentless they seek Rawlings, an Aboriginal leader, but he is depicted as compromised.

> Rawlings is on the way to a safe seat in parliament and has listened to Alan's plea with a slight sense of being upstaged. He thinks over his reply. As a forthcoming politician he

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[83] James Procter, *Stuart Hall* (London: Routledge, 2004) 45.
[84] Procter 45.
[85] Judy Scales-Trent, 'Notes of a White Black Woman,' *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror,* eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP, 1997) 475-481.
[86] Procter 45.
[87] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 33.

> has a supply of platitudes which can be trotted forth. [. . .] His party finds him an asset on the platform, a symbol of Australia; but to the boys he's heavy and inert. The solid hand of adult authority. He's made it and knows it, and to these kids, that's somehow a sellout.[88]

After attempting aid from the only politician they know, Alan and his crew turn to bank robbery. Along with this new idea comes the presumptive shedding or their old ways—as a means of gathering new strength, identity. Tom, like a brave bushranger, is renamed the 'Captain,' but he is not comfortable with the name, for it does not sound appropriate. Noorak, resurrected/renamed as Old Sandawara, then explains its significance.

> The white fellows took him away from his land and up north, but he became one of the local people. Everyone knew him as Captain. He was Sandawara's friend, his right hand man and a true freedom fighter.[89]

This placates Tom, though Sandawara does admit he was a 'foreigner.'[90] Not unlike Thomas Johnson, from the United States, the alleged grandfather of Colin Johnson, also known as Mudrooroo. Such (re)turning might seem self-indulgent, but Shoemaker answers why he recycles characters and incorporates those with 'his' family names.

> These resurrections and (re)creations are important in Mudrooroo's work. As is so often the case with Mudrooroo's fiction, the phoenix of a new book rises out of the ashes of an old one. Or, more specifically, the final chapter of a novel opens up creative possibilities that are explored far more fully in a larger text.[91]

Because of the concept of resurrection, instead of relying on vampire lore to explain Mudrooroo's more morbid muse inspirations, perhaps Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a better fit. 'I collected bones from charnel-houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the secret frame.'[92] Such perspective gives more of an explanation to why his characters, over-all, ultimately fail at their endeavours—they do not know from whence they

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[88] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 46.
[89] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 117.
[90] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 117.
[91] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 27.
[92] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1812; London: Aldine House, 1941) 48.

come. Hence, the nameless character who becomes 'Wild Cat'—this is not his original name—does not escape the psychological damage from being lost and incarcerated. More, an even worse fate awaits the primary characters of *Long Live Sandawara*. They are all killed after attempting a bank robbery in masks that provide no talisman-like protection.

The masks are appropriations of characters known in the West as horrible monsters needing destruction. 'The leader has been given the best mask, that of a ferocious black, unfortunately African.'[93] Perhaps not 'unfortunate,' but their attempts are child-like. The characters fail to understand that skin-walking as evil Western icons is a doomed gambit. 'Ellewara [Greg] turns into a wolfman; Kangawara [Sue] into a hideous old witch; Lillewara [Rob] into Frankenstein's monster.'[94] Also confusing, the Western masks come *after* their adoption of more Aboriginal names, as Alan explains. 'I've decided that we should drop our white fellow names and have Nungar names.'[95] As leader, of course, he chooses young 'Sandawara.'[96]

Long Live Sandawara is a 'battler' novel with a supposedly Aboriginal ethos. But their resistance is futile.[97] The band's positions are hopeless in both power and mission. This follows and their leader, Alan, is more than interested in his own well-being.

> Alan's departure to become the new Sandawara rings hollow, and he is falsely devoid of any remorse for the suicidal mission he inspires his naive followers to join [. . .]. The modern Sandawara is no hero and the author's coupling of what is to come with the promise of Allan's 'manhood' does not inspire confidence that his future will necessarily be any more heroic.[98]

In the end, Alan, having orchestrated the deaths of his mob, leaves with Noorak in search of their

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[93] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 140.
[94] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 140.
[95] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 117.
[96] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 117.
[97] Popular refrain used in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The term is used for a civilization called the Borg, a cybernetic race which has the ability to force other species into assimilation.
[98] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 33.

(true) Aboriginal home. As Shoemaker argues, 'the key point is that there is a continuum of Aboriginal resistance to the European invasion.'[99]

It remains to be seen how this position is served if the majority of the Indigenous characters are gunned down after the betrayal by one of their own. And this occurs while the 'hero' abandons them for the quest of helping an elder back to 'ancestral' lands. The values of Aboriginal society seemed to have been twisted, which is partly what makes Mudrooroo's next novel, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World*, so invaluable, even though it stands alone. The text is a bridge between seeing the Indigenous assured in their self-worth immediately before invasion, and it also gives an understanding of how and why (after first contact with Europeans) they lead fractured, broken lives.

The contemporary problems and context for Mudrooroo's characters stem from interactions with a more militarily powerful English, they then constituting an inflexible Australian authority. *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* chronicles their initial destruction and introduces the obliviousness and ambivalence to such a calamitous downfall. Of course Mudrooroo has not stopped here. The next project, the *Master of Dreaming*/vampire trilogy does the same—while incorporating several elements of colonialism not well understood or mentioned. Many (opportunists) had left England (and many of the other 'Old World' countries) for nothing better than the chance at a better life—becoming rich, in other words. The means did not matter; it was the goal that held them fast. This motivation could also be seen in Christian missionaries, setting out to 'convert' for the good of the 'savage soul,' but, ultimately, it had only helped in subduing/conquering native populations. For these reasons, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* is still the more central bridge between how things were and how they will, very likely, stay.

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[99] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 32.

Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World

Published in1983, this is another historic and symbolic novel. The concern this time is with the treatment of Tasmanian peoples by the English and then by later Australia authorities. The novel is important in understanding the story arcs to come.

> I cling to the idea that the new series would hardly be conceivable without the gently ironic subtlety of *Doctor Wooreddy* and the ambiguous war against time of its sad protagonist, which anticipate and make possible Mudrooroo's subsequent work of subversive 'incorporation' and 'reframing' of the master-narratives of Australian colonial history and literature.[100]

This destruction and war is seen through three characters, primarily Wooreddy, Trugeranna, and Ummarrah.

Mudrooroo's ability to de-territorialise,—then re-territorialize this era—is not solely due to his remarkable abilities as a fiction writer, as formidable as they are. He clearly understands that there are inconsistencies, gaps in history, in the colonial narrative, both of which are still taught as truth. To that end, Mudrooroo is at his most subversive when he parodies Western culture and its sensibilities by de-centering conventional/master narratives, and then by posing different interpretations of the times and their outcomes. Here he does it with shaman/maban reality, instead of Western science or ethno-cultural/anthropological theories. Annalisa Oboe writes,

> *Sandawara* and *Doctor Wooreddy* conjugate the archaeological effort of the historian and the imaginative power of the fiction writer in order to reactivate a moment in the past which might yield a powerful vision, a gift for the present from a long-lost time.[101]

In a positive review, however there is concern; it is not entirely clear whose/which 'long-lost' time is being retrieved and re-examined. If the records belong to the master narrative—(which it must, since the work clashes with written narratives),—there might be a slight

[100] Annalisa Oboe, 'Doctor Wooreddy's War Against Time,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo,* ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 103.
[101] Oboe, 'Wooreddy,' 85.

displacement, mimicry, but not enough to erase what is believed to be the truth. If it is with Indigenous time, can it be legitimate in a Western format? Such questions do not diminish the author's attempt, however, but speak to the enormity (and perhaps impossibility) of the challenge.

> It is because of this double concern – for a past pregnant with present meaning and a present with its roots in the past – as well as to discuss the question of how an Aboriginal writer may actively and creatively intervene in the contemporary debate about Australian history and identity, that Mudrooroo turned to historical fiction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Writing fictionally about the past somehow answered his twofold aim: on the one hand the awfulness of man's inhumanity to man had to be dealt with, 'until it becomes accepted as part of official Australian history'; on the other, it was necessary to help Aboriginal people realize that 'many of their problems are based on a past which still lives within them.[102]

The re-working begins with the first chapter 'The Omen,' and it includes the imagery and identity that Wild Cat and Alan only heard about. 'Wooreddy as a child and a young man belonged to Bruny Island.'[103] The protagonist lives in a space further out than even the rural; he belongs to a land without European boundaries. 'Wooreddy belonged to a rich island.'[104] However, there is a danger in and on the water. 'The surrounding sea was dangerous and filled with dangerous scale fish.'[105] The British (and later Australian Administrations), who came by ship, conquered the people and destroyed the land. So much that when it is Wooreddy's time to die all is lost; he sits alone on a boat, silently. His reduction is so profound at first no one knows of his demise.

> He sat there until one of the sailors who carried food to them nudged him. The old Aborigine fell over on his side. The sailor saw that he was dead and brought an officer. The captain was informed, and he decided to bury the old crow ashore [. . .] They rowed to the island and dug a shallow grave in the sand. They rolled the body in and shovelled sand over it. No prayers were wasted on the old heathen, and the captain, after strolling

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[102] Oboe, 'Wooreddy,' 85.
[103] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World (*New York: Ballantine Books, 1983) 1.
[104] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 1.
[105] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 1.

over the barren island, went back to the ship.[106]

In a lament, Trugeranna sees Wooreddy's phoenix like ability. 'Suddenly a spark of light shot up from the beach and flashed through the dark sky towards the evening star. As it did so, the clouds closed again and the world vanished.'[107] This transcendental quality is also seen in the poem, 'The Birds Have All Vanished,' by Li Po.

> The birds have vanished into the sky,
> and now the last cloud drains away.
> We sit together, the mountain and me,
> until only the mountain remains.[108]

The dismay is not in 'vanishing' into a void—be it a darkness, nothingness or solely a state of non-being. Such beliefs are seen, by those with a strong sense of agency, as other ways of existence. But what if the person (or group) is being hunted? The difference (then) is that *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* is an apocalyptical story, similar to those spoken by the Indigenous in the 'New World,' of death coming from the sea. And as those, this will end in tragedy as well.

The clan knows this is the work of the Evil One (*Ria Warrawah*). 'It was the times.'[109] Included in this worldview is the result of being dictated to by British insistence on the Indigenous being corralled and then colonised. Hence the perspective of the Indigenous is that of a harried people, who, nonetheless, want to be free–again. But first they must understand how 'different' their captors' culture is from what they have always known.

> In *Doctor Wooreddy*, the writer exploits this conceptual and formal framework to the full: the confrontation between Aborigines and British invaders coincides with a collision between two interpretative systems structured around different concepts of time.[110]

Thus the strength of this text comes from the history being told from the colonised. This clash is

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[106] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 212.
[107] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 213.
[108] Li Po, 'The Birds Have Vanished,' trans. Sam Hamill, *A Book of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, ed. Czeslaw Milosz (London: Harcourt Brace, 1996) 277.
[109] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 9.
[110] Oboe 'Wooreddy,' 95.

one between maban/shaman reality and 'European natural reality.'[111]

> The cultural conflict here, is cast as a clash between Aboriginal Dreamtime and Western chronology, and – partly because the viewpoint is Wooreddy's through most of the narrative and because the first system is proved more flexible and hospitable than the second – the culture of the indigenous Tasmanians, always considered backward from a white European viewpoint, figures as more advanced and 'civilized' than the British one.[112]

But the depiction of the Tasmanian as backward—or very conservative culturally—is a view also shared by the narrator, for 'In the days of tribulation and when the world was ending, tradition and custom were comforts.'[113] This leads to questioning why Mudrooroo believes they did not survive. The idea of them as not being able to confront large challenges is mirrored in an interview.

> One thing I noticed about Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, just a feeling I picked up: that it was extremely conservative. Of course they were separated 6000 years ago from the other tribes and they were, more or less, driven back. So I saw them as being much more conservative and less open to change than the mainland Aborigines.[114]

First contact can be catastrophic, though here a bit of condescension appears in Mudrooroo's assessment. This points to a weakness in his creative world view. At times it is patronizing and sexist—elements he has spent his career rallying against. Mainly, though, Mudrooroo focuses on abuses committed by Western/Australian cultural power. This mitigates those charges, but the concern remains.

Understanding this, it is important to see the bulk of his work using a reversed cultural mirror. Thus, instead of the British being civilized, bringing a new way of life, they are ghosts, brought forth from the (evil) sea. Also, the Aborigine is represented as being human instead of a savage, sub-human. More, the invaders destroyed/raped the land and spirit. 'The ghosts had

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[111] Mudrooroo, 'Maban Reality,' 223-237.
[112] Oboe 'Wooreddy,' 95.
[113] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 8.
[114] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 157.

twisted and upturned everything.'[115] The clan leader's wife was raped then murdered by the *num*[116] who had landed on Bruny Island.

> What had happened had nothing to do with her, her husband or her children. It had been an act of *Ria Warrawah*—unprovoked, but fatal as a spear cast without reason or warning. No one could protect her, and thus Mangana broke his spears and cast the pieces on the blazing pyre. This shows that he, and all who were associated with him, were at the mercy of forces which he could only try and propitiate through magic.[117]

Such was only another omen as to what was to befall him and the tribe. 'This was not the last tragedy Mangana was to suffer, or Wooreddy to witness'[118] –as he watched the raping of a woman who would later become his second wife.

The acceptance of the *num's* rising presence and of the Aboriginal decline forces Wooreddy to become a native informant to the representative of British colonization, George A. Robinson. This is chronicled after Wooreddy has fled his native land. 'The island was haunted and unsafe to humans. He must escape before he became a victim of the demon or the ghosts.'[119]

He does with his family, but understands that fleeing will not be enough. 'In the long run, to survive meant accepting that the ghosts were here to stay and learning to live amongst them, or at least next to them until—until the ending of the world!'[120] From this as their collective history, the defeatist attitudes of Wild Cat and Alan have their genesis. Generations before, their heritage had been completely disrupted. They had not travelled far geographically from their diaspora place, but they had been forced to abandon its spiritual, metaphysical stability, making them as broken as the land, as numb as Wooreddy's crew was. 'His wife and children huddled in

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[115] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 27.
[116] Joanne Tompkins, 'It all depends on what story you hear: Historiographic Metafiction and Colin Johnson's *Dr. Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World* and Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*,' *Modern Fiction Studies* 36.4 (1990): 483-498. *Project* MUSE. [Félix G Woodward], [Clarksville], [TN]. 18 Nov. 2009 Web. One of the most interesting plays with language is the use of the Bruny word *num*, ghost, and the frequent recurrence of the word, 'numb.'
[117] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 10.
[118] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 10.
[119] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 12.
[120] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 20.

terror at his side, but the good Doctor Wooreddy donned his cloak of numbness and observed the scene with all the detachment of a scientist.'[121] Victims use this strategy to protect themselves when overwhelmed. By being able to separate from the abuse, they are able to keep some part of their psyche inviolable. However, Wooreddy's detachment ensures the violation of his future second wife. 'On the soft, wet beach-sand a naked brown-skinned woman was being assaulted by four ghosts.'[122] Here, looking at the penises of the rapists, Wooreddy is more inclined to think about the body and motivations of the *num*, rather than of his helping Trugernanna. After the rape she looks at him and spits.[123] Wooreddy is perplexed at her behaviour, wondering why, if they raped her, she should seem angry at him.

The problems with the *nums* are their violent, capricious and rapacious behaviours. Such depictions create sympathy for the Aboriginal characters. However, as in Mudrooroo's earlier texts, there seems to be a high level of ambivalence (from the narrator's tone), whenever Aboriginal females endure humiliation. Instead they (almost exclusively) represent muted sexual degradation—when not being seen as traitors.[124]

> The woman [Trugernanna] accepted her fate with a numbness worthy of Wooreddy. In the past she had found sex to be a weapon useful for survival and felt little pleasure in it. She gave her body in exchange for things and that was where the importance lay. Her husband's love-making meant less than the rape that had been inflicted on her. She hated the men for doing that, and was indifferent to what Wooreddy could or would do.[125]

This is as close the narrator comes to explaining the horrors lived by Aboriginal women.

It is true that Mudrooroo is under no obligation to write solely from the standpoint of Aboriginal women. However, for one who had been billed as a speaker of, and on, all things Aboriginal, a mantle he wore proudly, it is a curious omission.

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[121] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 21.
[122] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 21.
[123] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 23.
[124] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* (1991; New York: HarperCollins, 1994) 80-81.
[125] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 49-50.

The narrative continues with Wooreddy seeing and becoming friends with one who would only brings more disaster: 'Meeter Ro-bin-un.'

> He accepted Meeter Ro-bin-un as his very own *num* with the same readiness with which Robinson had accepted the fact that he was destined to save these poor, benighted people. At first, Wooreddy was overjoyed. He had found a protector and also a subject for study. He tested out the relationship by making a gesture and then walking off into the bush. He was happy to find the ghost following, but his happiness disappeared when the ghost marched past him and took the lead. Robinson was defining their relationship from the beginning.[126]

While there were other slights, Wooreddy, being a pragmatic realist, rationalises, thus 'it seemed a small price to pay for survival.'[127] One of the losses was Trugeranna to Robinson. She became a possession of Robinson/Fada (as were the Irish prisoners he brought from Europe), especially whenever they went on expedition. 'Behind them came the Aborigines and lastly the bunch of convicts. They still carried most of the supplies and managed with their groans and slowness to evade the heartily detested Robinson.'[128]

> George Robinson is the parodied (historical) figure in the text, as Shoemaker stresses:
>
> One of the real strengths of Johnson's novel is his wonderful lampooning of George Augustus Robinson, officially the Protector of Aborigines (1839-1849), whose policies ultimately ensured the sterility and near genocide of the race he was allegedly preserving.[129]

The historical George Augustus Robinson (1791 – 1866) was a bricklayer and lay preacher. Though a foolish social climber in the novel, he was commanded to find and protect Aboriginal Tasmanians. The historical backdrop for the novel being,

> the Black War in Tasmania, the confrontation between the Tasmanian Aborigines and the European invaders between 1829 and 1831. He comes to prominence after the failure of the infamous 'Black Line.'[130]

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[126] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 33. Here the Robinson character has a dual role. The first, a ghost, by being white, and a re-interpreted, historical character. Both Robinsons are destructive; on an individual level and as a proxy for the ravages of Western civilization.
[127] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 35.
[128] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 70.
[129] Shoemaker, 'Sex and Violence,'45-57.
[130] Gerry Turcotte, 'Remastering the Ghosts: Mudrooroo and Gothic Reconfigurations,' *Mongrel Signatures:*

A character well deserved for ridicule, if one were re-casting the historical narrative—

> George Augustus Robinson, destined by God to make the Aborigines the most interesting and profitable part of his life, leered at the forbidden fruits of the bare-breasted maiden who conjured up romantic visions of beautiful South Sea islands where missionaries laboured for the salvation of delightful souls. On this island and on the larger one of Van Diemen's Land, he too would be such a missionary.[131]

Robinson's worldview effects all around him. Hence, the white labourers, prisoners ordered to do his bidding, did not fare well either. This prompts a greater appreciation for the historical observations seen in Mudrooroo's projects. Not merely settling for chronicling the suffering of Aboriginal people, he incorporates that of Irish convicts, whose fate was often not much better. This was in an era the British had little respect for them as well. 'There is a historical analogy between the black slaves of an earlier epoch and the domestic workers of the Victorian period as symbols of class.'[132] This is why the convicts have similar problems (as the Aboriginal people) and like attitudes towards Mr. Robinson.

> Behind his back, the convict crew twisted their faces in mockery. Some of them had endured a visit from him in prison and were familiar with the style of his deliverance. They described it, in their colourful way, as a 'load of shit'. Perhaps it was their contempt which had driven George Augustus Robinson to the greener pastures of Aboriginal welfare,[133]

where he was charged to 'help,' yet, ultimately overseeing, their deaths.

Robinson has a condescending view of his men too, as he had for Aboriginals. And so Mudrooroo, then, by parodying Robinson—and thus imperialism—gives another layer missing from the deconstruction of the master narrative. Also, by rendering Robinson a fool, he shows the Western European worldview as something other than civilised or helpful. It is like a plague,

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Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo, ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 132.
[131] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 34.
[132] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 113. Curious title for the reference is to an influential toiletries' brand name that dates to the late 1700s. The products became better known during World War Two, via Britain, for, according to their website, (www.imperialleather.co.uk/our-story/our-history) it had the ability to last longer. A theme deodorants use today.
[133] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 32.

as is seen later in the character Amelia Fraser, herself a vampire.[134] Robinson's ineptness can also be seen in his domestic life, as his wife exclaims.

> Haven't you had enough of them by now? I should have stayed in London. I've never got used to these wild places. Why don't we go home where we belong?' the woman cried, her face red and twitching.[135]

Martha is in a compromised moral position, being working poor even if she is white; she does not have the talent or skill to create a better, more healthy relationship. Nonetheless, she does force a confession. Robinson's reply tells of his real motivations—which are the same reasons for colonization: profit not found in the mother country.

> Because I have yet been made eligible to receive a pension when I retire from government service, and my assets are insufficient to allow me to live in any degree of comfort. Martha, I have outgrown my humble origins, and will never return to the bricklaying trade.[136]

The revelation does nothing to help his marriage, however. Even after his being promoted, the weight of foreign domesticity weakens his wife. 'Mrs. Robinson lay trying to rest on the sofa. She lay there like a bloated white whale.'[137] In this manner Robinson—a re-incarnated Ahab of *Moby Dick*—is close to having killed the whale. 'The months her husband had left her alone on an island filled by death and despair had sickened her. She was dying, but no-one knew it.'[138] Then, on the journey back to England, Martha does die,—one more casualty, while under the pathetic protection of Robinson. Martha had attempted protest and expressed her fears, but in the end, had no one to aid her.

Despite it being a tragic novel, not all its characters are as easily resigned to their fate as Wooreddy and Martha. The warrior, Ummarrah, who comes into the novel later, is the opposite

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[134] The character comes into prominence in Mudrooroo's *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series.
[135] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 158.
[136] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 158.
[137] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 182.
[138] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 182.

of Wooreddy, plotting around and against Robinson, and ever waiting to 'get beyond Macquarie Harbour where he knew the country and could travel safely.'[139] Sailing to Robinson's ghost station:

> Ummarrah, who belonged to the Stoney Creek Nation, explained in staccato sentences shot out from the depths of his barrel chest, how he came to be on ship. He and four others were out on a guerilla operation and had been captured. They were taken and locked in a ghost shelter (gaol) in the ghost town of 'Richmond'. There they had remained for some weeks until he volunteered to join Robinson's party. As soon as he reached familiar country, he would kiss it goodbye and go on to rejoin what resistance forces remained.[140]

Even when it is his time to be executed, he is defiant, the way one would expect a warrior to be.

> I am like Wooreddy, I don't care a fig for anything. This world is yours and you can have the ruins. I will walk with Wooreddy and forget all this. I have three heads and only one of them belongs to you—that one I lose on the gallows. The second one will go to my homeland and the third to the grave.[141]

Such a stance does lift Wooreddy as he provides a rebuttal to the apparent defeat suffered by his friend, yelling back into the crowd, 'That person is a human being, sir, and perhaps a better man than some of you.'[142]

In examining the calamity befalling the Tasmanian Aboriginals, including their finest warrior, there is another character and a comparative text that comes to mind. Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart,* the Nigerian novel by Chinua Achebe. This text chronicles the downfall of the Umuofia tribe (in the story, the most militarily powerful and respected) at the hands of the British—in a similar pattern to what happened to Aboriginals. The (native) people were 'conquered' by an aggressive, inflexible culture fortified by an accomplished, military force. As for the writers, it is true they belonged to different classes—Achebe was from a respectable family and received a university degree. However, as with *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*, the

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[139] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 71.
[140] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 63.
[141] Mudrooroo, Doctor Wooreddy's *Prescription* 209.
[142] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 210.

measure and impact is far greater than for its initial audience. Achebe's seminal work, similarly, has a larger purpose than just attempting to 'signal, at long last to end Europe's imposition of a derogatory narrative upon Africa.'[143] This is a similar point made by Mudrooroo and Shoemaker with *Wildcat Falling* chronicling the 'ways of seeing and living'[144] of Aboriginal people, not for them as much as non-Aboriginals. This is also true for *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* in that another Indigenous group is shown to be as worthy of respect as any in the West. Similarly, *Things Fall Apart* gives an incredible account of a fictional tribe: the Umuofia, [still known as representative of the Igbo nation[145]], for those who only know of Europe's flawed 'understanding' of Africa.

As important as the texts are, however, it must also be acknowledged that this same Europe (and its leading writers) has given each its structure. Though understood as an 'authentic re-telling,' Mudrooroo alluding to Samuel Beckett in *Wild Cat Screaming,* and *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* and so challenging the conversion narrative of Classics like *Robinson Crusoe*[146] underscores the intimate relationship between 'Western' and Aboriginal society—and not a severing of them. Perhaps more striking, *Things Fall Apart* takes its title (and angst) from W. B. Yeats' poem, the 'Second Coming.'

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are filled with passionate intensity.[147]

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[143] Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 45.
[144] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 18.
[145] Achebe, *Home and Exile* 5.
[146] Tompkins, 'It all depends,' 483-498.
[147] William Butler Yeats, 'Second Coming' 3 Aug. 2010 < http://www.potw.org/archive/potw351.html.>

Hence, another European foot path is followed by the native. *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* could not have been written without European/Christian contact. True, the relationship proves disastrous for the Indigenous, but not for its author. Another similarity, as between those novels, is having a defeated warrior. In *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*, Ummarrah, though 'a man of action, not of theory'[148], is no match for dispelling the *num*—indeed, he is hanged.[149] Such outcomes are 'tragic mantras' in Mudrooroo's world, for those struck are at first seen with such vitality, that defeat does not seem possible. Then, the reader is reminded of the total brutality of colonization.

Ummarrah had made attempts to remain pure of spirit but failed. His world was dying. 'Despite his fight to retain his Aboriginal life, Ummarrah even dies in a *num* fashion, losing all Aboriginal dignity.'[150] Thus, Ummarrah 'felt a numbness creeping through his bones. His zest for life strove to reassert itself and failed,'[151] because he had been infected with the 'num' disease.

Similarly, Okonkwo, through physical prowess, had been the pride of his tribe, for, 'as a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat,'[152] could not defeat European encroachment. After becoming despondent over the incursion of English culture and his impotency to rally his tribe, he hangs himself.[153] This being such an affront in Umuofia, he does not receive a respectable burial. No one sings his praises. Instead, his best friend (Obierika) provides an explanation of Okonkwo's fallen status. [He was] 'one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You [the English] drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried

[148] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 64.
[149] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 211-212.
[150] Tompkins, 'It all depends,' 483-498.
[151] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 209.
[152] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958; New York: Random House, 1994) 3.
[153] Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 207.

like a dog.'[154]

The Indigenous' new world order, being so thoroughly penetrated after first contact, is one never independent of that relationship. This is why when the Other 'tells' his or her story, s(he) must appropriate structures, insights from the hegemony it struggles against. Hence, the distance sought is not achieved, but the different versions still give alternate ways to view the master narrative. Ultimately, however, cross-cultural exchange is no defense for over-coming shifts in fealty. 'Resistance is futile.'[155]

Before the British and missionary, the Umuofia had been the most powerful and aggressive tribe. They were like Mangana's clan in being able to control their destiny, before *Ria Warrawah* brought about the end. So as with many of the Indigenous in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*, Okonkwo becomes numb with this understanding: that the end is coming for his people.

Albeit from different parts of the world, Achebe and Mudrooroo characterization of Indigenous pride and identity, versus Western incursion, are so very similar. Also, the writing styles are Western. Regardless, they capture the subtlety of the insidious control of the mind by colonial ideology. These same great conflicts can be found elsewhere in the greater British colonial canon as in so often Mudrooroo's array of fiction. What he has been able to do though, that many, including Achebe has not, is write over a larger span of time. What must also be acknowledged is the high quality of the texts; comprising a library of pride, history, loss and longings, from all Indigenous people. This type of talent and energy is due a fidelity to the intrinsic worth of those who are not readily seen or respected and the field of letters.

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[154] Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* 208.
[155] Popular refrain used in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Master of the Ghost Dreaming: A Novel. Book One

Published in 1991, this work revisits the ongoing calamities from first contact already seen in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the World*. For 'There is an intriguing relationship between Mudrooroo's 1983 novel, *Wooreddy*, and *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, his 1991 return to the Tasmanian theme.'[156] Mudrooroo is now able to expand the ways in which the island's peoples attempt to survive after invasion, both physically and spiritually—and not with the same Indigenous characters. However, never far from the teachings or musing of canonical literature, Mudrooroo continues to pay homage. In this series it is to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* with passing references (throughout) to whaling.[157] Though this particular pattern, with Melville, began in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*.[158]

Nevertheless, the transferences are creative and very informative. Wooreddy is now replaced with Jangamuttuk, who separates from the *num* and destroys their camp. Wadawaka, an African, is accepted into the Aboriginal community, after a ritual conversion, is similar to Ummarrah. With this character, the plight of Africans (and by extension black Americans) is also introduced. By widening his character pool, Mudrooroo's rendering of the more brutal side of England's/Christian missionary fervor at 'civilizing' the darker world is so masterfully done.

Ludjee now takes the place of Trugeranna. She enjoys a larger role (than Trugeranna had) within the group, being more mature and, of an independent spirit. This depiction includes, as her totem of a Manta Ray, the saving of Wadawaka (Leopard) and Jangamuttuk (Goanna) during a symbolic Dreamtime episode—

> Goanna and Leopard (their totems) sought for footing, but found none. They began sinking down and down. Ludjee realised the peril they were in. Manta Ray alone was

[156] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 67.
[157] Wadawaka fades (and flies) out of *Moby Dick* with the beckoning of his 'lover,' Amelia Fraser. Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1999) 178.
[158] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 182.

> able to move through the fluid. She requested her to move next to Goanna's head on which Jangamuttuk perched. He slid off onto the back of Manta Ray. She then swam next to Leopard and received Wadawaka onto her broad back. Safe, they severed the mental connection binding them to their Dreaming companions who had almost disappeared from sight.[159]

Yet she is still narrated as not being 'true' for all things Aboriginal. Wadawaka thinks she is too close to Fada.

> Wadawaka's eyes flashed, but he kept his peace. He had been with Ludjee and listened to her story. She had suffered in much the same way as African women had, but seemingly bore no bitterness. This was strange to him. His mother hated the white devils. How could this woman meekly turn the other cheek and side with her captor?[160]

For the Great Conciliator, in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*,[161] Mr. George Robinson, is back as Fada and his spouse is Mada (Martha). Their low 'religious' beliefs and actions also continue. This forces the reader into a re-thinking of European morality, — especially when compared to the high spiritual culture of Aboriginal people.

Master of the Ghost Dancing also showcases the extensive literary library Mudrooroo references in creating his novels. In doing this he shows how potential Aboriginal sensibilities could/will soon have to reconstruct the Australian national narrative. 'Myth and legends are terms loaded with inferior connotations, but that such labels can be positively re-imagined in terms of a foundational canon or nationalist narratives for Australian culture.'[162] The first example comes from the introduction, one that can be imagined around a campfire, or sitting on the deck of a boat, about to sail away to a worse fate:

> Morning Star had shifted from its course and had drifted far from the dawn. It continued to shine, continued to be a beacon, but became not the harbinger of the morning, of the light, but a marker of the density of the night which has overtaken us. It illuminates our misery and tugs our souls far from day. Our spirits roam the realm of the ghosts—unfriendly land where trees and plants, insects and serpents, animals and humans wither

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[159] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* (1991; New York: HarperCollins, 1994) 103-04.
[160] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 80-81.
[161] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 182.
[162] Archer-Lean, 'Place,' 214.

> and suffer.[163]

There is an awful sense of forboding here. The setting, as so fully described, is also horribly reminiscent of another location.

> The *Nellie*, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.[164]

Thus began another tale with an unknown destination.

> The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharpley peaked, with gleams of varnished spirits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless.[165]

Critics such as Achebe, though agreeing with the influence of *Heart of Darkness*, as a treatment of the colonial, also worry at its representation of the native.

> *Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant beastiality.[166]

However, this work is one filled with satirical musings. What is occurring in Conrad's text is a re-examination of the Enlightenment ideal. 'Conrad brings us face to face with the disillusionment that many twentieth-century thinkers continue to confront, although much of the culture operates by trying to forget it.'[167] This may be seen/heard in Marlow's iconic and reverberating phrase, 'And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth.'[168] *Master of the Ghost Dancing* has this same 'disillusionment,' but not it is from the point of view of the

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[163] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 1.
[164] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Ross C Murfin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989) 17.
[165] Conrad 17.
[166] Achebe, 'An Image of Africa,' *Research in African Literatures* 9.1 (1978): 1-15.
[167] Brook Thomas, 'Preserving and Keeping Order by Killing Time in *Heart of Darkness*,' *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Ross C Murfin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989) 238.
[168] Conrad 19.

Indigenous of Tasmania or Australia. They were forced to leave what they knew (by the dictates of missionary 'progress') and to flee into a space filled with spiritual dread and of an unknowable quality. Yet their 'odyssey' is for any home, though none to be seen on the horizon.

This is why Mudrooroo would use the name 'Morning Star,' with its connection to Lucifer, the 'light bearer.' The allusions to Western sensibilities are not solely parodying tactics, but conventional techniques for foreshadowing other (too well-known) disasters to be faced by Indigenous people.

> Pulled by Evening Star into the realm of ghosts, only some of us live on, kept alive by our hope that we shall escape this plane of fear and pain. All round us is the darkness of the night; all around us is an underlying silence of a land of death.[169]

The new land/Promised Land the Tasmanians are searching for will not be attainable. This (associative) mirroring works to induce a contextual bond, and, further, to underscore the destructive nature of white/Christian encroachment. As Shoemaker shows well—

> Mudrooroo's 1983 novel had shown up the multitude of ironies in the missionary process. There, Robinson's version of Christianity (glib as it might be) seems to succeed. However, this is only on the most superficial levels and is undercut by the fact that all of his 'sable friends' rebel against his strictures, poke fun at his foibles and eventually die under his supposed care.[170]

Thus, *Master of the Ghost Dancing* critiques the hypocrisy of class and religion, not only on the Island, but as the motivating factors that had convinced Fada (pronounced in non-standard English in the text, but means 'Holy' Father) to immigrate, in addition to getting Mada (pronounced in non-standard English in the text, but means 'Holy' Mother) pregnant. In his native East London, Fada was not a religious man, but well-known to drink, to frequent bars and search for social elevation.

> It—now she realised—had always been like that. The only reason he had married her was that she was above him, and so he had thought that by marrying her he would

[169] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 1.
[170] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 68.

automatically rise to her level.[171]

Fada is, essentially, a social climber—not a man of the cloth. Even though, by going to the Island (Eden re-styled), he can be thought of as an Adam. More, the couple even refer to each other in a Biblical manner. Indeed, when they first meet, in the tavern Mada attends with her parents, she glibly says, 'Anyway why we gabbin' on like this? Don't even know you from Adam.'[172] To show his wit, Fada then answers, 'An' you from Eve.'[173] From this the two became very interested in each other. So much that later, 'she let the boy through the back door and hurriedly they got down to it.'[174] Their dalliances are further proof of libidinous—not religious or chaste lifestyles. 'They did what came naturally with the result that Mada soon found herself pregnant.'[175]

Such light, wanton play is akin to the carnal, religious 'politics' of Chaucer's Wife of Bath (*CT* line 314), who was 'Master of both my body and my goods.'[176] However, the highly sexualised, provocative nature of the text is not seen within an Aboriginal context. A point Shoemaker, Maureen Clark, and even Aboriginal critics of Mudrooroo's work have commented. Rather are tendencies transplanted from European imaginations and behaviours. 'The European porno-tropics had a long narrative tradition.'[177] The characteristics of these were then projected onto Indigenous peoples. This is one of reasons why the passage seems to have much in common with the Wife of Bath.

> She had the lover's gap-teeth, I must say.
> With the ease upon an ambling horse she sat,
> Well wimpled, while upon her head her hat
> Was broad as any buckler to be found.

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[171] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 58.
[172] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 36.
[173] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 36.
[174] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 36.
[175] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 36.
[176] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (Palatka, FL: Hodge and Braddock, 1993) 162.
[177] McClintock 22.

> About her ample hips a mantle wound,
> And on her feet spurs she wore were sharp.
> In fellowship she well could laugh and carp.
> Of rememdies of love she had good notions,
> For of that art's old dance she knew the motions (*C. T.*, 468-475).[178]

In the 'Wife of Bath's prologue and tale,' there is bliss if the wife is dominate. She is vital—a type of precursor to later feminist stances. When the reader first meets Mada, she is also vibrant. Her downfall comes after leaving London (Mada's place of power and security), succumbing to sad disillusionment (no longer indomitable) and to an inevitable drug addiction. 'I'm on my last bottle of medicine. Such a fine quality. It's done me the world of good.'[179] Her 'medicine' does relieve her anxiety, but not alleviate it. The problem is her isolated position on a distant Island, and her fearing she would be left behind.

> So you think you're running away from me again. That's all my marriage to you has been. Me staying home and you running here and a running there. My God, why'd you bring me to this hell hole. I'm falling apart here.[180]

In this anxiety, she mirrors Martha in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* (and stands as a warning to any woman who 'stands by her man'). 'For us, for us, what about me? Stuck here alone in this dump. You can't do this to me. Why did I ever come to this place? Why did I?'[181]

Mada's distress comes from their lack of what her husband cannot provide, success. 'Her pains were the result of the wounds and setbacks of all she had endured in the ever recurring campaigns.'[182] Driven by constant disappointments, she relies on laudanum, although not as much as she would want.

> One medicine above all she valued as a pacifier, laudanum. But her husband, who had the audacity to believe that he knew what was best for her, only allowed three pint bottles per

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[178] Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* 13.
[179] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 48.
[180] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 42-43.
[181] Mudrooroo, *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription* 57.
[182] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 7.

supply ship. These never lasted, never ever lasted.[183]

Despite being a victim of a domineering husband, she should still not be thought of as a martyr. Mada is not without her biases, assumptions—she is still a conqueror, a colonial woman. 'Those natives! Just about dinnertime and that Ludjee nowhere in sight. Stupid natives.'[184] Thus she is not sympathetic to Ludjee (a woman who has been violated), as she dismisses the other's efforts as a cook, comparing it sarcastically to the ability of Fada working in construction. 'As skilful as you were at laying bricks, or at building houses.'[185]

In this larger perspective, the passage points to the 'peculiar' relationship between women of colour and colonial woman: Race, as a class symbol, trumps gender. Mada is contemptuous of native women. This is also a comment on Mudrooroo's own literary conceptualization of women. His female characters are largely tools, objects for satisfaction, yet colonial women are still privileged over Indigenous women. Hence Mada's travails are written with more sympathy than Ludjee. This happens even though 'The girl Ludjee had been taken in by ghosts and used and abused as everything was used and abused,'[186] shouldering the brunt of a far wider brutal system, while Mada's problem coalesces around her husband who has brought ruin upon her.

> You should not expect that Fada and Mada actually mediated on their lives and rued their missed opportunities. Perhaps Mada the more sensitive did, but Fada had made the best of things, though he suffered his wife badly; and made the worst of things and created a past more to her liking. She had sacrificed herself to a buffoon and that was that how she longed for London and that was that.[187]

More to the point of who is looked upon more favourably, Fada is not oblivious to his failures. In this fashion, there would be more 'hope' for Mada than the Indigenous—or, at least, less

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[183] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 7.
[184] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 43.
[185] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 48.
[186] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 26.
[187] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 42.

despair.

> What pained him about the whole subject of accounting was the fact that there was no income from the mission. This fact he couldn't avoid. Two columns and one absolutely blank. No income, and this had to be remedied.[188]

As such he tells Mada about their future away from the Island. 'Listen Mada, I too have had enough of this post. It is most isolated and unhealthy.'[189] Thus, he decides they must leave, for this Eden has not been successful enough, as if it could have been. Such admissions show that even an opportunist, like Fada, can realise failure. But his acceptance of failure does not make him a better man, or more sympathetic to his wife. 'He had never loved her. Had only loved himself and that love affair had grown over the years until there was only him and his needs and wants.'[190] Such an outlook is at odds with orthodox Christian ideas.

> Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'[191]

Knowing the fissures in any 'chaste' version of the colonial narrative, Mudrooroo is more authentically challenging in his raising a fictional mirror to Western/Christian morality than by charting a way forward, or revitalizing an Aboriginal present or past. His next strength, though, can be thought of as Aboriginal based. He has spliced Aboriginal fables into world mythologies and placed Maban reality on an equal footing as the flood story of Utnapishtim, in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, or in 'Deluge of Manu' in the Hindu text *Shatapatha Brahmana*. Here again, this seems to be a more helpful approach for his main goal, which is to write Aboriginal conceptualizations of being and identity into the annals of world (canonical) literature. The

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[188] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 94.
[189] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 43.
[190] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 7-8.
[191] MATTHEW 34-36 BIBLE (NIV).

example listed here is their version of the Great Flood.

> No water though. [. . .] No plants, no nothing. Then out of that dry dusty ground came Frog. She poked her head up. Looked around. No water. So she began hopping. Hopping this way, in that direction and this direction. No water. Too dry and dusty, her skin began cracking. No water. Gotta have water, you know, or nothing will grow. That's what Frog thought. Gotta have water, or I can't live here. And she began to vomit up water. Lots and lots of water. It was like a waterfall coming outa that frog's mouth. Finally, too much water came. Everywhere water.[192]

The tale harkens back to Aboriginal lore, about the dominions shared between women (sea/water) and men (land). One of Mudrooroo's greater achievements then, perhaps more than his assimilation of the (Biblical) canon, is his creative force in guiding the reader to re-think the value and modern plight (and potential) of Aboriginal people and their cosmology. He places their epistemological understandings on the same plane as those the West now accepts. Yet these understandings, as epiphany-inducing as they are, do not render one's 'mob' as spiritually uplifted.

