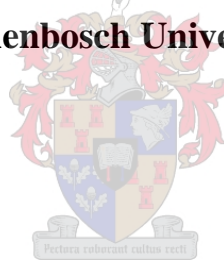


**Past (Pre)Occupations, Present (Dis)Locations:  
The Nineteenth Century Restored in Texts from/about South Africa,  
Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand**

**Jeanne Ellis**

**Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of English Studies in the  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at  
Stellenbosch University**



**Supervisor: Dr. Dawid de Villiers**

**December 2014**

## DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

2 June 2014

## Abstract

This thesis focuses on the ‘restorying’ of British settler colonialism in a range of texts that negotiate the intricacies of post-settler afterlives in the postcolonial contexts of South Africa, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. In this, I do not undertake a sustained, programmatic comparative reading in order to deliver a set of answers based on insights achieved into the current state of post-settler colonial identities. Rather, I approach the study as an open-ended exploration by reading a combination of texts of various kinds – novels, poetry, drama, films and installation art – from and about these different geographical and historical contexts, structured as a sequence of four chapters, each with a distinct theoretical ensemble specific to the (pre)occupations of the settler colonial past and the linked senses of (dis)location in the present that emerge from the primary texts combined in each case. Since this project is informed by my location as a South African researcher, the cluster of primary texts in every chapter always includes one or more South African texts as pivotal to the juxtapositional dynamics such a reading attempts. By placing this study of the textual afterlives of settler colonialism undertaken from a South African perspective within the ambit of neo-Victorian studies, it is my intention to contribute to the growing body of critical and theoretical work emerging from this interdisciplinary field and to introduce to it a set of primary texts that will extend the parameters of its productive intersections with colonial and postcolonial studies.

## Opsomming

Hierdie tesis bestudeer die *restorying* van Britse setlaar-kolonialisme in 'n groep tekste wat die verwickeldheid van post-setlaar *afterlives* in the post-koloniale kontekste van Suid Afrika, Kanada, Australië en Aotearoa Nieu-Seeland vervat. Hiermee onderneem ek nie 'n volgehoue, programmatiese vergelykende interpretasie met die oog daarop om die huidige stand van post-setlaar koloniale identiteite tot 'n stel antwoorde te reduceer nie. Ek benader die studie eerder as 'n verkenning van moontlikhede gegenerer deur die lees van 'n kombinasie van verskillende tekste – romans, gedigte, drama, films en installasie kuns – wat hulle oorsprong in hierdie verkillende geografiese en historiese kontekste het, asook daaroor handel. Gevolglik bestaan die studie uit vier hoofstukke wat elkeen die (pre)okkupasies van die setlaar-koloniale verlede en die gepaardgaande gevoel van (dis)lokasie in die hede, soos tevoorskyn gebring deur die kombinasie van primere tekste, aan die hand van 'n toepaslike teoretiese ensemble bespreek. Aangesien die projek uit my posisie as Suid Afrikaanse navorser spruit, en 'n jukstaposisionele dinamiek grondliggend aan my leesbenadering is, betrek ek telkens een of meer Suid Afrikaanse tekste by die groep primere tekste wat die basis van elke hoofstuk vorm. Deur hierdie studie van die tekstuele *afterlives* van setlaar-kolonialisme, wat vanuit 'n Suid Afrikaanse perspektief onderneem word, binne die raamwerk van neo-Viktoriaanse studies te plaas, beoog ek om by te dra tot die korpus van kritiese en teoretiese werk van hierdie interdisiplinere veld. Deur die toevoeging van die betrokke groep primere tekste word die area waar hierdie veld met koloniale en post-koloniale studies oorvleuel verbreed.

## Contents



### Acknowledgements

<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction: Restorying Nineteenth-Century British Colonial Settlement	
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<b>21</b>
Female Genealogy and a Bodily Metaphorics of Unsettlement in Farber's <i>Dis-Location / Re-Location</i> , Atwood's <i>The Journals of Susanna Moodie</i> and Krog's <i>Lady Anne</i>	
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>55</b>
Bodies (Dis)Possessed and the Poethics of Improper Speech in Atwood's <i>Alias Grace</i> and Christiansen's <i>Unconfessed: A Novel</i>	
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>100</b>
Settling Men: Family Romances and Ancestral Plots in Carey's <i>Jack Maggs</i> , Greene's <i>Boy Called Twist</i> , Grenville's <i>The Secret River</i> and Harries's <i>Manly Pursuits</i>	
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>144</b>
Conclusion: Getting Under the Skin of Settler Colonialism	
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>175</b>