A dystopian travelogue, overall, *Master of the Ghost Dancing* is still a purgatorial piece, one where none are able to escape. This not because the characters are inept; there is nowhere they can go that is free. Furthermore, Dreamtime and/or Maban reality cannot be employed as an effective strategy. Such despair is also to be seen in *Long Live Sandawara,* where there is much talk of the demise of the 'Law,' as the unifier of the people and its demise. 'Noorak sighs, watching the last fading of the keeping of the Law. It has been broken, the people are scattered – would a wholeness ever return?' [193] Without a geographical location to retreat to, Mudrooroo (and his works) battle on a spacio-temporal plane. This is (somewhat) achieved by re-visiting the already transcribed Aboriginal history, but now by giving it some privilege; competing (and sometimes succeeding) against world history.

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[192] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 57-58.
[193] Mudrooroo, *Long Live Sandawara* 18.

As such, it is fitting indeed that Jangamuttuk lives above the mission camp. When Fada attempts to coax Jangamuttuk to leave his elevated dwelling, he says— 'I have built a nice home for you in the mission compound and yet you persist in living in the bush up on that mountain of yours.'[194] The elevation is symbolic, for it shows this 'mob' maintaining some little autonomy and status. In this fashion, the Indigenous cannot be seen as yet fully conquered. However, the liminal space allows for slippage—especially here, with the struggle between colonials and natives.

The relationship between master servant, coloniser and colonised, is a fluid one. And so, Robinson needed Wooreddy, even as Fada is dependent on Janagamuttuk. This is a contentious coupling, too, for there could be no colony without the colonised, and here it is no different, as Fada says, 'I need to use the authority of Jangamuttuk to collect the natives together.'[195] With this authority comes legitimacy. Understanding this dynamic gives Jangamuttuk enough strength and space to successfully plot against Fada. Therefore the mission camp is destroyed and they do escape.

Ultimately, all, except Sonny (Fada and Mada's son) leave the island, but Mada dies, all this reminiscent of the tragic mulatto syndrome: wanting to flee an oppressive and unfulfilled life, only to die of disease or suicide, with the husband then finding a more 'suitable' spouse. 'Mada unfortunately never [did] return[ed] to London. Upon reaching the chief town of the colony she fell prey to her real sickness.'[196] Now a widower, Fada achieves success, marrying 'a young lady, the daughter of an accountant, join[s] the Ethnological Society and tour[s] Europe.'[197]

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[194] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 63.
[195] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 43.
[196] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 147.
[197] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 147.

The main Aborigine cast also progress, but this is only superficially positive, with an ending reminiscent of old TV dramas which promise more colourful events if the viewers would 'tune in tomorrow.' The novel ends: 'As for our band of intrepid voyagers, their further adventures on the way to and in their promised land await to be chronicled, and will be the subject of further volumes.'[198] They leave in a schooner piloted by Wadawaka.

The problem for us (and for them) is their likely destination. They are not the powerful from an acknowledged nation-state, but those who are fleeing the treatment of an invader. Further, Jangamuttuk, their leader on the ground, when he is on board the schooner, is of a reduced capacity and purpose. Wadawaka pilots the ship. Ludjee, being female, is at one with the water and does not need a leader. This new dynamic means that their accustomed centre (Jangamuttuk) cannot protect them, as in the past. More, the land they were fleeing, which is normally one's refuge, was their own.

Mudrooroo, with his ephemeral background and history, serves as a prologue, to the text—for the question of (ultimate) destination is one very difficult to consider. Where can one go without an identity tethered to a land, or to any land?

Such a voyage as this must remind us of the other enigmatic journeys—Odysseus returning home after twenty years; the Romans ultimately being expelled from Britain—to go where?; and the Victorians with their colonising/trading empire which was to be one drenched in blood and which would, ultimately, revolt from almost every part. Also then is the irony to all these scenarios that none ever thought they would have such an ignominious end.

[198] Mudrooroo, *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* 148.

Book Two of the *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series

The Vampire Trilogy 1 (*The Undying*)

The Undying, 1998, is the follow-up of the primary Indigenous characters seen in *Master of the Ghost Dancing*.

> A quartet begun in 1991 with the publication of *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* and completed in 2000 with *The Promised Land*. The quartet traces, albeit in very disparate ways in each novel, the flight of the major black characters from Tasmania and their ensuing journey along the coast of mainland Australia to the west, a journey complicated by its beginning and ending with the Aboriginal people's encounters with the historical figure of George Augustus Robinson as well as the repeated skirmishes with the apparently fantastical figure of Amelia Fraser, the vampire.[199]

The travails encountered by the quartet lead to the only answer as to which location promises freedom: there is none.

The old characters, Wadawaka, Jangamuttuk and Ludjee are back, as was written at the end of *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, but with an additional voice. The tale is 'told' by George, the adopted son of Jangamuttuk. Being an outsider/harbinger within the group, he represents the co-mingling of two cultures—and the demise of the Indigenous one. In the waning pages of *The Underground* (third in the series) Wadawaka reveals that his biological father is George A. Robinson.[200] But now George has been turned into a vampire. Never a full member in either society, this last conversion makes his tribulations even worse than those of the Tasmanians. He is not comfortable or fully capable in either society. George's lineage also forces the reader to reflect on Mudrooroo's family history.

The contradictory nature of George's rightful place is mirrored in the author's own case. By the time *The Undying* was published, Mudrooroo had been formally ousted from the

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[199] Wendy Pearson, ''I, the Undying': The Vampire of Subjectivity and the Aboriginal 'I'.' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo,* ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 185-86.
[200] Mudrooroo, *Underground (*Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1999) 174.

Aboriginal community. There was also the published piece 'Identity Crisis'[201] which further questioned his Aboriginal roots. Accused of being a fraud (which one might assume was a motivating factor[202]), he had left his teaching post, much like his characters having to leave what is familiar.

The personal accounting embraces another aspect of Mudrooroo's early life, he then released from prison but not to return to any discernable true family. He had been released, in 1957, not to his mother. 'Rather, it was into the care of the late Dame Mary Durack, a member of an influential pastoralist family, whose practices it was to assist authorities by taking in young men just released from gaol.'[203] This lament—'the songline ends here with me, the last of my mob'[204] —reflects Mudrooroo's situation; now only to be/live in the company of strangers.

The greater questions are, then, not only the retelling of the continual suffering of the Aboriginal peoples, but the struggles and relationships Mudrooroo has himself entered into. One is the implication of Mudrooroo being George (albeit ambivalently), and Amelia casted as his patron and primary shaper of his persona, Mary Durack. If so, it would explain the competitive voices of the narrator, and why 'she' seems to make him move. There is also the question of

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[201] Victoria Laurie, 'Identity Crisis,' *Australian Magazine*, July 1996: 28-32. The tone is that of a piece of detective fiction, but it makes a very convincing case, though the sentiment was not new. Simon During, and others, have made similar stirrings. Because of the sensitive nature of one's family origins, especially in Australian history, the question of Mudrooroo's heritage was not actively engaged by white Australians. Curiously, the article points that those of Aboriginal origins, in particular, Betty Polglaze, who had searched and sought out Mudrooroo. In the conclusion of this section, Mudrooroo's 'explanation' will be given.

[202] Mudrooroo has published a defense of himself and his life: 'Portrait of the Artist as a Sick Old Villain,' *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 11.2 (2011): 1-23. The piece is an attempt to answer several questions that (until then) had largely been the work of fans and friends. There are plausible explanations, but also a level of ambivalence which gives the reader pause. One simple example is losing his post. He writes accepting the position 'wasn't the best move on my part.' Regardless of why people agree to any opportunity, most would still be angry (or insulted) at having to leave under questionable circumstances. But not Mudrooroo. In fact, throughout the piece, regardless of the topic: his origins, his sister Betty's recollections, he does not seem to strike a commanding tone—either proclaiming his complete innocence or revealing his own charlatan machinations. Strange for this is not the posture of the one who wrote *Writing from the Fringe: A Study of Modern Aboriginal Literature* (Sydney: Hyland House, 1990).

[203] Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death,' 83-102.

[204] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 4.

Durack being Mudrooroo's 'moma' in the manner that Fraser wants Others to call her. The struggle forces George/Mudrooroo to choose which land to live in. 'The new land, yes,'[205] thereby incorporating more 'foreignness' into the text, for he will not be Aboriginal for much longer. Or, is it only an indictment tale? This is the real question, for the trilogy of vampiric texts continues Mudrooroo's critique of colonization as an annihilating force. As one of his finest critics observes:

> He interweaves the concept of European vampirism with Aboriginal Dreamtime stories and culture in order to comment directly on the very real impact of colonization/ contamination on the Aboriginal people of Australia. For Mudrooroo, vampires and ghosts are textual metaphors, representing colonizing predators, which he uses to transform hegemonic accounts of Indigenous peoples. European narratives, which literally (pre)figured the Indigenous as absent or insubstantial via the notion of *terra nullius*, are in turn potentially refuted by the very existence of his own 'ghostly' characters.[206]

In the text, George, raised in Aborigine culture, begins to turn away from it, even questioning the power of his adoptive father.

> [Jangamuttuk's] ceremonies, though they gave us hope, seemed on reflection to have had the opposite effect to that intended. Instead of closing the entrance to the ghostworld, they seemed to have widened it. Ghosts, released from their world, flooded forth on great wooden ships to drift along the coastlines. They landed and made their homes, as they had on our island. Our island, which had felt the brunt of their mission. And perhaps, now that they had made it their own, they were following us to make this whole vast land theirs. Eventually this is what happened.[207]

As a speaker of words, George is granted a home—a seat at the campfire. But this acceptance is complicated with Amelia's manipulation of him, coupled by his acute loneliness. His lament, 'Now they are gone, and I sit at your campfire and sing and yarn to you,'[208] draws the reader into the narrator's sense of profound loss, much as in *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*. For

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[205] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 67.
[206] Turcotte 'Vampiric Decolonization,' 1-24.
[207] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 19-20.
[208] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 3.

> *The Undying* is a darker, more confusing narrative than *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, because it begins by refusing the optimism of the latter's ending. It begins by *announcing* [author's emphasis] the end, and in this way returns is to the tone of *Doctor Wooreddy*.[209]

This is also shown by the limitations of their shaman; being a protector. The storm that confronts them pays no heed to Jangamuttuk's words or power.

> Our little schooner hurtled towards it, towards a jutting point of its mass, and even Jangamuttuk's chant was swept away in contempt by the blast of the storm. Powerless, he retreated down below, while I remained to strain at the wheel.[210]

The powerful yet impenetrable storm that drove them is (deliberately) similar to the destruction in the apocalyptic poem, 'The Sick Rose.'

> O Rose, thou art sick!
> The invisible worm
> That flies in the night,
> In the howling storm,
>
> Has found out thy bed
> Of crimson joy:
> And his dark secret love
> Does thy life destroy.[211]

The Indigenous have had their lives destroyed and as they attempt flight have yet to fully realise their situation is almost completely hopeless—a similar predicament with Rose and her ineffectual protector. The forces in opposition are too strong and pervasive, even if not the primary.

The secondary roles are still an all-encompassing. The Aboriginal voices, then, had desperately needed to counter control the master narrative, but are still not strong enough. An example of this asymmetrical, symbiotic relationship is the life George now leads, with Amelia speaking through him. 'It was fate first, in the kindness of Wadawaka, then in the shape of a

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[209] Turcotte, 'Remastering the Ghosts,' 145.
[210] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 7.
[211] William Blake, 'The Sick Rose,' 3 September 2010 < http://www.online-literature.com/blake/623/>.

female, that old yet young granny, who followed after us and passed over to me her ghost ways. I cannot bear the sun.'[212]

Amelia's savagery is the metaphorical explanation of the West hunting down and overtaking all Aborigine peoples. In addition, those they meet are in the employment of the same destabilizing, colonising, and life-eating forces. Out of this 'howling storm' comes Amelia, and as Dracula lore goes, she needs a trusted servant, a 'Friday,' a Renfield. Here it is Dungeater, and is taken as sexually as Rose. 'I take him into my mouth and give him such pleasure that his fright recedes as he groans in ecstasy.'[213] Amelia, comfortable with her power as monster and her status as a 'respectable lady,' revels in the *façade* of lady-like modesty.

> In this vast and cruel land I am entirely alone and must have someone to do my bidding, especially when I am incapacitated by the day. In his mind I explain to him his new position as I give him an advancement on his first wage.[214]

This is said by her, while still enjoying her 'dark secret love'[215] of destroying souls. Curious, being she is very powerful, the transgression almost espouses a proto- feminist stance. Instead of the phallic worm from William Blake's 'The Sick Rose,' we have a 'gyno-centric' antagonist. Though still being European, the result is the same. Also, in keeping with his strengths, here again, Mudrooroo connects myth and historical personage.

> Once, how long ago it seems, I was Amelia Fraser and I had a sister, Eliza. Now that life is finished with and I have entered into some other, far different state of existence. I am something else, and perhaps it is better than what I would have become.[216]

Mining the historical record, Eliza is a figure of genuine Australian settler lore, being kidnapped by the natives.

Fraser, as Mudrooroo well knows, is one of the most controversial and overloaded figures

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[212] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 4-5.
[213] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 93.
[214] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 93.
[215] Blake, 'The Sick Rose.'
[216] Mudrooroo, *The Undying 66.*

> in Australian settlement history, a woman shipwrecked in 1836, and putatively kidnapped and victimized by her Aboriginal captors. Fraser would become a signifier for the evilness of Aboriginal Australians, a justification for punitive expeditions to rescue her, and later, in a dramatic change of fortune, she would go from mother of empire to symbol of female moral degradation.[217]

The melding underscores just how formidable and destructive his European characters can be: Amelia Fraser is virginal and not (using sex and chastity as weapons), feminine, but not (as with the Bruny Island male, she is one with the land and not of the sea), saying, 'It was not an easy thing for me to do for I need my earth to support me.'[218]

Refusing to glorify chaste women, Amelia sought this role (vampire); turns to it instead of being turned into one. 'As he stood there with my face pressed against him, I bit him and tried to jerk away.' [219] His reply was a condemnation which befitted her. 'You have bitten me and there is my blood on my lips. You little fool, it will change your life and I need blood for my blood.'[220] Amelia exhibits extreme aggressive tendencies—(behaviour the West respects)—and thus is awarded. She has no remorse, killing family (like Vlad II), as she dispatches her brother-in-law, the equally violent Captain Torrents, 'his blood is an elixir filled with power. I gulp down the rich bear essence while I exult in his attempts to get free of me,'[221] and then turning to his wife, her sister.

> 'Let me kiss you, for I have relieved you of your torment,' I say, taking her face in my hands and placing my bloody lips full on hers. 'There, taste your husband for the last time,' and I break her neck as if I were snapping a twig.[222]

Not completely devoid of human modesties (or colonial denial of wanton destruction), when Ludjee takes her to bathe, she feels shame.

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[217] Turcotte, 'Remastering the Ghosts,' 143.
[218] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 66.
[219] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 66.
[220] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 74.
[221] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 148.
[222] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 149.

> No person, except my mother, had ever seen me naked, and even in the worst conditions I have clung to my sense of modesty, as precious an ornament as the other. After all that I have been through and done, I am still a virgin.[223]

Her claim is not of chastity, but of posture, for the plea from Ludjee to 'leave me and my own alone,'[224] does not end in reciprocity. Amelia wants all 'savages' under her sway. What saves Ludjee is her blood being different; different magic and so it cannot be killed by Amelia. She is powerless to conquer her, and flees, admitting, 'some of these natives have strange and awful powers which equal or surpass my own.'[225] However, the settler colonialists do not leave easily after having coupled with a land.

The passage illuminates a class/gender dynamic that inevitably leads to a racial one. Wadawaka and Amelia have sex, the coupling taking on the stereotypical overtones of a White female wanting to be overpowered by a strong slave/Black male.[226]

> I give a shriek. I have never known a man in this way and am afraid. Then I feel my body responding and try to rake his face with my nails, try to get at him with my fangs but I am mortified when he laughs as he continues to violate me.[227]

After the initial act, there is a turn and the strong Black man forever craves the white woman. Wadawaka succumbs to Amelia's spell, which causes doom for all involved, as they continue to sail west. 'The course as always was westward, ever westward,'[228] and Wadawaka flies away, with George wanting him to 'have better luck'[229] in finding Amelia than he did. Thus, this text also ends with another turn in tomorrow's announcement for the next installment of this seismic conflict between the races locked in mutual destruction.

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[223] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 120.
[224] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 122.
[225] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 122.
[226] *Jungle Fever*, dir. Spike Lee, perf. Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra, Universal Pictures, 1991
[227] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 188.
[228] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 201.
[229] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 201.

Book Three of the *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series

The Vampire Trilogy 2 (*The Underground*)

Whereas *The Undying* began with a friendly call to friends, to come and share in a trustworthy tale, *The Underground* (1999) begins defensively, as if the reader/viewer does not believe the new tale, or in the teller's legitimacy. 'Don't look askance at me, I was one of the first to reach these goldfields and dig for the metal.'[230] Furthermore, the epigraph (inscription) has a quality of chaos to it, or at least an overt over-lapping of cultures. 'We danced roundabout . . . dressed in our breechcloths and academic sashes with all the animals and ghosts under the redwood trees . . . The fogdogs laughed and barked from the rim.'[231] As Mudrooroo utilises Western novels frequently, this passage may be said to be a possible recalling of the chaos shown in William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954). There, a group of marooned boys are left to create a (re-imagined) community after being severed from what they knew—not unlike Mudrooroo's male characters. There is one difference, however. When European males (largely) are shipwrecked, they are thought to retain a strong sense of agency and pluck (albeit calamity might still follow). Yet in Mudrooroo's work, cultural displacement is a terrible loss that the characters are not able to reverse—there is no Lemuel Gulliver or Charles Marlow in his *repertoire*. Quite the opposite. 'A significant element of Mudrooroo's novels involves the central character being destabilized by events around him because of multiple voices and the mis-distribution of information.'[232] This displacement harkens back to the *Wild Cat* series, and to *Long Live Sandawara*. The only addition is the motif of how well the destructive agents work in concert.

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[230] Mudrooroo, *Underground (*Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1999) 1.
[231] Mudrooroo, *The Underground*, epigraph.
[232] Archer-Lean, 'Place,' 206.

Though the vampire is powerful, the destruction of the mob is not solely by Amelia, nor by the force of British imperialism. It is from their unrelenting, complex and (inevitably) combined actions. The ghosts that occupy the land are physical beings. Next, Amelia representing a spiritual virus grows stronger, as she explains to a bewitched Wadawaka.

> Yes, my dear, you have to learn that there are other things than the freedom of the ocean; then this underground will be your paradise. You want to flee, do you?! You know what happens to runaway slaves? No, forgive me and I shall be patient, and wait until you assume your kingship willingly and rule with me.[233]

She is underground, having become mad, and wishing for the one who had turned from her, asking, 'Why did he have to abandon me, his newly made creature,'[234] thus still showing a connection back to England (and empire), and another link in the chain of her being. However, by erecting a sunken fortress, 'a vast cavern lit with glowing pools of liquid which reflected off myriad specks of mitre in the walls and ceiling to make it a magical place, warm and secure,'[235] she subverts the natural order: for only the dead live underground.

With Wadawaka in the clutches of Amelia, the mob must rescue him. Jangamuttuk tells George that he must first locate the adopted African. Yet George is so terrified by the prospect of having to find Wadawaka alone, that he discounts his own totem and its resources.

> GEORGE: 'But,' I protested, 'how am I to scent out Wadawaka when he flew off through the air? He's a leopard and much stronger than me. If he can be enthralled and captured, what might happen to me?'
> JANGAMUTTUK: 'Dingo has a keen nose and can sniff out the track.' He answered simply.
> GEORGE: 'But if I go as Dingo, I will not be able to wear clothes or carry a weapon. If I turn back into a human, I will be defenseless as well as helpless unless, of course, my route is only on this island which is small enough for me to handle.'[236]

In showing such reticence, George displays something Mudrooroo's other young male characters

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[233] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 81.
[234] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 81.
[235] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 80.
[236] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 38.

do not: a reluctance to do as instructed. This is the result of weakened bonds of authority. An elder (who represents legitimacy) is describing what must happen, and the reasons, but the younger is hesitant; another example of the diminishing power and control the Aborigine have over their world. This is a similar problem found in the lament from the 'The Second Coming' with 'the falcon no longer hearing the falconer.' The traditional order for relationships has been altered. So much when George finally agrees, it is only out of partial loyalty, for he has another, a mistress even more powerful. 'Then came her voice calling me to come to her,'[237] and as a dingo, but he loses himself to her.

Aboriginal magic—even that which controls their personal totems, is waning. George is an example, not being able to convert himself back into human form after locating Wadawaka. 'I reached him and tried to change back to George. Before it had been only a matter of wishing, but now, as much as I tried, I found that I could not,'[238] as his magic does not work here; Amelia's incantations have displaced Aboriginal magic. Even after the struggles which seem to have cost Jangamuttuk and Ludjee their lives, George is compromised by his loyalty to Amelia. 'Once I had been a confused dog, now I was a puzzled human filled with conflicting emotions that should not have been there, hence my belief that she had stolen my soul.'[239]

Ludjee confronts Amelia first, having none of the sympathy as before. Yet seeing (kidnapped) children by Amelia's side again becomes simple. Amelia convinces her to gauge the heat of a pool of water.

> She stepped back, giving my mother enough room so that she might feel safe to come and sample the water.
> LUDJEE: 'It is far too hot,' Ludjee exclaimed, kneeling down at the ledge of the pool.
> AMELIA: 'Of course it is, you fool,' then moma screamed, leaping forward and

[237] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 55.
[238] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 105.
[239] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 163.

flinging her weight against the back of the kneeling woman.[240]

Amelia seems to have drowned Ludjee, who is of the water, with an uncomplicated ruse. Yet this is only a temporary defeat.

Mudrooroo's work recycles characters, motifs and themes. As such, Ludjee is (to-be) re-united with her sisters (Lorimee and Nadjee), who in *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, had been taken from the clan. Theirs is another tale of the native's suffering cycles of degradation, including rape. And then of pragmatic acceptance. This is seen when Ludjee asks why they have stayed with the present ghost. 'He's better than the one we were with,' Nadjee replied. 'He doesn't hurt us like the first brute who had us.'[241] Their chances for freedom were further comprised by their lack of resources or allies. 'Where could we go, if we left him and who would take us in? We have been defiled by them and even those blackfellows on the mainland opposite are frightened of us.'[242] The world for them is without any reliable and/or uniform 'Law'—only different forms of transgression. Malone's behavour is an example of this as he gleefully submits to those of a lessor 'class' and stature—according to Western dictates. 'It was lucky for us when he won us, for strangely he likes a bit of the lash himself though you have to be careful not to hurt him, or else he bellows like a stuck pig.'[243]

As that tale of exploitation ended, another resumed. 'Wadawaka, more agitated than he had been when he was speaking, got to his feet and prowled within the illumination of the campfires, stopping every now and again to stare off into gathering darkness.'[244] What has unsettled, and infected Wadawaka is Amelia's bite—an action replete of transgressive implications, for vampires, being alive and dead, human and other do not heed the moralities or

[240] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 127.
[241] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 23.
[242] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 26.
[243] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 26.
[244] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 27.

sensibilities of any society or culture. They are predator and prey, killing, while infecting/employing others, like Dungeater in an effort to destroy. As Jangamuttuk contemplates this problem, his ability to assess his mob is weakened as well. 'Jangamuttuk stared after him, scratching his beard. 'I thought he was stronger,' he said. 'She got into his mind and now he's off without a word to us.'[245]

After the remainder of the crew is sea bound again, another storm destroys their schooner, leaving George and Wadawaka to swim to the shore of their 'promised land,' yet, as before, their hopes meet with disappointment. 'In front of us, here in what my father had called our promised land, was a sprawling ghost settlement with a dozen or so ships at anchor,'[246] this forcing a sharp revision of what George believes. 'So my father had been mistaken about this and perhaps there were other things he had been wrong about.'[247]

The tale ends with the ship dashed, George and Wadawaka in the water, having to swim ashore. Wadawaka, having enough of Aboriginal adventures, walks out of this epic, and into another tale of transgressed imperialism: *Moby Dick*—though this is done voluntarily, as he says 'I join you [Captain Ahab] for I too hunt leviathan.'[248] The tale does not end for George, however, as he has now lost his Aboriginal family, and his friend, but not his mistress.

> I turned, confronting a figure all in black. Her body which I had only seen naked was covered from neck to feet in a long black dress and even her hands were hidden by black gloves as was her face behind a veil falling from a wide-brimmed black hat. Conflicting emotions overwhelmed me. I stood there petrified and she whispered one word, 'Dog', and I felt myself changing.[249]

The story ends here, with him being transformed into a complete submissive being. This dramatic conclusion is deliberately dramatic, cyclic and awesomely terrifying.

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[245] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 35.
[246] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 169.
[247] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 170.
[248] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 177.
[249] Mudrooroo, *Underground* 179.

Book Four of the *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series

The Vampire Trilogy 3 (*The Promised Land*)

Beginning with *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription*, there is a nuanced authorial retreat from having foregrounded Aboriginal characters. Replacing them is an English cast, with *The Promised Land*, published in 2000, going further by first not featuring Aboriginal characters at all. The novel begins with the echo of Dracula's Lucy. 'Lady Lucille, or as she was affectionately known to her intimates, Lucy, since becoming a woman subjected to noctambulism.'[250] Also, Mina—again from Bram Stoker's tale—is used as the willing supplicant to Lucy's needs. 'They had sighed and passed on their responsibility to Mina.'[251] The text here is more straightforward in detailing the nocturnal habits of the English characters, and their sexual playfulness. Further, as with the other works of Mudrooroo, the liminal space brings serial characters back, as Lucy's parents fret about marrying off their daughter, to an older gentleman, the 'newly-titled knight, Sir George Augustus.'[252] In addition, their having moved to Bath is perhaps an intended allusion to *Canterbury Tales* and the Wife's peregrinations—or to Jane Austen. But in the vein of transgression, this Lucy here is not the same ultra chaste young woman of Bram Stoker's text. Instead, this one is amenable to Amelia. It must be said, that in Mudrooroo's work, the key to his women characters staying vibrant is their willful breaking of Western societal norms.

Another character, the Governor's wife, Rebecca Crawley, unlike Mada/Martha, does not wilt if away from of the metropole. These women, and Lucy, are all opportunistic, similar to the figure Riyoko Tamada, in *The Kwinkan*.[253] In another switch in conventional patriarchal

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[250] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1999) 1. The term 'promised land' is both Biblical and used in Stoker's tale.
[251] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 2.
[252] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 4.
[253] Though Mudrooroo keeps to familiar themes of loss and exploitation, here he satirically critiques neo-colonial capitalism, and the fear of Western (particularly Australian) forces losing political clout in the Pacific. *The Kwinkan*

structure, it is Mrs. Crawley, who climbs socially. 'She, using brazen invention together with her beauty and sharp intelligence, had glossed over her own origins, which were lower than those of the knight; her husband's family was of ancient lineage which she, supposedly a distant cousin, had rejoined through their union,'[254] using this device as a means to seal the marriage with Mr. Crawley. Seen in this fashion, Rebecca herself is a type of vampire.

The text does not signal a complete break with the Aboriginal saga, but, as with the legends of *The Kwinkan*, the cultures have changed positions, with the West clearly being more powerful. The example of George as being referred to as Mrs. Eliza Fraser's dog, is one example. The immigrant British in Australia, fretting over their 'obligations' of being 'caretakers' to the natives is another. That and making a (home) career to which one can retire after converting them, as when Sir George offers his services at protecting the natives from ruffians.

> I had thought that the population of this colony would slowly increase and thus not upset the native too much; but if gold has been discovered, this means that hoards of riffraff and rascals will descend upon them [. . .] They must be protected, sir, and I am here on behalf of the government to see that they are protected.[255]

The Great South Land has turned out to not be the Promised Land for the Aborigines. Instead, extractor colonialists, and prospectors looking for gold, are coming in hordes; so once again, an Aboriginal hope turns into a benefit for the British invaders.

Mudrooroo's maternal heritage comes in to play here as well, for the text includes a Sergeant Barron,[256] another inclusion from Mudrooroo's family, this time one from the maternal side.

> Johnson represents Barron as fiction when, in fact, much like George Augustus Robinson and Eliza Fraser, he is drawn from an actual historical figure. History's Edward Barron was in fact a Colours Sergeant of the 'old' British 63rd Regiment, which was re-formed in

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(New York: Harpercollins, 1993).
[254] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 11.
[255] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 20-21.
[256] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 21.

> the new colony. And, as was the case with Robinson and Fraser, he was one of the first white settlers. Edward Barron was of Irish descent and together with his heavily pregnant wife, Jane, he arrived on the shores of Western Australia aboard the *Sulphur* in June 1829. This is a highly significant year and event in Johnson's own ancestral narrative, for the same Sergeant Edward Barron was in fact the author's great-great grandfather.[257]

This connection harkens back to the *Wild Cat* series, via the Barron name. Coupled with Tom (*Long Live Sandawara*), Wadawaka from this series also points to African and Black American paternal roots. Mudrooroo, using these elements to give added symbolism and structure to his novels, makes it difficult to think that he has not known of his own origins all along.

Though the quest for gold is a plausible plot device for *The Promised Land*, the work's mission is rather one in revisiting the political history of the time. Recycling earlier prose, Sonny re-appears, the forgotten son of Fada and Mada. He returns to relate the abandonment of the 'sable friends' (from the camp). In doing this, Wadawaka, Ludjee, Jangamuttuk, are all present and accounted ready for the next challenge. In fact, Wadawaka, who was John Summers, accosts Fada, over his past deeds.

> A would-be preacher and missionary who came to me in that prison, drowning me in your ideas of God and redemption, until I believed you and became your captain as you plotted to profit from those poor wretches under you. And here is another question: how many survived your ministry?[258]

The exchange ends with Amelia convincing Robinson to hire Wadawaka by gazing into his 'eyes.'[259] Strangely, the passage, instead of ending with a final battle, is more like a reunion.

Ever the opportunist, Sir George decides he can use this episode to his advantage, by taking the three (Wadawaka, Ludjee, and Jangamuttuk) back to England, and thus gaining a seat at the gentlemanly Anthropological Society. 'He had wished for a seat in the governing committee but had been unable to garner enough support. With a group of these blacks, that

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[257] Maureen Clark, *Mudrooroo: A Likely Story: Identity and Belonging in Postcolonial Australia* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007) 231.
[258] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 163.
[259] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 165.

could change.'[260] Here another of Mudrooroo's themes re-surfaces: the 'superior' races' need of help (normally rendered not by negotiation, but force) from the 'inferior' races if they are to succeed. Yet what is odd here is the lack of authorial anger (or even animosity). Especially from a writer who still enjoyed the status of rebel, though a problematic one. However, there is no rebellion or harsh words from the remaining 'native' characters. In fact, as the novel reaches its conclusion, there is no clash or fighting at all. It is as if each side has claimed a victory and then decided to co-exist. And since the hostilities are over, all of the old cast can safely come back out.

Ludjee is present again too, explaining how she was able to escape after seemingly perishing. Conveniently there was a 'hot and cold stream.'[261] By following the cold stream in her Manta Ray totem, she was able flee. Ultimately they will all make the trip to England with Sir George, who is seen in a sexually compromised position with the Governor's wife.

When spotted, Jangamuttuk lectures him, as old friends: 'Fada, you still up to your old tricks. But watch that one; she is just as bad as that Amelia. Keep that thing covered and for your wife.'[262] The seduction having worked, Sir George enters into Becky, thinking of himself as the victor, but is not: 'As her fingers freed him, she began *her* conquest. '[263] He is also wrong in thinking the affair with Becky created a connection he could never have with his wife. By the end of the novel, Lucy is completely under the sexual sway of Amelia. The ending is remarkably light for what had transpired historically, with Ludjee being the last full blooded Tasmanian, as if the final members (including the author) have agreed that resistance is, truly, futile. [264]

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[260] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 169.
[261] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 180.
[262] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 231.
[263] Mudrooroo, *The Promised Land* 229.
[264] Popular refrain used in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

The Kwinkan

Though a more modern work (1995), its setting is similar to the incarcerating, interrogating/surveillance environment seen in *Wild Cat Screaming.* More, there is a nameless narrator having to speak to symbols of authority. Nonetheless, the work departs (the most) from having an Aboriginal centre. The focal point, geographically, is Oceania. This start is more aligned with postcolonial sensibilities, though Aboriginal (and Australian) concerns are still present.

> Most of the novel is set outside Australia—a departure for the author—and the image of Queensland is actually thrown into clearer relief through the contrasts he [Mudrooroo] establishes in the South Pacific. The paradox is this: *The Kwinkan* is Mudrooroo's most international novel, but it reflects the most parochial of Australian attitudes.[265]

The attitude demonstrated by the narrator mimics what Mudrooroo had found in the Queensland male.

> Living in Queensland for a couple of years, I really had problems understanding the Queensland male character. I don't know exactly how what was odd; I found them extremely macho and they were sort of 'just there.'[266]

One who is not 'just there' but a serial Other (seen in *Wildcat Screaming*) is Detective Watson Holmes Jackamara. His authority is adequate enough so that the candidate (the nameless narrator), running for Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, needs his support to appear legitimate. Though here is another paradox. Jackamara is not a weak vessel, having the political matters he wants addressed, and at the conclusion he does benefit from his own manoeuverings. '*The Kwinkan* ends with Carla, Riyoko, Lataoga and 'Carla's Australian friend', Jackamara, walking side-by-side with the fictional Prime Minister.'[267] But is not is own master, either. In *The*

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[265] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 124.
[266] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 159.
[267] Clark, *Mudrooroo: A Likely Story* 180. There seems to be a general parody of the Nottingham-born Arthur W. Upfield and his Inspector (Bony) Bonaparte in his sequence of novels about the black detective.

Kwinkan he is abused.[268] And before that, in *Wildcat Screaming* he is a spy—against incarcerated Aborigine men.[269]

Concerning the international application of the text, as noted earlier, it fits extremely well into many genres of Western literature. One of these being the detective story. Plus, with the nervousness of the narrator, is reminiscent of the early 1800's, speculative fiction, the type American writer, Edgar Allen Poe, wrote. His narrators were conversational and conspiratorial, their voices read like confessions to the audience, making them part of the conspiracy. 'The Tale Tell Heart' (1843) is one example. 'True ! – nervous – very, dreadfully nervous I had been and am ; but why *will* you say that I am mad ?'[270] Using the second person thus creates an intimacy and a way into the story while making objective investigation difficult (reminiscent to *The Kwinkan*). 'The text plots the interviewed narrator's slackening grip on reality in which his own identity and relationships between the other characters become obfuscated.'[271]

A like action is seen in Poe's work, with his un-named narrators, as in their leisurely if high stressed voice. 'Hearken ! And observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story.'[272] Another of Poe's, a short story of planning revenge, is 'The Cask of Amontillado' (1846), which begins with the reasoning for redress.

> The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could but when he ventured upon insult I viewed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged ; this was a point defiantly settled.[273]

Though macabre (the narrator in the first story suffocates then dismembers the victim, the second

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[268] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* (New York: Harpercollins, 1993) 120-121.
[269] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* 91-92.
[270] Edgar Allen Poe, *The Complete Works of Edgar Allen Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison, vol 5 (New York: AMS Press, 1965) 88.
[271] Archer-Lean, 'Place,' 206.
[272] Poe 88.
[273] Edgar Allen Poe, *The Complete Works of Edgar Allen Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison, vol 6 (New York: AMS Press, 1965) 167.

walls the unfortunate in an underground tomb), these enticing short stories are told by unreliable narrators who live in oral versions of 'truth.' This style is displayed in *The Kwinkan,* when the narrator must revise his answers, for he is bedazzled by the power of the tape recorder. 'I'll try again, as, as, well, as your tape-recorder attracts my words.'[274] Mudrooroo is at his most subversive for Aboriginal rights when he is parodying Western culture.

The mirrored action here turns Western constructions back onto itself. The native informant is not a native of any minority group, but becomes one. 'You have become an expert on, shall we say, native peoples.'[275] Here, a white Queenslander has had business opportunities, but never succeeded in any of them. After the latest failure, his senior colleague tells him, 'I'm so sorry, so very sorry, but you would drag in extraneous issues, such as land rights. What on earth made you come down so heavily on the side of the Aboriginals!'[276] Further, it is Jackamara who had wanted that to happen; an Aboriginal displaying his powers of influence over a white Australian. The reversal of fortune displays a wider concern shown than merely a subplot in a novel. There are real-world concerns and consequences at play. 'Why, it threatens our whole policy on that question,'[277] draw the reader out of the work and into legitimate worries. Colonialists know 'their' land was 'acquired' by force, either soft or hard. Without the veneer of respectable law to aid their claims, the subject matter, then, is of (rightful) possession and (unlawful) dispossession. This is why his senior colleague comments, 'The farmers are frightened that their land may be alienated from them.'[278] The real fear is the same and Turcotte has put it well.

Ken Gelder's and Jane Jacob's *Uncanny Australia* (1998) identifies the way in which the

[274] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 41.
[275] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 23.
[276] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 15.
[277] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 15.
[278] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 16.

> Aboriginal sacred, reinforced by the Australian High Court's Native title Act (or Mabo) decision, has led to many white Australians feeling dispossessed in their own country. There is a misinformed yet pervading fear that Aboriginal people will reclaim their land – that they will rise from nothingness, from *terra nullius* – and avenge themselves. Mudrooroo plays with these fears of 'reverse colonization' and allows them to haunt the Australian imaginary.[279]

If an Australian court ruled all land once used and lived on, be reverted to Indigenous people, where would those with coloniser roots go? These concerns raise larger questions about identity and essence.

The informant, frustrated as well voices back, 'And whose bright idea was that to give me the only Aboriginal detective as a bodyguard?'[280] After the debacle, the protagonist is given another assignment. 'I was to go to Canberra where many government departments still remained in those days,'[281] though this was not a relief, for 'Detective Inspector Jackamara was there to witness my further humiliation. True, indeed. And now he is a doctor and what am I but a lowly clerk.'[282]

The humorous exploits of this forced native informant underlie what is going on with the story: land is being 'bought up' and redistributed by the Others. They are now the new colonisers. Riyoko Tamada,—'once we were considering that piece of land you controlled on the Spit. Now it is ours.'[283] Moreover, her lover, Carla is a *Gyinggi* woman, a type of succubus, who dominates the narrator, makes him *Kwinkan* (a type of lustful spirit or ghost). Another feature of the change of the power dynamic, the white male character is without control or significance. Though one aspect does crop up and that is violence against women. Yet unlike past (frontier)

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[279] Turcotte, 'Remastering the Ghosts,' 148.
[280] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 15.
[281] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 17.
[282] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 17.
[283] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 32.

icons (such as John Wayne), he is physically deformed, with a 'misshapen penis'[284] and can finally be seen as morally deficient.

> I felt ashamed at hitting a woman—as ashamed as when I had hit my first and second wives. I helped her to her feet trying hard not to see the derision on her face. I knew that I was weak, weak, weak; but she had driven me to it.[285]

This type of excuse is one abusers use: blaming their victims for the assault. However, Carla is not to be seen as a Martha or Ludjee. She is much more wordly.

Carla reinterprets an axiom (giving it great ironic power) made famous and influential since first written in the late 1600s. She says, 'We torture, therefore we are.'[286] René Descartes, in his *Meditations* had written '*Je pense donc je suis*,' popularised into '*Cogito ergo sum'* translated into 'I think, therefore I am.' Carla is very clear in her sentiment. Descartes' is ambiguous, for who is the I? It is assumed a European male of the Enlightenment epoch, but what the proposition does not do is name, specifically, the 'I,' as in this 'I am a rational, thinking human being; I exist.' The theory has been defended and distorted, but still stands as a foundational concept for Western identity—but in *The Kwinkan*, the Western icon is nameless, and not very commanding.

The minor characters fair much better than the protagonist. All seem to have an elevated position, relative to his. Also, there is the fear that 'those people' will usurp the influence of those (colonials) in charge. Carla tells him,

> You see, darling, please forget your Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. Things are different on our islands. My family have been colonial rulers for 200 years. Little Britain, so far away, left us to our own devices.[287]

In the *Kwinkan*, the displacement is more than voices and space, as power has shifted. Tamada

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[284] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 8.
[285] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 125.
[286] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 124.
[287] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 62.

tells the protagonist. 'Once we marched out to conquer, now we wait and they, you all come to us.'[288] Also interesting here is there is no remorse for having lost any traditional attributes—a difference from Mudrooroo's earlier work. It might be that by this point he had tired of such 'fixations,' given his personal and private battles, but there might be another reason. By this time in his life, the practices and sensibilities of Buddhism had become more central to how he interacted with the world. If this is the case, as he argues in his 'defense,' by the time *The Kwinkan* is published, such dogmatic positions would no longer not have any *place* in his creative universe. One would hope that were true, though other aspects do still remain, making that claim suspicious. One was the abuse women suffered by the narrator's hand. [289] The second is how Mudrooroo still views carnal activities.

Concerning sexual relations, there is the same large amount as in the previous novel, *The Promised Land*, although the exotic nature of the women has become more complex. Riyoko Tamada is both an 'Asian fox' and a Japanese corporate agent. The *Ginggyi*, Carla, is of German, English, and African American heritage and she also has power, since her family owns the Polynesian Island's plantation economy and has an incestuous relationship with the Black American, Maynard Brookes.[290] The women are not taken for granted as before, but still, symbolically, fulfill any (and all) of the island-tropic porn narratives written for Western consumption.

The text ends somewhat where it started, with the nameless, down-trodden narrator complaining of a plot against him by yet other, stronger forces.

> I want to say that only a Royal Commission will satisfy me. Sir, there has been skulduggery. Yes, I declare, skulduggery, and it must be brought out. The people of Australia must know how their country is run and how foreign affairs are conducted.

[288] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 47.
[289] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 125.
[290] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 101.

They must learn that I have been a victim of a plot vast in its ramifications.[291]

With this lament the narrator, though a colonial figure, seems little more than a shrew—not much more than how he began. It is true he was always portrayed as that, yet initially, there seemed to be chances for promotion. Yet as with Mudrooroo's G. A. Robinson, this European male character is only potentially viable when *given* help—namely by government entities. If they must survive as independent beings, they fail miserably.

It would seem all disenfranchised people have the same types of resentments towards government. However, their bitterness is mitigated by the need of further assistance. Needing someone to publish his account secures his place in the subservient class. 'Publish my account.'[292] However, this alleged whistleblower is as compromised as his aspirations, when he nearly whimpers for a salary. 'Please could you make out a receipt for the money. Make it out personally to me. That will do. Thank you, and goodnight and goodbye.'[293]

One could well smile in satisfaction at this reversal of fortune, but not for long. The Indigenous, in a multicultural milieu, do succeed here, in *The Kwinkan*, but the system is still Western and intact. The cynicism is powerful and appalling in the widespread operation. The reader is left exhausted and deeply despairing. This feeling is not too dissimilar from that reached when the reader contemplates Wildcat's plight. He is free, but the struggle has left him broken. Here, with this international cast, they are free, but only where they stand. The West still surrounds them.

[291] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 130
[292] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 130.
[293] Mudrooroo, *The Kwinkan* 130.

Conclusion of the Mudrooroo Section

Being a minority writer, aspiring to the widest public, often means having to struggle against asymetrical forces. Therefore, the writer must push for yet more adequate working space. Mudrooroo's writing, then, owes its provocative status to not only being creative, but to its challenging the master's narrative. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have spoken helpfully about this position, having defined it as one (necessarily) belonging to a minor literature.

> A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization.[294]

The second obvious characteristic gives a much clearer location for major and minor literatures.

> The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political. In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other, no less individual concerns, with the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background; this is so much the case that none of these Oedipal intrigues are specifically indispensable or absolutely necessary but all become as one in a large space. Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics.[295]

This comparison and contrast style does not equate minor literature to being lesser in quality, or in its value. Rather, it creates a place, a distinctive position, for those who write from the periphery (almost exclusively people of colour); instead, of the privileged centre (that is almost exclusively white and male). Though not merely political, but aesthetic—something also seen as important in the field of letters.[296] These are also the questions postian studies—post-structural, postmodern and then, postcolonial—albeit sometimes inconsistently, ask themselves, further proving the creative talent of Mudrooroo is not merely an outlier.

It becomes apparent, in comparing indigenous postcolonial works which exhibit

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[294] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature: Theory and History of Literature (*Minneapolis, MN: University Of Minnesota Press, 1986) 16.
[295] Deleuze and Guattari 17.
[296] Another point by Bloom is that 'Great styles are sufficient for canonicity because they possess the power of contamination' (523). This because after being injected, a strain always appears—the reader has been altered.

> postmodern characteristics, that postmodernism is as political in nature as postcolonial literature: both contest the authority traditionally vested in univocal white history.[297]

Yet the author, as much as his material—can and does exist outside of pat definitions—fitting well along-side postian sensibilities, while not being confined by them. 'Labels such as 'postmodernism' and 'semiotic theory' apply to Mudrooroo's work, but these non-Aboriginal concepts do not *contain* him.'[298] This slippage of the work's 'centre' (and author's) has also been the source of controversy, for Mudrooroo, aka, Mudrooroo Nyoongah, Mudrooroo Narogin, and Colin Johnson. It is precisely from his name/skin-walking ability, moving in and out of ethno/racial groups, including his father and mother's 'nativeness,' that serious problems arose, these to be subsumed under the title: the Mudrooroo Affair.[299] The first concerns were written about more than fifteen years ago. [300] Who is he really, and what is he up to? These are legitimate questions which can well undo the power of his prose. The reason being, it is problematic (at best) to say he 'fully' champions the Aboriginal cause (as one of them) vis-à-vis telling of their plight if he is not. Therefore, perhaps, he is not truly 'one of them.' A charge he has also lodged against famed Aboriginal writers, none better known than Sally Morgan.

With these questions it is difficult to know what to appreciate in the work and in its interlocking themes of separation/dislocation and yearning/re-living. Or, perhaps, some may query if the works should be read at all.

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[297] Tompkins, 'It all depends,' 483-498.
[298] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 2.
[299] Maureen Clark in 'Mudrooroo and the Death and the Mother,' Cassandra Pybus' 'Black Caesar' and Victoria Laurie's 'Identity Crisis,' have given us the controversial and curious family points concerning Mudrooroo. Cornelis Martin Renes' paper furthers the discussion, but in a different direction. The first is to locate a term in which to contextualise the problematic essence/identity of Mudrooroo. Second, argue that though the person who is named Mudrooroo is not what he seems to be, his work should has earned the right to be seen separately (albeit attached to the author). 'Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy: A Ghostly Deconstruction of 'Authentic' Australianness,' *Ethical Imaginations: Refereed Conference Papers of the 16th Annual AAWP Conference* (2011): 1-10. Web. 28 Dec. 2013. <http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net /theaawp/pages/86/attachments/original/1385080066/Renes_0.pdf?1385080066>.
[300] Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death,' 83-102.

Considering the second point, yes, it is of course true that without Mudrooroo, there would still be leading voices in the struggle for Aboriginal spaces. The better question is whether any others would be as influential. Mudrooroo's 'Portrait' argues against that idea. Also, that in some small measure, he was never given enough credit for the support he gave to all things Aboriginal—although, perhaps there were reasons: 'I really had antagonized some Noongars (and others including academics) who were out to crucify me even though I surely had done more for Aborigine people than they had, for example I had been on the founding committee of the cultural unit that had gone on to become *Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation*.'[301] The proof is there, with some self-justification too. Regardless, Mudrooroo has re-directed the discussion, widening it, enriching the possibilities, casting aside the belief that resistance is futile, as seen in the *Song Circle of Jacky and Selected Poems*. However, the controversy surrounding his identity, even after proving via his novels that there is no centre in which to properly draw from, hobbles his achievements.

Additionally, the concern which critics (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike) have with the subterfuge goes beyond him. The degradation suffered by Indigenous people, not being able to maintain control over their identity, is profound. Though, now, sometimes there is a meagre give back of (public) writing space.

> In certain limited spheres, properties are now being 'returned' to Aboriginal communities. These returns are effected mainly when the properties in question have little or no immediate commodity status, or when they can be symbolically integrated into rhetoric of decolonization.[302]

But such gestures are a pittance. Further, they bespeak of the control the West has, and the 'other' has not. Therefore, regardless of the motivations, such (well) intentions can never come close to restoring Indigenous peoples' well-being or justified claims against colonial doctrines.

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[301] Mudrooroo, 'Portrait,' 1-23.
[302] Ken Gelder, 'Aboriginal Narrative and Property,' *Meanjin* 50.2-3 (1991): 353-365.

Back to Mudrooroo's problem, being or having been the paternal ambassador to/for recent Aboriginal literature and culture at times—there should not be any lingering questions over lineage. Especially with one who has been afforded and awarded so much.

Mudrooroo has been understood, via his writings, as an 'Authentic' rebel. Additionally, he sees his characters that way.

> In his novels Mudrooroo writes about outcasts and rebels; usually—but not exclusively—these are aboriginal characters who are pushed to the fringe of the dominant society and fight to regain some space of their own.[303]

His fidelity in this 'struggle' has earned him numerous accolades.

> In her opening speech for the second Aboriginal Writers' Conference held in Melbourne, Victoria in November 1983, the poet Oodgeroo of the Tribe Noonuccal authoritatively assigned Mudrooroo (then Colin Johnson) the status of 'historian' to the Aboriginal people.[304]

Mudrooroo (or more importantly, his work) is an influential voice in and for political/cultural revival literature—as he has long written and lived in that space. He has changed the path of Aboriginal discourse. Perhaps more than merely that, he has created the tenor for contemporary Aboriginal literature. For better or ill, the discourse, both positive and negative, about all things Aboriginal (and the non-Aboriginals who also contribute), is in no small measure that from Mudrooroo's mind. And indeed, we are left with points such as this to discuss and contemplate:

> The idea of having to live in two worlds is not a new one and is often applied to Aboriginal Australians, but there is more than this in the author's words. Mudrooroo explicitly states that the Black Australian author must act as a mediator between the Aboriginal past and future while existing in the largely non-Aboriginal present.[305]

This, if for no other reason, makes him worthy of continued reading. True, Mudrooroo has, perhaps, made too much a mockery of circumstance, for questions of identity are important.

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[303] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 9.
[304] Oboe 'Wooreddy,' 83.
[305] Shoemaker, *Mudrooroo* 2.

Further, he has made his claim for legitimacy difficult if such questions have no verifiably documented basis. Again, being able to agree and maintain specific and particular traits is one of the hallmarks of a dynamic, living and confident culture. Mudrooroo, at times, has believed that. Then, at other times, he did not. Such contrarian positions are confusing, and can be mirrored in his family history.

Much has been written about his grandfather and father being Negro and not Aboriginal. Oddly, this only places him in another minority class, so his status is still somewhat acceptable to many. This is enhanced (albeit also further scrutinised) by Maureen Clark's *Mudrooroo: A Likely Story: Identity and Belonging in Postcolonial Australia* (2007), which not only explores Mudrooroo's work, but his larger family heritage. The extra attention gives us a better understanding of Mudrooroo's lineage than Shoemaker's 1990's text, *Mudrooroo: A Critical Study*.

Yet research into his matrilineal side had lagged behind. Why did the academy not spend much time on that question? Is there an unwritten protocol, still, that prohibits critiquing constructions of even (partial) whiteness, while so often deconstructing blackness, Indian-ism, Jewishness, Oriental-ism and on? It would seem there is—perhaps subconsciously—that whiteness is still thought of as normal, correct and the dominant paradigm, and, therefore, above/not needing close scrutiny. Though this is the future—can whiteness (finally) be other than pure, be labeled as a social/personal fault line, since these are social constructs?

Going back to his first work, the narrator of 'Finish' is raceless. The reader learns much *later* that the narrator in the *Wild Cat* series is Aboriginal. Although, what separates these two characters is very little, raising the question for identity well before the writer was ou(s)ted, which creates another question. Is there a true Aboriginal identity in Mudrooroo's texts, or is it a

construction that the readers posit for its similarity? For many, the question (and answer) is very important.

> In Australia in recent years, there have been several thefts of Aboriginal cultural identity which mocks Aborigines in their struggles for acceptance and equality, not only in the art world, but in every sphere dealing with Aboriginal issues.[306]

The prime example of this theft—

> Colin Johnson, now known as Mudrooroo. Colin Johnson has changed his name so many times it is hard to keep track of who he really is. One thing is for certain though, he is not an Aboriginal person.[307]

Conversely, 'the deployment of authenticity as a concept which meant to validate the categorization, reception and reading of literature is highly suspect.'[308] This is a valid statement both in the abstract and in the practical sphere. But how are we to prove literature (and its creators) honest? A test (of purity of blood and mind) would have to be conceived. And with such a test, would not the eugenics of the world rejoice? However, not admitting the seriousness of such posturing glosses over the deep shame Aboriginal people must endure yet again.

> The literati, academia and the publishers, besides those ignorant Aborigines, seem to uphold his right to maintain his false identity. I ask you, where does that leave the indigenous people, the Nyoongar people, whose cultural identity he has stolen and made use of for his own ends? Are we to accept this state of affairs? Are we to let students from all over the country believe that he is a Nyoongar, an Aboriginal man. Are we to let this imposter make fools of us? [309]

The question is compounded by the understanding that Elizabeth Durack had also engaged in a like deception.

> The next notorious person to assume an Aboriginal identity is Elizabeth Durack, an elderly white woman who paints under the pseudonym of Eddie Burrup. At first glance,

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[306] Rosemary van den Berg, 'Intellectual Property Rights for Aboriginal People in Australia,' (1998) Curtin University, 25 Jan 2010 <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP898rvdb.html>.
[307] van den Berg, 'Intellectual Property Rights for Aboriginal People in Australia,' Web.
[308] Shoemaker, 'Mudrooroo and the Curse of Authenticity,' *Mongrel Signatures: Reflections on the Works of Mudrooroo,* ed. Annalisa Oboe (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) 8. Odd the title would include the word 'curse,' for regardless of Mudrooroo's future, making arguments defining what 'authentically' is Aboriginal then performing in that role is what enhanced his writing career.
[309] van den Berg, 'Intellectual Property Rights for Aboriginal People in Australia,' Web.

> Eddie Burrup is construed as being Aboriginal. This is a deliberate ploy to delude people into thinking that her artistic work is done by an Aboriginal person.[310]

The simple question of identity via pseudonyms is not the point. bell hooks (Gloria Watkins), Jamaica Kincaid (Elaine Potter), while the British (seeming men) George Eliot and the Bronte sisters[311] are all examples of deliberate identity change. Instead, it is the historical context.

Terry Goldie, in 'On Not Being Australian,' discusses two 'ethnic' and publicly awarded writers of Australian letters: Mudrooroo and Demidenko. He writes that the first might not be 'truly' aboriginal,[312] and Demidenko was born to English migrants who were not Ukrainian. 'As her mother puts it, 'We are Poms, let's be honest about it.''[313] Legitimacy, and questioned authenticity surrounds each case,—yet there is something else, slippage. Later, Goldie writes,

> There are many similar examples in the United States, the United Kingdom. My claim is that the special character of certain countries such as Canada and Australia, places where identity is a rather fragile thing, makes imposture a particularly important issue, and in case of the indigenous and the migrant, it becomes a still more difficult matter.[314]

Criticism and theory (though always needed) should be cautiously applied when a term or author gives definitive answers to societal-induced problems and phenomena. In her warning about postcolonial theory, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes, 'Postcolonial studies, unwittingly commemorating a lost object, can become an alibi unless it is placed within a general frame.'[315] The question of 'agency' [i.e. self-generating action] can also be at risk, for who is the legitimate spokesperson, and is the terminology static? Moreover, there seems to be a question as to whether the discourse itself might be problematic.

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[310] van den Berg, 'Intellectual Property Rights for Aboriginal People in Australia,' Web.
[311] Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death,' 83-102.
[312] Terry Goldie, 'On Not Being Australian: Mudrooroo and Demidenko.' *Australian Literary Studies* 21. 4 (2004): 89-100. 9 Jan 2009. <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=900126668478764;res=IELHSS>. This article is not the first scholar who has raised this question about Mudrooroo, which has added to his celebrity. However, the mystery should not necessarily over-shadow his contributions, either.
[313] Goldie, 'On Not Being,' 89-100.
[314] Goldie, 'On Not Being,' 89-100.
[315] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Harvard: Harvard UP, 1999) 1.

> Colonial Discourse studies, when they concentrate only on the representation of the colonized or the matter of the colonies, can sometimes serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present.[316]

Perhaps this is why theoretical wonderings should not be the sole purview of academics. 'There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged.'[317] Nevertheless, the Academy is in a very solid place to offer such ideas, even if they are enhanced from other sources.

> What is less well known is that a member of the Nyoongah community first aroused Laurie's curiosity about the results of research undertaken into the Johnson family's ancestry. It was only following this initial approach that the journalist moved to contact the author's older sister, Betty Polglaze, whose investigations had, in 1992 culminated in a reunion with a 'lost' younger brother whom she had neither seen nor heard of for over forty years. Any exposé of what has since been called 'the Mudrooroo affair' must therefore be regarded as an act performed by both 'families.'[318]

Mudrooroo was duly 'defrocked' as a kin member of Narrogin peoples. 'The Kickett family rejects Colin Johnson's claim to his Aboriginality and any kinship ties to the families throughout the Narrogin and Cuballing region.'[319] Thus, there are serious consequences for ambiguity or obfuscation of the truth. Yet the situation for such censure seems to have made the Aboriginal community seem a little smaller.

Mudrooroo has rebutted these claims, pointing out, after dispatching his own investigators, that they could not find conclusive, paternal evidence.[320] Yet that will not do much to assuage the controversy; Mudrooroo's acknowledged then celebrated claims and literary contributions are, too, duly noted to pretend they never happened—or that 'Mudrooroo' ever existed. This being true, we are only left with the second question: how to appreciate his work?

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[316] Spivak 1.
[317] Homi K Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 28.
[318] Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death,' 83-102.
[319] Clark, 'Mudrooroo and the Death,' 83-102.
[320] Mudrooroo, 'Portrait,' 1-23.

The strangeness of Mudrooroo's work transcends boundaries, occupying too much liminal space[321] to be ignored. Also, his work in theory and fiction challenges long-held (historical and political) foundations—for the betterment of Indigenous peoples. This is why there needs to be a separation between the person and the work—to save critics from becoming ensnarled in a 'cult of (his or her) personality' in the future, for it has certainly happened in the past. The trap of only seeing from the perspective of 'one's academic cult' has also been pernicious. John Eustace wrote of this problem in explaining why anthropologists (and in a wider view, academics) have not been as forthwith as they should have: 'In attending to the Mudrooroo affair the way we have, we have defended our territorial interests.'[322] Personal gain has sullied the issues. A further *mea culpa*: 'His Aboriginality legitimized our cultural practice; his authenticity legitimized ours.'[323] Hence, one of the vehicles for Mudrooroo's influence came from those who saw their fortunes tethered to his. But this still does not minimise the well-documented effects that he has had on all things Aboriginal—or in other spheres of Indigenous thought. 'In this way. Mudrooroo's spectre haunts the uncanny limits of Australianness through fiction in its widest sense.'[324] This is what the works have created in its readership and in the larger field of literature.

Yet what Mudrooroo can be held in low regard for is something that Clark has argued.

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[321] Bhabha 5. What Bhabha has done, perhaps more persuasively than most in the field of contemporary literary criticism is show, through this metaphor, the connections between points and subjects. He writes 'The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities of either and of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.'

[322] John Eustace, 'An Unsettling Affair: Territorial Anxieties and the Mutant Message,' *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 40.2 (2005): 65-91.

[323] Eustace, 'An Unsettling Affair,' 65-91. Many of these are not new points. Graeme Dixon, Tom Little and Lorna Little, 'The Mudrooroo Dilemma,' *Westerly* 41.3 (1996): 5-8. The same concerns are voiced there, of Mudrooroo needing to speak forcefully about the matter not only for his legacy, but all those who have been influenced by his work.

[324] Renes, 'Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy,' 1-10.

> His refusal to speak, however, also implies that Johnson is unwilling or perhaps unable to admit that the politics of the body in which he engaged depended for its authority on the same conceptual colonising apparatus he still professes to resist. It is not unreasonable to suggest that all things considered, the Aboriginal peoples, the academic communities, his readers and his biological family deserve something more than his silence.[325]

This seems to be the most reasonable point; to those who seem loyal and have been (none more than Shoemaker,[326] who has been at work 'litigating' to bring Mudrooroo and his texts back into 'respectable' discussions), a better explanation is warranted. Sadly, 'Portrait' does not expound on personal accountability. Instead, 'Any identity we have is made up of our intricate relationships with our families (society), nature and the whole universe.'[327] Therefore, one must question the sincerity of this summation.

Nonetheless, 'He cannot be easily removed from that heritage.'[328] Or better, *his* work has served a purpose in unifying and creating spaces for modern Aboriginal ideas. Clearly merit, evasion and anger have all served to blur the essential power of the writing and the challenges which it poses for the host society/his readers, whenever and wherever they may be. However, understanding (and acknowledging) that Mudrooroo's entire body of work is an attempt to neutralise and/or destroy hegemony will never be lost or diminished by the results of any DNA test.

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[325] Clark, *Mudrooroo: A Likely Story* 246.

[326] Adam Shoemaker wrote a partial explanation/defense of Mudrooroo and the crises that followed the outing: 'Mudrooroo and the Curse of Authenticity.' The essay attempts a re-focusing, a questioning of the motivation behind anyone interested in searching for origins. The argument fails since it cannot reconcile the fact that this, roughly, forty-year, 'curse,' that made Mudrooroo an icon for many of the down-trodden, was never repudiated. Then, in 2012, Shoemaker wrote of this 'affair' under the title 'Mudrooroo: 'Waiting to be Surprised.' This after Mudrooroo had contacted him. The article is more wide ranging (exploring Mudrooroo Buddhist training and faith), but grudgingly, still adheres to Shoemaker's earlier position. Albeit, he is more direct in what Mudrooroo's stance has wrought. 'Mudrooroo was hoist on his own petard of *hubris* and chauvism.' Further, that Mudrooroo's work, though creative, was also consumed by paternal weaknesses. 'I believe they laid the groundwork for his frequently misogynistic writing (and) speaking.' *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 11.2 (2012): 1-10. Web. 10 Feb. 2014. Yet for all of this, there still seems a need to protect Mudrooroo (from critics). Also curious, the personal/professional embarrassment of those who had defended Mudrooroo is not fully addressed.

[327] Mudrooroo, 'Portrait,' 1-23.

[328] Turcotte, 'Remastering the Ghosts,' (35n) 140.

Section Two—Sally Morgan

Although a contemporary of Mudrooroo, Sally Morgan's worldview is not nearly as angst driven. This does not mean her work is emotionally void or impersonal, however. *My Place*,

> tells of the search of its author, Sally Morgan, for her true place within the present and past Aboriginal culture, and also gives a very personal counter-version of traditional post-contact Australian history.[1]

This story's communicative tools are oral and literal, having recorded family interviews, to which the project is dedicated. The transcripts were then transferred; their essence onto paper and then into a (flowing) text. Her maternal, Aboriginal heritage side is featured at length. The project addresses a desire (for countless Aboriginal and/or Indigenous people) to create a connection between a past that has been partially erased and/or silenced, and a present that does not seem to be accorded a space.

Mudrooroo and his characters are to be seen as loners. Morgan's text, instead, is inclusive. With the support of numerous family members she creates a new, safe space for herself, and all her people. This also means the writing style is less experimental than Mudrooroo's, using a standard format for self-discovery.[2] Yet the venture is still sophisticated, weaving four familial, inter-relational narratives into one—Or, let us postulate, a family narrative Aboriginal people can ponder over while thinking of the space they do not readily enjoy, due to a vast social and historical void.

My Place attempts to fill that void beginning with the dedication. 'How deprived we

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[1] Rhonda Ozturk, 'Sally Morgan's Discovery of True Identity and Black History from Minimal Lore,' *Australian Folklore: A Yearly Journal of Folklore Studies*, 10 (1995): 61-78.

[2] This style (being contentment inducing), though anathematic to many of her critics has not always been so for all writers. Roland Barthes writes of a 'text of pleasure.' Such a work 'comes from culture and does not break with it; is linked to a comfortable practice of reading.' *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975) 14.

would have been if we had been willing to let things stay as they were. We would have survived, but not as a whole people. We would never have known our place.'[3] The issue here is the ability to flourish as a whole being, instead of existing on the margins via institutional ostracization. 'This practice of habitation is more than the occupying of a location, it is itself *a way of being* within which, and through which comes to be.'[4]

The first void that crowds out Morgan's awareness of her place is the hospital. 'The hospital again, and the echo of my reluctant feet through the long, empty corridors.'[5] There is a detachment here since the location represents a Western, colonised space. 'An ideally efficient, sanitized, scientific bureaucracy [that] also suggests the imposition of a certain totalizing system of social relations.'[6] The Samoan writer, Albert Wendt, wrote more dealing with that institution and one other: hotels. Such *papalagi* [of European descent] architecture has invaded Oceania with

> super-stainless/super-plastic/super-hygienic/super-soulless structure[s] very similar to modern hospitals, and its most nightmarish form is the new type tourist hotel—a multi-stories edifice of concrete/steel/chromium/and air-conditioning.[7]

The application of Western space antagonises all it touches. **'**I hated the bare boards that gleamed with newly applied polish, the dust-free window-sills, and the flashes of shiny chrome that snatched my distorted shape as we hurried past. I was a five-year-old in an alien environment.'[8] Morgan's opposition and reasons for activism began very early.

The best way to understand how *My Place* contests colonization is to split the work into two sections. The first can be titled 'Not My Place.' It chronicles a young, bewildered Sally

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[3] Sally Morgan, *My Place* (1987; Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1988) 5.
[4] Bill Ashcroft, 'Habitation,' *New Literature Review* 34 (1997): 27-42.
[5] Morgan 7.
[6] Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania,' *Mana Review (*1976): 641-652.
[7] Robert Chi, 'Toward: a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions,' *Cultural Critique* 37 (1997): 61-105.
[8] Morgan 7.

living in a household that is fearful of its being discovered as Aboriginal. This work is not without its contradiction, however, for, along with other Australian texts from the 1980s, it does 'privilege the nuclear family, intentionally or unintentionally, and in particular, sustain[s] the mythology of motherhood.'[9] Nevertheless, the chapters read as vignettes, detailing how standard and respectable institutions (formal education and organised religion/the church), then governmental bodies (questions concerning her *right* to claim Aboriginal scholarship awards) shunned her. This is all contained in the section titled 'Not My Place: Home Instability.' It bears this description for her home life (as a child), was not idyllic. Her father was abusive and the family was very poor—almost destitute. There were more travails though, including the problematic relationship with her grandmother Daisy.

In the second section, here titled '(Re)Creating My Place,' she proclaims her Aboriginal lineage as a location not to be shied away from, and so she explores it formally.

> The narration in *My Place* follows first Morgan's journey from childhood to adulthood, then the gradual development of her identity through her slow understanding of herself, in relation to her family and their place within the Aboriginal kinship network at large and, finally, importance of the Aboriginal culture within Australia at large.[10]

This wider view leads to a doubling back to an oral and re-visioned understanding of standard Australian history and Aboriginal people. 'Morgan feels that she needs to go back to the beginning, to delve into the history of the Aboriginal people, if she is to discover her true identity.'[11] Of which she admits in the text. 'A very vital part of me was missing.'[12]

Her going back happens in a linear fashion, re-living her life from childhood to adult, from being a confused little girl to a proud Aboriginal woman. Along the way, each chapter (or

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[9] Carolyn Bliss, 'The Mythology of Family: Three Texts of Popular Australian Culture,' *New Literatures Review*, 18 (1989): 60-72.
[10] Ozturk, 'Sally Morgan's Discovery,' 61-78.
[11] Ozturk, 'Sally Morgan's Discovery,' 61-78.
[12] Morgan 134.

vignette) chronicles her confusion at not being allowed to fit into proper society, until she re-examines her maternal history. On a different front, then, this can also be seen as her own 'battler' tale. Battler since the term is one 'used to describe 'ordinary' or working class individuals who persevere through their commitments despite adversity.'[13] The vignettes chronicling her meagre home environment and status as an outsider strengthen this idea. 'Typically, this adversity comprises the challenges of low payment, family commitments, environmental hardships and of a lack of personal recognition.'[14] The Sally Morgan depicted in much of the novel (then) is not much different from many of Mudrooroo's characters—in plight. However, there the similarity ends, and three differences occur.

My Place is not a text consumed by racial (nor class or gender) oppression—albeit those problems are present. Instead, the text is a means to chronicle her (and immediate family's) struggles, and their successes. This is seen in her ability to construct a positive outcome, whereas, while if it were a Mudrooroo text, perhaps that would not be the case, since he has almost perfected, by his pen, the pathos that can surround one being from a broken home. This is the second important difference between their works. In Morgan's novel, though there was abuse, the family remained together. And not only the nuclear aspect (mother, and all her children), but positive, older extended family members were present and offered what aid they could. Thirdly, had this happened while embracing and utilizing what Australian society has to offer. These themes are also in Epeli Hau'ofa's work. He also addresses the plights of oppressed people—but on a larger platform, by critiquing the matter of global colonization.

[13] Noriko Sekiya, 'Aussie 'battler' as a cultural keyword in Australian English,' *Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication* 1. 1 (2008): 21-32.
[14] Noriko Sekiya 21-32.

Not My Place: Home Instability

Not being able to connect, or reconnect to a holistic past, a younger Sally elicits help from her oldest, immediate elders: first, her great uncle Arthur, then mother, Gladys, and lastly, grandmother Daisy (also known as Nan). Of the three, Gladys gives insight into the troubled relationship she had with her husband (Bill Milroy).

> I suppose many people must wonder why on earth I didn't just take the kids and leave. Well, I nearly did, on several occasions, but Bill always threatened me. He said, 'Nobody will let someone like you bring up kids and you know it. I'm the one that'll get custody, I'll give them to my parents.'[15]

Here he means an Aboriginal woman with mixed-blood kids. Further, with the history of Australian racial policies, this was not an idle threat; mixed race children were routinely taken from their Aboriginal mothers. The film, *Rabbit Proof Fence*[16] has chronicled this policy very clearly indeed.

Yet Gladys did not see herself as a victim. As with most of her family, she is proud of her achievements.

> What I've always hated is people feeling sorry for me, and I would hate that to happen, because when I think of it, I've really had a fantastic life. I've managed just lately to be able to talk about where I was brought up; up until now I haven't been able to, so it's good.[17]

The text, then, has liberated Morgan's mother as well. A positive not noted in many of the (negative) critiques of the work. One point, which will be listed later, is that the Morgan of the text was not an angry person—at her situation or white Australia. Yet since there is also a lack of

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[15] Morgan 377.
[16] *Rabbit Proof Fence*, dir. Phillip Noyce. Miramax Films, 2002. DVD. The film chronicles the struggles of Aboriginal mothers and their inter-racial daughters. A close look at Australian resettlement doctrine, circa 1930s, though the policy ran from 1869 to beyond 1969. The experience here is of three mixed blood Aboriginal girls, Molly Craig, Daisy Craig Kadbill and cousin, Gracie Fields (Played by Everlyn Sampi, Tianna Sansbury, and Laura Monaghan, respectively.).
[17] Mary Wright, 'A Fundamental Question of Identity: An Interview with Sally Morgan,' *Kunapipi* 10:1-2 (1988): 92-128.

vituperative criticism (and concerns) with Gladys' comments; those dismayed by the text's 'even temper' should have leveled scorn (it would seem) at her mother as well. Saying she had 'a fantastic life' displays the same mindset as her daughter. Indeed, she does not curse out the 'white man' either. Yet neither is a Pollyanna figure—quite the opposite. More, Gladys is a very determined person. She admits the abuse she suffered from her husband and Australian governmental policies, but then decides to not live (solely) by those events. Such strength of character, which can be seen throughout this work, leads to the reason—which will be discussed later—that most of the criticism is not due to Morgan being a traitor to the Aboriginal cause, but difficulty with not knowing how to interpret her Aboriginal experience (and place).

FORMAL EDUCATION

Problems with the academic system, rendered by Morgan, is not one unique to Aboriginal people—especially those who became professionals. Larissa Behrendt wrote, as an Aboriginal student and teacher, along similar lines. 'Aboriginal people experience many hurdles in the education system.'[18] As such, Morgan's ambivalence/struggle against Western institutions and constructions began at an early age. Indeed, the educational system held the same place as the hospital.

> Mum chattered cheerfully as she led me down the bitumen path, through the main entrance to the grey weathered and asbestos buildings. One look and I was convinced that, like The Hospital, it was a place dedicated to taking the spirit out of life.[19]

Morgan does end up in a formal class and bonds with reading, but she does not enjoy school. 'By the beginning of second term at school, I had learnt to read, and was the best reader in my class. Reading opened up new horizons for me, but it also created a hunger that school could not

[18] Larissa Behrendt, 'At the Back of the Class. At the Front of the Class: Experiences as Aboriginal Student and Aboriginal Teacher,' *Feminist Review* 52 (1996): 27-35.
[19] Morgan 15.

satisfy.'[20]

Succeeding in school did not mean that she felt comfortable. 'They were the spick-and-span brigade, and I, the grubby offender.'[21] The 'grubby offender' here is the 'grubby five-year old in an alien environment' who had earlier visited the equally clean hospital. Here again, the feelings written are not outside the parameters of what other Aboriginals experience. From Behrendt: 'I remember being reprimanded for wearing small symbols of my Aboriginality to school. I encountered a third grade teacher who told that 'you people' never amount to anything.'[22]

Young Sally's sense of place was further challenged in high school, when she befriends a white schoolmate. 'I think my intense admiration for Steph's room caused me to become somewhat dissatisfied. I suddenly realized there was a whole world beyond what I knew. It was frightening.'[23] This awareness (further) validates the text and answers why a young Morgan would be so dissatisfied—even conflict-ridden.

Can one be loyal to different 'masters'? The answer is, 'no.' Even if the schools were were more sensitive to the struggles the Aboriginal students faced, those pupils would still feel ostracised. Being successful in a Mathematico-technologial culture[24] in a manner deemed by western standards (potentially) puts Aboriginal children (and parents) in a horrible position. 'If Aboriginal children are schooled in this way they will lose their Aboriginal identity.'[25] This while realizing 'economic opportunities' lie with doing well in western pedagogy. The either/or

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[20] Morgan 17.
[21] Morgan 28.
[22] Behrendt, 'At the Back of the Class,' 27-35.
[23] Morgan 103.
[24] Beth Graham, 'Mathematical Education and Aboriginal Children,' *Educational Studies in Mathematics* 19. 2 (1988): 119-135. The sentiment is pro-Aboriginal, yet the terms are problematic. Indigenous cultures are technologically and mathematically inclined. How else did they hunt, farm, live long lives? Therefore, there is a bit of cultural (and conceptual) blindness here, but the idea of Western pedagogy having the power to erase other teaching methods and foundations is accurate.
[25] Graham, 'Mathematical Education,' 19-135.

paradigm is one stress hegemony leverages for benefit and to the disadvantage of Indigenous people.

ORGANISED RELIGION

Missionary (Christian) service is a part of the colonization paradigm. The man young Sally married, Paul Morgan, and then later divorced, was born to missionary parents. Christianity is also seen as another pillar in Western civilization—including its missionary zeal. A young Morgan displayed this phenomena; being a convert and believer.

> MORGAN: 'Who are you?' I asked mentally.
> With a sudden dreadful insight, I knew it was God.
> MORGAN: 'What are you doing here?' I asked. I don't know why I was surprised. It was a church hall, after all. It had to be Him because the voice seemed to come from without not within, it transcended the reality of the room. I couldn't even see my surroundings any more. I was having an audience with Him, whom I dreaded. The mental images that I had built up of Him so far in my life began to dissolve, and in their place a new image. A person, overwhelming love, acceptance and humour. What Nan'd call real class. In an instant, I became what others refer to as a believer.[26]

Older, she reflected on the place of Christianity and Aboriginal beliefs—

> I think one can enhance the other. I have many relations who wouldn't have the same beliefs as me, and would probably disagree with my religious beliefs, but they still have that Aboriginal spirituality, which I just think comes as part of that culture and as part of that inheritance.[27]

Though such a musings should not be thought of as odd. Morgan had that side (Aboriginal spirituality), before she realised what it was. A younger Sally spoke of Nan's private but expected special bird call. 'This morning, I was waiting for the bird call. Nan called it her special bird, nobody had heard of it but her. This morning I was going to hear it, too.'[28]

The special bird reappears in the last chapter, titled 'The Bird Call.' There it reassures a dying Nan, who must then assuage the fears of the family.

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[26] Morgan 127.
[27] Wright, 'A Fundamental Question,' 92-109.
[28] Morgan 11.

> ‘Ooh, no,’ she scoffed, ‘it was the Aboriginal bird, Sally. God sent him to tell me I’m going home soon. Home to my own land and my own people. I got a good spot up there, they all waitin’ for me.’[29]

Because of her confused, in-between status, a young Sally struggled with her grandmother’s blending of religions—not knowing its Aboriginal roots. Morgan was also conflict-ridden with being a believer and a true follower. A good example is her fondness for belonging to a local youth group but not the Church proper.

> I joined the local youth group after that. I was full of ideas for making the meetings and outings we went on more interesting, but it was difficult to change the pattern that had been set in motion so many years before.[30]

The tension is exacerbated when told she was an undesirable. Further proof that she was not acceptable to mainstream society.

> DEACON: ‘I’d like you to stop mixing with Mary.’ He smiled his charming smile again.
> MORGAN: ‘Why?’ I was genuinely puzzled.
> DEACON: ‘I think you know why.’
> MORGAN: ‘No, I don’t.’
> DEACON: ‘You’re a bad influence, you must realise that.’
> MORGAN: ‘What do you mean?’
> DEACON: ‘This is Mary’s Leaving year, the same as yours. I don’t want her mixing with you in case she picks up any of your bad habits.’
> MORGAN: I nodded my head, and he walked off. I was hurt and disappointed. He was a deacon, I’d looked up to him. I was lucky I had my pride, it came to my rescue yet again. I didn’t need people like him, I decided.[31]

Her being relegated to the margins was not unique, as she found out.

> For a while, I’d been hearing about a girl who attended a church a few suburbs from mine who was supposed to have a great personality and sense of humour. I was keen to meet her. Firstly, because I hadn’t met many girls with a great sense of humour, and secondly, because I’d come in on quite a few conversations about this girl that ended in ‘Yeah, but she’s got a great personality’ or ‘Yeah but she’s nice, isn’t she?’ I wondered what was wrong with her. When we finally met, I understood. I can’t remember her name, but she was a very dark Aboriginal girl.[32]

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[29] Morgan 443.
[30] Morgan 127-8.
[31] Morgan 128-29.
[32] Morgan 141.

This passage displays the clear divide between Australian and Aboriginal people. The problem with Aboriginals is that they are Aboriginal; marginal, not fully admissible. But there is no sadness with this contemporary. Her placement is curious for one of the common complaints of the text is the supposed lack of 'real' Aboriginal voices. Yet that accusation is not supported. Indeed, its opposite is clearly true.

> One day, she told me she was leaving.
> MORGAN: 'What do you mean, leaving?' I asked. 'Where are you going?'
> ABORIGINAL GIRL: 'I'm going back to live with my people.'
> MORGAN: 'Your people?' I was so dumb.
> ABORIGINAL GIRL: 'Yes. I'm going back to live with them. I want to help them if I can.'
> I was really sorry I wouldn't be seeing her any more. And I wondered who her people were and why they needed help. What was wrong with them? I was too embarrassed to ask.[33]

The passage proves that Morgan was aware of other Indigenous people. The problem, then, was her relationship to those she had been taught were not of her lineage. The old dilemma, then, had resurfaced and with it several other questions. Who was Sally Milroy (maiden name) and why could she not grasp societal distinctions lay between 'race' and culture? Her confusion came from her not being reared or taught as to her true heritage. It did not come from her hiding that fact from herself.

IDENTITY/CITIZENSHIP

Western perspectives and perceptions centre on individual identity to prove its difference and (thus space) from others. Not a small or unique issue.

> In the nineteenth century, the very notion of a fixed identity was doubtless a product of, and reaction to, the rapid change and transformation of both metropolitan and colonial societies which meant that, as with nationalism, such identities needed to be constructed to counter schisms, friction and dissent.[34]

Even well after the nineteenth century, identity (and its markers) continues to be important.

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[33] Morgan 141.
[34] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 3-4.

Regardless of it being a social construct. Sally learns this as a young student.

In the first few chapters Morgan is seen as an outsider. This sentiment is reinforced by those outside her family.

> The kids at school had also begun asking us what country we came from. This puzzled me because up until then, I'd thought we were the same as them. If we insisted that we came from Australia, they'd reply, 'Yeah, but what about ya parents, bet they didn't come from Australia.'[35]

When Sally asks her mother for clarification, Gladys dissembles, keeping her ignorant, but temporarily satisfied.

> MORGAN: 'I mean, what country. The kids at school want to know what country we come from. They reckon we're not Aussies. Are we Aussies, Mum?' Mum was silent. Nan grunted in a cross sort of way, then got up from the table and walked outside.
> GLADYS: 'What do the kids at school say?'
> MORGAN: 'Anything. Italian, Greek, Indian.'
> GLADYS: 'Tell them you're Indian.'
> MORGAN: I got really excited, then. 'Are we really Indian!' It sounded exotic. 'When did we come here?' I added.
> GLADYS: 'A long time ago,' Mum replied. 'Now, no more questions. You just tell them you're Indian.'
> MORGAN: It was good to finally have an answer and it satisfied our playmates. They could quite believe we were Indian, they just didn't want us pretending we were Aussies when we weren't.[36]

Young Sally is closely questioned by her schoolmates, for they perceive something is misplaced with her. She cannot be Australian ('pure,' in a Victorian sense). Yet they have trouble placing her securely with any *Other* sub-group. She mimics proper (Australian) behaviour well enough, but does not 'look' like an Australian. Hence the problems with Sally's identity were from those outside in their attempt to categorise her—not from some profound lack of self-esteem.

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* the protagonist, Marlow, has a similar problem with

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[35] Morgan 45.
[36] Morgan 45.

identifying an African, who, circa 1700s-1960s, were all thought of as primitive. However, this particular African had an important duty, working the ship's boiler. Much crew vexation ensues, for the man did not fit into the category he should. The African blurred the racial boundary line by not being 'white,' or acting 'savage.' Marlow is attended upstream by a mimic man. The African, like Sally, is an historical anomaly: 'the savage who was fireman.'[37]

Another similarity between these texts is that of satire. Critics of *Heart of Darkness* have railed against it as being a racist tract. However, the action played can also be thought of as deeply cynical of the Western idea of Enlightenment. The passages which make young Morgan completely oblivious should be taken the same way. She is writing about her younger life, and using a child's naivety to express the problem of her surroundings, the culture and not herself. This performance gives the reader a better understanding of why she needed to find her own place.

However, the tone for her older relatives, being that they have already lived through deep bouts of humiliation, is rendered differently. There is no light mood with them—only concern. That is why Gladys' answer of 'Indian' solved the dilemma for the moment, but only that. Due to Nan's experience with dominant society, she is so anxious lest her secret(s) will become known and spoken, and then she reacts extremely.

> Towards the end of the school year, I arrived home early one day to find Nan sitting at the kitchen table, crying. I froze in the doorway, I'd never seen her cry before.
> MORGAN: 'Nan … what's wrong?'
> NAN: 'Nothin'!'
> MORGAN: 'Then what are you crying for?' She lifted her arm and thumped her clenched fist on the kitchen table.
> NAN: 'You bloody kids don't want me, you want a bloody white grandmother, I'm black. Do you hear, black, black, black!' With that, Nan pushed back her chair and hurried out to her room. I continued to stand in the doorway, I could feel the strap of my heavy school bag cutting into my shoulder, but I was too stunned to remove

[37] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*. ed. Ross C Murfin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989) 51.

it.[38]

As long as there was a silence over the past, there was plausible deniability. But that tactic was never reliable, so the fear of past and what it might portend was never far away. Still they needed to perform differently.

> Concrete instances of the impact of racialist, legislative texts on the corpus of Aboriginal Australia punctuate all three accounts. Daisy's [Morgan's grandmother] story reveals, for instance, how, in keeping with the legislation which prevented Aborigines from disposing their own property, she is not allowed to keep anything that belonged to her cousin, Helen Bunda, when the latter dies – it is Helen's white employers who 'inherit' their Aboriginal servant's meager possessions. Gladys's [Morgan's mother] account records the historical facts that Aboriginal people were legally obliged to obtain official permits to travel in Australia. [39]

This explains Daisy's attempts to move closer to the centre.