## Acknowledgements



I have been exceptionally fortunate in having the support and encouragement of a group of generous and inspiring friends, colleagues and students while working on this thesis and the acknowledgement of my gratitude and admiration here must stand as necessarily insufficient. In particular, I would like to thank the following:

Dawid de Villiers for taking on the supervision of the thesis *in medias res* and for the invaluable gift of intellectual collaboration;

Meg Samuelson for her intellectual guidance as my supervisor during the first stages of the project and for securing NRF funding to support my research;

Shaun Viljoen for being a kind and affirming friend and colleague right from the very beginning when his guidance steered me through the proposal-writing stage of the project;

Annie Gagiano, my friend extraordinaire, for being a boon companion through thick and thin, for her wit and wisdom, and for the rare example she sets with her personal and professional integrity;

Amanda Gouws for the constancy and delight of her friendship, and for insisting on the importance of regular excursions and diversions;

And, as always and with love, my daughter Raine Lucretia Ellis, for being touchstone and bright star.



I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the National Research Foundation of South Africa, under the project ‘Southern African Subjectivities’, which enabled me to attend a conference on “The Other Dickens” at the University of Portsmouth, UK, in 2012, where I presented my work on Tim Greene’s *Boy Called Twist*, more fully developed in Chapter 3.

Sections of Chapter 2 were included as a chapter, titled “A Bodily Metaphorics of Unsettlement: Leora Farber’s Dis-Location / Re-Location as Neo-Victorian Gothic,” in *Neo-Victorian Gothic: Horror, Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, published by Rodopi in 2012. I would like to thank Marie-Luise Kohlke, Christian Gutleben and the anonymous readers at Rodopi for their helpful comments and suggestions.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Past (Pre)Occupations and Present (Dis)Locations: Restorying Nineteenth-Century Settler Colonialism

---

For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.

Walter Benjamin – “Theses on the Philosophy of History” (255)

The legacies of slavery, empires, and mobility are frequently painful, but they are inescapable: in many ways, these legacies are at the heart of what it is to be modern, what it is to be human, at the start of the twenty-first century.

Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton – *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (1)

[T]he past is irrecoverable and the past is not past; the past is the resource for the future and the future is the redemption of the past; loss must be marked and it cannot be represented; loss fractures representation itself and loss precipitates its own modes of expression.

Judith Butler – “Afterword: After Loss, What Then?” (467).

I came to explore the wreck.  
The words are purposes.  
The words are maps.  
I came to see the damage that was done  
and the treasures that prevail.

Adrienne Rich – “Diving into the Wreck”

The true story lies  
among the other stories,

a mess of colours, like jumbled clothing  
thrown off or away

like hearts on marble, like syllables, like  
butchers’ discards.

The true story is vicious  
and multiple and untrue

after all. Why do you  
need it? Don’t ever

ask for the true story.

Margaret Atwood – “True Stories”



This thesis takes as its points of departure the proliferation of texts broadly referred to as neo-Victorian and the academic interest these texts have garnered.<sup>1</sup> Writing from a South African

---

<sup>1</sup> Numerous studies on neo-Victorianism have appeared over the past number of years, many of which have informed this thesis, particularly the following: John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff. eds. *Victorian Afterlife:*

context, my interest is, however, in the particularities that emerge when such fictional revisions of a long nineteenth century are undertaken from former British settler colonial contexts in an attempt to navigate the crosscurrents and undertows of affiliation and identification that bedevil postcolonial subjectivities entangled with the debris of settler genealogies and histories. I here embark on a series of readings which juxtapose South African texts with texts from Australia, Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand,<sup>2</sup> guided by the question John McGowen poses in his chapter in *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, a foundational collection of essays on the neo-Victorian: “Who (in any particular historical or cultural analysis) is trying to make what kind of connection between what elements of the past and what elements of the present, and how, and why?” (23). In this, I do not undertake a sustained, programmatic comparative reading in order to deliver a set of answers based on insights achieved into the current state of (post)settler colonial identities. Rather, I approach the study as an open-ended exploration, reading a combination of texts of various kinds from and about different geographical and historical contexts, structured as a sequence of four chapters, each with a distinct theoretical ensemble specific to the (pre)occupations of the settler colonial past and the linked senses of (dis)location in the present that emerge from the primary texts combined in each case.

Although these settler histories and their afterlives differ in significant ways, some of which will emerge more fully in the following chapters, there are – as Annie E. Coombes points out in “Memory and History in Settler Colonialism,” her introduction to the edited collection of essays *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* – also significant similarities, which inform the project I undertake here. One such similarity that Coombes identifies as central is “[t]heir common status initially as colonies and subsequently as ‘Dominions’ in the early twentieth century, when they had a greater degree of autonomy within the wider British Empire as ostensibly *self-governing* colonies, [which] meant that they also developed an ambivalent relationship to the imperial metropolitan centre” (1). In *Unsettling Settler*

---

*Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century* (2000); Cora Kaplan. *Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism* ((2007); Simon Joyce. *The Victorians in the Rearview Mirror* (2007); Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham. eds. *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past* (2010); Ann Heilman and Mark Llewellyn. *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2009* (2010); Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben. eds. *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering* (2010); Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben. eds. *Neo-Victorian Gothic: Horror, Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth Century* (2012).

<sup>2</sup> The use of the name Aotearoa for the more familiar name of the country New Zealand is explained as follows by Leonie Pihama in a footnote to her essay on Jane Campion’s *The Piano*: “Aotearoa is the given Maori name for this country. The name *New Zealand* was imposed as a part of the colonial renaming of indigenous people’s lands” (132).



*Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*, Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis describe this ambivalence which marks settler identity – a now perennial trope in literary and cultural studies on settler colonialism – as follows:

Colonial settlers, the offspring of European imperialism, refused to integrate with the indigenous population. Moreover, they kept Europe as their myth of origin and as a signifier of superiority even when formal political ties and/or dependency with European colonial powers had been abandoned. This sense of identification with the ‘mother country’ has not, however, mitigated the unevenness and the fragility of settler identities, which were often forged in defence against metropolitan contempt. (in Coombes, 3-4)

It is, however, evident that the refusal to integrate was not that clear-cut and that settler ambivalence also extended to their interactions with the indigenous populations, which, occurring in what Mary Louise Pratt terms “contact zones” (8), were instrumental in the forging of distinct place-specific settler colonial identities, whether “through resistance, containment, appropriation, assimilation, miscegenation or attempted destruction” (Coombes 1-2). As Coombes argues, “this historical factor [...] has ultimately shaped the cultural and political character of the new nations, mediating in highly significant ways their shared colonial roots/routes” (2), notable in how the afterlife of colonial settlement in the ‘New’ post-1994 South Africa plays out in a political context that differs markedly from that of Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada, which, following Pal Ahluwalia’s description of Australia, might all be considered “triumphant settler independent” countries in which the “diminished” indigenous populations continue to struggle for recognition and restitution (65). In contrast, post-apartheid South Africa, as Mahmood Mamdani has noted, is “the first [country] in the history of African decolonization [where] a settler minority has relinquished exclusive political power without an outright political defeat,” although this is not to say that “this minority has given up its interests, only that it has consented to exploring ways of defending these interests other than a monopoly over political power and the rights of citizenship (“When Does a Settler” 7). Given these differences and similarities and their impact on current negotiations of national identity, the question of settler indigeneity remains a troubling one that, often unproductively, relies on the colonial binary set out in Mamdani’s now familiar question, “When Does a Settler Become a Native?”

These basic contextual markers and the questions they raise are elaborated on in the following chapters in relation to the specificities of the primary texts discussed and the theoretical constellations within which they are read. My choice of texts, and hence my

decision to work across a range of genres, was largely dictated by my own preferences and preoccupations, but it was also informed by their popular and critical reception and the questions this raises about the cultural currency of settler colonialism. Many of the literary texts have received at least one prize, in many cases more, and these are generally prestigious awards that garner visibility and sales. For example, Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* won the Miles Franklin Award and the Commonwealth Writer's Prize, and was selected as the Age Book of the Year; Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* also won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize; and Antjie Krog's *Lady Anne* won the Hertzog Prize. The same applies for the films, the outstanding example being *The Piano*, which "won three U.S. Academy Awards in 1994," after having received "the Cannes film festival's prestigious *Palme d'or* (with Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine*) in 1993, making Jane Campion the first woman and the first New Zealander to win this award" (Margolis, "Introduction" 1). Many of these texts – and here I include Leora Farber's travelling exhibition *Dis-Location / Re-Location* – have also generated significant critical interest and a substantial archive of articles and books. They therefore register as culturally significant texts emerging from contexts in which settler colonial histories continue to compel our attention and trouble our imagination, which, in this study, I endeavour to engage by bringing these texts together and opening up routes of conversation between their variously located preoccupations.