Acting in a certain manner, one that would be respectable to the larger culture, was born out of a need to be safe. There was no alternative for Daisy. She had witnessed, many times, what happened to those *known* to be Aboriginal. Hence, she tried, for the rest of her life, to act differently, using her own version of the politics of respectability.[40]

The politics of persona and self-respect are not only relegated to questions dealing with race, however. Judith Butler has argued forcefully that gender is also a term tethered to performance and not to biology.

> In this sense, *gender* (author's emphasis) is not a noun but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender

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[38] Morgan 120.

[39] Shelia Collingwood-Wittick 'Sally Morgan's *My Place*: Exposing the (Ab)original Text Behind Whitefellas History,' *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 25.1 (2002): 41-58.

[40] This political/personal philosophy has a long history, but perhaps is best described in Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993). This movement was perfected by 'black Baptist church women.' They were 'duty-bound to teach the value of religion, education, and hard work [. . .] the politics of respectability equated public behaviour with individual self-respect and with the advancement of African Americans as a group. They felt certain that 'respectable' behaviour in public would earn their people a measure of esteem from white America' (14).

> is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed.[41]

In *Gender Trouble,* Butler goes on to say,

> In an application that [Friedrich] Nietzsche himself would not have anticipated or condoned, we might state as a corollary: There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results.[42]

Racial categories, identifications, should be seen in a similar manner.

Stuart Hall contends that race is a 'floating signifier.'[43] An image loaded with differing meanings, depending on the gazer and those gazed upon—not too dissimilar to gender. What is interesting, unlike the idea of a skinwalker, the 'viewee' has little agency—as opposed to the 'viewer.' Instead, is trapped by what a culture or society sees that person or people as being. Worse, one might be forced to remain in that category. Butler's *Gender Trouble* includes the word 'Trouble' not by happenstance. One who speaks differently than her perceived station can and normally will experience consequences and repercussions meant to ensure the wrong performance will not happen again. For the Milroy family, especially Nan, performing as something other than Aboriginal was the only reasonable survival tactic. They were never respected as having a legitimate culture. Even by those who supposedly had their best interests in mind.

In colonial versions of Australian history, Aborigine people (when they are mentioned at all) are invariably dismissed for their feckless nomadism or their inherent aversion to work. This attitude may be clearly observed in Alice Drake-Brockman's comment to Morgan, during a visit

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[41] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 24-5.
[42] Butler 25.
[43] Stuart Hall's full example and explanation of this term is captured in a 1996 lecture (originally filmed on videocassette, but can also be found on the web at *www.mediaed.org*) at Goldsmith's College, London titled *Race: the Floating Signifier*. The lecture is preceded by Sut Jhally's incisive explanatory notes, for the Media Education Foundation.

she pays to the Drake-Brockmans in the hope of finding out more about her Aboriginal family history. 'The natives never liked to work. You had to work with them if you wanted them to work. They always wanted to go walkabout. They couldn't stand the tedium of the same job.'[44] Such a sentiment is reminiscent of Mudrooroo's first official patron, Dame Mary Durack,

> Some [Aboriginals] became assimilated into the white community, but the majority continued to breed among themselves or [go] back into the Aborigines from other parts of the State, resulting in a drifting coloured minority caught in the vicious circle of a lack of opportunity and their own lack of stamina.[45]

The viewpoints are not much different, but the identity/position of Mudrooroo is that of the rebel. Morgan is the traitor. This is the pervasiveness of perceptions that reinforces the belief based on agreed behavior/performance. Morgan's text exposes such ideas and notions as wrong; an endeavour most writers must confront. Black American writer James Baldwin voiced a familiar charge. 'Every society is really governed by hidden laws, by unspoken but profound assumptions on the part of the people.'[46] Baldwin knew this rule well.

In the 1950's-1960s, Baldwin and other Black American intellectuals (before and after), sought refuge in Europe. There they reflected on the ease of living, as long as they had an American passport. They were safe and even celebrated in their Blackness—as long as they were not European. Richard Wright had also expressed such a freedom, but Baldwin at least placed a heavy caveat on believing in this utopia: one must know/have the right symbols and language.

> The meaning of Europe for an American Negro was one of the things about which Richard Wright and I disagreed most vehemently. He was fond of referring to Paris as the 'city of refuge' – which it certainly was, God knows, for the likes of us. But it was not a city of refuge for the French, still less anyone belonging to France; and it would not have been a city of refuge for us if we had not been armed with American passports.[47]

Hence, they were only safe as long as they performed as belonging to, yet estranged from a

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[44] Morgan 215.
[45] Mary Durack, foreword, *Wild Cat Falling*, by Mudrooroo (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1965) xiv.
[46] James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dell, 1966) 23.
[47] Baldwin 149.

dominant culture. In that manner they were fun to be around. But not France's problem if they became trouble—they could be expelled. However, they would have to be very troublesome for that to happen. Chinua Achebe, commenting on the secure ability of Western artists wrote this:

> These children of the West roamed the world with the confidence of the authority of their homeland behind them. The purchasing power of even very little real money in their pocket set against the funny money all around them might often be enough to validate their authority without any effort on their part.[48]

Hence, the political/rebellious sentiment many have espoused is dampened with knowing, by their identity, little damage would become them. Such an understanding does not diminish one's stance, but lessens the 'romantic aura' attached. Indeed, these artists (and many more) fled their home countries because they were more than merely inhospitable, or conducive to living with dignity and respect. As for American Negroes, until late in the 1950s, life what very dangerous, with even pubic hangings still in the minds of people—both black and white. What should be noted, though, is the paradox: It is only that because they came from those particular countries, that they were also safe—abroad. Sadly, it makes several aspects of adult society seem rather base.

Nevertheless, being conscious of one's colour and its symbolic nature is needed to perform well. A young Sally, reflecting on her life, initially, did not.

> For the first time in my fifteen years, I was conscious of Nan's colouring. She was right, she wasn't white. What did that make us, what did that make me? I had never thought of myself as being black before.[49]

Even at this juncture, Sally does not recognise the inherent problems of being outside, unlike her younger and more racially astute sister.

> JILL: 'Boongs, we're boongs!' I could see Jill was unhappy with the idea.
> MORGAN: 'What's a boong?'
> JILL: 'A boong. You know, Aboriginal. God, of all things, we're Aboriginal!'

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[48] Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 92.
[49] Morgan 120.

> MORGAN: 'Oh.' I suddenly understood. There was a great deal of social stigma attached to being Aboriginal at our school.[50]

Young Sally is displayed as someone who sees/observes a confusing outside world—while staying ambivalently connected to it. Not too unlike Wild Cat, she lives existentially from the greater society, for that is not her space. Those locations are already occupied and/or heavily dominated. She does wonder about this new identity, but, and believes it is not new as much as not well known to her.

> MORGAN: I settled back into my mattress and began to think about the past. Were we Aboriginal? I sighed and closed my eyes. A mental picture flashed vividly before me. I was a little girl again, and Nan and I were squatting in the sand near the back steps.
> NAN: 'This is a track, Sally. See how they go.'
> MORGAN: I watched, entranced, as she made the pattern of a kangaroo.
> NAN: 'Now, this is a goanna and here are emu tracks. You see, they all different. You got to know all of them if you want to catch tucker.'
> MORGAN: 'That's real good, Nan.'
> NAN: 'You want me to draw you a picture, Sal?' She said as she picked up a stick.[51]

By the end of this flashback, Morgan seems lost again.

> I opened my eyes, and, just as suddenly, the picture vanished. Had I remembered something important? I didn't know. That was the trouble, I knew nothing about Aboriginal people. I was clutching at straws.[52]

There is an understood amount of desperation here—though from the outlook of a child. Nonetheless, the yearning is legitimate, if the reader remembers that the text, though formatted in a straight forward manner, has blanks. These were caused by Morgan's elders, who saw that living without a fixed lineage (thus performing in an inconspicuous manner), though with a certain end (alluding government detection) was their best chance to stay intact. Thus, true, a young Sally is grasping, but luckily, they were still familial straws.

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[50] Morgan 121.
[51] Morgan 123.
[52] Morgan 124.

Re(Creating) My Place: Confrontation

Affirming and then fashioning a space/agency is the central theme of *My Place*. However, until there was official backlash, her topic was not research—the project being closer to a hobby, than a profession. Nevertheless, Morgan, not being formally recognised as Aboriginal was a threshold she wanted to cross. This is partly why she had applied for an Aboriginal scholarship. 'I desperately wanted to do something to identify with my new-found heritage and that was the only thing I could think of,'[53] in 'A Beginning.' When she is confronted by an official concerning the scholarship,

> about halfway through that year, 1973, I received a brief note from the Commonwealth Department of Education, asking me to come in for an interview with a senior officer of the department,[54]

there is a more defiant Sally, though the accusation would have angered most.

> We'll get straight to the point. We have received information, from what appears to be a very reliable source, that you have obtained the Aboriginal scholarship under false pretenses. This person, who is a close friend of you and your sister, has told us that you have been bragging all over the university campus about how easy it is to obtain the scholarship without even being Aboriginal.[55]

The outcome is a different one from what Daisy or Gladys would have had; Morgan reacts indignantly.

> I'd had it by then. 'Look,' I said angrily, 'when I applied for this scholarship. I told you people everything I knew about my family, it was their decision to grant me a scholarship, so if there's any blame laid, it's your fault, not mine. How do you expect me to prove anything? What would you like me to do, bring my grandmother and mother in and parade them up and down so you can all have a look?[56]

At this point Morgan has no verifiable proof, except the spectacle parading her mother and grandmother. She decides to not back away from her now official designation however, partly

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[53] Morgan 173.
[54] Morgan 176.
[55] Morgan 177.
[56] Morgan 177-78.

because of the injustice her grandmother suffered.

> Just then, for some reason, I could see Nan. She was standing in front of me, looking at me. Her eyes were sad, 'Oh Nan,' I sighed, 'why did you have to turn up now, of all times?' She vanished as quickly as she came. I knew then that, for some reason, it was very important I stayed on the scholarship. If I denied my tentative identification with the past now, I'd be denying her as well. I had to hold on to the fact that, some day, it might all mean something.[57]

In her push to understand her past, she also realises her own inability to withstand official scrutiny stems from her mother's and grandmother's lack of identity and place. The legacy of oppression is always felt, and then disseminated.

> I looked at Mum and Nan and I realised that part of my inability to deal constructively with people in authority had come from them. They were completely baffled by the workings of government or its bureaucracies. Whenever there were difficulties, rather than tackle them directly, they'd taught us it was much more effective to circumvent or forestall it. And if that didn't work, you could always ignore it.[58]

Such actions are not surprising by those who have not 'benefitted' from government benevolence; many in an unprotected minority status have similar stances. Nan's feelings on this point are the most prominent though, and those young Sally tries hardest to penetrate, but clumsily, as the passage about bribing housing officials shows.

> NAN: 'I don't know what you're talking about, Sally.'
> MORGAN: 'Yes, you do. All these years, you've been frightened that we'd get evicted. That's why you've been buttering up the rent men. You thought if it came to the crunch, he might put in a good word for us.'
> NAN: 'Good men have collected rent from this house over the years, Sally. Don't you go running down the rent men.'[59]

However, Nan is not without her ability to connect to other groups who have suffered.

> NAN: 'Hmmph, you think you know everything, don't you?' she replied bitterly. 'You don't know nothin', girl. You don't know what it is like for people like us. We're like those Jews, we got to look out for ourselves.'
> MORGAN: 'What do you mean people like us? We're just like anybody else, aren't we? I didn't even know you knew Jews existed, how on earth could we be the same as

[57] Morgan 179-80.
[58] Morgan 129.
[59] Morgan 130-31.

them?'

NAN: 'In this world, there's no justice, people like us'd all be dead and gone now if it was up to this country.' She stopped and wiped her mouth with a man's handkerchief. Her eyes looked tired and wet.

MORGAN: 'Nan,' I said carefully. 'What people are we?'[60]

In this exchange the reader understands the underpinning symbolic nature of Nan comparing their plight to Jewish people; persecuted, abused. From the perspective of one who has been abused, laws and the idea of human rights are at best far off concepts. What the oppressed experience instead is violence, degradation and humiliation. Within that context, it might seem reasonable to curry favour with any and all who seem to be in an official capacity.

Nan, gives hints for the obfuscations, though, is also a product of her subjugation, actively engaging in racialist language. An illustration of this is the chastisement of her brother, Arthur. 'You silly old man,' she grumbled, 'who do you think you are? Nobody's interested in your stories. You're just a silly old blackfella.'[61] However, Nan, always fearful of others piercing her act, does not understand that such a term, depending on the person, is a term of endearment.

> 'Aah, you'll have to think of a better name than that to call me,' he smiled, 'I'm proud of bein' a blackfella. Anyway, you're a blackfella yourself, what do you think of that?!'
>
> Nan was incensed. No one had called her blackfella for years. She bent down to him and said, 'I may be a blackfella, but I'm not like you. I dress decent and I know the right way to do things. Look at you, a grown man and you got your pants tied up with a bit of string!'[62]

Though the arguments and fights over her status always seem present, it was six years after the confrontation with an official from the Commonwealth Department of Education,[63] that Morgan announced writing the text. 'I'm going to write a book. It was the beginning of 1979.'[64] She also tells her mother about the written history she read in Battye Library, proving Morgan

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[60] Morgan 131
[61] Morgan 187.
[62] Morgan 187.
[63] Morgan 176.
[64] Morgan 191.

does not see a problem in combining oral and written accounts for a better understanding of the past.

> MORGAN: 'I went to Battye Library the other day, Mum.'
> GLADYS: 'What for?'
> MORGAN: 'It's a history library. Western Australian history. I wanted to read up on Aborigines.'
> GLADYS: 'Oh,' Mum said keenly, 'did you find out anything interesting?'
> MORGAN: 'I sure did. I found out there was a lot to be ashamed of.'
> GLADYS: 'You mean we should feel ashamed?'
> MORGAN: 'No, I mean Australia should.'
> GLADYS: Mum sat down. 'Tell me what you read.'
> MORGAN: 'Well, when Nan was younger, Aborigines were considered subnormal and not capable of being educated the way whites were. You know, the pastoral industry was built on the back of slave labour. Aboriginal people were forced to work, if they didn't the station owners called the police in. I always thought Australia was different from America, Mum, but we had slavery here too. The people might not have been sold on the blocks like the American Negroes were, but there were owned just the same.'[65]

For those who share the same status as Aboriginal people, the 'Law' is designed only for the powerful. The Indigenous must find a different path.

Hence Morgan's seeming naivety serves a greater role—she is an 'apostle' on a quest for truth and enlightenment. The journey compels her to seek the narratives of her relatives to better understand who and what she is. To this end she needs Arthur, separated by gender, and Gladys, by era, to share their stories of dislocation and injustice (similar to that) suffered by Daisy.

ARTHUR CORUNNA

In 'Where there's a Will,' Sally talks to her great uncle Arthur, whose agency is not mired in shame or voluntary amnesia. Instead, he has triumphed in two different worlds. 'I got all my land up in Mukinbudin, that's more than what most blackfellas got.'[66] By obtaining land in a Western sense, he becomes a success in ways that were seen the purview of white Australians.

Arthur Corunna's story, for example, presents Aboriginality as a split-identity. Arthur is

[65] Morgan 193.
[66] Morgan 187.

> the first to tell his story within Morgan's text and seems keen to relate his indestructibility in the face of hardship. On one level his story fits well with other 'Aussie-battler' narratives; conversely, through the process of naming and asserting his relationship with specific places and people, he clearly locates his story in an indigenous framework.[67]

Arthur's mobility is not from a romantic notion of nomadism, though. He left to preserve his life, as his recounting of the punishment meted out by Bob Coulson, a worker there, details. 'He raced around the dormitory like a madman, beating us with a long cane over the head and body. He didn't care where he hit us, he just beat us till we bled.'[68] (This is the same type of treatment Mudrooroo and his character Wildcat speaks of.[69]) Arthur is an authentic speaker who must be conferred. He has overcome the struggles most fell prey to, as a noted farmer of Muckinbudin, earning him 'bush hero' status. His other value comes from disabusing Morgan of the idea that Judith Drake-Brockman, Alice's daughter, understood *their* family history.

> MORGAN: The following evening, Mum and I sat chatting to Arthur. After we'd finished our tea, I said, 'I visited Judith Drake-Brockman the other day, Arthur.'
> ARTHUR: 'What did you do that for?'
> MORGAN: 'Oh, I thought she might be able to tell me something about Corunna Downs and something about Nan.'
> ARTHUR: 'You wanna know about Corunna, you come to me. I knew all the people there.'
> MORGAN: 'I know you did,' I paused. 'Can I ask you a question?'
> ARTHUR: 'You ask what you like.'
> MORGAN: 'Judy told me Nan's father was a chap by the name of Maltese Sam, have you ever heard of him?' [70]

Arthur responds strongly to having outsiders be allowed to tell his family history.

> Are you gunna take the word of white people against you own flesh and blood? I got no papers to prove what I'm sayin.' Nobody cared how many blackfellas were born in those days, nor how many died. I know because my mother, Annie, told me. She said Daisy and I belonged to one another. Don't you go takin' the word of white people against mine.[71]

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[67] Lizzy Finn, 'Postnational Hybridity in Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' *Moveable Type* 4 (2008): 11-28. 8 Feb. 2010 <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english/graduate/issue/4/pdfs/finn.pdf>.
[68] Morgan 236.
[69] Mudrooroo, *Wildcat Screaming* (1992; Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1993) 66.
[70] Morgan 200-01.
[71] Morgan 201.

He then goes on to explain why Alice Howden Drake-Brockman was not a reliable resource, and that Alfred Howden was their father.

> Don't forget Alice was Howden's second wife and they had the Victorian way of thinking in those days. Before there were white women, our father [Alfred Howden] owned us, we went by his name, but later, after he married his first wife, Nell, he changed our names. I'll tell you more about that one day.[72]

His depiction of the 'way things were' gives a better understanding of why Daisy and Gladys would be hesitant to talk of their pasts.

> I remember seein' native people all chained up around the neck and hands, walkin' behind a policeman. They often passed the station that way. I used to think, what have they done to be treated like that. Made me want to cry, just watchin'. Sometimes, we'd hear about white men goin' shooting blackfellas for sport, just like we was some kind of animal. We'd all get scared then. We didn't want that to happen to us. Aah, things was hard for the blackfellas in those days.[73]

This is the treatment suffered by the powerless. They do not enjoy full participation (without struggle) that others might take for granted. This regardless of how 'patriotic' the minority person behaves, as Arthur comments.

> They never even treated the blackfellas right during the war. I heard of this native bloke, he went and fought for the country overseas, when he came back he still wasn't a citizen, he had to get an exemption certificate. And he wasn't even allowed to vote. That's the white man's justice for you. You see, the black man remembers these things. The black man's got a long memory.[74]

Arthur freely gives content and context, however seeks clarification on why she has persisted, as if ensuring her intentions are honorable. As a literary device, it also answers the question for the intended reader.

> MORGAN: 'I want to write the history of my own family,' I told him.
> ARTHUR: 'What do you want to do that for?'
> MORGAN: 'Well, there's almost nothing written from a personal point of view about Aboriginal people. All our history is about the white man. No one knows what it was like for us. A lot of our history has been lost, people have been too frightened

[72] Morgan 201.
[73] Morgan 231.
[74] Morgan 266.

> to say anything. There's a lot of our history we can't even get at, Arthur.'[75]

With her incorporating 'us' answers, Arthur asks if he could be included.

> ARTHUR: 'Do you think you could put my story in that book of yours?'
> MORGAN: 'Oh Arthur, I'd love to!'
> ARTHUR: 'Then we got a deal. You got that tape-recorder of yours? We'll use that. You just listen to what I got to say, if you want to ask questions, you stop me. Now, some things I might tell you, I don't want in the book, is that all right?'[76]

The exchange here is relevant for two reasons. The first will be touched on briefly[77] (then discussed further in the conclusion of this section). The second, discussed here is that the dialogue represents a merger of two realms: orality and modernity. A rebuttal to the colonial narrative which says native peoples are forever fearful of technology; afraid of what the white (boogey) man might have. That caricature, and the 'happy-go-lucky' trait are constructs used to portray native (or any other than white) peoples as needing help. They are like children, after all. One literary example of the loveable buffoon comes from Aneas Gunn's *We of the Never-Never*, published in 1908.

> The blacks (and the Chinese) are alternatively comic, sly, affectionate, loyal and useful—indeed somewhere between children and dogs whom the 'missus' learns to manage because she is genuinely fond of them.[78]

Though the allusion is maternal, the colonial context is a paternalistic one.

This is the backdrop to what is taking place. By Arthur demanding and Morgan agreeing to use the tape recorder as a legitimate device in getting the truth, the reader sees the crafting of

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[75] Morgan 209.
[76] Morgan 209.
[77] One of the main criticism of the text is of its simplicity. Stephen Muecke *et al* have brought that point up. It will be challenged in the conclusion of this section. Yet to the significance of Arthur not shying away from being tape-recorded is the question of bearing witness, or giving testimony. Ana Julia Cienfuegos and Cristina Monelli, in 'The Testimony of Political Repression as a Therapeutic Instrument,' wrote: 'The use of testimony—tape-recorded by the therapist and revised jointly by therapist and patient into a written document—was found effective in providing symptomatic relief for certain patients.' *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 53.1 (1983): 43-51. The scenario here is not the same, but the positive nature of Arthur's telling went far beyond the scope of a younger relative writing a book. It gave a certain amount of gravitas to the endeavour, and aided in convincing Daisy (discussed later) to adding to the project.
[78] F. S. Stevens, ed, *Racism: The Australian Experience. A Study of Race Prejudice in Australia* vol 1 (Taplinger Publishing, 1971) 116.

her identity is not by happenstance (Nor ignorance of technology.). Yet there was an objection. He did not want the Drake-Brockman question trespassing on his narrative.

> Before we start there's something else. I don't want my story mixed us with the Drake-Brockmans'.' If you're going' to write their story as well, I'll have none of it. Let them write their own story.[79]

His stipulation further privileges the integrity and authenticity of Sally's Aboriginal family heritage. This while strengthening what will be an oral accounting in a written (and so Western) space and an identifiable 'proper' style.

GLADYS MILROY

Arthur's battler past gives Gladys permission to be more at ease at claiming her Aboriginality. 'For Mum in particular, there was something to be proud of.'[80] Therefore, when Sally decides to travel (metaphysically as well) to her relatives' birthplace for more clarification, 'I decided that our best course was to return to Nan and Arthur's birthplace, Corunna Downs,'[81] her mother decides to accompany her. 'I'm coming and that's that!'[82] Gladys' contemporary identity has also been grounded in not knowing her past.

In 'Return to Corunna' Morgan and her mother meet a relative they were not expecting, which leads to a wider re-telling and affirming of Morgan's matrilineal heritage.

> By the time we arrived in Port Hedland, we were eager to begin our investigations. We'd been told to look up an older gentleman by the name of Jack, as he knew a lot of people in the area and might be able to help us.[83]

The older gentleman was her maternal grandfather Jack McPhee (Aboriginal name: Wanamurraganya), who gives her more information concerning her family tree.

Another point of contention for many critics of Morgan centres on her not engrossing

[79] Morgan 209.
[80] Morgan 270.
[81] Morgan 270.
[82] Morgan 272.
[83] Morgan 276.

herself enough in all things Aboriginal. She is an interloper, according to some Aboriginal thinkers. However, she is warmly welcomed (albeit in very melodramatic fashion) after she declares what culture she claims to be hers—

> WANAMURRAGANYA: 'Well, I'll be,' he said, with tear in his eyes, 'So you've come back! There's not many come back. I don't think some of them are interested. Fancy, you comin' back after all these years.'
> MORGAN: 'Are we related to you, then?'
> WANAMURRAGANYA: 'Well now, which way do you go by, the blackfella's way or the white man's way?"
> MORGAN: 'The blackfella's way.'
> WANAMURRAGANYA: 'Then I'm your grandfather.'[84]

But her search did not stop here—there was yet another surprise. A connection to pastoral Australia. While inspecting old photographs, she and Gladys find an 'odd' person: Alfred Howden.

> Suddenly, I held up a photograph of Howden as a young man next to her face. We both feel into silence. 'My god,' I whispered. 'Give him black curly hair and a big bust and he's the spitting image of you!'[85]

With it now impossible to deny Morgan's project or doubt its integrity, Gladys is persuaded to tell of her life.

> GLADYS: 'There's been so much sadness in my life,' Mum said, 'I don't think I can take any more.'
> MORGAN: 'You want to talk about it?'
> GLADYS: 'You mean for that book?'
> MORGAN: 'Yes.'
> GLADYS: 'Well' she hesitated for a moment. Then, with sudden determination, she said, 'Why shouldn't I? If I stay silent like Nanna, it's like everything's all right. People should know what it's like for someone like me.'[86]

What 'people should know' are the feelings of dislocation and shame.

> I have no memory of being taken from my mother and placed in Parkerville

[84] Morgan 276. Sally Morgan would write the life story of this grandfather, as well. Jack McPhee. It would become her second book *Wanamurraganya, The Story of Jack McPhee* (Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre, 1989).
[85] Morgan 299.
[86] Morgan 302.

> Children's Home, but all my life I've carried a mental picture of a little fat kid about three or four years old. She's sitting on the verandah of Babyland Nursery, her nose is running and she's crying. I think that was me when they first took me to Parkerville.[87]

Gladys (like Daisy[88]), has also wished she were of a different race. 'I feel embarrassed now, to think that, once, I wanted to be white. As a child, I even hoped a white family would adopt me, a rich one, of course. I've changed since those days.'[89] This admission comes after she has become a successful business woman and on hearing how her uncle has contributed his life story. Curious, the idea of being adopted here, as a white child, is made with the stipulation that it be a rich one. Such a location would not be contested. Remnants of this sentiment (class), it would seem, followed her into her adulthood.

> I'm still a coward. When a stranger asks me what nationality I am, I sometimes say a Heinz variety. I feel bad when I do that. It's because there are still times when I'm scared inside, scared to say who I really am.[90]

This very real fear translated into staying with her abusive husband. 'Aboriginal women weren't allowed to keep children fathered by a white man. I couldn't take the chance of losing them, I had to stay and try to cope somehow. They were all I had.'[91] Such sexist-racist privilege was institutionalised, as Daisy later explains.

> In those days, it was considered a privilege for a white man to want you, but if you had children, you weren't allowed to keep them. You was only allowed to keep the black ones. They took the white ones off you 'cause you weren't fit to raise a child with white blood.[92]

Their lack of agency was not by mistake. Instead, for

> many Aborigines, sexual violation of cultural codes was constitutive of being part of a subjugated people. There were no forms of protection from such a personal violation.

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[87] Morgan 304.
[88] Morgan 419.
[89] Morgan 382.
[90] Morgan 382.
[91] Morgan 377.
[92] Morgan 419-20.

> There was no social or legal recourse to protect their personal rights or their sense of personal dignity.[93]

This environment was not conducive to a sense of proud identity, but some Aboriginal children did retain a sense of unity and fidelity, as Gladys recounts.

> Every morning the older girls came over to bathe us. I dreaded bath time because of the carbolic soap and the hard scrubbing-brushes. The House Mother used to stand in the doorway and say, 'Scrub 'em clean, girls!' We'd cry, those brushes really hurt. Our crying always seemed to satisfy her, she'd leave, then. As soon as she'd left, the girls would throw the brushes away and let us play. It got that way that we'd start crying as soon as the House Mother appeared in the doorway.'[94]

Underscoring the balance sought in not being portrayed as a victim, Gladys tells of an example of compassion amongst the children. This is also an example of passive-aggressive rebellion.

> I guess that was one of the few times when I was lucky to be black, because the older Aboriginal girls always gave us black babies an extra kiss and cuddle. That gave me a wonderful feeling of security, I'll always be grateful for that time. You see, even though we weren't related, there were strong ties between black kids.[95]

Yet having such a protective support system did not last very long. In her teenage years she meets her future husband, Bill Milroy, at an engagement party, and knows there will be tragedy, severely limiting any possibility of creating her space.

> It was strange, really, because, all my teenage years, I'd dreamt of this man who I would one day meet and marry, so it was quite a shock to see him at this party. The dreams I'd had about him were always mixed up and recurring. Sometimes, they turn into nightmares. My future marriage was to turn out like that, it was to be good and bad, only I didn't know it then.[96]

This not knowing is similar to that of the main characters from Mudrooroo's *Master of the Ghost Dreaming* series, and the children in *Long Live Sandawara*. There is an attempt at freedom, but they do not have the tools or ability. Perhaps more particular to the *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, in their bafflement, parents are not able to care for their children. George was

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[93] Kathryn Trees, '*My Place* as Counter Memory,' SPAN 32 (1991): 66-74.
[94] Morgan 305.
[95] Morgan 305.
[96] Morgan 351.

lost to his adoptive parents who were not able to properly care for him. In Morgan's text, her grandmother, and mother were not given rights that would have kept them stable, with Gladys presented with a doomed marriage before it had begun. Thus young Sally is confused, but the difference in Morgan's and Mudrooroo's work is that the family, maligned and problematic, is still intact. This key, of being connected to something, is also a theme in Epeli Hau'ofa's work for Oceania, which has had its destiny altered by outside groups, but re-aligned from within. Perhaps, ultimately that is one of the reasons Morgan and Hau'ofa's work seems to have conclusions not as dark as Mudrooroo's.

DAISY CORUNNA'S STORY

The text builds upon each episode leading to the final discovery. Although, the claiming and epiphanies are not for Morgan. They are for Daisy (and various implied readers).

> Daisy's recollection is similar to that of Gladys and Morgan, but the difference in context is crucial. Daisy is one of the Stolen Generation – a term used to describe an entire generation of Aboriginal children of mixed parentage who were taken away from their parents and placed into the care of white people.[97]

Since Daisy's story is the most traumatic, the need to be accommodating, by seeming sympathetic and empathetic, is most important. Because of this, proof had to be given that Morgan's self-discovery quest was an important link to the family establishing its rightful place.

As with Gladys, knowing Arthur's story helped convince an extremely reluctant Daisy into telling her history.

> I read her the section on Arthur's boxing days. When I stopped, she said, 'That's a wonderful story, a really good one. I did enjoy it, where did you get such a story from?' 'This is what I've been writing, Nan,' I grinned. 'That's Arthur's story.' [98]

His affirming story reduces her reticence and silence.

I read a little more, and then we began to talk about the old days and life on Corunna

[97] Finn, 'Postnational Hybridity,' 11-28.
[98] Morgan 385.

> Downs Station. For some reason, Nan was keen to talk. As she went on and on, her breath began to come shorter and shorter grasps. Her words tumbled out one over the others, as if her tongue couldn't say them quickly enough.[99]

She is also motivated by her own mortality and would not be able to aid much in reconnecting past and present.

Daisy's narrative reiterates some of the same concerns other family members: dislocation, fear and injustice, but begins with affirmations. 'My name is Daisy Corunna, I'm Arthur's sister. My Aboriginal name is Talahue.'[100] Throughout the text she has claimed amnesia, though here, into Morgan's tape recorder, she ends her long silence.

> On the station, I went under the name Daisy Brockman. It wasn't until I was older that I took the name Corunna. Now, some people say my father wasn't Howden Drake-Brockman, they say he was this man Malta. What can I say? I never heard 'bout this man from Malta before. I think that's a big joke. And you see, that's the trouble with us blackfellas, we don't know who we belong to, no one'll own up.[101]

The inherent schism between the indigenous (when subjugated) and the dominant culture produces feelings that do not leave, as Daisy Corunna admits,

> I'm 'shamed of myself, now. I feel 'shamed for some of the things I done. I wanted to be white, you see. I'd lie in bed at night and think if God could make me white, it'd be the best thing. Then I could get on in the world, make somethin' of myself. Fancy, me thinkin' that. What's wrong with my own people?[102]

Such notions should not be seen in a vacuum, however, for all institutions are skewed toward those in power.

> In *My Place*, political legal and economic control is exercised by white people, such as Howden and Alice Drake-Brockman, the police, missionaries and educators. Alice, Daisy, Arthur and Gladys Corunna were coerced into accepting *white* (author's emphasis) assessment of themselves as 'inferior' and therefore as subordinate. The exercising of white power in the lives of the Corunnas is pervasive throughout all facets of their lives: the sexual use and abuse of their bodies; the enforced denial of family rights; restricted

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[99] Morgan 385.
[100] Morgan 406
[101] Morgan 407.
[102] Morgan 419.

> use of their language to English and restricted communication with family members.[103] The account of Daisy succinctly describes this plight, and the lasting effects on her

and anyone else, perhaps, who would have had to endure it.

> I was owned by the Drake-Brockmans and the government and anyone who wanted to pay five shillings a year to Mr. Neville to have me. I been scared all my life, too scared to speak out. Maybe if you'd have had my life, you'd be scared, too.[104]

Daisy contextualises her bitterness and resignation with an analogy to the colonization of her

body.

> Aah, that colour business is a funny thing. Our colour goes away. You mix us with the white man, and pretty soon you got no blackfellas left. Some of these whitefellas you see walkin' around, they really black underneath. You see, you never can tell. I'm old now, and look at me, look at my skin on my arms and legs, just look! It's goin' white. I used to be a lot darker than I am now. I don't know what's happened. Maybe it's the white blood takin' over, or the medicine they gave me in the hospital, I don't know.[105]

Of the three older relatives, Daisy alone cannot fully recreate a semblance of space or

territory. She being female, had been limited in opportunities, and, unlike Gladys, was never

allowed to become literate.

> They told my mother I was goin' to get educated. They told all the people I was goin' to school. I thought it'd be good, goin' to school. I thought I'd be somebody real important. My mother wanted me to learn to read and write like white people. Then she wanted me to come back and teach her. There were a lot of the older people interested in learnin' how to read and write then.
>
> Why did they tell my mother that lie? Why do white people tell so many lies? I got nothin' out of their promises. My mother wouldn't have let me go just to work.[106]

Thus Daisy is sent to Perth, Claremont, and lastly, to Ivanhoe, soon to be disheartened, and

yearning to be reunited with her people.

> At night, I used to lie in bed and think 'bout my people. I could see their camp fire and their faces. I could see my mother's face and Lilly's [an older sister]. I really missed them. I cried myself to sleep every night. Sometimes, in my dreams, I'd hear them wailing, 'Talahue! Talahue! and I'd wake up, calling, 'Mum!' Mum!' You see, I needed

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[103] Tress, '*My Place* as Counter Memory,' 66-74.
[104] Morgan 434.
[105] Morgan 408.
[106] Morgan 415.

> my people, they made me feel important. I belonged to them. I thought 'bout the animals too. The kangaroos and birds. And of course, there was Lily. I wondered if she had a new boyfriend. I missed her, I missed all of them.[107]

Yet Daisy does not acquiesce to the colonial myth of 'happy darkies loving their masters,' though one was offered: 'Alice kept tellin' me, 'We're family now, Daisy.''[108] Daisy did not agree, and as such is 'saved' from complete madness, seen in, Urfried's (tribal name Ulrica) manner, in the novel *Ivanhoe*. Yet this is not a complete or satisfactory 'victory.' She is still detached in ways most would think are horrible to contemplate.

> Thing is, they wasn't my family. Oh, I knew the children loved me, but they wasn't my family. They were white, they'd grow up and go to school one day. I was black, I was a servant. How can they be your family?[109]

Not being allowed to fully enter proper Australian society (by being literate) was devastating enough. Even more incredible, this happened in addition to being severed from Aboriginal society—with the realization there will never be a reunion of any sort. Such a predicament left Daisy without a place or family. This situation also left her without something else, perhaps, even more intangible, and that is hope. It is true that Daisy being able to reject the 'lie' told by Alice proves she is one of great strength, but sadly, and historically, her treatment is not different than that experienced of Ludjee or any of the other Aboriginal women in Mudrooroo's middle texts.

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[107] Morgan 417.
[108] Morgan 417.
[109] Morgan 417

Conclusion of the Morgan Section

My Place can be seen as having elements of universal appeal, as in recognition of great difficulties, and restoring faith. Such are important aspects in canonical work. Some of the travails are forced silence, victimization of women, and near cultural annihilation. On the more positive side is a belief in the written word as a form of redress. Of course these are not the sole properties of any one group, and thus cannot be monopolised. Mysteriously, it is this inclusive landscape which has forced some critics to question the entire endeavour. There are two over-lapping critiques that form a Venn diagram of dissent—what is left in the middle is proof of Morgan's poor writing ability and 'hucksterism.'

The first encompasses questions of Morgan's legitimacy and authenticity to write *My Place*. This stems from her not exclaiming her 'Aboriginalness' from birth. Some critics (most particularly those discussed in this section) have conveniently dismissed her admission of not being told. Even more, there was a dissembling project to keep that part of her heritage hidden. Hence, she 'found' who she was in her adulthood 'by suspecting a deceit.'[110] This also factors into Morgan's reason for publishing such a work—to serve as a model for those searching for their place. But such motivation is viewed dubiously. 'At the back of all these critiques of *My Place* lies the question of authenticity.'[111]

The second charge accuses the plot and storyline as being too simplistic (a point briefly mentioned while discussing Arthur Corunna's contribution). '*My Place* can also be likened to a detective novel, according to its conventions.'[112] As such the work might be a respectable example of pulp fiction, but should not be thought of as literature. These charges, especially the

[110] Marcia Langton, 'Aboriginal Art and Film: The Politics of Representation,' *Race and Class* 35.4 (1994): 89-106.
[111] Annabel Cooper, 'Talking About *My Place*/*My Place*, Feminism and the Other's Autobiography,' *Southern Review* 28 (1995): 140- 53.
[112] Bain Attwood, 'Portrait of An Aboriginal as an Artist: Sally Morgan and the Construction of Aboriginality,' *Australian Historical Studies* 25.1-2 (1992): 302-318.

second, over-look certain points. *My Place*, while readily consumed, is connected back in theme to/via established literature (*Ivanhoe*). Also, borrowing from different genres shows command of the craft. 'The inventor knows *how* to borrow.'[113] More, its 'heteroglossia' narrative connects it to literary theory. Those connections will be commented on after discussing the question of legitimacy.

Concerning Morgan's legitimacy, there is a curious synergy with the harsher criticism. That chorus is comprised of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal writers. Male and female. Therefore, Bain Attwood, in criticizing Morgan, is a solid template for Aboriginal writer and thinker, Jackie Huggins. They have a similar view of her and the text. Thus, Huggins' critique seems genuinely suspect when she defensively uses Attwood's criticism to ground hers. 'Foremostly I detest the imposition that anyone who is non-Aboriginal can define my Aboriginality for me and my race.'[114] She goes on to write, 'There are no books written by non-Aboriginals that can tell me what it is to be Black as it is a fiction and an ethnocentric presumption to do so.'[115] Nevertheless, she endorses his position.

> Having said all this, [Bain] Attwood's argument is the only deconstruction of Aboriginality that I have found even remotely interesting and makes some poignant remarks which need addressing.[116]

Such an admission means any reasonable person can have insightful ideas concerning Aboriginality—or, at the very least, in opposition to a text with Aboriginal issues.

'Morgan's *My Place* is part of a growing body of writing by Aborigines about their past and, like most of that literature, takes the form of autobiography and family history.'[117] What is

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[113] Harold Bloom, preface, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, by Bloom, (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994) 11.
[114] Jackie Huggins, 'Always Was Always Will Be,' *Australian Historical Studies* 1 (1993): 459-464.
[115] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[116] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[117] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.

at odds is the family history. Albeit Attwood (later Huggins) believes Sally Morgan is genetically Aboriginal. But this is not good enough without 'a particular historical experience.'

> Unlike other Aboriginal writers who have been conscious of their Aboriginality (defined in terms of a particular historical experience which they have in common), Morgan was unconscious of her Aboriginal background and only becomes fully cognisant of her 'Aboriginality' through the telling of the history of various members of her family.[118]

Such a complaint, blaming her for not knowing about her lineage is a problematic one. In addition, this explanation leaves out the part of the text where she writes her mother and grandmother did not want her to know. Therefore, stating 'by comparison with other Aboriginal writers, then, one could argue that Morgan's 'Aboriginality' is forged through the creation of the text rather than the reverse'[119] is not appropriate.

Another of Attwood points, which is also very weak, argues Morgan's new identity was solely created via an exercise, and therefore she is not a 'real' Aboriginal person. This while disregarding the void of guidance growing up. Additionally, all identity is forged via some conduit. And most poignant; her maternal family is Aboriginal. Also, the knowledge gained was not something she was embarrassed by. Instead, it was the *not knowing*. She was not raised in a tribe or Aboriginal community, so how else was she supposed to be 'forged' if not by her own interrogative methods, courage and insistence?

> *He* (author's emphasis) has allowed me to crystalize my long-felt doubts, fears and opinions regarding Sally Morgan's *My Place* and express them in a public way. For I too agree that 'Morgan's Aboriginality is forged throughout the creation of the text rather than the reverse.'[120]

Huggins does not believe the text is a legitimate reflection of an Aboriginal's life. Though it incorporates oral narrative of Aborigine—Morgan's older relatives, Sally Morgan is not a real member of *the* Aboriginal community. Unlike Huggins, who

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[118] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[119] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[120] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.

> lives, breathes and works in the Aboriginal community in localised and national ways, [for] the issues that I wish to raise are positioned by the fact that I always was, always have been and always will be Aboriginal, and I would challenge anyone to refute it.[121]

Morgan, then, is a tourist.

Stranger still, the critique has shifted from text and author's credibility to Huggins' own agency, which is used as a baseline. It is clear Huggins has set herself up as an impassioned (brave) arbiter of what and who is authentic. But where is that checklist? She does not list the definitive criteria, as will be shown later. There is also irony here, for one of the complaints Morgan (and most Diasporatic peoples) has about Western institutions is its rigidity. More, the manner in which Morgan's authenticity has been criticised assumes the construction of Aboriginality (and being Aboriginal), is fixed. This position while others argue it 'is not a fixed thing.'[122] Further, 'It is created from our histories. It arises from the intersubjectivity of black and white in a dialogue.'[123] For some Aboriginal advocates to not admit that there is ambiguity in the term and its administration is confusing, since others do. Jane M. Jacobs wrote of the larger context:

> In South Australia there are a large number of Aborigines who do not fit the limited notion of 'Aboriginality' underscoring the passing of the Pitjantjatjara and Maralinga Acts. Many of the state's Aboriginal population have been displaced from their traditional lands, and, in short, do not display any of the characteristics which white Australia accepts as hallmarks of a tradition-oriented lifestyle.[124]

Stereotyping is supposedly a pursuit for non-oppressed groups. Conversely, all minority people, and their advocates, are sympathetic and empathetic to each other. But Huggins, and Mudrooroo (I here include Tim Rowse and Stephen Muecke), in their comments would fit in the voices of pro-colonialist.