In each chapter, one or more South African texts are combined with one or more texts from another settler colonial location, their selection based on shared clusters of intertwined tropes and themes. Chapter 2, "Female Genealogy and a Bodily Metaphorics of Unsettlement in Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location*, Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* and Krog's *Lady Anne*," functions as a threshold chapter because its exploration of metaphor and embodiment, (post)settler ambivalence and (un)belonging and ancestral recovery, linked to the Gothic, the uncanny and spectral returns, sets in play a range of associated concepts, tropes and themes that recur in the thesis. In it, the Canadian pioneering foremother Susanna Moodie is placed as counterpart to Lady Anne Barnard and Bertha Marks to trace the bloody lines of (dis)affiliation that unspool in poetry and in visual narrative and performance. Chapter 3, "Bodies (Dis)Possessed and the Poethics of Improper Speech in Atwood's *Alias Grace* and Christiansë's *Unconfessed: A Novel*," continues the Canadian-South African link, but shifts its focus to two novels which fictionalise the histories of what Yvette Christiansë describes as "the vast body of 'nobodies' in the service of 'somebodies'" ("Heartsore" n. pag.), embodied by the Irish servant Grace Marks and the Mozambican slave Sila van den Kaap. In Chapter 4, "Settling Men: Ancestral Plots in Carey's *Jack Maggs*, Greene's *Boy*

*Called Twist*, Grenville's *The Secret River* and Harries's *Manly Pursuits*," the genealogies of settlement uncovered and re-invented and the secret histories of violence and displacement thus revealed link the history of the transported criminal ancestor in the two Australian novels with the film's re-scripting of a Cape Muslim genealogy for *Oliver Twist* and with the third novel's portrayal of the decline of the imperial "Colossus" Cecil John Rhodes at his estate on the slopes of Table Mountain. Concluding the thesis, Chapter 5, "Getting Under the Skin of Settler Colonialism," takes the notion of "skin as a place of encounter" (Benthien 2) as its focus and returns to the visual metaphors of (un)settled embodiment that circulates in Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location* to consider how Jane Campion and Vincent Ward use Maori *moko*/facial tattoos in their films, *The Piano* and *River Queen*, to register the *pakeha*/white settler's inscription of settler indigeneity in nineteenth-century Aotearoa New Zealand. In the contrasting example I refer to in this chapter, Reza de Wet's *A Worm in the Bud*," which is set in the early twentieth century shortly after the Anglo-Boer War, the skin itself speaks the intolerable psychic discomfort of ambivalence and repression in the red weals that cover the body of the English governess, whose chafing encounter with the Boer who employs her sparks twinned disgust and desire.

In following the temporal and spatial routes the primary texts imagine – each text explicitly or implicitly recalling that first transitional voyage from metropolis to colony that is often portrayed as the transformational crucible for settler subjectivity – this approach is, to some extent, a methodological elaboration on Stephen Clingman's notion of the "navigational space" in "transnational fiction," which he defines as follows in his *The Grammar of Identity*:

Whether it concerns language, fiction, identity, or location, navigation does not mean crossing or having crossed, but *being in the space of crossing*. It means *being prepared to be* in the space of crossing, in transition, in movement, in journey. It means accepting placement as *displacement*, position as *disposition*, not through coercion of others or by others of ourselves, but through 'disposition' as an affect of the self, as a kind of approach. (24-25)

My intention is not to lay claim to the category of the 'transnational' for the texts I discuss here, even though Clingman's definition of transnational fiction is one capacious enough to accommodate even those texts that do not fit obviously under the rubric of the fictional, such as, for example, Farber's installation *Dis-Location / Re-Location*.<sup>3</sup> I instead use his