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[121] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[122] Langton, 'Aboriginal Art and Film,' 89-106.
[123] Langton, 'Aboriginal Art and Film,' 89-106.
[124] Jane M. Jacobs, 'The Construction of Identity,' *Past and Present: The Construction of* Aboriginality, ed. Jeremy Beckett (1988; Maryborough, Australia: Australian Print Group, 2000) 33.

As with Mudrooroo's claim that this is a sanitised story, Huggins agrees. 'Precisely what irks me about *My Place* is its proposition that Aboriginality can be understood by all non-Aboriginals. Aboriginality is not like that.'[125] Yet the reader (most of whom are non-Aboriginal) does not receive an explanation of why Aboriginality cannot be understood. One can imagine perhaps, but if the boundaries are so permanent, why not include a few and/to then prove their timelessness? Instead the reader must contemplate this point: 'To me that is *My Places* greatest weakness—requiring little translation (to a white audience), therefore it reeks of whitewashing in the ultimate sense'[126] means. Again, the reasons for calling the work not respectable seem flimsy. Would more 'Aboriginal' words and phrases, make any work more authentic? If so, how many would be needed?

These critics do not seem to have any suitable examples of the perfect Aboriginal novel, written in the 'perfect' dialect or language. There are two reasons for this predicament. The first being English (or any of the Western or Asian language/culture—which crafted the written form we call 'novel') were not germane before first contact. Next, 'Aboriginal' culture, initially, was not literal, but oral. Therefore, *any* Aboriginal novel, to be called that specifically, would still have to have more in common with those outside forces than inside tribal fidelities. If there are inviolable, fixed boundaries and criteria, then an endeavour such as writing an authentic Aboriginal novel is impossible. The opposition does not concede that, or the equally problematic search for a 'pure' accounting.

Yet Morgan has violated some ancient trust. Though none have sufficiently answered what truth has been sacrificed, or who swore her to secrecy. It is a mystery, until one remembers her relatives related their family history and wanted it to be known. This is the paradox those

[125] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[126] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.

who believe Morgan is not an authentic, Aboriginal person struggle with.

Seeing this is not a profitable line of inquiry, there is another—which is probably closer to the truth. Perhaps the anxiety stems from the text not screaming at white Australia.

Not being angry and voicing vituperations seems to have been a point of contention for Mudrooroo. 'For Mudrooroo, Morgan's *My Place* was weak precisely because it did not shout at its white readership; in fact, he felt it 'mirrored their concerns as to their place in Australia.'[127] More,

> Sally Morgan's book is a milepost in Aboriginal literature in that it marks a stage when it is now considered O.K. to be Aboriginal as long as you are young, gifted and not very black.[128]

Huggins uses a similar tactic in explaining what a real Aboriginal is, which goes beyond living and breathing it. One must be 'actively involved to alleviate the disadvantaged positions of Aboriginal people *per se*.'[129] By this criteria, the status of infants and teenagers is unclear, but at least mature, active adults would have an identity. Concerning Morgan, her writings and lectures were not enough (or for other critics with similar complaints). Also included for disregard is any and all work(s) committed to the Fremantle Arts Centre. This point is stressed with Huggins asking has Morgan 'established 'a writer's trust fund, charities,'[130] or similar projects. Yet Huggins has not offered proof Morgan has benefitted in any unscrupulous ways.

In conjunction with not being riotously angry, Morgan has had the effrontery of having whites help her career. 'Outside of the text there is the whole series of well-meaning whites bringing us the book.'[131] What is curious is Muecke does not discount Mudrooroo's work,

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[127] G. Turcotte, 'Vampiric Decolonization: Fanon, 'Terrorism' and Mudrooroo's Vampire Trilogy,' *Faculty of Arts – Papers* (2005) < http://works.bepress.com/gturcotte/4>.
[128] Mudrooroo, *Writing from the Fringe: A Study of Modern Aboriginal Literature* (Sydney: Hyland House, 1990) 149.
[129] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[130] Huggins, 'Always,' 459-464.
[131] Stephen Muecke, 'Aboriginal Literature and the Repressive Hypothesis,' *Southerly* (1988): 405-418.

though he was also helped by 'well-meaning whites.' More, publishing in English (as an enterprise) is the purview, largely, of Western culture, what non-white writer has not been aided? But Morgan's eases white Australia's guilt since many white Australians helped her. This somehow proves the society was not and/or is not as destructive as many might believe.

> Morgan's friend who encouraged her to publish, the 'white' publishing house and its sympathetic and sensitive editors, and last but not least the white reviewer for whom the book becomes an occasion to drive home gratuitously a moral lesson about how we should take up the burden of guilt for the wrongs of the past.[132]

In addition, Muecke believes *My Place* is a token text, and Morgan not truly invested in Aboriginality.

> What I would argue is that the appearance of an Aboriginal literature over the past two decades is not just in response to conditions of repression and struggle but is also a consequence of the publishing industry being in a state of readiness, even eagerness, to publish work to Aboriginal writers.[133]

It does not help her 'pureness' with her critics that she has held offices such as being the director at the Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts at the University of Western Australia. This, in addition to *My Place* earning the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Humanitarian award in 1987. Later, the Western Australia Week literary award for non-fiction in 1988, and the 1990 Order of Australia Book Prize. In 1993, international art historians selected Morgan's print *Outback*, as one of 30 paintings and sculptures for reproduction on a stamp, celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All of this is thought of as an indictment of her true intentions, which are not pro-Aboriginal. Thus, no Aboriginal person could look at this list of achievements and feel proud of Morgan.

Categorically held beliefs are commendable, but such stances miss an important point when dealing with identity and past events: 'We live, no matter who we are, in a problematic

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[132] Muecke, 'Aboriginal Literature,' 405-418.
[133] Muecke, 'Aboriginal Literature,' 405-418.

relation to our past.'[134] This is true for all peoples, yet there is a dividing line between those who are secure versus groups that do not have such control over their destiny, if any truly do.

> For the Aborigine the past represents pain and humiliation in more recent times, and the mysterious source of identity and self-respect in former times. There is no absolute dividing line, though there is no doubt that the rot set in two hundred years ago. It is this past, both pre- and post- contact, that Aboriginal writers are seeking to explore in an effort to redirect the future of a people.[135]

The expansion goes further, explaining in a similar fashion the problematic foundation of Western ideologies.

> The underlying difficulty is twofold—to account for the present in terms of the past; that is, to learn how to interpret present conditions in terms of past repressions and humiliations: and second, to overcome (as illustrated in *My Place*) the deeply felt shame of a disposed and enslaved people.[136]

Castigating those who do not adhere to the 'understood' rules is a tactic to silence those voices. Further, these critics (and others) voice frustration in their attempt to locate Morgan's text on *their* Aboriginal plane. This without considering Morgan's project as an attempt to destroy (or force a re-evaluation of) supposedly fixed barriers. The very same boundaries that Mudrooroo, Epeli Hau'ofa, and many others have outwitted by using them as points of contestation and instead of allegiance or fealty. 'I have spent most of my life, after all, watching white people and outwitting them, so that I might survive.'[137] *My Place* displaces the 'us' versus 'them' paradigm and replaces it with a shifting sense of departure. Its power comes from its ability to change known dynamics. Conversely, the concept of 'change' (or not) has been one of the frustrating 'controls' many Indigenous critics have had to fight to establish it as being a legitimate prerogative. This for there is a strange double-standard many have employed. 'When *we* change,

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[134] David Kerr, 'Fictionalising History: Problem and Promise in Black Literature,' *Journal of Australian Literature* 1.1 (1990): 1-14.
[135] Kerr, 'Fictionalising History,' 1-14.
[136] Kerr, 'Fictionalising History,' 1-14.
[137] Baldwin 172.

it's called progress, but when they do—notably when they adopt some of our progressive things—it's a kind of adulteration, a *loss* of their culture.'[138] Change can be intimidating to contemplate. However, such an attempt should be thought of as typical for one who has been denied true access into a society.

But the central complaint adheres to a belief that the past is fixed, immutable. In addition, that essence can be distilled. This can be understood as a Western theory, but not one generally prescribed to tribal peoples. More odd is that agreed upon inviolable boundaries, by colonial administrators, has been an effective tactic to oppress minorities. In addition, those not privy to a dominant narrative must go further to (re)create and establish themselves. Baldwin explains this is the survival strategy for black people.

> To become a Negro man, let alone a Negro artist, one had to make oneself up as one went along. This had to be done in the not-at-all-metaphorical teeth of the world's determination to destroy you. The world had prepared no place for you, and if the world had its way, no place would ever exist. Now, this is true for everyone, but, in the case of a Negro, this truth is absolutely naked: if he deludes himself about it, he will die.[139]

This dying, though symbolic, is real enough for the person and any work created. This is a more important factor than how the work was born.

Morgan's project has been accused of being too simplistic to take seriously. Yet reflecting on ones' life (in a memoir setting) to explain a present position is not antithetical to those taught in a Western educational system. A common enough device, but not disingenuous, despite what some, like Stephen Muecke, argue—

> It is a literary form which could be called *occasional* [author's emphasis]; it functions in relation to specific events in one life and a set of lives, it does not aspire to a universal literary condition, and it makes a specific political move (recuperation of untold stories) in the realm of documentary history.[140]

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[138] Marshall Sahlins, 'What is Anthropological Enlightenment? Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century,' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1999): i-xxiii.
[139] Baldwin 182-183.
[140] Muecke, 'Aboriginal Literature,' 405-418.

The authenticity question is also discussed. '*My Place* can also be likened to a detective novel in that, according to its conventions.'[141] Attwood writes,

> it is, in other words, rendered in terms of her capacity for growth and self-knowledge. This romantic view of an individual life not only characterises autobiography, but also the classic realist novel.[142]

It is true that the format is not a daring one, but that was not the goal of the project—though it aided in its benefit. 'The success of *My Place* might be said largely to reside in the ease with which Morgan's Aboriginality can be understood by all non-Aborigines—that, unlike most other Aboriginal life histories, it requires little if any translation.'[143] The text is fairly linear. Yet within that construct is a sophistication not admitted to by Attwood.

The text does move in and out of European sensibilities. This would include Morgan's contextualizing her paternal side, though Attwood denies that has happened: 'There is a racial determinism at play in her excavation of her past which leads her to deny.'[144] How one can assert this after reading the text, unless there was a deliberate and unfair hidden agenda? Little else makes sense, for if the text is fully examined, including the non-Aboriginal narrative, then the historical and literary references, a different conclusion is reached. John Docker has written:

> The novel explicitly and openly suggests that the ethnic and cultural identities of the narrator and her family are multiple, and here *My Place* can reprise by analogy the historical experience of forced assimilation and conversion in Europe of Moors and Jews in the history of the *conversos* and *marranos* of medieval and early Spain, Portugal and Holland.[145]

This other perspective leads to a more balanced critique, instead of dictating what it should be.

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[141] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[142] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[143] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[144] Attwood, 'Portrait,' 302-318.
[145] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.

'The debate was freely prescriptive, anxious to tell Sally Morgan what she should have done.'[146] This without the slightest amount of irony: stripping an Indigenous person, one already marginalised, of her agency. Luckily, not all had the desire to rewrite *My Place* as they saw fit.

> I do not see the novel's generic connections and literary conventions as a sign of the failure of her alleged claim to authentic Aboriginal identity. Rather, such textuality and intertexuality constitute a major part of its interest and richness as an autobiographical novel.[147]

Still, there is a legitimate concern to be discussed—even if one sees the work as being a positive text.

Critics are right to feel the glowing reports and cheers of *My Place* as a post-modern or postcolonial text have been a bit too enthusiastic—when the work is being heralded as being a 'hybrid.' Though meaning well, 'hybrid' has a not-too-innocent history. Such worry is not misplaced but should be thought of in a wider context. One, *My Place* has connections to contemporary theory and political-therapeutic practices. Two, there are links to the classic novel *Ivanhoe*. Compared to these points, the hybrid term does not seem warrant skepticism of the work as much as its use by those of us in the academy

My Place is nuanced, in a fashion that might not be easily understood by polemics. More, even those who have a higher opinion of the work might be challenged.

> I would like to argue that, due to the hybridised nature of *My Place*, the text does not put forward any single definition of Aboriginality. It is true Morgan attempts to define *herself* [author's emphasis], but the inclusion of so many voices in her narrative prevents anyone reading of indigeneity.[148]

In addition, Mudrooroo, on different occasions has argued Aboriginality is not fixed. 'It is not a static ideology based on fixed traditional ways of expression and culture.'[149] This leads credence

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[146] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.
[147] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.
[148] Finn, 'Postnational Hybridity,' 11-28.
[149] Mudrooroo, *Fringe* 48.

to the idea Morgan's text is within the spirit of Aboriginality and being protest literature.

> Morgan's text is one of many that came to be known as a kind of 'resistance literature'. What was being resisted was the idea that there can be any authorized definition of Aboriginality.[150]

Such a view then shows, perhaps, another form of struggling against doctrine. Yet as the historical use of the term 'hybrid' has changed, it might help to understand its legacy.

> The historical links between language and sex were, however, fundamental. Both produced what were regarded as 'hybrid' forms (creole, pidgin and miscegenated children), which were seen to embody threatening forms of perversion and degeneration and became the basis for endless metaphoric extension in the racial discourse of social commentary.[151]

Robert Young gives even more detail.

> Models of cultural interaction, language and sex, merge in their product which is characterized with the same term: hybridity. The word 'hybridity' has developed from biological and botanical origins: in Latin it meant the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it, 'of human parents of different races, half-breed.' [152]

Though sounding pedantic, the reason for the word's etymology is important for the context it is still used.

> 'Hybrid' is the nineteenth century's word. But it has become our own again. In the nineteenth century it was used to refer to a physiological phenomenon; in the twentieth it has been reactivated to describe a cultural one.[153]

Young is correct in saying in the newer century it has been 're-activated,' though the old connections have not been broken off, severed, as much as new signifiers put on. Race, class, culture can be talked about using a myriad of terms, but in context they are interconnected. Therefore, 'An *OED* entry from 1890 makes the link between the linguistic and racial explicit.'[154] This is the danger.

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[150] Finn, 'Postnational Hybridity,' 11-28.
[151] Young 175.
[152] Young 5-6.
[153] Young 5-6.
[154] Young 10.

> Today, therefore, in reinvoking this concept, we are utilizing the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right as much as the notion of an organic process of the grafting of diversity into singularity.[155]

Hence, when speaking of blackfellas and whitefellas, the discussion is actually taking place in the early years of modernity; still attempting to make a separation, distinguish and distill a language and manner separate from all Others. An endeavour that is not new, but is still all performance.

Words are the tools used to define other words and symbols. After groups, societies agree on meanings and actions, they aid in categorizations and hierarchy. Their usefulness, in turn, signifies certain peoples as sub-human and thus having no legal rights or laws that civilised human beings need worry or heed. The same trick was used in the 'New World,' which was called virginal—despite all the people already living there.

It would seem, then, that by not being confined to only one definition would be a radical proposition, as Morgan defined herself. 'I wouldn't define myself as an academic even though I work at the university. I would probably define myself as an artist and a teacher, and an ordinary person.'[156]

Therefore, her reluctance to being bitter in her text, one which chronicles social injustice, seems to also be based more on having a more balanced strategy, and personal outlook, rather than on obsequiousness. 'I think there was a danger there to get up on my high horse, but I think what I learned while I was writing it was that you don't have to be explicit to say something.'[157] Yet Morgan does comment on the affirmation of Indigenous people.

> I am for multiculturalism but my personal view is that when a country, regardless of what country it is, has an indigenous population then those indigenous people should have a

[155] Young 10.
[156] Salhia Ben-Messahel, 'Speaking with Sally Morgan,' *Antipodes: A North American Journal of Australian Literature* 14:2 (2000): 99-103.
[157] Wright, 'A Fundamental Question,' 92-109.

> primary place of honor within the overall society because they are the indigenous people.[158]

Alongside the other misguided points is arguing the text does not discuss and chronicle the hardships faced by her family, or using a neutral tone when writing it. 'My first motivation was anger – I get angry at injustice, and I thought, 'Somebody should put this down, people should know about these things'.'[159] This course of action is reasonable and subversive to the hegemony that seeks to narrow, reduce her significance. 'The novel explicitly and openly suggests that the ethnic and cultural identities of the narrator and her family are multiple.'[160] Such a stance is not kowtowing to existing power structures. Minders like Muecke then, a 'kind of non-Aboriginal guardian',[161] do a disservice to the group and movement they supposedly ally. This by lamenting Morgan is not performing as how Westerners have constructed Aborigine people.

The complaint of her voice or text failing at being representationally authentic enough is not logically sound. As stated in the introduction and preface of this work, there is no complete (or essential) beginning to which every person can subscribe. What humans have is an agreed starting/ beginning narrative for their tribe, clan, or culture. Such narratives should be given respect and latitude. When one tries to limit the legitimacy of others (even within the same group), we should pause and wonder about those motivations.

The idea the work is merely autobiographic is also weak. There are several autobiographical elements, but the text is a collaborative project, albeit some of the subjects, Daisy and Gladys, initially did not want to help. Ultimately, the additions strengthened the text.

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[158] Ben-Messahel, 'Speaking with Sally Morgan,' 99-103.
[159] Wright, 'A Fundamental Question,' 92-109.
[160] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*: The Fictionality of Identity and the Phenomenology of the Converso,' *Humanities Research* 1 (1998): 1-22.
[161] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.

Their oral accounts, included with Arthur and then Morgan's maternal grandfather, testify and bear witness to the destruction wrought after colonization.

> While Morgan's autobiography celebrates a continuous transcendent Aboriginal identity, the testimonies bear witness to assimilation as a violent historical process which has produced an irreparable rupture in Aboriginal culture. In an effort to reclaim the text's act of witnessing to the traumas of forced assimilation, I want to suggest, that it should be read and evaluated as a '*testimonio*' rather than a European-style autobiography.[162]

The term *testimonio* is a derivation of testimony, with its context being legalistic, religious or a combination. The reason is still tethered to having given a narrative concerning an important matter. 'The *Testimonio,* or Testimony, is a therapeutic tool in the treatment of people who have suffered psychological trauma under state terrorism.'[163] As such it is grounded in the sufferings of oppressed peoples in an even wider context.

> The *Testimonio,* generally recognized as the treatment of choice for people who suffered psychological trauma under state-sponsored terrorism, was introduced in Chile in the 1970s a means of reestablishing the personal and political ties severed by political repression. Earlier it had been practiced in Europe with Holocaust survivors. [164]

In the text, Morgan tape-records the experiences of her relatives. The primary reason is ethnographic, but the second gives a literal voice to those not heard of by the larger culture. Realizing this Arthur volunteers to help Morgan.[165] But there is one stipulation: that *his* story 'not to be' intermingled with those of the Drake-Brockmans. He even goes further, demanding they write their own story.[166] Though regardless of the term *testimonio* or a collective autobiography, the inclusion of Daisy's alluding to being like Jewish people (already discussed) or any other outside group, not Aboriginal, and literal references, gives the work the right to higher respect.

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[162] Rosanne Kennedy, 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY: The Narrator as Witness. Witness, Trauma and Narrative Form in *My Place*,' *Meridan* (1997): 235-260.
[163] Adrianne Aron, '*Testimonio*, a Bridge Between Psychotherapy and Sociotherapy,' *Women & Therapy* 13.3 (1992): 173-189.
[164] Aron, 'Testimonio,' *Women & Therapy* 173-189.
[165] Morgan 209.
[166] Morgan 209.

Having her relatives adding their history to her narrative adds legitimacy, though the means was not as positively therapeutic for Daisy. Her tale, taking place in the era of greater Aboriginal despair, is also a jeremiad. As such it does not have the happy after all ending some think has happened. Hers is still open to opinion, for Morgan does become frustrated and even condescending as she attempts to understand her grandmother, but fails—seen when Daisy refers to their plight as Jewish in nature, and Morgan stunned by the analogy.[167] Though the failure does not last long—as with the inclusion of *Ivanhoe*—a work with its own broken people.

The heroine in *Ivanhoe* tells of the impossibility of her marrying one outside her 'race.' Rebecca saying to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'You are a Christian; I am a Jewess. Our union would be contrary to the laws alike of the church and the synagogue.'[168] Therefore, there are connections here (again) with race and an immutable barrier. Moving from present to a past gives space for reclamation; the reason for giving a *testimonio*.

> Described as a verbal journey to the past 'allows the individual to transform past experience and personal identity, creates a new present and enhancing the future,'[169] the testimony is a first-person account of one's life experiences, with attention to the injustices one has suffered and how one has been affected by them. [170]

My Place is deceptively like a matryoshka or Russian nesting doll, for it has narratives within narratives. There is the child narrator at the start of the text, and the oral transcripts of Aboriginal life, but also non-Aboriginal people. 'Glady's testimony interpolates an account of Bill's [her husband, Sally's father] wartime experiences constructed from what he had told her.'[171]

With Gladys then giving an accounting of her husband, complimented with what a young

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[167] Morgan 131
[168] Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, eds. M. L. Howe and Helen J. Estes (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962) 109.
[169] The added description of testimonio in Cienfuegos and Monelli, 'The Testimony of Political Repression,' comes from ideas summarised from existential psychology, written about by Igor Caruso, in his text: *La Separación de los Amantes: Una Fenomenología de la Muerte* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1969).
[170] Cienfuegos and Monelli, 'The Testimony of Political Repression,' 43-51.
[171] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.

Morgan recites, there is a pattern worth noting: Except for Arthur, who is the brother of one of the main characters, the narratives are told by women. On the plane of gender politics, there is another reason why the text became so popular: its accessibility is rooted in tribulations suffered by women over recorded history. This inclusion spans beyond performed roles and into literature and theory.

The overlap into literature occurs with the insertion of Ivanhoe; the mansion where Daisy was a servant. 'I did all the work at Ivanhoe.'[172] By this link, Daisy's future had been arrested, unbeknownst to her. Later she would realise how much. Being conquered, conquest, is also what concerns *Ivanhoe*. John Docker comments, '[Sir Walter] Scott's *Ivanhoe* is a predecessor novel concerned with invasion, colonial relations of dominion and subordination, race and destructive desire for the other.'[173] This interpretation fits with the havoc wrought on Aboriginal life. Granted, the turn in perspective is one within postcolonialism, for before *Ivanhoe* enjoyed a more fun and vaunted status. '*Ivanhoe* is one of the great tales of English literature. As a result, *Ivanhoe* has a secure place in the curriculum of our schools.'[174] Morgan's use of it has altered the enthusiasm of that view, while staying true to the expectations of transcendent writing. 'Great writing is always a rewriting or revisionism and is founded upon a reading that clears space for the self, or that so works as to reopen old works to our fresh sufferings.'[175]

The start of the tale begins with ruin. 'Norman oppression is heavy on the Saxon Master and his servant.'[176] The Other here, are not Aboriginal people, but the context is still defeat. 'For a hundred years since the Norman William the Conqueror had defeated the Saxon King Harold in the battle of Hastings, the victors had ruled, seizing all great estates and governing

[172] Morgan 425.
[173] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.
[174] Scott iii.
[175] Bloom 11.
[176] Scott 1.

tyrannically and lightheartedly.'[177] The genre is historical fiction, set during the Holy Crusades, the third. In addition, the novel has as one of its centre pieces, the plight of Jewish people. Yet what is also interesting is the character Urfried (tribal name Ulrica), an old servant. She tells of how the castle was taken by the Normans, raping her along with the other Saxon women. She has under gone a name changed, as Daisy, and was property. 'Once her beauty had gone, she was no longer the sport of her master's passions and was treated henceforth as servant and slave.'[178] Such a life is similar to Daisy's. 'In *My Place* it would appear that Howden Drake-Brockman the white station owner took Daisy to Ivanhoe in Perth for his sexual pleasure.'[179] As both tragedies are rendered orally, so is the shame. Urfried talking of the loss: 'They died—they died every man; and ere their bodies were cold and ere their blood was dried, I had become the prey of the conqueror.'[180] Next she speaks of her fate.

> I was not born, father, the wretch that thou now seest me. I was free, was happy, was honored, loved, and was beloved. I am now a slave, miserable and degraded—the sport of my masters' passions while I had yet beauty—the object of contempt, scorn, and hatred, since it has passed away. Dost thou wonder, father, that I should hate mankind, and, above all, the race that has wrought this change in me? Can the wrinkled, decrepit hag before thee, whose wrath must vent itself in impotent curses, forget she was one the daughter of the noble Thane of Torquilstone, before whose frown a thousand vassals trembled?[181]

She continues her lament, 'deep, black, damning guilt—guilt that lies like a load at my breast—guilt that all the fires of hereafter cannot cleanse.'[182] This depression too is seen in Daisy, bemoaning her lack of connection and not being able/wanting to 'go back' and shame of being found out, as she had yelled at Morgan years precious at the grandchildren not wanting a

[177] Scott 1.
[178] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.
[179] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.
[180] Scott 108.
[181] Scott 123.
[182] Scott 123.

black grandmother.[183]

Ulrica is able to visit her revenge by burning down castle Torquilstone, extinguishing Reginald Front-de-Boeuf. She also screams ending with these lines: 'For vengeance hate shall expire! / Strong hate itself shall expire! I also must perish!'[184] Her last acts restore some of her former dignity as Daisy's Aboriginal bird call.[185]

The plot of conquest, Diasporatic melancholy is evident in both works. Also, with the Jewish characters the reader sees the injustice perpetuated, not too dissimilar to what Aboriginal people suffered. In some of the more noted critics of Morgan and her work, they omitted these connections. Perhaps, as Eric Michaels has said, the problem is with not knowing what to do with her or her work. 'What she [Morgan] uncovers nonetheless is so inconsistent with what we have hitherto understood about Aboriginal theologies that if Morgan is right, much will have to be corrected.'[186] This might be true but leads to wondering why fear adjusting one's definition or understanding of identity? This happens even in groups that are relatively stable. Judy Scales—Trent, discussed in the Mudrooroo section brought this point up. We skinwalk throughout our lives. We are not the same person before having children, going to wars, divorcing—if not those around us worry and wonder. Even if there is a worry about an opening up of status, that phenomena need not always be in the negative. When critiquing the emphasis should be on evaluation, not condemnation, as Joan Newman, using Mikhail Bakhtin:

> Arthur Corunna's narration draws the reader's attention to the new context in which such familiar narration is now placed. This recognition demonstrates that language is not monologic, but a site of struggle for appropriation. All discourse, Bakhtin claims, has its parodying double. Parodic consciousness recognizes the simultaneous expression of 'two

[183] Morgan 120.
[184] Scott 158.
[185] In *My Place* Daisy explains the importance of this call when she is close to death. 'It was the Aboriginal bird, Sally. God sent him to tell me I'm going home soon. Home to my own land and my own people' (443).
[186] Eric Michaels, 'Para-Ethnography,' *Art & Text* 30 (1988): 42-51.

> linguistic points of view, and in the final analysis two speaking subjects.'[187]

Newman goes on to say that 'within the novel, Bakhtin refers to this struggle between sociolinguistic points of view as heteroglossia.'[188] Bakhtin refers to this term to mean:

> The base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance. It is that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, meteorological, physiological—that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions.[189]

There is nuance even here. That is important to remember. Yet as with all examples of strong work, it is not an exact copy of what has been written before. It is true the text shares much in the way of heteroglossia, but it deviates from there as well.

> The voices do not challenge one another, for they have the same cohesive function of oral narrative in terms of their relations to each other. Rather they challenge the discourses in which they are framed—orthodox European discourses of nationalism and the generic form of the autobiography.[190]

In this manner then, it is and is not. The text occupies more than one space, or place. 'There cannot be a coincidence of author and hero, they belong to different moments of time and space, and they represent different aspects of the texts.'[191]

In this instance, there is a metaphysical (additionally, a Dreamtime or Vision Quest) quality to the work. Americans fiction writers sometimes refer to it as the night-time mind. Regardless, there is a separation from corporality that enhances a different perspective—

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[187] Joan Newman, 'Reader-Response to Transcribed Oral Narrative: *A Fortunate Life* and *My Place*,' *Southerly* 4 (1988): 376-389.
[188] Newman, 'Reader-Response to Transcribed Oral Narrative,' 376-389.
[189] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1981; Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990) 428. The postmodern critic, Jacques Derrida, in *Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1973) gives an accounting that is similar. He will be discussed later, but what is important here are the thinkers who argue that since there is shakiness in language and ideas of truth—neither is stable. Hence, contestations are not only inevitable, but logical. Such readings, then support *My Place* in its sometimes unreliable narrative.
[190] Newman, 'Reader-Response to Transcribed Oral Narrative,' 376-389.
[191] John Docker, 'Recasting Sally Morgan's *My Place*,' 1-22.

consciousness. Odd, that in keeping the text grounded in literal and largely colonial terms, those who dismiss the text, though seemingly pro-Aboriginal, seem to be very closely tied to the colonial administrative way of conducting business. Such a point-of-view can only produce only more myopic reviews. But it does not have to be that way; and this is where a wider perspective can help, if the result is not a search for allegiances. In fact, literature should not be used as a purity test for various administrations or ideologies—that is the purview of propaganda. True, doctrines can sway many to a cause, and perhaps keep converts loyal, but not enrich the mind. Nor can it be reliable in aiding intellectual curiosity.

Luckily, one of the utilities canonical literature is its ability to critique, forcing cultures and readers) to rethink foolish, racist, sexist ideas that have not injured in the abstract, but have had real world effects. True, there is uncomfortableness in a text detailing injustices as everyday experiences but that is a duty for canonical texts. 'The literary canon does not baptize us into culture; it does not make us free of cultural anxiety. Rather, it confirms our cultural anxieties, yet helps to give them form and coherence.'[192] If anyone is unhappy with that, they should stop reading and leave writing to those brave enough to expose such human failings.

[192] Bloom 527.

Section Three—Epeli Hau'ofa

Part One: Younger Voice

All of the individuals featured here are more than merely accomplished writers. Mudrooroo and Morgan provide alternative approaches and interpretations to (Aboriginal) pasts. In addition they supply authentic representations of the Other—which are normally stifled within Western dominant master narratives. Hearing them, conversely, gives a clearer understanding of the weaknesses in the master's/colonial narrative. Epeli Hau'ofa, though having this nuanced perspective, eclipses theirs. His works have, as a quality, 'a transcendence of limits.'[1] In his writing there is hope, disappointment, humility, frustration and humor, experienced over a lifetime of critiquing the central problems plaguing Oceania: 'colonialism, Christianity, and international capitalism.'[2] This without desperation. 'Hau'ofa is an author of harmony, of high seriousness balanced by huge delight, even as he shows how humane laughter can drive out fear and despair.'[3] A complete writer, now. Earlier in his writing, where he centred on Tongan topics—with his reflective and Western anthropological background, he was not. Always present, though, was the idea of giving those muted voices a platform.

For his doctoral dissertation, Hau'ofa wrote on Mekeo tribal life and power structures. This culminated in the text *Mekeo: Inequality and Ambivalence in a Village Society.* Though Hau'ofa's legacy of prose begins here, many have not included it, though Geoffrey White gives us reason to reconsider.

> For his PhD work in anthropology, Epeli returned to the Pacific, studying at ANU and carrying out research in Papua New Guinea. From that work he produced a major book about the Mekeo (*Mekeo: Inequality and Ambivalence in a Village Society*, ANU Press,

[1] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994) 524.
[2] Epeli Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) 106.
[3] J. S. Ryan, 'A World of Insight and Wisdom that Came for the Pacific: or, Epeli Hau'ofa on All Our Human Follies,' *Australian Folklore* 24 (2009): 152-68.

> 1981), a lasting contribution despite its relative absence from lists that emphasize Epeli's creative writing. While quite different from his later work, a close reading of *Mekeo* shows that he was already pushing the limits of ethnographic writing in order to create more human forms of representation.[4]

This then can be called a Hau'ofa signature: informing, but not lecturing, the reader. This for all human portrayals should be seen on an equal plane, since we are more similar than different. A truth perhaps uncomfortable in modernist terms, which argued that Western European society was the apex of intellectual thinking, but not so within a postmodern mindset.

In *Mekeo*, Hau'ofa decided to travel to the area (Mekeo village) to conduct a 'study of improved communications.'[5] His interest being the communications between the rural and urban, peripheral and centre. He also notes that what interested him was a road being built that would facilitate a connection between rural Mekeo village and the city of Bereina.[6] For his field research he chose what would become a lifestyle: converting into being one of the people. Succeeding, he was well-placed to examine what important changes occurred. 'Being strategically located in the middle of the village, our new accommodation afforded us a central spot from which to observe what was happening in the community.'[7] More importantly, the project was one where he came to reflect on even his motivations. 'My sympathy with underdogs is evident in my analysis of the relationships between elder and younger brothers, between seniority and juniority.'[8] Conversely, another of Hau'ofa's strengths was in not allowing his personal view to cloud his work. Hence when writing about demarcated lines, Hau'ofa did not make excuses for what he recorded. 'The basis of inequality in Mekeo is ideological and

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[4] Geoffrey White, introduction, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*, by Epeli Hau'ofa (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) xi.
[5] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo*1.
[6] Hau'ofa, *Meke*o 1.
[7] Epeli Hau'ofa, *Mekeo: Inequality and ambivalence in a Village Society* (Books Australia, 1981) 1.
[8] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 104.

mystical.'[9] Structurally, it is a stratified culture. 'Inequality is a fundamental (if not central) principle in the ordering of Mekeo relationships.'[10]

One of the stereotypes of native/Indigenous people is of warring brutes. The other is of lazy savages in need of civilization, or both, depending on the administrator. Hau'ofa's rendering of Mekeo life discourages such ideas, while not shying away from their actions. By doing so, he displays their culture as not being exotic or doomed to fail. Instead, they are a functioning group with theoretical and philosophical outlooks that should be respected, rather than the myopic renderings of many first contact cultures.

The typical narrative told by East and West is that of the European invader. A convenient and many times true depiction, but not the only one. 'The early experiences of Mekeo with Europeans were friendly and peaceful. Partly because of their inland geographical location, they escaped the visitations of those unscrupulous traders, miners and settlers.'[11] The same was seen in what would become the Americas, that not everyone from Europe had greed or destruction on their mind. For some this is astounding, and even more when missionary culture comes to the area.

> If at this period Mekeo were generally fortunate in their initial encounters with the agents of the colonial administration, events favoured them further in that they were not evangelized by the zealous London Missionary Society.[12]

The restraint here by the Europeans is also written about in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, that in the beginning the missionaries were a curious lot and some native people converted, but each group, largely, left the other alone. The explanation is similar: the 'priests depended on the

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[9] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 298. Mekeo history explains that envy and jealousy (*pikupa*) are traits of man for they are traits seen in one of their myths between two brothers. The conflicts begins when elder brother, A'aisa, is mistaken for a child by younger brother, Isapini. Animosity and later death followed. The myth is a means to describe the conflicted nature of man.
[10] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 298.
[11] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 20.
[12] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 21.

chiefs.'[13] The tales diverge here, however. The Nigerian novel chronicles the 'downfall' of the Umuofia tribe (the same for those in the Americas), while Mekeo is largely left to its own devices. Yet not surprisingly, change still came for the Mekeo via war.

> The Second World War and the subsequent reconstruction and developmental periods broke the isolation of the society. During the war most able-bodied men were conscripted into military service which took them too many parts of the country. [14]

A migration began out of the experience, both physically and ideologically, giving the people a different perspective and opportunities. 'After the excitement of these years the return to village life was a disappointment to many, who took the first opportunity to go to Port Moresby and other urban centres.'[15] Thus, what took many risk-takers away from rural village life is also what brought Hau'ofa there. He wanted to chronicle the change seen from the eyes of the people, and those who were most knowledgeable of their traditions and customs.

By reflecting on his early work, functional, formal connections are found which later become more nuanced and explored. Hence after his doctorate came journal articles concerning the Mekeo. Further, the early article 'Anthropology and Pacific Islanders' proves that even at this point in his career, Hau'ofa's work was groundbreaking outside his fields.

> [Hau'ofa's] 1975 reflection anticipated elements of Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism*. His concerns about the depersonalizing effects of conventional ethnographic writing set the stage for later work critiquing academic discourses that reproduce many of the same imbalances of power and agency associated with colonial history. [16]

The text and articles that chronicle Mekeo lifestyles are succinct, but not as authoritative as seen in later pieces. Indeed, in his earlier years, it is clear he is struggling against structural decorum and seems to defer to those dictates.

The present conclusions are tentative and subject to possible major modifications in two

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[13] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 22.
[14] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 24.
[15] Hau'ofa, *Mekeo* 23.
[16] White, *Ocean* xi.

> or three years' time. They are not to be taken as authoritative; my aim is merely to draw attention to a very interesting ethnographic case.[17]

Here his anthropologist-sociological training reigned. Nonetheless, he renders the chieftainship of Mekeo expertly, countering what had been written.

> In a 1968 publication, Dr [M. D.] Sahlins admits to the existence of leaders other than 'big men' in segmentary, tribal societies amongst which he includes Melanesia, but consigns such leaders to a special category of 'petty chiefs' with 'little influence, few functions, and no privileges.'[18]

He bestows the chieftainship with the respect deserved by its role and function within Mekeo society.

> It will be shown in the paper that the influence and the authority of Mekeo chiefs pervade a very large part of the corporate life of their people, that their functions enable them to control vital areas of their society.[19]

Such a need to clarify and distinguish nuances was (and is) needed in fostering understanding for 'the literature on the Mekeo is sparse.'[20] This is another signature of one who champions the underdog. Hau'ofa believed this particular group had not been investigated thoroughly.

> As a response, the subtly of the Mekeo tribe, rendered by Hau'ofa is very intricate.
>
> Through networks of rights and obligations created by ties of marriage, matrilaterality, clanship, and *ufuapie* [special groupings of chiefs for ceremonial and political purposes], the authority and influence of the Mekeo chiefs extend for specific purposes beyond the narrow confines of their respective groups.[21]

This is important to note since previous scholarship sounded a different tone. Also, there is attention paid to how the Mekeo delegate in a stable manner, albeit that has too been altered. 'For the performance of tasks the chiefs are assisted by several functionaries whose positions are ideally hereditary, though under current circumstances some are appointed.'[22] Outside influence

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[17] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 80 (1971): 152-69.
[18] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[19] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[20] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[21] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[22] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.

(Australian government involvement) altered the society. Western bodies have redirected the trajectories of non-Westerners (here with the Australian Administration). 'Since the suppression of warfare, the Mekeo military leaders have lost their former political significance, vacating the field of leadership of the civilian chiefs and their functionaries.'[23]

Hau'ofa's other life experience, which of missionaries—like his own parents—is also listed, linking Mekeo society and Christianity, so

> that they have institutionalised in the office of their chiefs those qualities of humanity to which the common man aspires but, owing to the old Adam in him, cannot always attain. Thus, at its best, the Mekeo chieftainship symbolises what is good and desirable.[24]

Pointing out the intimacies of Mekeo culture, presenting them as reasonable, strong and not needing saving, was part of a *larger mission*. That of deconstructing the relationships Oceania had (and still has) with international entities. However, Hau'ofa saw such endeavours as partial explorations of the person. 'I believe that every analysis of social and cultural situations is in part a self-exploration by the analyst.'[25] This also included examining power from within—while locating himself there, as he did next with Tongan society.

TONGAN SOCIETY AND THE WRITER OF ITS FABLES

As a younger writer, Hau'ofa was sharp in his criticism of fellow Tongans. The first example comes after returning from 'an absence of nearly twenty years.'[26] He argued for a reduction in the birth rate, which he took for the most pressing problem facing 1970s Tonga. Much later, when asked to discuss population growth in the middle and late 1970s, he says, 'that ten-or-so-page paper was miraculously transformed into a forty-page mini-picture book that

[23] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[24] Hau'ofa, 'Mekeo chieftainship,' 152-69.
[25] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 104.
[26] Hau'ofa, *Our Crowded Islands* (1977; University of South Pacific: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1980) 3.

instantly established me as an Expert on population problems and environment.'[27] Not pleased with the notoriety, Hau'ofa sardonically comments 'since the publication of *Our Crowded Islands* [1977] I have spent so much time and ingenuity trying to avoid being exposed as a fraud that I have willy-nilly become a real imposter'[28] showing a maturation into the force for which he is best known. For Hau'ofa does not really write sociology, or trade history, but rather one man's musings on the past, present and likely future for the island peoples of the South Pacific and beyond.

In 'Pangs of Transition: Kinship and Economy in Tonga' Hau'ofa offered pointed criticism of Tonga's power structure, saying, 'our kinship system is coming under heavy pressure and has shown certain inadequacies.'[29] He was not without an ironic tone, noticing,

> it is indicative of the strength of kinship loyalty that those who complain about nepotism and favouritism do so not so much as a matter of principle but because they themselves have not benefited from particular acts thereof.[30]

More, the worry of losing independence is ruminated on. 'We dream about growing rich quickly, and about having our problems solved instantly by unrealistic methods, some of which, if implemented, will create more problems, including the loss of our independence.'[31] Reasonable concerns, but the over-all tone is that of a parent or guardian scolding children.

His critiques should not be seen as anti-authoritarian, or anti-monarchy, however. There is true affection for the royal family, but seen in an older Hau'ofa. In the eulogy titled 'His Majesty King Tāufa'āhau Tupou IV: An Appreciation' [2006] he shows his respect and graciousness. 'Immediately after the passing away of someone we love, we recall and talk only of the good

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[27] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 103.
[28] Hau'ofa, Ocea*n* 103.
[29] Hau'ofa, 'Pangs of Transition: Kinship and Economy in Tonga,' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 14 (1978): 160-165.
[30] Hau'ofa, 'Pangs of Transition,' 160-165.
[31] Hau'ofa, 'Pangs of Transition,' 160-165.

things he or she has done with and for us.'[32] This introduction concludes with an admission. 'I will touch only on how and why we came to hold him so dearly in our hearts. This is neither the time nor place for saying anything else.'[33] Yet to understand the complicated manner Tongan aristocracy is critiqued, the Janus aspects of Hau'ofa must be kept in mind. His writings are never far from his experiences (including his Christian roots), or from the backward looking history of his country.

In 'Thy Kingdom Come: The Democratization of Aristocratic Tonga,' the relevance of Christianity is centre to the argument he makes about the future of Tonga and, in general, about political struggle. There is 'a historical tendency for oppressed or threatened populations to look to religion for liberation or salvation.'[34] Hau'ofa, being a child of missionary parents, had a more unique perspective than others who have, and rightly, more directly accosted the Church for its forced erosion of Indigenous peoples' way of life. Yet this was no impediment to being satirical. 'Then came the Christian missionaries whose aim was to save everyone's soul.'[35] The change also gave the people the benefits of a Western educational system and greater opportunities. 'Ordinary Tongans in rapidly increasing numbers have received higher level educations and have acquired a greater awareness of the world and their potential to excel.'[36] The aid was well received by those who wanted different outcomes than what was offered under the old system. 'The new knowledge and training in new skills were sought after eagerly by Tongan commoners.'[37] The result was an increase in the peoples' power. Before, 'the aristocracy monopolized the entire field of cultural and technical knowledge then available in the country.

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[32] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 173.
[33] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 173.
[34] Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come: The Democratization of Aristocratic Tonga,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 6.2 (1994): 414-428.
[35] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[36] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[37] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.

Commoners were referred to, as they still are sometimes, as *me'a vale* 'the ignorant'.'[38] Such a position made them very easy to control.

This slow transfer, seen in a socio-political and economical manner, is also important to realise in a wider context.

> Local societies of the Third and Fourth World *do* (author's emphasis) attempt to organize the irresistible forces of the world-system according to their own system of the world—in various forms and with varying success, depending on the nature of the indigenous culture and mode of external determination. [39]

The 'external determination' cannot be understated. Here the aid Tongan society received increased the non-aristocratic middle class, one reason 'the ruling aristocratic section of the community has declined.'[40] As with other social vacuums, a newer entity moved into the departed space with tools needed, 'for a modernizing society to develop and operate within an extremely complex international system.'[41] This change, as any other, was one that had begun in an earlier era. 'The process of democratization of Tonga's political culture can be traced to the period around the middle of the nineteenth century,'[42] which 'culminated in the establishment of a centralized monarchy at the expense of a hitherto multicentred aristocracy.'[43]

In his discussion, Hau'ofa renders the context more intelligible while not glamorizing the past or its rulers. 'The modern state of Tonga was built on conquest warfare.'[44] After this 'a new order that centralized in his hands (like George Tupou I) all powers of political control, and he exercised those powers through a newly established bureaucracy.'[45] Never myopic in his thinking, Hau'ofa gives a parallel in continental Europe. 'An excellent example is the reign of

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[38] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[39] Marshall Sahlins, 'What is Anthropological Enlightenment? Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century,' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28 (1999): i-xxiii.
[40] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[41] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[42] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[43] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[44] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[45] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.

Louis XIV, who emasculated the French nobility by bringing them into direct dependence on his court.'[46] What can be said, then, is that tradition (or culture) although it enjoys respites of stability, is not, fundamentally, static. In addition, the manner in which political upheaval occurred in Tonga is not less culturally calculated than Western Europe.

The prior 'stability' also reflected a stagnant educational system. The 'new' knowledge forced a lessening of entrenched power circles, which took many away from Tonga. Not too unlike massive migration patterns in other times, by other peoples, as was written of in *The Pleasures of Exile*, 'the young will remain too numerous and too strong to fear being alone.'[47] This theme is not monopolised by any group or society, given a chance, as Hau'ofa writes of the evermore numerous, educated Tongans. 'Most of them have received their education overseas, where they have formed important links with individuals and institutions that may be activated for their advantage or that of the causes they espouse.'[48] Therefore, 'Tonga's progressive absorption into the world economic and cultural system has supplied the means for the rise of the ordinary people.'[49]

The aristocracy is not to be discounted, however, a group in which he counts himself. 'I use the first personal pronouns because I am now talking to myself.'[50] Hau'ofa writes of them as a legitimate part of Tongan society for he understands their value. 'Like their ancestors, they serve the nation in ways that no one else can; and therein I believe lies their great and continuing importance.'[51] For though in a diminished capacity, are still 'the foci of our culture and our identity as a single people, as well as being the signposts of our historical continuity as a

[46] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[47] George Lamming, *The Pleasure of Exile* (1960; University of Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 23.
[48] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[49] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[50] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[51] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.

nation.'[52] Therefore, 'we still expect to see in our aristocracy, the ideal qualities of our collective personality.'[53] This for Hau'ofa did not discard what was there (in functional terms) for foreign, idealistic notions. 'We look to them for such qualities in social interaction as civility, graciousness, kindness and that calming aura of a unifying presence in our midst.'[54]

The continuity seen here is not of an invented national pride but a re-emergence of a significant contextual history. Tonga was never fully subjugated, thus able to continue its culture, an important aspect to consider. However, the particular colonial narrative of extinguishing 'savage' tribes became very influential.

> In particular, any discussion of depopulation must be aware of the insistent and ubiquitous nineteenth-century narrative of the inevitable extinction of Pacific populations, which by the end of the century had become a colonialist mantra.[55]

Despite this, the tradition of solidarity along traceable kinship lines has only recently fallen apart, thus ensuring a reshuffling of society, but not its complete breakdown, as perhaps with all Australian Aboriginal society. 'It is unlikely that Pacific peoples ever thought of themselves as inhabiting somewhere small,'[56] before Westerners were able to exert their influence over them, via colonialism, Christianity and capitalism. The exertion, never being complete, would not be completely dictated to Tonga.

Paradoxically, this still meant changing their way of life, whether they wanted to or not. Moreover, there were Western-derived perspectives that had to be attended to.

> The new knowledge and training in new skills were sought after more than eagerly by Tongan commoners, leaving the aristocracy to nurse the kinds of knowledge that were becoming increasingly irrelevant for the conduct of everyday affairs in the changing socioeconomic environment.[57]

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[52] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[53] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[54] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.
[55] Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) 14.
[56] Edmond, *Representing* 1.
[57] Hau'ofa, 'Thy Kingdom to Come,' 414-428.

This kind of split, schism, is to be seen when an outside culture offers a deviation from that seen as normal. This separation is not an anomaly. *Things Fall Apart* gives such an example, explaining what had happened in Umuofia.

> The white man had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store and for the first time palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia.[58]

In each situation, there was a status quo, then outside contact, devastation, but also opportunity. As is also the case in Achebe's novel, the 'newer' form of culture and economics flourished for it helped those deeded 'untouchable' in Umuofia society

A similar phenomenon has been seen in India, with shocks to the rigid caste system.[59] Those who are surprised by these changes are the ones who never realise that societal shifts are inevitable. Conversely, understanding that complex change is a constant is one of Hau'ofa's gifts, with honesty the second. Critical humor, the third, and perhaps most important, offers a different path to conceptualizing changing space and agency. The journey is carried out via mythic/fictional/actual settings and cultures across the South Pacific.

[58] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958; New York: Random House, 1994) 178.
[59] The article in question is Giridharadas' 'In India, a shift to meritocracy uproots old elites' *International Herald Tribune* (2009) 1: 31 Jan 2009. Web. Discussed in the preface.

Part Two: A Fictional and yet Peculiarly Authoritative Voice: *Tales of the Tikongs*

A popular rap from the 1990s, which illustrates the space Hau'ofa existed is the song, 'Welcome to the Terrordome.' In it the narrator with a dual consciousness tells of being between cultures (Black and White). 'Caught in a race against time / The pit and the pendulum / Check the rhythm and rhymes / While I'm bendin' 'em.'[60] The song contains two warnings; one, against the pitfalls of not controlling one's identity. The second, there will be no pity from those who do. Hau'ofa's work was always centred on such concerns. However, beyond his ability to criticise all, including himself, his use of humor, amidst dismal circumstances, sets him apart from most thinkers and writers about race and external change.

In writing about Hau'ofa's first novel, *Tales of the Tikongs*, Edward Watts explains 'Hau'ofa's absurd characters, mostly [Pacific] islanders siding with either the neotraditionalist or assimilationist side, refuse to concede that all contemporary societies exist in a global context.'[61] Moreover, not understanding this context may well reduce the appreciation of the text since it ends with a somewhat defeated tone.

Hau'ofa's deeds and words are of a more persistent tone, while attempting an inclusive possible future. 'For Epeli, tradition was not the arid, formulaic routine of what had gone on before; it was a living, breathing organism of the present day. It drew from the past, yet was neither bound nor limited by it.'[62] However this stance stems from a more beholdened younger

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[60] Public Enemy, 'Welcome to the Terrordome' *Fear of a Black Planet*, Def Jam/Columbia, 1990. CD. The song also warns that if (Black) people use their collective power and status (especially that of being creators of great entertainment), the people will enjoy a better position in society. If not their demands will go unheard. When Hau'ofa spoke of a 'sea of islands' and his redefinition of Oceania, he harbored the same sentiments.

[61] Edward Watts, 'The Only Teller of Big Truths: Epeli Hau'ofa's *Tales of the Tikongs* and the Biblical Contexts of Post-Colonialism,' *Journal of Literature and Theology* 6. 4 (1992): 369-382.

[62] Joni Madraiwiwi, 'Epeli's Quest: Essays in Honor of Epeli Hau'ofa,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 22:1 (2010): 104-105.

one.

Hau'ofa's initial stridency was caused by unreflective thinking. Earlier in his career, he seemed to advocate a turning back of time, via population control—but not to the point of being an extremist. 'Although he calls for population control and less dependence on foreign goods and existence in his 1977 book *Our Crowded Islands*, in his fiction he avoids romanticizing the 'Pacific Way.'' [63] When *Tales of the Tikongs* was published (1983), however, a more nuanced and authoritative writer satirises back-to-tradition-esqe ideas and the uncritical acceptance of Western institutional beliefs. The most fundamental being Christianity, now long a part of Tongan religious-culture. Yet, perhaps the main objective is—through the humorous logic—to prove that a pragmatic third way is the only viable answer for Tonga and Oceania.

The explanation for why a third way is needed is made clear in his novel. The dialogue, speech patterns were designed to prompt the people to think about the choices (some poor) they had made. In 'The Writer as an Outsider' Hau'ofa says this of islanders and of his *Tales of the Tikongs*,

> the style that I have developed is an attempt to translate into writing the cadences of sounds as produced in the islands by storytellers, preachers, orators, people in supplication, people giving orders, can be heard in *Tales of the Tikongs.*[64]

The notion was to amplify those voices, making them heard with a better understanding of their actions (including their connections to Christianity), and remind them of their agency.

Hau'ofa tactically alters several favorite parables. The chapter titles: 'The Seventh and Other Days,' 'The Tower of Babel,' 'A Pilgrim's Progress' and so on, challenges the effectiveness of Biblical narratives in regard to Oceania. The clashing between cultures has been horrific, but 'these are not stories of fatal impact so much as upbeat tales of indigenous

[63] Kathleen Flanagan, 'Refractions on the Pacific Rim: Tongan Writers' Responses to Transnationalism,' *World Literature Today* 72.1 (1998): 89-95.
[64] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 108.

responses to cultural and economic imperialism.'[65] There is much to learn. About *Tales*, it has been said that it, 'should be required reading for every government official and developer in the Pacific. Unfortunately, the people who should be reading this remarkable work are too busy trying to develop our islands.'[66]

The vignette 'The Seventh and Other Days' illustrates Hau'ofa's anger with confusion generated by church doctrine, as well as his view on other mistaken 'traditions.'[67] This point is illustrated by his Sione Falesi, 'a Most Important Person who holds high positions in both secular and the spiritual affairs of the realm.'[68] Exemplifying the schizophrenic nature of the character, he 'is a true Polynesian chief, a practising Christian, and a self-confessed sinner who goes to church every Sunday.'[69] Through themes of colonization, Christianity and capitalism, 'the description in this story leads the reader all too quickly from the Christian church of Western origin to the usurping presence of foreign economic and political advisors.'[70]

The problem faced by Sione is that of his—and his people's true identity. He is Polynesian in family, but avowed Christian in ritual and belief. Thus, he is able to argue his Christian beliefs using Old Testament doctrine, while living an alternative life making him a fallible believer in each community. In fact, Sione is so contradictory, the foreign-aid worker who is supposed to infuse him (and others) with the Protestant work ethic 'lost his way, eventually finding himself slumped over the bar at the Tiko club.'[71]

Sione is a farcical character, but does not suffer like Sailosi Atiu (a Man Friday type). After the English depart he becomes a revolutionary, replete with wearing 'Afro-shirts, and

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[65] Epeli Hau'ofa, editor's note, *Tales of the Tikongs* (1983; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994) vii.
[66] Vilsoni Hereniko, 'Interdisciplinary Approaches in Pacific Studies: Understanding the Fiji Coup of 19 May 2000,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 15.1 (2003): 75-90.
[67] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[68] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 1.
[69] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 1.
[70] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[71] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 6.

other Third World clothes.'[72] Additionally, he is so hostile to educated young people he forces them away by espousing a 'Pacific Way' ideology[73], regardless of the consequences. His eradication campaign becomes so successful at creating disarray, in addition to the mother colony feeling 'remorseful,' that he is sent a deputy to help him. The irony is the person ordered (a Mr. Eric Hobsworth-Smith) was his employer. The turn of events is catastrophic for Sailosi; he retreats to his home, calling in his orders. This vacuum leaves Mr. Hobsworth-Smith to assume command again, as if he had never left. The moral is one of the consequences of extremism.

> Another character who exemplifies absurdism is Tevita Poto [a potential self-protrait], a Tikong migrant who received a university education abroad, is castigated by his elite family for questioning the church and the monarchy and by the common people for supporting the 'Pacific Way.'[74]

This philosophy is described by Subramani as 'a quasi-political ideology. Its basic objective is to assert that Pacific people should not be intimidated by foreign models but develop their own priorities.'[75] The sentiment is fair, but has been used to stifle a diversity of options for the future, and problematically, has been used by the elite of society, to hold those below in their place.

'Paths to Glory' explores these dilemmas while 'Tevita's quandary illustrates the inherent duality of the Pacific Way ideology in its adoption of seemingly progressive principles of nonreliance on Western culture.'[76] Yet this is an uncritical posture when the look back is premised on a present overly influenced by first contact. The contradictions stifle him (and its

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[72] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 50.
[73] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 52.
[74] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[75] Subramani, *South Pacific Literature: From Myth to Fabulation* (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1985) 154. This charge against a seemingly proletariat movement is not new. Indeed, 'Negrismo' and 'Negritude' are just two others that have faced the same dilemma.
[76] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.

author), as he is accosted by his uncle, 'You're an Elite and you should walk and act like one'[77] for not performing 'elitely' enough. He is further scolded by a taxi driver because of his ability to class shift. The inebriated driver ends his rant with telling him, 'Pray to God and you will have your democracy in Heaven. Goodbye, professor, I'm off to New Zealand tomorrow. Yes, for good.'[78]

Of the tales, the trilogy concerning the biblical Tower of Babel is the most forceful. There, 'Hau'ofa pokes fun at the abandonment of a viable subsistence economy for the surplus production economy which shortsighted foreign development schemes cannot sustain.'[79] The tale told by Manu explains the 'Fish Cannery Project fiasco,' saying sex was its undoing. This also harkens back to a point made in *Our Crowded Islands*—that Tonga was at risk of over-populating. Another point, that of short-sighted fishing enterprises, is also examined in the report, *Corned Beef and Tapioca* (1979). All of which is then satirised in *Tales.*

The tale, while a critique of colonial power, is engrossed with sexually and Christian allusions. The Japanese having old men who are not sexual viable for women, but still needing to consume tuna, comprises the first part of the tale. Then the responsibility falls onto New Zealand and finally to the Tikongs, with the company in charge of the fishing with the bemused name, 'Bottom Development' and the aid person, Alvin [Sharky] Lowe, who 'like the Great Shepherd of Nazareth, [Sharky] converted many frightened fellows into fishermen.'[80] The tales' characters are natives who are not interested in globalization. One is 'Ika Levu, a part-time fisherman and gardener,'[81] who, being a subsistence person had no debt; he was free. This for one who was an 'inhabitant' of a tropic island—which means uncivilised.

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[77] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 43.
[78] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 47.
[79] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[80] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 21.
[81] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.

> His dual occupation meant that Ika worked whenever he felt like it; and he had very little money, which bothered him not at all. Ika never felt miserable until Sharky [the sleazy and corrupt Australian development coordinator] laid hands on him.[82]

The idea of island freedom is progressively destroyed with this imposed way of life. 'Although a Western-style developed economy will benefit transnationals and the existing elite in 'Tiko,' it effectively destroys the way of life for most commoners in a subsistence-based economy.'[83]

The worry of outside influence is not only from Western institutions, as the historical record shows. 'The present government in Tonga began advocating a return to 'traditional' culture in the late 1970s, building a cultural centre with Japanese aid money.'[84] The concern was shared by Hau'ofa, as he, also in the 1970s, commented on the curious situation of island people always desperately needing fresh fish.

> Although the demand for fresh fish in Tongatapu has never been adequately supplied, much of the catch of the government-owned deep-sea fishing vessels has been taken to canneries in Pagopago and Levuka for the much-needed foreign earnings.[85]

The mix of international influences embedded in Tongan society makes their complete removal almost impossible, but not beyond hope, though that future is difficult to conceive. Especially if there is a misdiagnosis.

Edward Watts, in his discussion of the novel's philosophy, sees the problems that befall Tiko as a confluence of language and power. 'The failure of the 'Appropriate Authorities' to notice the inapplicability of the concept of 'development' to Tiko is again a failure of language.'[86] Yet this is not a failure of language. Instead, an example of force exerted via

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[82] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 21.
[83] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[84] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[85] Epeli Hau'ofa, *Corned Beef and Tapioca: A Report on the Food Distribution Systems in Tonga* (Canberra: Development Studies Centre, ANU, 1979) 159.
[86] Watts, 'The Only Teller,' 369-382.

hegemonic language. 'You try savvy good or I'll bloody well bash your coon head in, O.K.?'[87] Alvin's threatening and condescending tones complicates the supposition of there being a failure to understand the key issues.

Nevertheless, Ika was able to destroy the relationship foisted upon him, Toa Qase, was not as fortunate. 'The story of Toa Qase concludes 'The Tower of Babel.' He has the misfortune to partake in the 'Poultry Development Scheme funded by an agency of the Great International Organisation,' which gives him six thousand chickens so he can become a 'Modern Businessman.'[88] Also, being a gardener and deciding on this plan, he dreams of something not seen in his culture: personal wealth. The business goes awry, for in Tongan (for the fictitious Tiko) culture there is an expectation of generosity and sharing. 'In Tiko if you give less you will lose more and if you give nothing you will lose all.'[89] The idea of hoarded wealth is antithetical to Polynesian sensibilities. Therefore, his chickens were removed, leaving him with the loan and his still thwarted Western aspirations. 'After succumbing to this language, Toa forgets the Polynesian tradition of sharing [any] abundance. Hau'ofa makes it clear that another language interrupts Toa's hope.'[90]

Ultimately, Toa, with the help of clergy thinks of 'developing for himself vast treasures in Heaven where live neither thieves nor experts,'[91] but even here, there is a question about what lessons were learned. Watts argues 'each culture's inability to recognize the *de facto* (author's emphasis) existence of a series of interactive cultures on Tiko victimises the majority of the islanders.'[92] This means that the power dynamic is not equal, thereby, 'disallowing the possibility

[87] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 22.
[88] Watts, 'The Only Teller,' 369-382.
[89] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 26.
[90] Watts, 'The Only Teller,' 369-382.
[91] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 26.
[92] Watts, 'The Only Teller,' 369-382.

that a multiplicity of priorities and languages share Tiko.'[93] True, but these do understand each other. What is missing is a mutual respect for the different lifestyles, which capitalism and colonialism does not heed—as power seldom values the Other.

Hau'ofa's value is in his insistence on locating what could be used of the past (Oceanic tradition) and from Western culture. This while noting since neither is going away, it is vital to merge them in a productive manner. Such must be done without assuming either's principles uncritically, for it is there problems arise. In the text the narrator, Manu, points this out. For proof he wears a shirt that says 'Religion and Education Destroy Original Wisdom'[94] on the back, yet displays 'Over Influenced'[95] on the front. This fictitious character is

> based the character of Manu on a popular eccentric in Nukuʻalofa. He shared his remarkable propensity for inappropriate truthfulness and freedom of criticism with an eccentric from Vavaʻu.[96]

Such fare saves the novel from widespread cultural and physical defeatism. This makes it very different from Mudrooroo's *Doctor Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World*. Here the hero is saved by an ability to joke about the people's predicament. On this subject, as Nigel Rigby writes, 'comedy is a rarely used form in postcolonial writing; [V.S.] Naipaul and [Wole] Soyinka come to mind, but interestingly it is their early rather than their later work.'[97] In addition, 'Hau'ofa's particularly Tongan humor does have parallels in postmodernist destabilizing and decentring techniques.'[98] Yet first this is an extension of a societal trait. 'The Tongans have a long history of using humor to deflect and deflate power,'[99] from where very adult language is used.

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[93] Watts, 'The Only Teller,' 369-382.
[94] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 7.
[95] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 7.
[96] Michael Poltorak, 'Nemesis, Speaking, and Tauhi Vahaʻa: Interdisciplinarity and the Truth of 'Mental Illness' in Vavaʻu Tonga,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 19.1 (2007): 1-36.
[97] Nigel Rigby, 'Tall Tales, Short Stories: The Fiction of Epeli Hau'ofa,' *World Literature Today* 68.1 (1994): 49-52.
[98] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[99] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.

> The humor is often extremely bawdy. The comedy works through inflating and inverting the 'norms' of the rest of the Christian world, emphasizing the difference and smallness of Tiko: rest becomes work and work becomes rest: morality causes immorality; an official truth is an actual lie.[100]

The action is designed to subvert the power of European activity and actions over Tiko (and Tonga), though the act is complicated—especially since the writer belonged to the upper and educated classes. However, he never succumbed to such allegiances. What saved him was his wanting to not be 'type-casted', but an individual. Further, at his core, he was a wonderer and a wanderer. So much that he wrote he has never felt very comfortable being in any one place.

> My background of rootlessness, of being a perpetual outsider, a professional underdog, and an unbeliever, rendered me completely ill suited to the life of sedentary respectability that a national Establishment provides and even demands.[101]

A contrarian, he saw himself more like the trickster, in African tales, 'a clown at heart, a connoisseur of absurdity.'[102] Like Hau'ofa, then, Manu 'exists outside society'[103] freeing him to comment without seeming biased. To further Manu's independence, Hau'ofa gave him a unique name. '*Manu* means 'a pain, like a toothache' in Tongan, but *Manuki* also means to mock or deride. Manu, the alter ego of Hau'ofa, is an irritant to the power structure as well as a deflator of them.'[104] Thus as Rigby says, 'he is in touch with traditional values but is not simply a traditionalist. He wants Tiko to develop but does not want a development which continues to subordinate Tiko to the old colonial powers.'[105] Hau'ofa expresses his skin-walker ability[106] in 'Writer and the Outsider,' where, as an anthropologist he was comfortable being with others while not wanting to become one of them. 'I studied other people, I wrote about them, I liked

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[100] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[101] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 100.
[102] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 100.
[103] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[104] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[105] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[106] Judy Scales-Trent, 'Notes of a White Black Woman,' *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror,* eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia, PA: Temple UP, 1997) 475-481.

most of them, but I could never become one of them.'[107] This is the type of nomad[108] seen in the postmodern writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

As comedic as the vignettes are, the general subtext is very serious, albeit from the bottom, the rhizome. Borrowing the botanical term, Deleuze and Guattari write about a 'distinct type of underground stem-system.'[109] Such a stance means the understanding and strength comes from the proletariat. Of course the weakness here, with wanting such a strategy, is finding a weapon that is obtained with little effort. The working classes do not control the flow of capital. They do not shape public perceptions. In fact it would seem (if one solely believed in the *bourgeoisie*) they are powerless. Which would over-look one source: It is almost impossible to remove from an entire class, their ability to create space for laughter. Therefore, not being in power, the humour of the protagonist becomes his weapon. But this is a very limited weapon against Western hegemony. One not powerful enough to force the change sought, against an entity like international aid.

> His translations of the tall tales provide a distinctive and exuberant new voice in postcolonial writing, synthesizing modernity and tradition; but at the end of the last story in the book, 'The Glorious Pacific Way,' the humor is bitter.'[110]

To save oneself from a nostalgic look at revolution, such a point, albeit crushing, must be remembered.

Also complicating the success of this strategy, many abandon it, deciding to follow the easier path—which is almost always made much more lucrative with the lure of enhancements and inducements. This is why there is sadness when a different character, Ole Pasifikiwei, is

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[107] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 62.
[108] Though the word is never fully defined, here is one of the best explanations in 'Deleuze and Space: The Smooth and the Striated' by Lars Marcussen. 'Deleuze introduces an agent called 'the nomad', who runs counter to 'the State' in the sense that the nomad is aggressively creative.' (2004): n. pag. www.architectureandspace.com. 1 Sept. 2011.
[109] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Rhizome,' trans. Paul Foss and Paul Patton *Ideology and Consciousness. Power and Desire Diagrams of the Social* 8 (1981): 49-71.
[110] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.

seduced by such forces. 'Since [he] shelved his original sense of self-respect and has assumed another, attuned to his new, permanent role as a first-rate, expert beggar.'[111] The allure and force of 'aid' was too strong to resist.

In the final tale, 'Hau'ofa presents an account of a Tikong amateur folklorist, Ole Pasifikiwei, who needs a typewriter to record his findings in an orderly fashion.'[112] 'The Glorious Pacific Way' gives illustration of the impossibility of any pure movement and the pervasive undermining effects of assimilation. The most pointed example is the use of a very Western icon: the typewriter. In addition, writing down facts was not part of the culture before first contact. Instead, it became a model of preferred handling of information. Such a shift, though, is reasonable in a changed culture. Sadly, such alterations pushed Tikong culture in a negative direction. 'The folklorist leaves his carefully collected papers with a relative, who unknowingly sells them as toilet paper, thereby destroying a rare written archive of Tikong oral culture.'[113] The influence of the colonizers' lifestyle is a theme throughout the novel. The disappointment is in Indigenous peoples, either traditionalists or those more invested in Western standards, not utilizing practical methods to their benefit. Not being in control of their constructs, they are unable to counter Western assumptions about themselves.

Tales, though not as tragic as Mudrooroo's works, does end on a worrisome note. As if the narrator concedes there will be no change, no relief for the ordinary citizen. This is a weakness of using only one technique to oppose a power structure, as said by Rigby. 'The fragmentations of this comedy can only reproduce the European representations of the Pacific as small and powerless, even as they expose the workings of those representations.'[114] Humour does not erase

[111] Hau'ofa, *Tales* 93.
[112] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[113] Flanagan, 'Refractions,' 89-95.
[114] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.

laws or regulations deemed unfair. In the larger debate, it also does not liberate one culture, if it is almost completely dominated by another. Such acknowledgments are important, but even more very sobering. Admitting them also reminds one of other claims, reminiscent of the endings of Mudrooroo's novels (historical fiction as well) with strong Aboriginal characters who attempt rebellion but ultimately fail. Yet there is also another interpretation of Hau'ofa's strategy. One that fits well with his seemingly weak (but ultimately sublime) strategy.

Hau'ofa never gave up his attempts at liberating his people. He only realised that what had been used before was not successful. The opposition had more effective weapons. Therefore, he did what any tactician would do: he changed his approach. 'Hau'ofa seems to feel now that the primary need of the postcolonial writer is to help rebuild rather than deconstruct society.'[115]

The past can be contested and revised but only in the context of the present. In such a manner it is still based on the master's narrative. Instead, rebuilding what is, as Heidegger says 'ready-to-hand,'[116] is more practical. Such utilitarian ideas are not as dazzling, but have the strength of being better implemented and Hau'ofa does stress the importance of being practical. That if one were to not tip to an extreme point of view, there would be a path to a harmonious future. His next novel follows that proposition as well.

[115] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[116] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1926; New York: SCM Press, 1962) 98. One this point, what is important is not the tactic, or for Heidegger, the equipment, but what is done with it. It is through the using, or manipulating a tool that its use will become known. For Hau'ofa, that contested past is ready-at-hand (his equipment) to be manipulated into a better future for not only Tonga but Oceania as well.

KISSES IN THE NEDERENDS

If there is bitterness by the end of *Tales*, *Kisses in the Nederends* has an opposite feeling. This, though the beginning does not give the reader a hint of its graphic tone. In an interview with Subramani, Hau'ofa said of *Kisses*, 'I first experienced the pain in Tonga in 1981. My doctor opened its source and drained it [a fistula].'[117] The experience led to *Nederends*, a creative nonfictional novel about pain, modernity, and colonial island life.

One goal of *Nederends* was to achieve a certain coarseness. 'I intended *Kisses* to come out very differently [than *Tales*]; I wanted it raw, not cooked.'[118] The depictions of pain and embarrassment are direct, yet the themes are connected to those of *Tales*, albeit more sharply. 'The central feature of the arse-about-face principle of grotesque realism is debasement, the sinking of the exalted or abstract to the loser material levels of the body.'[119] What is merely absurd in *Tales* is bizarrely funny in *Kisses*, via its depictions. For this reason, many critics have connected Hau'ofa's strategy of low body humor to François Rabelais, the 1500s French writer, who, in writing on similar themes and topics, forced 'the peculiar logic of 'the inside out' (*à l' envers*) of the turnabout of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear.'[120] These attributes point to a larger discussion than one with narrow categories such as 'ethnic' or 'minority' writer.

Hau'ofa's ideas also share similarities with Continental writer Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's, the Russian classist turned prominent twentieth century interpreter. 'This also involves a kind of transubstantiation, whereby grotesque realism turns its subjects into flesh through

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[117] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 137.
[118] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 143.
[119] Rod Edmond, ''Kiss my arse!' Epeli Hau'ofa and the Politics of Laughter,' *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (1990): 142-155.
[120] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: M. I. T. Press, 1968) 11.

laughter, thus imitating the traditional role of the clown.'[121] As has been mentioned before, both Hau'ofa and Tongan culture expect humour.

It is very true that *Nederends* is even more ribald than *Tikongs.* The editor's note for the 1987 edition warns the text 'is not for the fainthearted'[122]—nor for the easily offended by bodily function humor. Within the first two paragraphs there is 'a stinking cacophony of snoring and farting which has the reader, like the hero's wife, running for cover.'[123] Yet there is another aspect here, seen in the two types (physical and spiritual) of treatment for the boil suffered. One is the more traditional, using local methods, potentially applauded by those with nativist/Pacific Way sentiments. This affords some help, but Oilei Bomboki's fistula grows worse. Therefore he has more treatment, this time in Pacific Metro (Western) centres. This other extreme course does not offer the relief sought either. Thus, he is 'whisked straight to the Dum Mihaka Hospital'[124] in New Zealand. At a different hospital—with a suspicious Maori name—he receives a treatment plan taking a white woman's anus. However, another extremism (this time sexism) prevails. There is opposition from the lead surgeon (Dr. Fraser) because it is a 'feminist arsehole.'[125] Oilei's body also rejects the organ which was proposed in a Western manner. Out of necessity, a different clinic is suggested (Babu's Whakapohane Clinic). One that uses spirituality in its healing program, and there, surrounded with family and various well wishers, his mends. This amalgamation works for it unifies cultures and gender, producing an equality of race, culture and gender, something not readily seen in Greek or in later Western culture—or in Mudrooroo's work.

The text itself, then, is a quest for relief; physical and spiritual. The pain is seen through the

[121] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[122] Hau'ofa, editor's note, *Kisses in the Nederends* (1987; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995) ix.
[123] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[124] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 142.
[125] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 146.

tensions wrought in the developing and under-developed world by the developed. The 'developed' countries feast on what is located in the developing or under-developed world. This diagnosis came about from a healer named Seru, who saw the body as being its own world, inhabited by creatures called the Tuktuks. These creatures reside in two basic camps: Lower and Upper. Such a point of view compliments the next healer, Babu, with his philosophy of the world and body. 'Seru's dream prepares for the introduction of Babu – sage, yogi and faker – whose holistic belief [is] that all parts of the body are of equal value.'[126] Additionally, this type of explanation is similar to other non-western culture's healing perspectives, like those of Traditional Chinese Medicine, that sees the body (life force or *qi*) as needing to be harmonised (i.e. a sore in the mouth is caused by too much fire in the body.) When it is not, problems arise.

The strife seen in Oilei's body occurs because the Uppertuks want the resources found in the region used by the Lowertuks. But, rather than mutual barter, the Uppertuks steal and force them into servitude. They also have the advantage of superior weapons, as with colonial Europe, which is why, after hearing this lesson, Oilei says, 'The rebellions sound exactly like what you here from the BBC news service every day.'[127]

The problem of extremes, as seen in *Tikongs*, is as important here. Therefore, these theoretical strong ideas, while respected, do not remove the fistula; instead it worsens. Further, Seru, after being assailed by Oilei's affliction spurns him. However, a philosophical/spiritual understanding has been found, preparing Oilei for Babu's viewpoint. Seeing Babu as a world operative and 'faker' is correct from only one perspective. Not having the aid of a powerful entity, he must be an opportunist. In this way, he is also the embodiment of the people of Tikong,

[126] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[127] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 124.

'who must lie and trick in order to survive.'[128]

So, while appearing to some readers as no more than a joker, there is a more serious undercurrent to his character. 'For Babu, the real obscenity of our time is the threat of nuclear annihilation.'[129] To buttress this he offers a playful solution. 'Against it we must greet, love and dance with each other in the middle of our zones of taboo'[130] Babu's treatment for Oilei and all others is to make peace with the anus, kissing it, thereby bonding the reprehensible with the afflicted and so displays the connection to Rabelais' inside out theory. However, to non-believers, this 'new anal obsession, and his desire to kiss the bums of his family and friends results in an enforced session with a psychoanalyst.'[131] The clashing of ideology is made into slapstick. Though Oilei has been 'taught' peace, he is incensed by the insinuations of Oedipal urges. 'It's a combination of anal fixation of an indeterminate form, and Oedipus complex'[132] Oilei responds to Dr. Zimmerman's prognosis with threats of violence, showing again the incompatibility of such divergent cultures. 'You dirty arsehole, if ever again I hear you utter the word 'mother', I will personally kick your fucking arse all the way back to Vienna.'[133] Obviously, this is another failure to communicate between Western and non-Western peoples. Granted, there is hope still, but only if orthodoxy is replaced with confluence.

Therefore, with the (co)operation between Western and traditional medicine Babu receives enough funds 'to establish and International school of Traditional Medicine. This acts as a front for his Third Millenium Movement which in turn is fed by CIA and Russian money.'[134] Or, perhaps, seen as a down the middle approach to healing, while acquiring alternative revenue

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[128] Rigby, 'Tall Tales,' 49-52.
[129] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[130] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 105.
[131] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[132] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 114.
[133] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 114.
[134] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.

streams?

> Babu, however, is prophet as well as fraud, healer as well as entrepreneur. Oilei's descent into the anal region is a quest for physical and ultimately spiritual cure, and in the end it is Babu and his friends who provide both.[135]

Thus eschewing that pragmatic third way—Babu achieves success (where Sally Morgan succeeds and Ole in *Tales* fails) by using his Whakapohane clinic to enhance 'Eastern' beliefs instead of abandoning them.

'Hau'ofa's work appropriates various cultural knowledge, both introduced and traditional, as remedial measures against maladies of modern societies'[136] which some see as postmodern, yet is not, as Bakhtin has written.

> In the prehistory of novelistic discourse one may observe many extremely heterogeneous factors at work. From our point of view, however, two of these proved to be of decisive importance: one of these is *laughter* (author's emphasis), the other *polyglossia* [mnogojazyč].[137]

Further, as with Tongans, 'the most ancient forms for representing language were organized by laughter—these were originally nothing more than the ridiculing of another's language and another's direct discourse'[138] Hau'ofa, by continuing a Tongan tradition is engaging in a practice also recognised in the West. 'Polyglossia and the *interanimation of languages* associated with it elevated these forms to a new artistic and ideological level, which made possible the genre of the novel.'[139] Therefore, Hau'ofa is contributing to a known tradition, ensuring a dialogue with newer audiences, for he is a master of the machinations of the novel. 'It usually strives for a

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[135] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155. Babu then, is a type of benign doppelganger to Dante's Virgil. He has the abilities to guide and teach those who are in need of guidance, which Oilei needs. Yet for Hau'ofa and Tongan society, only the very foolish take themselves (and their abilities) too seriously.
[136] Steven Edmund Winduo, 'Unwriting Oceania: The Repositioning of the Pacific Writer Scholars within a Folk Narrative Space,' *New Literary History* 31:3 (2000): 599-613.
[137] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1981; Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990) 50-51.
[138] Bakhtin 50-51.
[139] Bakhtin 50-51.

sense of reality, it doesn't pretend to be the literal truth.'[140] Such straddling is only successful if carried out delicately. 'When we read a novel we should be empathizing with the characters and the world they inhabit, but at the same time we should also be aware that we are reading a fiction that has its own higher truths to relate.'[141] These are expectations seen in any audience. 'Both of Hau'ofa's fictional texts draw upon Tongan storytelling practices communicated through humorous stories which satirize the target of criticism by means of comic allegory.'[142] More, the location is not with high art but more proletariate in nature.

> Arlene Griffen has also evaluated *Kisses in the Nederends* in terms of Bakhtin's theories, claiming that 'Hau'ofa's socio-comic-grotesque approach reinforces the validity and vitality of the culture of folk humour and the principle of laughter as an antidote to monologic discourses and practices.'[143]

This impetus is very important. The problem is with another group which has been intellectually and psychologically arrested in their development by a culture which was so powerful that it had never set out to communicate in an equitable way. Indeed,

> Hau'ofa sets out to metaphorically liberate the indigenous body from the limitations of various discourses and social taboos, and the comic resolution of the novel points towards possible solutions for worldwide problems of discrimination and social exclusion.[144]

As with Jonathan Swift, writing 'A Modest Proposal,' satirizing Ireland's destitute, circa 1714, one sees with Hau'ofa, who though [he]

> explores and satirizes many of these issues [corruption and foreign dependency] in his two prose fiction texts, he is nevertheless somewhat unusual among postcolonial writers in his strategy of examining these issues through an exuberantly comic lens.[145]

This same sentiment is articulated by Rod Edmond. 'Themes of tradition and change, social disintegration and individual displacement, social mobility and cultural exile have not,

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[140]Richard Freedman, *The Novel* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1975) 11.
[141] Freedman 11.
[142] Michelle Keown, *Postcolonial Pacific Writing Representations of the Body* (London: Routledge, 2005) 62.
[143] Keown 67.
[144] Keown 61.
[145] Keown 62.

understandably enough, produced much serious comic writing.'[146] Instead there has been a plethora of writings filled with sadness and anxiety. Yet 'Hau'ofa, successfully counterbalances the 'serious' or satirical elements of his writing with an overlay of earthy, ribald and slapstick humour.'[147]

Such is achieved with Oilei, a stable individual, not intimidated by power, who embraces whatever works.

> The comic resolution of the novel, like Babu's philosophy, therefore works towards possible solutions to global problems through reconciling extremes and collapsing distinctions of race and gender, thereby transcending binary systems of exclusion or discrimination.[148]

The resolution, then, while acknowledging different methods, does not privilege either. The Western clinic in the tropics blends remnants of Western and native culture for a reasonable solution.

This transformation does not erode non-Western culture but merges it. 'The novel's conclusion may also be interpreted in terms of Hau'ofa's own philosophies about addressing some of the socio-political problems within the Pacific region,'[149] such as the question of aid and remittances. The Western view is that of a non-educated labour force sending their wages back home to a un(der)developed homeland. As Hau'ofa wrote: 'Islanders are not parasites on their relatives abroad.'[150] But knowing many in his Western audience would be shocked by this statement, he goes on to explain what is truly going on. He gives a more nuanced description of the practice.

> Everything homeland relatives receive they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, and they maintain ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed

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[146] Edmond, 'Kiss my arse!' 142-155.
[147] Keown 61.
[148] Keown 65.
[149] Keown 65-66.
[150] Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 6.1 (1994): 148-61.

> hearths for travellers to return to at the end of the day, or to re-strengthen their bonds, their souls and their identities before they move on again. This is not dependence but interdependence, which is purportedly the essence of the global system.[151]

Therefore, what was missing in the Western point of view was the humanity and practicality of remittances. Yet the West, in its ignorance and power overlooks the idea that native people can do more than dance and chant, which gives a greater sense of urgency to Oilei's problem.

> Indeed, Hau'ofa himself argues that Oilei's ailment is a metaphor for the social ills of the contemporary Pacific, and that his acceptance of the Third Millennium philosophy implies that the solution to contemporary problems in the Pacific must be 'global' rather than local in nature.[152]

This means his 'arguments suggest that his novel may therefore be read on several allegorical levels; the central issue of bodily taboo is deployed as a metaphor for wider regional and finally [for the] global issues of conflict and discrimination.'[153] Further, it is this global perspective that was missing earlier, when he had written *Corned Beef and Tapioca: A Report on the Food Distribution Systems in Tonga* (1979), or *Our Crowded Islands* (1980), which he admits was a text not readily disseminated. 'No one wanted to know what I was saying,'[154] for the analysis was too narrow for a native population. Younger, he was too beholden to Western perceptions of what the troubles and solutions should be for native peoples. As his older, authoritative voice, explains

> our economy, society, culture, and indeed our very existence, are not fenced in by our national boundaries. We are inextricably part of larger entities: the Pacific region and more importantly, the world economy.[155]

Such a worldview is a welcome one for two reasons. The first it shows the writer's maturity as a thinker and statesman. Second, to those looking for inspiration, it shows a potential path.