---

<sup>3</sup> Clingman asks whether "all fiction is equally and openly transnational," and responds as follows: "Not necessarily, though all fiction may respond at some deep level to this navigational prompting. It would go against the grain of a study such as this to set up hard boundaries between one kind of fictional work and

triangulation of the idea of navigation with what he calls “the grammar of identity,” on the one hand, and with textual form and content, on the other, as a compass at the start of my own “kind of approach” which responds to the “navigational prompting” (21) of the focus texts and their contexts, following the trajectories plotted within the texts between present and past, (post)colony and metropolis, and simultaneously essaying routes between texts that are representative of different settler colonial histories and topographies.<sup>4</sup> Whereas Clingman’s study focuses on novels, this study extends the definition of fiction to encompass a broader range of works of the imagination whose in(ter)ventions and fabrications, like the novels Clingman discusses, coincide with a keen sense that “the space of history at this time” is a “space of navigation,” which often leads them to “find a record of horror and atrocity, in which they are sometimes (like ourselves) complicit” (26).

The texts I focus on – ranging from performance and installation art to novels, poetry, drama and film – all, as the epigraphs to this chapter suggest, in one way or another, “div[e] into the wreck” of their respective settler colonial histories to “see the damage that was done / and the treasures that prevail,” and they are, in often diverse ways, concerned with telling “[t]he true story [that] lies / among the other stories.” It is a recuperative and revisionary endeavour that is nevertheless also marked by a suspicion of such claims to historiographical truth, a caution sounded by Atwood’s punning use of “lies” in the juxtapositional sequencing of the words “true story lies,” and which in the texts read here range from Carey’s overt and playful disclaimer to *Jack Maggs* that “[t]he author willingly admits to having once or twice stretched history to suit his own fictional ends” (n.pag.) and Atwood’s assertion in her “Author’s Afterword” to *Alias Grace* that she has “of course fictionalized historical events” (541) to Christiansē’s archival h(a)unting in pursuit of a trace of the truth about Cape Colony slavery with which to expose and confront the “world of lies” of the imperial archive in *Unconfessed* (218).

For these self-conscious and ambivalent reconfigurations of settler colonial ancestries I use the term *restorying* to invoke both the narrative project of *re-telling* or *telling differently* and the architectural project of *restoration*, and hence *renovation*, with the attendant

---

another; and in a certain radical sense it may be possible to apply the lens of the transnational – its categories and codes – to any work of fiction” (21). He does however identify “their concern with the nature of the boundary” as a distinguishing feature of transnational fiction.

<sup>4</sup> In using this idea of a “grammar of identity,” Clingman points out, one must “aim to keep a whole series of contexts in view: all the way from processes and possibilities within the individual, to relations between self and other, to larger questions of location and navigation in a wider world. The premise here is that there is a correlation between how the self is put together and how we navigate ourselves through space and time. It is this how that we can understand as a form of grammar, and movement is intrinsic to its constitution” (11).

ambiguities of related terms like *heritage*, *conservation* and *reclamation* that register the vexed question of intention to which McGowan points. This doubling is similarly at work in the word *storage* which ‘hosts’ both *story* and *restore*, reminding us that these stories simultaneously *hold* and *behold* the past, a multivalency of denotative play that the word *recovery*, which recurs throughout this study, likewise makes visible because the retrieval of these stories might, instead of revealing, serve merely to conceal again – to re-cover – the iniquities of the past, while in recovery there might also be healing. Since settler colonialism is always, as Lorenzo Veracini notes, “inevitably premised on the traumatic, that is, *violent*, replacement and/or displacement of indigenous Others” (*Settler Colonialism* 75), the restorying of these histories by those implicated in it, albeit belatedly or tangentially through the continued benefits of privilege based on the accrual of wealth deriving from the occupation of land, is a fraught and yet necessary undertaking. Grenville, for example, acknowledges “[o]ne of her ancestors [who] gave [her] the basis for certain details in the early life of William Thornhill,” the protagonist of *The Secret River* (n.pag.), who is transported to Australia for theft and subsequently establishes a dynasty on the banks of the Hawkesbury River which relies, the novel shows, on exactly the “disavowal of any founding violence” that Veracini identifies as formative of settler colonial identity and its narratives (“Settler Collective” 367).