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[151] Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands,' 148-61.
[152] Keown 65-66.
[153] Keown 66.
[154] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 164.
[155] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 164.

Such a lens proves his commitment to help the region. 'The solutions to all the major problems in our islands lie in regional and ultimately in wider international co-operation.'[156] The allegorical connection and resolution sought in the real world fits with the fictional world.

> Oilei's search for the ultimate solution to his problem reflects those thoughts quite closely. He tries local dottores, an acupuncturist, and medical officers, to no avail. Then he goes regional (to a New Zealand hospital, that is) too late. But he is at last healed by the world Third Millennium Movement. [157]

The clashing does end in a victory of sorts, bringing different peoples sexualities together in a manner embracing all, advocating what is still seen as an insult, to 'kiss my arse,' into a remedy.

Ceding common ground gives way to a new conception of what 'victory' could be. In sports, wars, the common assumption is one side scores more points or forces the other side to admit defeat. Here, since no one has lost anything (either fame or fortune), all are satisfied. Allowing those interested and concerned into Oilei's room and to bear witness—which is chronicled in various forms throughout the novel—has vanquished old preconceptions. This has occurred because of the decision to not dwell on what had happened before. Such a practice would be extremely difficult to make happen in reality, but it does pose a curious argument: what if West and East could simply not fetishize on what separates them (granted the list of grievances is long and sordid), and, instead, took what could be used for a better purpose. The possibilities are endless, if the will is insistent.

[156] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 164-65.
[157] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 165.

We Are the Ocean: Selected Works

In this text the reader is exposed to articles, lectures and speeches which give a much clearer, nuanced, theoretical understanding to Hau'ofa's political/theoretical evolution. Included here as well are his ideas and rationale behind his definition of 'Oceania.' It is also in this space that his more poignant comments are to be found, as in the commanding voice drawing its understanding from his travails.

His opus is enhanced in 'The Ocean in Us,' beginning with an admission that he had published a work that was 'more optimistic than the currently prevailing notions,'[158] reiterating the need for a different direction. 'This bleak view of our existence was so relentlessly pushed that I began to be concerned about its implications.'[159] This was coupled with his own internalised Western concept of Oceania as being insignificant, inept.

> Two years ago I began noticing the reactions of my students when I explained our situation of dependence. I was so bound to the notion of smallness that even if we improved our approaches to production, for example, the absolute size of our islands would still impose such severe limitations that we would be defeated in the end.[160]

Not a man to admit defeat, however, he challenged himself—

> What kind of teaching is it to stand in front of young people from your own region, people you claim as your own, and you tell them that our countries are hopeless? Is this not what neocolonialism is all about?[161]

This is the type of epiphany one must have if the goal is colonial liberation. 'Soon the realisation dawned on me. In propagating a view of hopelessness, I was actively participating in our own belittlement.'[162] The source for a more philosophical approach then came while travelling to a lecture in Hawai'i. 'Under the aegis of Pele, before my very eyes, the Big Island

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[158] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 60.
[159] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 29.
[160] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 29.
[161] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 29-30.
[162] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 30.

was growing, rising from the depths of a mighty sea. The world of Oceania is not small; it is huge and growing bigger every day.'[163] With this realization (and contemporary events) he re-categorises who has influenced the history of Oceania.

> Until recent years with the rise into prominence of historical anthropology and ethnographic history, there has been a near-total domination of the scholarly reconstructions of our pasts by the Canberra school of Pacific historians.[164]

The critique presented is also a personal one, for Hau'ofa was a product of the Canberra school, having studied there for his PhD. Here, a more authoritative Hau'ofa is more critical of the 'relationship' between Europe/Empires and native inhabitants, using a personal anecdote.

> Many years ago, while visiting a rural community in Papua New Guinea, I was invaded by a particular virulent kind of lice. Since then I have always associated the word 'contact' with nasty infections. As used by historians and other scholars the term is very apt; it describes accurately the first and early encounters between Oceanians and European sailors as carriers of dangerous diseases that wiped out large proportions of our populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[165]

Such a danger was the plight of Indigenous in many places in the world, notably in Oceania.

> Within one hundred years the indigenous population of Hawai'i, for example, was reduced by over ninety percent. There was real concern towards the end of the nineteenth century that we would vanish from the face of the earth because of such rampaging diseases.[166]

The coming of death is a central theme in Mudrooroo's *Ghost Dancing* series. This is especially true if one expounds on what is called 'rampaging diseases.' The fear of being obliterated was also alluded to in *My Place*. 'In this world, there's no justice, people like us'd all be dead and gone if it was up to this country.'[167] Second, third and fourth world people have felt their history (and themselves) would vanish. Perhaps none did it as smartly as the late comedian Richard Pryor, in a sketch about the film *Logan's Run*.

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[163] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 30.
[164] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 61-62.
[165] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 62.
[166] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 62.
[167] Sally Morgan, *My Place* (1987; Fremantle, Western Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1988) 130-31.

> I don't like movies when they don't have niggers in them. I went to see *Logan's Run*, right? They had a movie of the future called *Logan's Run*. There ain't no niggers in it! I said, 'Well, white folks ain't plannin' for us to be here much longer!'[168]

Others have also thought of this type of eradication but without the humour. Brian Attebery's 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' chronicles the different depictions of Aboriginal people through Australian science fiction projects. The first phase, from the 1800s to 1970s is chronicled as the 'Bad Old Days,' for there were various themes of genocide. One was to prune 'them' out. 'In Erle Cox's 1925 scientific romance *Out of the Silence*, a visiting superwoman offers, if her white hosts wish, to weed out all the coloured races.'[169] Though Attebery talks primarily within an Australian context, there is the larger argument that such ideas are not unique to the relationship between Australia and Aboriginal people.

Hau'ofa, always eager to use black humour points to how that fear gave way to another concern: what would happen if they reproduced in alarming numbers? 'Ironically, a major concern in the twilight years of the twentieth century was that there were too many of us around.'[170]

Hau'ofa understood the importance of more positive representations for Oceanians, warning whosoever controls these images, controls them too. 'It is a hindrance in that it marginalizes our peoples by relegating them to the roles of spectators. It does not see them as major players in the shaping of their histories.'[171] This means they are still second class peoples, far behind the 'real' history makers. 'The main actors are explorers, early traders, missionaries, planters, colonial officials, and so forth.'[172] He then goes on to say, 'it is not surprising, then, that many academics hold the view that the peoples and cultures of Oceania are inventions of

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[168] Richard Pryor, 'Black Hollywood,' *Bicentennial Nigger,* Warner Brothers, 1976.
[169] Brian Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' *Science Fiction Studies* 32.3 (2005): 385-404.
[170] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 62.
[171] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 63.
[172] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 63.

imperialism.'[173] Next arguing there needs to be a change.

> We Oceanians must find ways of reconstructing our pasts that are our own. Non-Oceanians may construct and interpret our pasts or our present, but those are their constructions and interpretations, not ours.[174]

Hence, the reason for autonomy is clear, however defined. Agency, meaning one's point of view, is central, not those that have been adopted. One example of this exorcism deals with Captain Cook.

> For this purpose we lay to rest once and for all the ghost of Captain Cook. This is not a suggestion to excise him entirely from our histories—far from it. As for us, we merely send Captain Cook to the wings to await our summons when it is necessary to call in the Plague, and we may recall him at the end to take a bow. Once we sideline Captain Cook, it will be easier to deal with other and lesser intruders.[175]

The separation Hau'ofa is making clearly stems from the need to undo what the West has wrought: Impose their interpretation on Oceania. Here, he recalibrates Oceanic sensibilities as another step that must be taken for independence of mind and spirit.

Thinkers like Hau'ofa operate on multiple platforms, but are myopically categorised, primarily, as a 'minority' or Oceanic writer. Disappointing, for his *Selected Works* not only deconstructs the mythology of Cook *et al*., and the problematic nature of the colonial mind, but also those followers of colonialism who have been oppressed by their leaders. The text reads as lecture and audacity, narrative, and an embodiment of the core ideal of Oceania, writing a more positive Oceania into consciousness.

> Relationships of power such as those between nations, classes, and other groupings are often characterized by the dominant going out of their way to erase or suppress memories, or histories, and implant what they wish in order to consolidate their control.[176]

A posture as forceful as this is normally seen as naked aggression, but that depends, surely, on

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[173] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 63.
[174] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 64.
[175] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 65.
[176] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 69.

the status/attitude of the 'participants'—hence developed nations call it progress. Though in more contemporary times, intellectuals have conceded that Others have voices. One example said of Tahitians: 'The glamorous view of that beautiful island and its beautiful people which prevailed in the drawing-rooms of Europe must have had a reverse side, the view seen by the Tahitians themselves.'[177] The problem, of course, is in forcing hegemony into listening to those whose 'imaginary' way of life entertained Europeans.

This does not mean that Hau'ofa follows the old tactic of blaming 'the White man.' Oppression is also a local phenomenon, as he has written concerning the Tongan royalty's rise at the expense of its aristocracy. Theirs was a societal acquiescence from below. 'We cherish and respect our connections to our aristocracies, mainly because we have no choice; and for the same reason 'we love and respect our oppression.''[178] Such a critique is also present when the West honestly critiques itself.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, one of the two seminal books by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, there is a suspicious look at the manner government's gain, then use power. The text critiques fascism, but not as an isolated, abhorrent phenomenon. Their argument is, instead, that even when one looks at the nuclear family[179] there is tension, not unlike those of the Mekeo.

The Western idea that the masses welcome control (it being a natural state) was also commented on by 17th century Dutch philosopher Baruch (later Benedict) de Spinoza. His work is also referenced by Deleuze and Guattari. These theories are similar to Hau'ofa's. Perhaps since all were cultural nomads. Hau'ofa had moved constantly, and Spinoza was excommunicated for

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[177] William Howells, *The Pacific Islander*s (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973) 15.
[178] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 70.
[179] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophernia*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Viking Press, 1977) 51. What is at odds in the Western confluence of envy, jealousy is not the rivalry between brothers model of the Mekeo, but the Western nuclear family. Deleuze and Guatttari argue the dynamic of 'daddy-mommy-me' produces feelings of guilt and repression. These emotions are then re-channeled by the State for its own purposes.

his views. In his *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza, writes of his bafflement to why the masses willfully submit, which seems to be out of fear:

> It may indeed be the highest secret of monarchical government and utterly essential to it, to keep men deceived, and to disguise the fear that sways them with the specious name of religion, so that they will fight for their servitude as if they were fighting for their own deliverance, and will not think it humiliating but supremely glorious to spill their blood and sacrifice their lives for the glorification of a single man.[180]

Anti-Oedipus also uses Austrian-American Jewish psychiatrist and psycho-analyst Wilhelm Reich to explain this phenomenon. He, as Deleuze and Guattari, was wary of any facile explanation of conformity. Reich argued (self) oppression could be seen throughout culture. In that way it is organic, and for those who are opportunistic, readily available. The problem is that the signs are so apparent many over look them. He gives the example of workers being hungry.

> What is to be explained is not why the starving individual steals or why the exploited individual strikes, but why the majority of starving individuals do *not* steal and the majority of exploited individuals do *not* strike.[181]

Though the societal diagnoses overlap, Hau'ofa was not fearful of governments or administrations, knowing he was on the inside. 'In view of this, we have to take careful note of our indoctrination by our contemporary elite groups and ruling classes—of which we, the senior staff of the university, are members,'[182] while attempting a renegotiation.

> Whatever their political situation may be, most educated people in the Pacific, like myself, are trying to redefine their cultural identities, or endeavouring to shed a kind of mentality bred under conditions of colonialism.[183]

It would seem that Hau'ofa, perhaps because he sees himself as part of that machine, was not as angry about it. He is not ambivalent either, but sees such machinations as endeavours in which

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[180] *Spinoza: Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. by Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) 4.
[181] Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Theodore P. Wolfe (New York: Orgone Institute Press, 1946) 20. Web. 7 July 2011.
[182] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 70.
[183] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 3.

humans engage. Hence he steps away from stark absolutes of right versus wrong in order to open possibilities for different avenues of approach to the problems that plague society.

The history of (especially modern) governments has proven that skepticism is prudent. Yet what is more curious is the amount of dark skepticism prominent Western thinkers employ when discussing the various types of governments. With Hau'ofa the same amount of leeriness is there, but he retains his hope in *native* governments, if only there were less outside meddling.

> Equally frustrating is how this has arrested intellectual development—his point being,
>
> after decades of anthropological field research in Melanesia we have come up only with pictures of people who fight, compete, trade, pay bride-price engage in rituals, invent cargo cults, copulate, and sorcerise each other.[184]

When such ideology becomes normal, or, as Neil Postman has said, the easiest to speak of, understanding and discourse are limited.[185] This being true, 'we should not, therefore, be surprised when we see equally distorted pictures, painted by angry nationalists, depicting them as being more moral and better human beings than us.'[186] In talking to his formal audience (Anthropology students and Pacific Islanders) he freely admits 'we have neglected to portray them as rounded human beings who love as well as hate, who laugh joyously as well as quarrel, who are peaceful as well as warlike.'[187] Though such analysis sounds bitter, the intent is not.

In 'The Ocean in Us' Hau'ofa creates a companion to the ideas in 'Our Sea of Islands' which also has 'community' as one of its themes. Here, he argues that 'a solid and effective regional identity can be forged and fostered.'[188] There is an important need here, for the past categorizations have not been helpful. 'It should now be evident why our region is characterised as the 'hole in the doughnut,' an empty space. We should take careful note of this because if we

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[184] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 6.
[185] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin, 1985) 6.
[186] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 6.
[187] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 7.
[188] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 41.

do not exist for others, then we could in fact be dispensable.'[189] Which is why, 'the conventional western picture of the Pacific is one of an area of a multitude of indigenous societies where both geography and culture appear as 'islands'–small, bounded, and isolated.'[190] Thus, there is a very important need to connect outwards and so to be seen as valued. The question is of the future, a topic the disenfranchised wonder/worry a great deal. 'We cannot afford to ignore our exclusion because what is involved here is our very survival.'[191] This is not a call to nationalism, however, using examples such as nuclear waste, burning of chemical weapons, and drift netting to point to the sometimes narrowness of Oceanic thinking.

> But as these issues come to the fore only occasionally, and as success in protesting has dissipated the immediate sense of threat, we have generally reverted to our national state of disunity and the pursuit of national self-indulgence.[192]

He also argues that unity could be used as part of a coherent strategy.

> The issue of what or who is a Pacific Islander would not arise if we considered Oceania as comprising people—as human beings with a common heritage and commitment—rather than as members of diverse nationalities and races.[193]

This definition might seem wide, but has a large component of the pragmatic.

> As far as I am concerned, anyone who has lived in our region and is committed to Oceania is an Oceanian. This view opens up the possibility of expanding Oceania progressively to cover larger areas and more peoples than is possible under the term Pacific Islands Region.[194]

He goes on to say, 'what I have tried to say so far is that in order to give substance to a common regional identity and animate it, we must tie history and culture to empirical reality and practical action.'[195] The merging of thought, politics, and all social theory constitutes reasons

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[189] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 46.
[190] Geoffrey M. White and Ty Kawika Tengan, 'Disappearing Worlds: Anthropology and Cultural Studies in Hawai'i and the Pacific,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 13:2 (2001): 381-416.
[191] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 47.
[192] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 49.
[193] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 50.
[194] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 51.
[195] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 55.

Hau'ofa's voice is very strong. Further, he weds his points to those of earlier vintage, as he quotes from the elder Albert Wendt, author of, 'I belong to Oceania.'[196] Concerning possibilities and perspectives: 'Our countries, nations, planets are what we imagine them to be.'[197] Here we have another visionary with wide influence.

> The entire Wendtian oeuvre constitutes an analysis and evaluation of the Samoan way of life from the vantage of a Samoan, an insider. Albert Wendt is keen to replace the 'superficial and distorted and over-romantic and racist' literature written by outsiders with one that derives from a self-assessment by Samoans themselves.[198]

By referencing such luminaries, he had a wider discussion than the one who wrote *Our Crowded Islands.*

> As a region we are floundering because we have forgotten, or spurned, the study and contemplation of our pasts, even our recent histories, as irrelevant for the understanding and conduct of our contemporary affairs.[199]

Hau'ofa never stopped this dialogue, chiding and goading the region into a different future understanding of both their relevance and their common past.

> It is clear that we need to review our position, to develop radically different perspectives of ourselves. *Our Sea of Islands*, for all its shortcomings, aims to make us realise that we are not necessarily small or helpless.[200]

The message is not solely for Oceania. Different Others have supported colonisers/first world countries (their need for slaves, minerals, arable lands), and this process still continues. Recent proof is the role of the Chinese, exploited in the past, now choosing, for its own benefit, to prop up the USA and Western Europe.

> Chinese Vice Prime Minister Li Keqiang backed Europe in its sovereign debt battle Wednesday, starting a three-nation tour by promising to buy more Spanish

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[196] Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania,' *Mana Review (*1976): 641-652.
[197] Wendt, 'Towards,' 641-652.
[198] Valerie O'Rourke, 'A Tribute to the fa'a Samoa: Albert Wendt's *Birth and Death of the Miracle Man*,' *World Literature Today* 66.1 (1992): 51-55.
[199] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 58.
[200] Epeli Hau'ofa, 'A Beginning,' *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, eds. Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu, and Epeli Hau'ofa (University of South Pacific: USP, 1993) 128.

> government bonds.[201]

Understanding the seriousness of the situation, the need for assistance, during this financial crisis, the Vice-Premier said,

> China's support of the E.U.'s financial stabilization measures and its help to certain countries in coping with the sovereign debt crisis are all conducive to promoting full economic recovery and steady growth.[202]

The Western need for a disposable Other can also be seen in context of militarization, as nuclear testing in Oceania has proved. Unfortunately as well, the effects have been muted for those living outside the area. So much that the very real devastation has been trivialised—and made popular and profitable. 'The sensational bathing suit was named for Bikini Atoll.'[203] Hence, the response, by the West, was to buy clothing.

Between the symbolic 'fun' of the article of clothing and the violence propagated is incredible. 'This was the site in the Marshall Islands for testing of twenty-five nuclear bombs between 1946 and 1958.'[204] The people there were 'convinced' to leave their ancestral home for the greater good. 'The US military secured the cooperation of the Bikinians in vacating their island by appealing to their sense of Christian duty.'[205] The land was then damaged and therefore the people. 'Since 1946 the Bikini Islanders have experienced the many troubles attendant on relocation—or *dis*location.'[206] The people were given some money, yet not enough, and when they were able to return to the radioactive land, cancers and birth defects abounded. There have been lawsuits, concerning resettlements, and more might still come, by

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[201] David Williams, 'China Vows to Help Europe Overcome Sovereign Debt Crises: Chinese Vice Premier Starts Three-Nation Tour, Vows to Buy More Spanish Bonds.' *The Daily Star* (2011): n. pag. 6 Jan. 2011. Web.
[202] Williams, 'China Vows,' n.pag.
[203] Teresia K. Teaiwa, 'bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 6.1 (1994): 87-109.
[204] Teaiwa, 'bikinis,' 87-109.
[205] This cite from the first note in Teaiwa's, 'bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans.' There is an incredible amount of irony here, that the US government (nominally a proud Christian nation), forcibly removing indigenous peoples, whilst using Christian themes, for there is serious doubt such a plea would work in removing 'Americans' from the 'US,' even if there were a referendum crafted in the UN.
[206] Teaiwa, 'bikinis,' 87-109.

those who ‘have been troubled by environmental, social, economic, political, physical health and emotional considerations,’[207] but a positive outcome does not seem likely.

Hau’ofa worked with this as the backdrop and current context. For his knowledge there is a further irony about this nomad. He is acknowledged as an outsider, but his passion for Indigenous representation has given him insider information. However, without the proper power, laughter became the preferred weapon. The problem (then) is as with his humour: Oceanic voices do not have the ability to force the West or international powers to change their perspectives. Instead, the peoples seem to be the ones forced to react even though they understand what is happening to their bodies and environment.

The devastation has been noted for all reasonable people to see. However, ignorance was not what clouded Western perceptions. Such beliefs are naïve at best—dangerous if taken seriously, for they give an alibi to violent, rapacious behavior. As with Sharky, the need was for resources and profit. But after correctly labeling the motives, the critique should end. Re-litigating those charges would do little to alleviate the sufferings, hence Hau’ofa’s tactic of critical humour. The action is two-pronged: spur Indigenous thought and show that their adversaries were (and are) not infallible.

[207] Teaiwa, ‘bikinis,’ 87-109.

Conclusion of the Hau'ofa Section

In the 1800s, Mathew Arnold, commenting on culture, said of it—'being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world.'[208] 'Our' societies, with the Web, smartphones, film, still see the written word as its unifying symbol. More importantly, the location for its dissemination is the academy—and letters. Of this, Hau'ofa embodies the best aspects. The work is biting, but his path included humour, which made the projects that much stronger, stranger, and canonical. [209]

Hau'ofa's occupations and formal schooling look more similar to Morgan's resume than Mudrooroo's. In this way he seems very mainstream, attending the University of New England, McGill University in Montreal and earning a PhD in social anthropology from the Australian National University. Though like Mudrooroo, he had the (intellectual) ability to move in and out of imagined and physical spaces at will.

Yet he brought disparate groups together. This from Teresia Teaiwa speaking at his funeral.

> From vice-chancellor and professoriate, to cleaners, groundskeepers, security guards, and dining hall staff, diplomatic corps members and representatives of international and state bureaucracies, to artists of all varieties (the unemployed, itinerant, commercial, classical, avant garde, and populist): Epeli's funeral was the occasion for a literal (if temporary) burying of class conflict.[210]

He did this by never being content or confined to one space—that of an academically trained expert or one who only wants a return to the old ways. Instead he felt forced to improve society rather than being consumed by it. He was a contemporary and modern man without living in fear

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[208] Matthew Arnold, preface, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism and Friendship's Garland*, by Arnold (1869; New York: Macmillan, 1901) xi.
[209] Bloom 4.
[210] Teaiwa, 'Epeli's Quest: Essays in Honor of Epeli Hau'ofa,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 22:1 (2010): 105-08.

of losing his Tongan roots. This while such a fear—of crossing over—has occupied others. The critics of Sally Morgan best exemplify that. Yet that is but a small number in the face of mass approval.

Marshall Sahlins quotes Margaret Jolly on this same point, arguing that, in modern discourse, such actions are normally looked upon as the native losing him or herself. He rebuts this worry.

> It is as if they had no historical relations with other societies, were never forced to adapt their existence, the one to the other. As if they had no experience constructing their own mode of existence out of their dependency on peoples over which they had no control.[211]

Understanding the unreasonableness of the reverse, the narrative of 'virginal lands' and pure natives, makes the criticisms lodged against Sally Morgan look silly. Identity is a shifting baseline.[212] While there is no definitive starting point, even in more sympathetic circles there is concern for Hau'ofa's outlook. Rod Edmond has questioned Hau'ofa's re-definition.

> We cannot suddenly disengage from earlier classifications and mappings, and perhaps it is better to understand and criticize the past in its own terms than attempt to cleanse it through verbal hygiene,[213]

while still agreeing very largely with the connections Hau'ofa has made.

> Pacific peoples were not marooned. They were travellers well used to meeting and receiving strangers. The most important external influences on Fiji in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for instance, came from intensified contact with Tonga.[214]

This includes embracing the difficulty in Hau'ofa's project. 'Hau'ofa continues to use the term [Pacific] while acknowledging its undesirability and suggesting its replacement by the inclusive name of Oceania. This is a measure of the problem.'[215] Alongside this issue is/was a

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[211] Sahlins, 'Enlightenment,' i-xxiii.
[212] Randy Olson, 'Shifting Baselines: Slow-Motion Disaster Below the Waves,' *Los Angeles Times* 17 Nov. 2002, Part M. The article discusses changes which are taken as true without researching its historical context.
[213] Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific* 15.
[214] Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific* 13.
[215] Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific* 15.

general disregard for fair representation. More, this was not by mistake.

> What is perhaps surprising is the pertinacity of doubts as to what Pacific history is or ought to be, and doubts also as to the proper way to pursue its study. The prevailing definition has been unsatisfactorily narrow, appearing in particular to eliminate from consideration the interactions of Pacific Islanders amoung themselves.[216]

Such schisms make reconciliation difficult. However, caution must be given to not become an extremist in any one direction—the Pacific Way, chanting to keep America for Americans (or France, Germany, *etc*.), or any nativist path.

Though some have voiced caution over Hau'ofa's type of grand idea. Greg Fry, in writing 'Whose Oceania?' asks the question of who is speaking for whom? [217] There is reasonableness in being concerned on this point, for too many times the educated class has spoken for the downtrodden—and not with them.

Along with not over-tipping in the direction of hyper-militancy is the concern of not breaking far enough away from one's colonial masters. One such example from Finau O. Kolo, writing about the problematic existence of indigenous history, 'perhaps I am too immersed in Western thought.'[218] A candid admittance, which is a good starting point, but to what end? His article, 'Historiography: The Myth of Indigenous Authenticity' lists being skeptical of a pure form of Indigenous history, and assumes Western history is solid in comparison. However, in the problematic nature of finding and locating accurate methodology, there is no one fine line. His reticence over Indigenous history begins with contact between Tonga and Europe: 'the existing

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[216]David Routledge, 'Pacific History as Seen from the Pacific Islands,' *Pacific Studies* 8.2 (1985): 81-99.
[217] Greg Fry, 'Whose Oceania?: Contending Visions of Community in Pacific Region-Building,' *Working Paper 2004/3*. (Canberra: Department of International Relations, Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 2004): 1-34. Fry seeks to answer, 'who is Oceania for, and who has the right to speak for it?' He concludes that the best option is that proposed by the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG). 'Past experience would suggest that the Eminent Persons' Group vision of future Pacific community has the most potential to gain the support of the Pacific states and other segments of Pacific society. It reinforces the equal place at the table where decisions are made for all states regardless of size, a principle which disciplines the larger states as well as seeking to assure the smaller states, at the same time as promoting a more inclusive community.'
[218] Finau O. Kolo, 'Historiography: The Myth of Indigenous Authenticity,' *Tongan Culture and History: Papers from the 1st Tongan History Conference held in Canberra* (1987): 1-11.

Tongan intellectual tradition is not purely Tongan nor totally European, but an adaptation of foreign values to Tongan substructures.'[219] This without at least postulating that Tonga functioned at an earlier time. Regardless, Kolo's acknowledging the two distinct cultures blending *is* compatible with Hau'ofa's arguing for a third way. However, Kolo takes for granted Western history has been uncontested instead of mixed. Such viewpoints are much to narrow. For these reasons, Kolo and those with concerns over epistemological propriety, should not overtly influence contemporary dialogue as it has in the past. In addition, Hau'ofa should not be seen as an outlier.

In reading Hau'ofa's work one 'confronts greatness,'[220] but he is not alone (regionally) in this endeavor. Two other Great Men have lent their expertise on such matters as tribalist movements and the influence of Australia and New Zealand on Oceania: Albert Wendt and Sir Thomas.

Wendt wrote of such things and, when interviewed, argued similar points to those Hau'ofa voiced.

> In Auckland, many are sold on a postmodernist approach to literature now. They seem to dismiss the vision of the social realist's novel, which is the vision of a lot of novels of the Third World. Some of these critics now dismiss our literature as being old-fashioned because they are still in the realist tradition. They fail to realize that we have a different purpose for our literature—a desire to explain to ourselves what has happened to us in the colonial process and to argue for political change. We still see the novel as a weapon of change.[221]

This sentiment is seen in Hau'ofa when he spoke of his generation coming to terms with their agency.[222] It is true the two have different strengths—as commented on by the critics who discuss them. Subramani said: 'The Samoan writer Albert Wendt has humour too, but it is of a

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[219] Kolo, 'Historiography: The Myth of Indigenous Authenticity,' 1-11.
[220] Bloom 524.
[221] Albert Wendt and Vilsoni Hereniko, 'An Interview with Albert Wendt: Following in her Footsteps,' *Manoa* 5.1 (1993): 51-59.
[222] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 3.

cold, melancholic variety directed at a particular reality, whereas your [Hau'ofa] work reveals an exuberant comic spirit that is directed against all reality.'[223] Yet what is similar is their push for a greater understanding of Oceania—and a new place that at once defines an identity without having to rely on an old dichotomy. Michelle Keown wrote:

> From the beginning, Wendt has avoided constructing polarized oppositions between colonizer-as-aggressor and colonized-as-victim, offering instead a nuanced analysis of colonialism and its after-effects. For example, he has problematized arguments made by ethnic fundamentalists regarding the putative cultural 'purity' of pre-contact Oceanic cultures, pointing out that certain problems were evident in Samoa prior to the arrival of Europeans.[224]

Another similarity is the dearth of understanding of his influence in the US. Wendt is

> little known in North America but highly influential in his home territory of the South Pacific. His limited recognition alone suggests that the South Pacific is still nonexistent in the North American imagination, that Wendt's work is seen by North Americans as being 'unrepresentative' of—that is, not properly native to—that region, and that his work presents great difficulties to readers who see themselves as outsiders.[225]

The third is in pushing back against the 'Pacific Way' movement. 'These sentiments were dismissed by Wendt and by Hau'ofa, identifying the 'Pacific Way' movement as a 'shallow ideology that was swept away by the rising tide of regional disunity of the 1980s'.'[226] As Hau'ofa has espoused a third way, Wendt also sees a blending of cultures as a more reasonable possibility for Oceania.

> Colonialism, by shattering the world of the traditional artist, also broke open the way for a new type of artist who is not bound by traditional styles and attitudes and conventions, who explores his own individuality, experiments freely and expresses his own values and ideas, his own mana unfettered by accepted convention. [227]

Though included in this idea is that, since culture and/or tradition is not fixed, what passes for

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[223] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 152.
[224] Keown 17.
[225] Robert Chi, 'Toward: a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions,' *Cultural Critique* 37 (1997): 61-105.
[226] Keown 4.
[227] Keown 17.

them should not been seen as stagnate either. Blending Judith Butler and French philosopher François-Marie Arouet (known as Voltaire), 'culture/tradition is a performance agreed upon.' Adding to that, Paul Sharrad writing, 'history is written memory, the objectification of memory.'[228]

Societal connective terms such as history, tradition, culture have performative aspects that, given time and repetition, are seen as normative. When those are used to enhance the quality of life, they should be celebrated. However, there is another side to these seemingly positive attributes. What is not commented on enough is the pervasive, sleep inducing power such ideas also might have in making whatever practice—especially those with little intellectual merit, seem normal and natural (a few examples of these are justifications for racism, sexism, and gender discrimination). All must be leery of any type of identity 'solution' that sounds too easy. Michel Haar, explaining this in a larger scope, as Heidegger, talks of assumptions of word and ideas.

> All psychological categories (the ego, the individual, the person) derive from the illusion of substantial identity. But this illusion goes back basically to a superstition that deceives not only common sense but also philosophers.[229]

Then the process becomes fetishized in a manner that forces all to conform or be ostracised. This is why inside voices are so important in reframing hegemonic discourse. Sharrad, in writing 'Albert Wendt and the Problem of History,'[230] points to this, in commenting on Wendt's insistence and influence.

> This reinsertion of a Pacific voice into the literary world is founded on the historical moment of Western intrusion into Oceania (as Wendt terms it, 'the reefs breaking open' under the impact of palagi ships and their freight of guns, Bibles and cash commodities).[231]

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[228] Sharrad, 'Albert Wendt and the Problem of History,' 109-116.
[229] Michel Haar, 'Nietzsche and Metaphysical Language,' *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David Allison (New York: Delta, 1977) 17-18.
[230] Sharrad, 'Albert Wendt and the Problem of History,' 109-116.
[231] Sharrad, 'Albert Wendt and the Problem of History,' 109-116.

Then there is the presence of Sir Thomas. He who embodies the idea of one's people having great potential. 'I did not share the opinion of some that we were dealing with a simple people.' [232]

Besides believing in one's people, another link between Hau'ofa and Sir Thomas is royal guidance. In Hau'ofa upbringing, he was slated by Queen Sālote Mafile'o Pilolevu Tupou III to become a vehicle for change. She is a connection to Davis' family as well.

> She [Reureu] had been a good friend of the present King of Tonga as my mother had been a friend of his mother, Queen Salote, before him. The King, his younger brother and I, through these earlier family associations and our many personal contacts since 1950, also became good friends.[233]

Further, there was a drive in Sir Thomas, a characteristic of great people. In a book review written by Michael P. J. Reilly— 'Tom Davis is the Island boy who made good: the first Cook Islander to graduate in medicine, the first native born Medical Officer in the Cook Islands' colonial administration.'[234] However, he was not the average local citizen, considering his family history and royal connections. Another shared trait with Hau'ofa was his choice of not following an easy life according to his status. Sir Thomas, when he decided to run for office saw weaknesses in policies that did not help Cook Islanders. He was also surprised at the amount of ignorance surrounding his people's idea of other government's assistance. 'Cook Islanders tended to follow what they mistakenly thought were New Zealand ways.'[235]

The problematic discord dealt with Prime Minister Sir Albert Henry being heavily influenced by New Zealand's Communist Party, which 'lowered the productive capacity and

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[232] Sir Thomas R. A. H. Davis, Pa Tuterangi Ariki, *Island Boy: An Autobiography* (Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1992) 236.
[233] Sir Thomas, op cit 5.
[234] Michael P. J. Reilly, '*Island Boy: An Autobiography* by Tom Davis; *Vaka: Saga of a Polynesian Canoe*,' *The Journal of Pacific History* 29. 1 (1994): 121-122.
[235] Sir Thomas 234.

personal integrity of the individual.'[236] Yet he did not exploit this fissure. Being a Great Man, as Hau'ofa, and not a rabble rouser set on going for nativist methodology, he realised the trouble then set about looking for a solution. He even writes that his problems 'were doubled because we (those agreeing with him) were closely associated with New Zealand.'[237] The positives of having the extra perspectives also hindered him. As Hau'ofa commented of his outsider status after returning, 'No one wanted to know what I was saying,'[238] Sir Thomas had a similar problem; for him it was being able to discuss important topics in a nuanced manner that could be conveyed convincingly to the masses.

> From the beginning, I was having difficulties of my own. I had problems with the language after being always for so long. I was all right in normal conversation, but not in the specialized fine tuning of oratory and public debate. The fact of being away for so long was a problem in itself. I was out of touch, and many who knew me well were no longer with the living or had migrated. I had great difficulty in making economic and social concepts understood. These were not necessarily common place elsewhere, but they were central to my own philosophy. Often the difficulty was not as much a matter of language as of concepts which were new and strange to this part of the world. In either language, points of reference that I could appeal to were missing.[239]

Such a dilemma did not stifle him, though. Sir Thomas worked to bring those barriers down, as Hau'ofa. This despite not harboring any illusions of the need to wrest power from entrenched, colonial thinkers. This is why one must be aware of all distractions.

There is an Oceania to deconstruct—creatively. Steven Edmond Winduo wrote: 'By unwriting Oceania we are involved in reimagining the imagined oceania.'[240] Doing so opens a space for many more to be noticed. This is reasonable, for Margaret Jolly explains that not every individual has (or had) a 'canoe, dugout or was/is a sea-farer.'[241] And even if that were true,

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[236] Sir Thomas 234.
[237] Sir Thomas 234.
[238] Hau'ofa, *Kisses* 164.
[239] Sir Thomas 235.
[240] Winduo, 'Unwriting Oceania,' 599-613.
[241] Margaret Jolly, 'On the Edge?: Deserts, Oceans, Islands,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 13.2 (2001): 417-466. *Project MUSE*. Web. 14 Apr. 2011. <http://muse.jhu.edu/>.

years ago, now, there is no going back. This for the journey would still be predicated on a contemporary understanding of what happened before. Hence still Eurocentric. This is the problem with neo-traditionalism. A term the African scholar, Anthony Appiah, coined to explain a phenomenon concerning 'real and authentic' critics and the legitimacy of their evaluation process.[242]

The relevance is pressing. Even if one wanted a movement of returning to a motherland (or fatherland), there is the problem of what to do with those who do not seem inclined, as

> many Tongans convert to the Mormon faith, which not only provides secondary education (at a premium in Tonga) to its members in Tonga but also maintains a college in Hawaii, to which its Tongan members have access, and assists Tongan members in emigrating to Salt Lake City. The cost of tuition, as anthropologist Paul van der Grijp puts it, is one's soul.[243]

Many times, this is the worry of those who are known as staunch traditionalists—but this does not mean such factions are not wanted. They are relevant and provide an important service, that is ensuring the culture (or society) remember the traits they believe best illustrate their being. But that is not the case here. A 'different' example of Tongan agency is being over-looked in this lament. They are deciding to go to Salt Lake City, Utah. Further, when one asserts agency, why is that viewed as soul-selling instead of pragmatism or wanting adventure? It would seem the time has finally come to assert pasts and futures are very much in the (several and different) mouths of individual thinkers—narrators from those societies. As the title of one of Anthony Appiah's texts ascribes*, In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*.[244]

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[242] Anthony Appiah, 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?' *Critical Inquiry* 17:2 (1991): 336-57. The article calls into question 'authenticity' claims of/for artists and/or critics. Sadly, the interpretation, more often employed than not, is a Eurocentric one.

[243] The text Flanagan refers to here is *Islanders of the South: Production, Kinship and Ideology in the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga* (Leiden, Netherlands: KITLV, 1993) 155.

[244] The title for Appiah's work (concerning inclusion) is from John 14:2 Bible (NIV): 'In my Father's house are many rooms: if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.' Appiah argues against mono-theorizing Africa—and/or any culture. Additionally, having multiple and over-lapping connections, even if they are not complete, are worthy of respect and should be welcomed rather than embrace dogma. Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992).

This being true (but seldomly practised on a larger scale), the manner in which Hau'ofa ascended is quite unique for it was not merely traditional—leaning on not on his rhetorical skill, academic or literary prowess, but the ability to do it with comic wit is very special. He made the decision to not hide behind cultural norms or perceived sensibilities.

It has been written that others have used humour to great success, but Hau'ofa did it not only in his novels, but also in his academic writings. In *We Are the Ocean*, 'The Writer as an Outsider' he said, 'I had the right amount of ill repute to add spice to an otherwise humdrum existence. What else could a man want in life?'[245] His deprecating wit is disarming and then insightful. While talking about himself he is able to create a feeling of intimacy though the reader is truly in the presence of a visionary thinker. This while being very honest about his frailties and eccentricities makes him that much more of a better candidate for canonical status.

At the beginning of the third millennium, Hau'ofa has proved as much. His writings and lectures are testament to that. Such a contribution to humanity can only be seen as having stature and unquestioned canonical merit.

[245] Hau'ofa, *Ocean* 98.

General Perspective and an Epilogue

The argument made throughout has been that artificial categories have mistakenly slotted Mudrooroo, Sally Morgan and Epeli Hau'ofa into stereotypical boxes.[1] Such action has hampered rather than fostered a deeper appreciation of their thoughts and (fictional) constructs. It is typical to think of them solely as representations of minority groups, but that is a disservice to the writers, their work and academic discourse.

Canonical writers (or their texts) do not shy away from complexity. 'The West's greatest writers are subversive of all values, both ours and their own.'[2] These writers' unwillingness to conform creates space for unique and indelible work. 'All strong literary originality becomes canonical.'[3] In addition, respected. It should, but does not. There is blindness in the selection process, as best understood from another literary mind. Saul Bellow once quipped, 'Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans? I'd be glad to read them.'[4] The point Bellow is making is the Other does not seem to have the equivalent to the great Western writers. Mirror (or mimic) copies who can then be viewed as fair contestants. He does not consider that what occurs in different locations can produce at least the same in quality to what occurs in the West. Such oversight even renders Harold Bloom in a questionable position, for he also doubted anyone not male, dead, and white as having potential, but not as severely as Bellow.

The three writers here have long obliterated boundaries but are mainly seen from such prisms/prisons as gender, region or race. Disappointing, for they are more than accomplished and

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[1] Labeling these writers by the most obvious of details like gender and/or ethnicity needlessly constrains any potential discussion. They are then contextualised (pervasively so) within those prisms, and it becomes very difficult to understand their importance other than by those markers. Further, labels such as 'marginal,' or 'Indigenous,' and the like cannot be seen as innocent or *de facto* terms. Each is also a designation and location to which many, even at best, struggle to then acknowledge that other person's humanity and creativity—as W. E. B. Du Bois argued in his concept of 'double-ness' in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; New York: Dover, 1994).
[2] Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994) 29.
[3] Bloom 29.
[4] James Atlas, 'Chicago's Grumpy Guru,' *The New York Times Magazine* (1988): 13 Dec. 2012 Web. n. pag.

so beyond any immediate measure. If Morgan is thought of as being a part of the Fremantle Arts Centre, the same and more applies with Epeli Hau'ofa and the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture. As with Mudrooroo and Morgan, Hau'ofa's ideas influences cultures, but more humorously. He also reclaims old spaces that have been taken away ('Our Sea of Islands'), but not at the expense of the future ('The Ocean in Us'). His strategy embraces both: to fight for what has historically been tribal, while forging a plan for future self-reliance. Teresia Teaiwa gives a glimpse into how wide and forward looking Hau'ofa was in rethinking old paradigms; this about the inauguration of the first black American president. The line that concerns us is Hau'ofa's belief of '[President] Obama's forsaking of ideological dogma for the purpose of building dialogue and community—the audacious pursuit of hope in humanity.'[5] This turning is also seen in Mudrooroo's work.

Jacques Lacan has given us: *le stade du miroir*,[6] known as 'the mirror stage.' This concept explains the Western gaze (and masculinity) and its possibilities. Sadly, there seems to be a danger in such a view. The problem is the oppositional binary impetus Western languages use. If there is an up, there must be a correlating down. A civilised people will always 'need' a mob. That is what is recorded through literature, sometimes at great cost. 'There are many men in myth, fact or fiction who have been caught between societal pressures and so have lost their heritage.'[7] Yet these Western trained writers still reflect great and universal 'truths.' Mudrooroo (aka Colin Johnson), has used his mirror to show the ambivalence and destructive actions of respectable 'middle class morality.'[8] Perhaps better in the *Ghost Dancer* series than *Doctor*

[5] Teaiwa, 'Epeli's Quest,' 105-108.
[6] Jacques Lacan, 'The Looking Glass Phase,' *Revue francaise de psychanalyse* (1949): 449-55.
[7] J. S. Ryan, '*Wild Cat Falling*: A Totemic Man Who Sought His Dreaming,' *Folklore* 98:1 (1987): 16-27.
[8] In George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Eliza Doolittle's father, Alfred Doolittle, uses this term to explain the dangers of leaving one's station: One will have to perform in a more restrictive manner. Later, in Act V, he does lament having to behave as a respectable citizen. Through satire, the work gives an indication of the ubiquitous, 'convertive' power class has.

Wooreddy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World. However, dispelling such ideas is not easy; the mental climate and anachronistic remnants of a distant past are difficult to banish. These pasts are enhanced by sanctioned narratives which need to be re-thought. Kathryn Trees wrote about the asymmetrical position of Aboriginal and Australian identity:

> History, specifically official Australian history, is a fiction that both creates and substantiates a political reality that is itself ficticious. A more equitable account of Australian history post-1788 is possible if official history is mediated by a reading of 'Aboriginal' literature as history.[9]

Admittance would not magically alleviate all problems. But it would help, as the text, *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics and Identity in the New Pacific* shows. This compilation showcases some of the finest thinkers and writers of Oceania. The aim of the text (and the embrace of the three writers argued for in this project) would

> go a long way toward imagining what the New Pacific will look like as we exit a monument-littered twentieth century that looks back warily to Romantic narratives of 'fatal contact' and Enlightenment narratives of 'better living through modernization; and the Western way of life. [10]

The need and expectation for inclusion as a means to aid in the discourse between all humans is the goal.

> Still, we need something more than what Nietzsche called, at the turn of the last century, when Europe itself was coming under the fatal suspicion as the power-driven ideology of ontological mastery and empire, the 'active nihilism' of postmodernity bent on deconstructing and deriding the grounds of others' cultural beliefs and national systems as so much tropological delusion. [11]

Such a desire is inspiring and should not be seen residing with only one group. Therefore,

> We can only hope that this work of collective critiquing and imaging will not be derided, ignored, or confused, or confined (my emphasis) in the bounded area of 'Pacific Studies.' Our hope is that the cultural works in *Inside Out* will not just draw borders around Pacific area-studies formation, but will move beyond these illusory (and, in lasting effect,

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[9] Kathryn Trees, '*My Place* as Counter Memory,' SPAN 32 (1991): 66-74.
[10] Rob Wilson, introduction, *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural, Politics and Identity in the New Pacific*, by Wilson, eds. Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999) 11.
[11] Wilson 11.

> institutionalized) borders marked 'For Insiders Only' and push out toward the broader and cosmopolitan world of American, Asian, and European circulation and cultural contention where 'Cultural Studies' is emerging in diverse global and local sites.[12]

Thus, the problem is not solely an Australian one—instead a ubiquitous by-product of imperialistic ventures everywhere. 'The Dutch East Indies (colonial Indonesia) as a time and place has vanished with Indonesian independence, it is still very much kept alive in contemporary Dutch literature.'[13]

Even questions concerning the legitimacy of speakers/artists are not solely East vs. West, North vs. South. Factions joust for position even within dispossessed groups. There are those from disposed quarters who fear different interpretations of what they perceive as cultural, as seen in the criticism of Sally Morgan (Jackie Huggins *et al*.).

This being the case, it is a positive that Mudrooroo forces all to contemplate the reasonableness of identity, and who is fit to judge it. Curious and conversely, more than one critic has speculated that perhaps the reticence of white critics questioning Mudrooroo's status was their worry of being out of bounds.

Caution and respect are positive traits, but fear and pettiness stifles progress. Albert Wendt has a much better system for evaluating projects.

> When you ask the old people how they evaluate a good storyteller, they'll tell you that the story has got to have action, there have to be interesting ideas. For every literature, there is a tradition of evaluation. [14]

This can be accomplished without pronouncing moral judgment.

> We need some of our own young people who want to be literary critics to study systems of evaluation in our oral traditions, and use that in combination with what they've learned

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[12] Wilson 11.
[13] Sarah De Mul, 'Nostalgia for Empire: '*Tempo Doeloe*' in Contemporary Dutch Literature,' *Memory Studies* 3.4 (2010): 413-428. Mul writes that *tempo doeloe* means the 'the good old days' in Pasar Malay (the colloquial colonial language spoken in the Dutch East Indies). She goes on to write 'Their [literary representations] affective energy partly explains why literature about the Dutch East Indies has been so central in bringing colonial repatriates together in memory communities ever since they returned to the Netherlands.'
[14] Albert Wendt and Vilsoni Hereniko, 'An Interview with Albert Wendt,' 51-59.

> from European literary criticism. After all, literary criticism is just a form of evaluation, not a form of judgment, even though a lot of people make it out as a judgment, saying, 'This is a good book,' or 'This is a bad book.' I think we should get away from that idea because, for every story, there are good parts and parts you don't like. It depends on the individual person.'[15]

The problem, then, has been preconceived notions and preoccupations (of superiority and inferiority) along socially constructed boundaries—similar to Paolo Mantegazza's 'Morphological Tree of the Human Races.'[16] Western notions of hierarchy are not as stark now. Still, there is no question that the belief in unequal (but assumed fair) relationships is present. Western evaluative methods follow from those same unequal starting points, and a false confidence in understanding 'essence.'

One of the causes of this problem stems from how easily 'being' has been, historically, under-valued.

> We have been getting into the same perplexity about 'being,' and yet may fancy that when anybody utters the word, we understand him quite easily, although we do not know about not being. But we may be equally ignorant of both.[17]

The ignorance continued into the present. 'This question has today been forgotten.'[18] Despite the discrepancy, the ideology progressed.

In understanding the ramifications behind such an action, this discussion will highlight points from three who have influenced our thinking on language and understanding. The first and third, Neil Postman and Jacques Derrida, respectively, contemporary thinkers, normally appear in such discussion. However, what is important is that we contemplate some of the words of Socrates—particularly from the *Phaedo*. Doing so will highlight the problems concerned with

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[15] Albert Wendt and Vilsoni Hereniko, 'An Interview with Albert Wendt,' 51-59.
[16] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 37-38.
[17] Plato, *The Sophist*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. Generic NL Freebook Publisher, n.d. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. EBSCO. Web. 2 Aug. 2011. 21.
[18] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1926; New York: SCM Press, 1962) 98.

the inability to become specific—having a reliable baseline.[19]

Discerning quality in a lucid manner has always been difficult. The task is made harder if one feels his or hers is superior. 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.'[20] Such a predicament is a human endeavour.

> We are all, as Huxley says someplace, Great Abbreviators, meaning that none of us has the wit to know the whole truth, the time to tell it if we believed we did, or an audience so gullible as to accept it. But you *will* find an argument here that presumes a clearer grasp of the matter than many that have come before. Its value, such as it is resides in the directness of its perspective, which has its origins in observations made 2,300 years ago by Plato. It is an argument that fixes its attention on the forms of human conversation, and postulates that how we are obliged to conduct such conversations will have the strongest possible influence on what ideas we can conveniently express. And what ideas are convenient to express inevitably become the important content of a culture.[21]

What is written now in and for 'the West' is to be included in this context and construction.

> In this sense, all culture is a conversation or, more precisely, a corporation of conversations, conducted in a variety of symbolic modes. Our attention here is on how forms of public discourse regulate and even dictate what kind of content can issue from such forms.[22]

In this sense, then, cultures (and their conversations) are mainly exclusive, closed systems. As such there are several aspects that must be scrutinised—including the motivations behind privileging some conversations over others. Of course, the words used are important too—but not because they convey a direct meaning. Instead, they enhance an already symbolic narrative; one that is not innocent or naïve to conquest. Western perceptions of categorization (post-Enlightenment) are thought of as succinct, without unfair bias, equal to a fault, equitable and not personal. Such benevolence has been attributed to its acclaimed, far-seeing early founders of

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[19] Randy Olson, 'Shifting Baselines: Slow-Motion Disaster Below the Waves,' *Los Angeles Times* 17 Nov. 2002, Part M. The article discusses changes which are taken as true without researching its historical context.
[20] Edward Said, Introduction, *Orientalism*, by Said (New York: Vantage Books, 1979) 5.
[21] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Penguin, 1985) 6.
[22] Postman *op. cit.* 6.

mainstream culture. However, it is time we re-examine that proposition.

Western modernity, still, largely locates its foundations in Greek philosophy and, particularly, in Socrates' dialectical thoughts. Hence the indebtedness to the Platonic Forms.

> SOCRATES: 'Consider,' he said, 'whether this is the case: we say that there is something that is equal. I do not mean a stick equal to a stick or a stone to a stone, or anything of that kind, but something else beyond all these, the Equal itself. Shall we say that this exists or not?'
> SIMMIAS: 'Indeed we shall, by Zeus, most definitely.'
> SOCRATES: 'And do we know what that is?—Certainly.'
> SIMMIAS: 'Whence have we acquired the knowledge of it? Is it not from the things we mentioned just now, from seeing sticks or stones or some other things that are equal we come to think of that other which is different from them?'[23]

The American writer, William Faulkner, once wrote, 'the past is never dead. It's not even past.'[24] He realised that human thought was not linear, but spiral. Therefore, one does not finally realise a singular truth as much contemplate what ideas that had always been there, albeit in different forms, and actualise them according to his or her dictates. The themes in the *Phaedo* are prescient, for is this passage not a nascent understanding of what, centuries later, Jacques Derrida would theorize on the dilemma with the verb *différer*? (That a term is not known directly, but from its opposite; a binary system. Good is known as being the opposite of evil.) Therefore, to 'defer' and/or 'differ,' creates endless chains of definitions, never arriving at an essential understanding of a concept or idea.

The Socratic dialogues are illuminating, but troubling; for hierarchy is understood within the framework of the Forms. There is an inequality of subjects. Furthermore, this stratification has been adopted into Western thought. Yet when Socrates spoke to Simmias, there was no animus, only the need to establish a baseline for judging.

SOCRATES: 'Or doesn't it seem to you to be different? Look at it also this way: do not

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[23] Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthypro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis, IA: Hackett, 1981) 112.
[24] William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (1950; New York: Random House, 1968) 92.

> equal stones and sticks sometimes, while remaining the same, appear to one person to be equal and to another to be unequal? —Certainly they do.'
> SIMMIAS: 'But what of the equals themselves? Have they ever appeared unequal to you, or Equality to be Inequality?'
> SOCRATES: 'Never, Socrates.'
> SIMMIAS: 'These equal things and the Equal itself are therefore not the same?'
> SOCRATES: 'I do not think they are the same at all, Socrates.'[25]

The discussion touches on the question of (im)mortality, a priori knowledge, and on the essence, 'Forms,' of things.

> SOCRATES: 'We must then possess knowledge of the Equal before that time when we first saw the equal objects and realized that all these objects strive to be like the Equal, but are deficient in this.'
> SIMMIAS: 'That is so.'[26]

What is being discussed and agreed to here, is that human beings, intuitively, believe in a disconnect between what might be thought of as perfect, or flawless (metaphorically speaking) , and what can be 'viewed' via analysis.

> SOCRATES: 'Then surely we also agree that this conception of ours derives from seeing or touching or some other sense perception, and cannot come into our mind in any other way, for all these senses, I say, are the same.'
> SIMMIAS: 'They are the same, Socrates, at any rate in respect to that which our argument wishes to make plain. Our sense perceptions must surely make us realize that all that we perceive through them is trying to reach that which is Equal, but falls short of it; or how do we express it?'[27]

There is frustration here. How can one connect different (in quality) items that, yet, still share a bond? First, a system (and 'language') must be erected to contemplate such dilemmas. For the West, this construction would later become the signifier and signified. The whole process of signification. 'Some people regard language, when reduced to its elements, as a naming-process only—a list of words, each corresponding to the thing that it names.'[28] What Ferdinand de Saussure and other linguists formulated so much later. A system which went beyond the

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[25] Plato 112.
[26] Plato 113.
[27] Plato 113.
[28] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) 65.

assumption of names tethered to the object, re-visioning Socrates' ideas of concepts coming outside the psyche—and thus True—then being housed there.

> This conception is open to criticism at several points. It assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words; it does not tell us whether a name is vocal or psychological in nature; finally, it lets us assume that the linking of a name and a thing is a very simple operation—an assumption that is anything but true.[29]

This usage of 'true,' also connects with Saussure. 'But this rather naïve approach can bring us near the truth by showing us that the linguistic unit is a double entity, one formed by the associating of two terms.[30] There is overlap with the dualism of Rene Descartes (in that there is a separation between the material (realm) and the spiritual, or intellectual). So (back again) to the *Phaedo*. 'Our souls also existed apart from the body before they took on human form, and they had intelligence.'[31] This process enabled (what would later become) the West to separate from ingrained ideals. Indeed, it created a separation (ascension) from a flat world, giving the space to re-invent perception. In this manner, the West went from the second dimension to the third.

For Saussure, this re-orientation leads us to a higher and clearer understanding of the language of science. 'We have seen in considering the speaking-circuit both terms involved in the linguistic sign are psychological and are united in the brain by an associative bond.'[32] The bond, being associative, is arbitrary.

> The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but the concept and a sound image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses.[33]

This random access system, then, becomes language, though a very tenuous endeavour. The problem resides in the cohesion that links the bonds. Though language is a system that can be

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[29] Saussure 65.
[30] Saussure 65.
[31] Plato 115.
[32] Saussure 65-66.
[33] Saussure 66.

studied, its many pieces are less understood.

> I call the combination of a concept and a sound-image a *sign*, but in current usage the term generally designates only a sound-image, a word. One tends to forget that *arbor* is called a sign only becomes it carries the concept 'tree,' with the result that the idea of the sensory part implies the idea of the whole.[34]

Such an understanding leads to the structure of signification.

> I propose to retain the word *sign* [*signe*] to designate the whole and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by *signified* [*signifié*] and *signifier* [*significant*]; the last two terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts.[35]

These pronouncements seemed to herald a new form of understanding; a better path to a secular truth. Yet Derrida cautions against the reliability of successive logos statements, since its source is the individual who creates that particular "epistemology."

> All the metaphysical determinations of truth, and even the one beyond metaphysical onto theology that Heidegger reminds us of, are more or less immediately inseparable from the instance of the logos, or of a reason thought within the lineage of the logos, in whatever sense it is understood: in the pre-Socratic or the philosophical sense, in the sense of God's infinite understanding or in the anthropological sense, in the pre-Hegelian or the post Hegelian sense.[36]

The problem is (still) with the belief in a being 'knowing' an essential Truth. Also to display that even future endeavours will be mired. This is the outcome of Jacques Derrida theorizing on the dilemma with the verb *différer.*

> The verb 'to differ' [*différer*] seems to differ from itself. On the one hand, it indicates difference as distinction, inequality, or discernibility; on the other, it expresses the interposition of delay, the interval of a *spacing* and *temporalizing* [author's emphasis] that puts off until 'later,' what is presently denied, the possible that is presently impossible.[37]

Slippage, then, permeates language plus its representations, such as literature and criticism.

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[34] Saussure 67.
[35] Saussure 67.
[36] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984) 10-11.
[37] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1973) 129.

Hence understanding, and then having the ability to commit a label to the entity, has a spiral (staircase) quality—not linear.

There are enough historical overlaps to prove this idea. The case of Harriet Birch, 1832, in India, is only one instance.

> In February 1832, Harriet Birch, daughter of an indigo planter named Stephen Birch, paid a visit to her father's old friend, the nawab of Farrukhabad, in the Gangetic plains of the Upper Provinces of India, and confessed that she wanted to marry him and convert to Islam.[38]

Her father, shocked, complained about an abduction[39] by Sirbuland Khan of Farrukhabad. Khan replied saying she came to him freely, and that 'by the tenets of her religion as well as by law she was at liberty to marry as she pleased.'[40] The case proceeded for her identity/agency was contested. If she were a proper British subject, her father could win his case.

> The legal, racial, and national status of Harriet Birch, were key coordinates for the officials. Of particular concern was whether Harriet Birch was a British subject, whether she was, legally speaking, a minor, and whether she should be allowed to marry a native man who, although a loyal ally of the East India Company's administration, was an unsuitable husband for a young British girl because he was a native Muslim.[41]

Thus the question of sovereignty over the girl was at issue, as well as her nationality and age. If she were a British subject at the time of the marriage (19) she was a minor. However, if she were found to be a native, then the age of 15 would end her minor status.

Officials differed on her ancestry. Finally, the acting magistrate, F. J. Shore concluded that 'Stephen Birch was half European, and his daughter was thus a quarter European and three-quarters native.'[42] Not having a valid claim this way, her father argued she was Christian, therefore a British subject. The magistrate ruled otherwise. The historical looseness of the terms

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[38] Durba Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?' Gender, Race and Subjectivity in Colonial India,' *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6.3 (2005): 1-28.
[39] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.
[40] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.
[41] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.
[42] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.

makes the case very instructive.

> European was the term widely used widely through the late eighteenth-century to mark out those arriving in India from elsewhere. European, in this usage, was associated with a culture of whiteness in which whiteness was an aesthetic that built on classical definitions of beauty and defined by a set of early modern practices that prized itself on certain modes of comportment, governance, and dress. Like European or white, native was a highly constructed category, malleable according to the specificity of the situation and context.[43]

The support for identity, at this juncture, was fluid. However, the aspect of performance as the central indicator is the same as in contemporary society. Judith Butler wrote:

> The 'coherence' and 'continuity' of 'the person' are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but rather, socially instituted and maintained forms of intelligibility. Inasmuch as 'identity' is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of 'the person' is called into question by the cultural emergence of those 'incoherent' or 'discontinuous' gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined.[44]

The same works for nationality. In accounting for European domesticity, the lines between savage/black and civilised/white were greatly marked by work and behaviour. In the lives of women, domestic work, cleaning, washing was *seen* as what the lower humans participated in—while *performed* by the 'aspiring classes.' 'The architecture of middle-class homes took shape around this paradox. The parlor marked the threshold of private and public, serving as the domestic space for the spectacular (public) metamorphosis of female work.'[45] This work made domestic activities a valued commodity of devalued worth for those hoping to move up (in society), which is why it was so convoluted.

> Hence the Victorian fetish with hands, for hands could betray the traces of female work more visibly than a washable apron or disposable gloves. Housewives were advised to rub their hands at night with bacon fat and wear gloves in bed to prevent smearing the oil on the sheets, an imperative that revealed so fundamental an embarrassment at female

[43] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.
[44] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 162.
[45] McClintock 162.

> work that it had to continue even in sleep.[46]

Thus were the activities one had to engage if one wanted to stay civilised. 'The emergent middle class values—monogamy ('clean' sex, which has value), industrial capital ('clean' money, which has value), Christianity ('being washed in the blood of the lamb').[47] Such criterion keeps one from being listed as subhuman—which meant not having rights the respectable classes had to adhere. Morgan's grandmother's (Daisy) fear was she might have been seen as lacking the necessary *accoutrements*—thus black. If so, the little space she had created would be taken away. For this same reason—exclusion from greater society—Wild Cat decided to attempt his uncoupling. In *Tales of the Tikongs*, Manu, knowing the unfairness of colonization, lives in-between. Such categorizing also occurred in the colonies.

> Although the status of a British subject was partially a matter of defining legal subjectivity and the government's jurisdiction, this concern spilled over into defining personhood in national, religious, and racial terms. Being British often meant white and Christian (which might mean Protestant or Catholic); being 'Indian' meant being not white, either Hindu or Muslim, perhaps a 'Portuguese' Catholic or 'collah feringee,' or black foreigner to denote those descended from Europeans who had lived on the western coast of India for several centuries, in Goa and environs.[48]

There was an enormous amount of slippage, but very little with a supposed biological link. Instead, performance and associations to certain ideas and religion were to be seen as borders. If one wanted to rejoice in the modern version of the 'Promised Land,' the rule was to walk and talk like the civilised (not unlike Eliza Doolittle, who was instructed by Professor Henry Higgins[49]). All the while not fully realizing, in some measure, such a decision meant agreeing with the colonial narrative.

The works featured here contest Western perceived presents and pasts, but this struggle is

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[46] McClintock 162.
[47] McClintock 208.
[48] Ghosh, 'Who Counts as 'native?'' 1-28.
[49] Shaw *Pygmalion*, Act 2.

not limited to the written word. Even futurist films (and characters) adhere to the old themes. This makes science fiction particularly telling. 'Sf [science fiction] can imply, by omitting a particular group from its representations, that the days of that group are numbered.'[50] This is the fear Richard Pryor[51] and Hau'ofa once joked about, but the concern is legitimate. The worry only underscores the importance of the three writers being included in the canon. Their methodology allows the potential to escape the cultural blindness that is manifest, even in science fiction films.

Science fiction has re-established old themes in newer ways. The similarity is such that its interest in 'first contact' themes are not too dissimilar than early Western novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* or the *Last of the Mohicans*. There is an understood hierarchy in such works: the narrator/lead character embodies and administers over anything and anyone not seen as Western. Looking at the *Star Wars* franchise is instructive here. At the beginning of film, there is an apology (a crawl), giving the back-story. 'A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.' This is a variation on 'Once upon a time, in a land far far away,' the ubiquitous opening for many fairy tales. Indeed, the popular animated series, *Shrek* uses 'Far Far Away' as its totemic Hollywood sign. The *Star Wars* franchise, albeit in space using technology not apparent now employs older ideas of representation, sharing motifs with the 'Western' and tales of knights.

> Some science fiction (like most fantasy) draws on the themes and motifs from traditional magical narratives such as myth and folktale, it reframes those narrative elements within novelistic representations of [Western] society and self. [52]

The modern Western gaze (this includes all ideas and colonial histories) is pervasive. Hence, even a highly successful franchise like *Star Wars* is not without its racist controversy. Seen no clearer with the character Jar Jar Binks, a Gungan.

In Episode Two: A New Beginning, the heroes are trapped on a planet and running from

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[50] Brian Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' *Science Fiction Studies* 32.3 (2005): 385-404.
[51] See footnote 168 in Section 3. Context is provided there as well.
[52] Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' 385-404.

enemy soldiers. They inadvertently save Binks' life, which in his culture means he owes them his life. The anti-Binks controversy stems from his speech pattern, which sounds like Caribbean-accented pidgin English. His ears also suggest dreadlocks, and his bell-bottom pants and vest remind some of old, unflattering movie stereotypes of blacks. Film critic Joe Morgenstern of *The Wall Street Journal* called Jar Jar 'a Rastafarian Stepin Fetchit on platform hoofs, crossed annoyingly with Butterfly McQueen.'[53] Such stereotyping can be traced even more broadly.

Binks is the future representation of the Jacky-Jacky character seen in Austyn Granville's *The Fallen Race* (1892). 'The hero ventures into the outback with a group of other white explorers and a single native servant.'[54] Binks is not a servant but demurs like a silly darky, while being human enough to be of some use. Mudrooroo's main characters: Wild Cat, Alan, and Wooreddy are contestations against such mindsets. Hau'ofa as well, in *Kisses in the Nederends*, with Oilei Bomboki. In *My Place* Morgan's grandmother, Daisy, talks of being embarrassed for Aboriginal people of how they were treated. These are examples of push back, but the stereotyping continues.

The problem is, regardless of the location of ideas (Buddhism, ideas of Japanese samurai culture, Indigenous culture), the results are still seen through the prism of Western culture. This while reflecting those societies' aspirations and fears. Ironic that while striving to create more perfect unions, utopians or near harmonious environments, the weight and imprinting of hegemonic history still exists.

> Some of the most aggressively modern societies are also those in which the modern world-view arrived with European invaders, so that the clash between viewpoints was enacted historically in the form of usurpation of land, formation of race-based castes, violent suppression of traditional religions, and even genocide. [55]

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[53] Clarence Page, 'Is He Or Isn't He? Fair Play For Jar Jar Binks,' *Chicago Tribune* (1999): n. pag. 8 Aug. 2011. Web.
[54] Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' 385-404.
[55] Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' 385-404.

Such a past has lead these societies into a schizophrenic present and projected future.

> Australia, like New Zealand, the US, and Canada, is now a prosperous, relatively peaceful, democratic, and scientifically advanced society. Each of these former colonies, however, is haunted by past injustices and ongoing conflicts with its native peoples. [56]

Clinging to the same tropes and narratives from the same minded writers and thinkers will not vanquish the dilemmas still plaguing these cultures. For these reasons, the inclusion of Mudrooroo, Morgan and Hau'ofa is not for inclusion's sake, or some misguided idea of diversity. The ancestors of Morgan and Hau'ofa hail from an existence long enough there can be no more patronizing theory of their intellect. Instead having them widely thought of can be instructive for present and future dialogues.

The work of each of these writers displays fundamental weaknesses/fault lines inherent in orthodoxy. In their own manner, Mudrooroo, Morgan and Hau'ofa exploit those fissures. Not to bring literary crisis onto the English reading world, but offer different interpretive tools for viewing more inclusive futures. Second, to garner more respect for work not thought of as pure literature. Their exclusion via disclaimers (e.g. best *Aborigine* writer) more broadly is foolhardy. Additionally, this 'separate but equal' approach allows renewed life to stereotypes.

Another influential science fiction franchise, *Star Trek* franchise (and its mission statement 'to go where no one (initially, man) has gone before,' suffers this affliction. Even its spinoffs privilege 'whiteness' while being 'a touchstone of U.S. popular culture.'[57] One was titled *Star Trek: The Next Generation* [1987-1994]. Despite being next, its cast looked oddly familiar to those before, in racial make-up, though the secondary characters were filled with more minority peoples and colours. One in particular is Lieutenant Worf (an embodied

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[56] Attebery, 'Aboriginality in Science Fiction,' 385-404.
[57] Brian L. Ott and Eric Aoki, 'Popular Imagination and Identity Politics: Reading the Future in *Star Trek*: *The Next Generation*,' *Western Journal of Communication* 65.4 (2001): 392-415.

blackfella), a Klingon, in charge of weapons/security and the protection of the captain. An ethnic improvement, for this race has been better known only for their violent, destructive behaviour. Now though, they are moderated. Worf more than others, for he was 'raised by human parents.' Oddly enough, he is not seen as a true Klingon by those of his race and laments feeling *stolen*. This problem becomes so obsessive that in one episode, 'Rightful Heir,' he leaves the Enterprise for his own dream quest.

Worf's 'blackness' is animal-like, savage as opposed to the mostly cultured, thoughtful 'white' crew. In 'Conspiracy' he declines going for a 'swim for it is too much like bathing'[58] leading to racist jokes about cleanliness. Not to be seen as a nurturing partner, Worf (by extension, all black males) is seen as being hyper-aggressively sexual. 'Human women are too fragile. I would have to restrain myself too much.'[59] These episodes harkens back to the coupling between Amelia and Wadawaka, in *The Undying*.[60] They are also a very common theme in contact mythology. The 'Other' is always more aggressive, sexual, than the colonial, who is more civilised. Even if she is a vampire.

The next long running program, the British *Doctor Who,* also has similar incredible and lavish scripts, and a very familiar structure. 'The Doctor, a flamboyant, enigmatic figure who has clearly joined that small pantheon of fantasy folk heroes who, like Tarzan, Flash Gordon, and Mr. Spock have virtually taken on a life of their own.'[61] All of these are still white males. The main character is a Time Lord. These characters can travel through time, know every language, and now, after years of war, one attempts to save Earth and all other species (and planets) from destruction. He is the High Sheriff of the multiverse and very old. The last of his breed. His

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[58] Brian L. Ott and Eric Aoki, 'Popular Imagination and Identity Politics,' 392-415.
[59] Brian L. Ott and Eric Aoki, 'Popular Imagination and Identity Politics,' 392-415.
[60] Mudrooroo, *The Undying* 188.
[61] Michael M. Levy, 'Who, What, and Why? Character Motivation in *Doctor Who,*' *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 10.2 (1985): 76-79.

longevity stems from being able to regenerate himself if killed. Yet the doctor is always casted by a white male who espouses certain virtues. All incarnations of the Doctor 'tend to be absolutists of a very British, upper crust sort. Though he invariably defends democracy, the Doctor demands more or less complete obedience from his companions.'[62] His devotion to the better good is demanding on him. Reminiscent of Kipling's poetic burden.[63] So much that he is in constant jeopardy of being a dictator in his absolutism. Because of that, The Doctor is in constant need of a side-kick, a 'Friday' or 'Tonto' to restore or remind him of his humanity. His sidekicks are mainly younger women. One of the more beloved was Rose Tyler, who was billed as an individual due to the changing times. 'The abilities to scream and run are no longer sufficient attributes for a twenty-first-century Doctor Who companion.'[64] However, like Mada from *Master of the Ghost Dancing* series, she is entirely not her own woman. Her plucky demeanor is still tethered to the lead male's character, and like Fada, when the Doctor moves on, she is casted aside for another woman. What these and many other science-fiction films have in common is their being, ostensibly, still casted in Western Europe's empire—leading image.

In the 2009 film, *Avatar*, native creatures, the Na'vi, are humanoids living on a planet called Pandora. The Na' vi are similar to Aboriginal peoples, or First Nations. The planet is visited by Americans, who are in need of precious resources. The problem is the material needed in a revered location for the Na' vi. The Americans, having grown tired of 'negotiations,' decide to take what they want by force. This scenario is not much different from how Sera Draunikau explained the Tuktuks to Oilei, Babu's prognosis of the world's ills, or the American legend of

[62] Levy, 'Who, What, and Why?' 76-79.
[63] Rudyard Kipling, 'The White Man's Burden,' *A Kipling Pageant*, ed. Rudyard Kipling (Garden City, NY: Halcyon House, 1935) 890-891. There are many interpretations to this poem. Here it is used to call attention to the un-asked task of 'helping' others and the imperial mission.
[64] Dee Amy-Chin, 'Rose Tyler: The Ethics of Care and the Limit of Agency,' *Science Fiction Film and Television* 1.2 (2008): 231-247.

Pocahontas.[65]

Contemporary Western culture (not any one country or culture, but as an aggregate, post Renaissance) disseminates to the rest of the world. One of the recitations is repeating (in word and image) how the natives were/are not intellectual or moral equals. These ideas are still carried on, though their more brutal edge has been softened. Now there are accommodations made for the Other. This is an admission of worth, yet on a more symbolic level is still troubling. Categories such as Women's Literature, Third World Literature, Aboriginal Literature, tell the reader the issues contained in them are fascinating, but not overly important. The topics are not as relevant as what is titled 'proper' (read Western) Literature or Criticism. That is the norm/centre, which is why Shakespeare is known as being the most influential playwright first and—of British heritage, second. This is not due to some fantastically powerful act, nor extra-ordinary men but persistence and a shifting of power.

'The Enlightenment was a means by which the 'other' world was re-arranged.'[66] One cannot deny that within Western Europe's flowering eras (the Renaissance to the Enlightenment), the progressive thinkers, the forward looking shapers of the word and universe, were doing their part, writ larger. Carl von Linné or Linnaeus and Comte de Buffon (re)created the world in Europe's image.

> The intellectual colonization of the world was done by two leading intellectuals of the eighteenth century—specifically, Carl von Linné or Linnaeus (1701-1778) a Swede, and an aristocrat on the make, and the Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), an aristocratic and wealthy Frenchman—particularly because the European 'scientific' endeavour has

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[65] The mythical versions tell of a mature Pocahontas smitten for Englishman, John Smith. So deep is her affection she risks her life for his. Later, she leaves her people, happily and freely for England. A more historical accounting reports the eleven-year old Pocahontas, daughter of a Powhatan chief, was kidnapped and used as ransom by the English. The strategy works and later she is forced to marry Englishman John Rolfe. This clearer version can be read in Camilla Townsend's *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma: An American Portrait* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

[66] O. R. Dathorne, '(Re)placing the Wor(l)d: The Search for the Half Sign,' *MOTS PLURIELS*: *ONE'S ENVIRONMENT* 11 (1999): 1-14. <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP1199ord.html>.

> always been presented as truthful, non-subjective, and universal.[67]

The study of history and scientific religion illustrate this mould. 'It was in the year 1750 that Linnaeus for the first time designated his traveling pupils as his 'apostles'; he chose the term to indicate that their task was a missionary one.'[68] Thus the world was not created again, but re-packaged.

> Penny van Toorn has said it well [and of all such collisions],
>
> > both as a Western discursive practice and as a cultural institution, history has structured political relations between Aboriginal people and Europeans from the moment of initial contact. Progressivist Eurocentric accounts of imperial expansion, nation-building, and spreading civilization either wrote Aboriginal people out of existence, or conscripted them into the roles of villain or victim.[69]

As it pertains to the West, this is the standard practice, regardless of the era or the peoples confronted.

Lord Macaulay (Thomas Babington Macaulay), a member of the Supreme Council of India, and his 'Macaulay's minute' on February 2, 1835, perhaps is the best example of this mindset. He was as destructive to native Indian pedagogy as G. A. Robinson was to saving Aboriginal lives. Macaulay's reasoning for English only in Indian schools has left a very deep stamp on the nature of Indian languages even today.

> All parties seem to be agreed on one point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India, contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. It seems to be admitted on all sides, that the intellectual improvement of those classes of the people who have the means of pursuing higher studies can at present be effected only by means of some language not vernacular amongst them. [70]

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[67] Dathorne, '(Re)placing the Wor(l)d,' 1-14.
[68] Heinz Goerke, *Linnaeus*, trans. Denver Lindley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973) 149.
[69] I agree with the sentiment, yet pointing towards 'history' as an entity that enjoys agency like a cartographer or legislative body is a bit passive; too safe. What we call 'history' is written by humans. This makes it neither good or evil, but does give us something a bit more concrete to work with. Penny van Toorn, 'Mudrooroo and the Power of the Post: Alternative Inscriptions of Aboriginalist Discourse in a Post-Aboriginalist Age,' *Southern Review* 28. 2 (1995): 121-139.
[70] 'Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education' (2002) 30 Dec. 2007.

Such arrogance would be called imperialistic now, but this does not mean only 'Western' enterprises are guilty of such ambivalence. In the greater perspective, it is the reality of the purview of those in power to act with low regard to others—if that will enhance their goals.

The problem is the lack of power, balanced against the affluence and influence of the powerful. Within this spectrum there are the tenets, the lessons of tradition that most adhere to, as Hau'ofa said of Tongans living with their oppression.[71] This humble trait is seen in Western history as well. Hau'ofa, knew too well that systems (here governments and/or traditions) exert a force over their people in an effort to keep them uniformed. In the West this is an inconvenient truth.

Hierarchy is thought of as being antithetical to modern, advanced and enlightened societies. Americans, who view themselves via the lens of exceptionalism, would agree to such sentiments. Yet what should we think of luminaries like John Winthrop, 1588-1649? Who surely knew the implications of his pronouncements concerning this New World, with his sermon, 'A Modell of Christen Charity.' A model sets forth the categories or classes, not from human law, but divine pronouncement.

> God Almightie in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condicion of mankinde, as in all times some must be rich somepoore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjeccion.[72]

Another luminary, one thought of as influencing the character of Americans, Hector de Crevecoeur, wrote this about identity:

> What then, is the American, this new man? He is neither an European nor the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. *He* is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and

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<www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/rraley/research./macaulay.html>.

[71] Epeli Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008) 70.

[72] John Winthorp, 'A Modell of Christian Charity,' *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, ed, Paul Lauter (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994) 226.

> manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.[73]

Rousing sentiments, but should be seen, juxtaposed, to ex-slave, and early intellectual leader of black liberation thought, Frederick Douglass'.

> I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine.[74]

How to reconcile Crevecoeur's (and others) call of triumph during the ages of reason, discovery and science, with Douglass' (and mutinous Others) lament of unfairness? The first answer is to not discuss the matter. If that does not work, then behave as if the charge is of a minor offense.

This though such issues are present in texts firmly within the canon, as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* proves. The husband Angel Clare, of the heroine, Tess, decides she has deceived him by withholding the history of her being raped until after their wedding. It matters not she was sinned against, humiliated, but that such an act impugns his good name. Tess's agency is not much better than native women. (As in Mudrooroo's texts, so the domesticated Western woman is as lost as the native.) Thus, he decides to leave her for awhile, to go somewhere to start anew.

> In going hither and thither he observed in the outskirts of a small town a red-and-blue placard setting forth the great advantages of the empire of Brazil as a field for the emigrating agriculturalist. Land was offered there on exceptionally advantageous terms.[75]

With this notice, he then sets forth for his (primarily) new beginning.

The post movements were to disperse/contextualise Western Enlightenment ideology, and 'man' destiny theory. Postcolonial theory being the latest and it is said to not be as trusting to its

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[73] J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, 'Letters from an American Farmer,' *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, ed, Paul Lauter (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994) 826.
[74] Frederick Douglass, 'What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?' *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, eds Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y McKay (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) 385-386.
[75] Thomas Hardy, *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* (1891; Garden City: Nelson Doubleday, 1912) 241.

antecedents. 'From a postcolonial perspective, Western values and traditions of thought and literature, including versions of postmodernism, are guilty of a repressive ethnocentrism.'[76] Further, Mudrooroo and Hau'ofa, playing with concepts such as race, class and power proves these ideas, and terms like 'truth' or 'real' are likewise tenuous. Morgan gives paths into new performative spaces. Those with the ability to write with such insightfulness have deservedly earned a place in the canon.

Instead of embracing such figures, the West has chosen to simply place those who do not aid the masters' narrative onto a lower tier. Further, if by some reason the West must include a few, alternative voices are offered as footnotes, bespeaking their small value simultaneously displaying the magnanimity of the centre. Their criticism is allowed, so long as it does not get out of hand.

Such patronizing creates frustration and suspicion. Thus, there is a 'coolness' instead of a full embrace of things Western. Hence the existentialist plane that Wild Cat sought was not only his goal. Many minority people, around the globe, don this posture.

> Being cool, or adopting a cool pose as we call it, is a strategy that many black males use in making sense of their everyday lives. We believe that coolness as a strength may be linked to pride, self-respect, and masculinity. At the same time, coolness as a mask may contribute to dropping out of school, getting into trouble, sliding into drug and alcohol abuse, and being sucked into delinquent or criminal street gangs.[77]

This while there is a deep yearning and insistence for acceptance, for these are not exotic figures—these are still the 'best produced in the West.'[78] The need is high for the human dignity timeline has moved in a more negative direction since the early 1900s, when the 'politics of

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[76] Raman Seldon and Peter Widdowson, eds., *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Theory*, 3rd ed. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993) 188.
[77] Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson, preface, *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America* (New York: Lexington Books, 1992) xi.
[78] Matthew Arnold, preface, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism and Friendship's Garland*, by Arnold (1869; New York: Macmillan, 1901) xi.

respectability' made its way onto the world stage. By the 1960s there was a distancing sought; a feeling of ambivalence was felt by those not yet fully accepted (or their approaches to creative forms) into mainstream discourse—instead of niches. Though there are more products to buy, freely, without being followed around in middle-class shops, in many quarters, around the globe, the 'unheard from' are moving and amassing.

Displaying any group or individual as existing outside proper society, as a tactic, is unsound. Plus, it does not have to be this way. 'The difficulty—and perhaps opportunity—is that none of these terms is fixed: not fieldwork, not anthropology, not *indigenous culture*, and not *cultural studies*.'[79] If there is any hope for not returning to the vortex, to the spiral, it is here. For as long as any grand narrative model is seen as being inviolable, over time, the canon will lose its legitimacy and relevance. It is vitally important to remember not all important messages come from Western Europe. Wendt had said of Pacific (or Oceanic) writers, though Mudrooroo and Morgan fit within this category of dreaming and sending:

> Like writers elsewhere our writers are explaining us to ourselves and to one another, and adding details to faces, organs, hopes, and dreams of each of our cultures. They are helping us to understand who we are, where we are, where we came from, and where we might be going, by singing their own individual songs, by plotting their own paths through the Void.[80]

The West lives in this Void as well. Without proper inclusion—that within academia[81] and the texts it studies—the gulf will continue. Hence, without help, what is thought of as 'high

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[79] Geoffrey M White and Ty Kawika Tengan, 'Disappearing Worlds: Anthropology and Cultural Studies in Hawai'i and the Pacific,' *The Contemporary Pacific* 13:2 (2001): 381-416.

[80] Albert Wendt, introduction, *Lali: A Pacific Anthology*, by Wendt, ed. Albert Wendt (1980; Auckland: Longman Paul, 1981) xvi.

[81] There is a reference to this fact in the University of New England's 2000 *Study Guide for ABEN 273/373*, 'Australian Literature Black and White: Conflict and Reconciliation.' Russell McDougall writes: 'It is extremely important that indigenous literatures be represented in universities, since universities are the traditional conservatories of *settler* (author's emphasis) knowledge. Simply by their inclusion in tertiary education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge's imply a critique of the dominance of Western forms of knowledge; and they question the authority of people like me, who are teaching in universities, and who claim to know something about 'Australian' literature' (3). Though the aim is not to include a Pacific Islander such as Hau'ofa, the basic argument calls for his conclusion, and others, regardless of the place of academia to counter what is supposedly commonly known.

literature' will look not too dissimilar to what was taught before the Second World War—even if a few minority works have been accepted. This is a point Gayatri Spivak made decades ago. 'Such a caution emerges out of my conviction that, as the margin or 'outside' enters an institution or teaching machine, what *kind* of teaching machine it enters will determine its contours. Therefore the struggle continues, in different ways, after the infiltration.'[82] If Spivak's words are not heeded, minority faculty, and those who support them in bringing these texts (and others), into the classroom, will not be successful. The result will remain a cruelly unequal dialogue, one geared, obliged, to forever mesh with old and tired paradigms.

Bloom wrote of needing a legacy test of two generations after a writer dies.[83] At worst this seems like a stalling tactic. One Indigenous (and minority) people have heard several times. Perhaps not better surmised than by Martin Luther King: "For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!' This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.'[84] Though speaking of the struggle for full citizenry in the Unites States, the sentiment is universal. Whenever a process is slowed, there is the suspicion that something deliberately negative is afoot. Yet one can believe differently—for a short time, and hope men and women of good will are deliberating fairly. However, it still must be said that at best, such a long wait period seems better suited for disputed clauses in a copyright cases, instead of judging literature. Regardless, such an interval would leave gifted writers and their great groups of readers outside, looking in, disappointed, and tragically bemused.

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[82] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Introduction, by Spivak *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993) ix.
[83] Bloom 522.
[84] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) 83.

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