A salient and provocative example of such disavowal is at the heart of Mamdani’s recent Edward Said Memorial Lecture at Princeton University, titled “Settler Colonialism: Then and Now” (6 December 2012). Arguing that “[d]eracializing America remains a settler society and a settler state,” he notes the differences in the current “political and social location of African Americans and American Indians,” and traces them to the past when, “[f]or the settler, African Americans signified labor; in contrast, American Indians were the source of land” (11). While enslaving vast numbers of individual Africans, settlers “set about conquering American Indians as entire tribes,” the consequence being that, after emancipation, African Americans could choose to return to Africa or “struggle for equal citizenship in America,” whereas for American Indians the latter option “looks like a masked acceptance of final defeat: total colonization.” Mamdani then points out that “discussing the race question” as it pertains to the “African American struggle for equal citizenship [...] is often a privileged way of not talking about the native question,” an observation resonating with Lorenzo Veracini’s argument that such deflections operate in ways similar to what Freud termed “screen memories” (90). Veracini – drawing on Andrew Zimmerman’s outline of Freud’s theory in his article on the anthropological expedition to German East Africa in

1906 – argues that “screen memories characterise settler reconstructions of the colonising past” and that “a conflictual relation with history is typical of settler consciousness” (90), symptomatic as it is of the need “to disavow any founding violence” (75). In his lecture, Mamdani notes that “[a] single-minded celebration” of the “[o]ne autobiography of America [which] sees the country as ‘the first new nation,’ the child of the first modern anti-colonial revolution [...] has hidden from public consciousness a fact far more constitutive of America: the conquest and decimation of American Indians” (11). The “significance” of the fact that America is “the first modern settler state,” one which “has yet to pose the question of decolonization in the public sphere,” emerged for Mamdani in 1993 when he first visited South Africa “to study apartheid as a form of the state,” and “realized that basic institutions of apartheid had been created long before the name and the state came into being”:

The ethnic cleansing of the African population of South Africa began as early as 1913 when the Natives Land Act declared 87% of the land for whites and divided the remaining 13% into so many tribal homelands into which to herd the native population. These homelands were called ‘reserves.’ I wondered why the name sounded so uncannily like the American ‘reservation.’ The answer was illuminating, and chilling. White South Africa became independent from Britain in 1910. That same year, the new settler government sent a delegation to North America, specifically to USA and Canada, to study how to set up tribal homelands, after all, they had first been created in North America, half a century before. The American ‘reservation’ became the South African ‘reserve.’ (11-12)

Considering various land-grab incursions by British imperial forces in Southern Africa during the nineteenth century and the coinciding acts of genocide perpetrated, 1913 seems considerably belated. One example, which I discuss in Chapter 4, is the extermination of groups of Shona and Matebele by troops employed by Rhodes’s Chartered Company into Matabeleland and Shonaland in the late 1890s, a moment of founding violence Anne Harries’s *Manly Pursuits* registers in its references to Olive Schreiner’s allegorical novella *Trooper Peter Halket of Matabeleland* and its frontispiece photograph of the corpses of three Matabele men in a hanging tree outside Bulawayo with their colonial executioners posing nonchalantly. Mamdani’s argument is, however, specific in its focus on “the history and technology of settler colonialism,” of which he considers North America to be “a pioneer,” notably in the “many technologies of native control” that originated from “the concentration of natives in tribal homelands” (12), and it is relevant here because he argues that it was not from the camps “built by the British to confine Boers during the Anglo-Boer War” that “the



Nazis drew inspiration,” but from “the reservations built to confine Indian tribes – under the watch of Presidents Lincoln and Grant in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century America.”

In *The Secret River* and its sequel, *Sarah Thornhill*, Grenville, however, also shows in her portrayal of the lives of subsequent generations that this willed and socially sanctioned amnesia cannot be sustained, because it emerges as a form of “transgenerational haunting,” a concept integral to a cluster of ideas that are informed by Freud’s theories of “the return of the repressed” and “the ‘uncanny’” circulating at the intersections of the Gothic with neo-Victorian and postcolonial studies, which recurs in this thesis.<sup>5</sup> This concept derives from the work of psychoanalyst Nicolas Abraham and was first introduced in English by him and Maria Torok in their essay “The Secret of Psychoanalysis: History Reads Theory” in *Critical Inquiry* in 1987. Nicholas T. Rand, editor and translator of their *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, explains that “[t]he concept of the [transgenerational] phantom moves the focus of psychoanalytical inquiry beyond the individual being analyzed because it postulates that some people unwittingly inherit the secret psychic substance of their ancestors’ lives” (166). While its origin may be in the unwitting transmission of shameful secrets within families from one generation to another, it also operates more broadly as a “breeding ground of the phantomatic return of shameful secrets [within] the community, and possibly even entire nations” (169), which is why it makes such compelling sense when one considers the personal and communal repressions and disavowals of settler colonialism and the spectres that continue to haunt its afterlives.

In Grenville’s *Sarah Thornhill*, for example, the protagonist’s first-person narration circles her father’s “dirty secret he’d lived with for so long,” until she is “drawn into” it and must face her genealogy of “shame” as an inescapable destiny:

It would be with me now till the day I died. Once you knew, there was no way to not know. There was no cure for the bite of the past. When bad was done, it was like a stone rolling. You put your foot to that stone and pushed and there was no stopping it. Every roll of the stone brought more bad. You had to live with it, and your children too. And their children, down the line. Whether they knew it or not, they lived in its shadow. (260)

---

<sup>5</sup> Renée L. Bergland’s *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* is pertinent to the American context to which Mamdani refers. Other studies of interest here are: Justin D. Edwards’s *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature* and Gerry Turcotte’s *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction*, whereas specific to the neo-Victorian is, for example, Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham’s edited collection of essays *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past*.

Both performing and propounding the refusal of disavowal, this novel also foregrounds the question of standpoint and representation, complicity and reparation, which is always a potential blind spot in the neo-Victorian project of restorying settler colonial histories. When Sarah, at the end of her story, comes to the realisation that “I am never going to be able to tell what it was all about. I can only tell what I know,” the humility of her position as chronicler is laudable, but not entirely convincing, since it almost immediately gives way to the claim that there are “[c]ruelties and crimes, miseries on every side” to be recounted (304), which, although true in its most basic assertion, also elides the significant differences in cause and effect between the violence perpetrated by settlers and by Aborigines. Even though at first convinced by her point that, “of all the crimes done, the worst would be to let the story slip away,” and hence that “[f]or what it’s worth, [hers] had best take its place, in with all the others,” one is brought up short by that incongruous “the worst,” which exposes the rhetorical sleight of hand at work here at the moment of closure and consolation. While it is true that her story should be told, not telling it would not be a crime exceeding the killing and maiming of Aboriginal people by settlers, neither would it be accurate to treat as equivalent the settlers’ eradication of indigenous people for their land and the indigenous people’s attempts at defending themselves against invasion.

The coinciding and colliding truths thus embedded in the character’s confirmation of the validity of both her story and its telling at the end of a novel construed as an autobiographical first-hand account of how “the iniquity of the [settler] fathers [are visited] upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*” (Exodus 34: 7) are rooted in competing claims to the (home)land as a place of rightful belonging. This complex of entangled, contradictory impulses and intentions that emerges in the narrator’s negotiation of her authority to tell the settler’s side of the story, which is also implicitly one of disloyalty in its exposure of family secrets, similarly manifests in the self-consciousness that marks the projects of restoration considered in this thesis, all of which are in their critical restorying simultaneously projects of de(con)struction. Unavoidably, these stories impinge on and appropriate the stories of the indigenous peoples replaced and displaced by settlement – as Grenville’s novels show, this is in many cases intended to work against their erasure while implicitly also acknowledging complicity and regret. This storytelling nevertheless remains an ideologically and emotionally fraught undertaking, because, as Marina Warner notes in *Six Myths of Our Time*, “[a]t the core of the struggle for home lies the struggle for the way the story of place is told. Between what is remembered and what is forgotten, the self takes its bearings for home. The question is no



longer who is to guard the guardians, but who's to tell the story? Who can bear witness?" (110).

What is at issue here is the fictional uses to which history is put, as Australian historian Inga Clendinnen makes apparent in her criticism of Grenville's *The Secret River* in "The History Question: Who Owns the Past?" Claiming that "[h]istorians are puritans when it comes to the novelisation of history," she "confess[es]" to having "flinched from what looked like opportunistic transpositions and elisions" in Grenville's fictional use of the research she had done on her ancestor Solomon Wiseman (16). Pursuing a similar project of ancestral resurrection, albeit one less obviously familial, Peter Carey, in his re-appropriation of Charles Dickens's Magwitch in *Great Expectations*, relies on the same history of convict transportation and settlement of Australia but consistently elides moments of encounter between Jack Maggs and Aboriginal people. Set predominantly in England, where Carey stages the protracted conflict between the illegally returned convict character and his creator Dickens, fictionalised as Tobias Oates, in which are played out the gothic entanglements of various transgenerational hauntings, the novel returns Maggs to Australia to establish his settler dynasty in a "compression of events" (Woodcock 136) in the final chapter, which 'corrects' Dickens's version in which Magwitch dies in England, having forfeited his Australian property. The novel's abrupt closure, as Bruce Woodcock points out, has been criticised for "fail[ing] to do justice [...] to the problems of the colonial legacy of settler culture in Australia, particularly with regard to the indigenous peoples" (136).

It is in the turn to history that the texts read for this thesis most obviously conform to Elizabeth Grosz's definition of texts as "explosive, dangerous, labile, with unpredictable consequences":

Like concepts, texts are complex products, effects of history, the intermingling of old and new, a complex of internal coherences or consistencies and external referents, of intensions and extensions, of thresholds and becomings. Texts, like concepts, do things, make things, perform actions, create connections, bring about new alignments. (*Space* 126)

In their self-conscious use or referencing of particular histories of settlement, whether overtly or implicitly, these texts are fundamentally intertextual and dialogic, and it is in this that they exceed the parameters of traditional historical fiction – if understood in the simplest of terms as fictions that follow a realist mode of representation in which unmediated access to the past

is unproblematically assumed – and resemble more closely what Linda Hutcheon has defined as “historiographic metafiction,” which are “those popular paradoxical works” (*Poetics* ix)

that raise issues about historical discourse and its relation to the literary [...] issues such as those of narrative form, of intertextuality, of strategies of representation, of the role of language, of the relation between historical fact and the experiential event, and, in general, of the epistemological and ontological consequences of the act of rendering problematic that which was once taken for granted by historiography – and literature. (xi)

That there is a continuum to be traced rather than fixed categories to be demarcated in the deployment of history and fiction in the texts read here is evident, incorporating as they do a vast array of intertexts from sources treated as equal in authority to historiographical accounts, which include the nineteenth-century literary canon, the Bible, life writing of various kinds, travel writing, court and prison records, newspaper reports, natural history, ethnography, medical treatises and case histories, ornithological research, including the use of vivisection, and others. It ranges from Grenville’s more conventionally construed narratives based on research undertaken into her own ancestral history to Campion’s and Ward’s films on Aotearoa New Zealand’s settlement, both of which unfold as historical romance. Campion’s film references Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*<sup>6</sup> and Ward’s merges historical accounts of the 1868 war between the Maori and colonial forces, the life story of Ann Evans, an English woman who had nursed the Maori leader Titokowaru, and the captivity narrative of Caroline Perrett, who was abducted by the Maori in 1879 when she was eight years old because her father had desecrated Maori burial sites, but, when rescued in 1926, had identified as Maori, having “loved and married Maori husbands, twice, with whom she had several children,” and hence unwilling to leave them (Nicholson n.pag.).

With the two films, an important new element enters into the discussion of how these texts use history because both directors relied on Maori consultants. Ward extended the process of consultation into a relationship with the Maori people who inhabit the Whanganui River area where the film was shot, and formalised it in a written accord with them, which is included in the *River Queen Press Kit*, together with information about the Whanganui Iwi who are acknowledged as “vital in the filming” (47). For Ward, this is clearly also a matter of ancestral recovery, as he explains in the press kit. He had “lived for 18 months as the only

---

<sup>6</sup> In an interview with Miro Bilbrough, Campion said: “I felt very excited about the kind of passion and romantic sensibility writers like Emily Brontë were talking about. I thought it would transpose effortlessly to the situation where I was setting my story, in 1850s New Zealand” (in Hardy, “Last Patriarch” 69).

Pakeha (white New Zealander) in an isolated Maori community in the remote Urewera Ranges, filming his award-winning documentary *In Spring One Plants Alone* in the late 1970s (7), gaining, he says, “a glimpse of a vanishing set of beliefs that drove me to further investigate the beginnings of the nation I had been brought up in. Living so closely with another culture made me more conscious of my own Irish ancestry and I began thinking about the extraordinary clash of values that must have happened when European and Maori met” (8). In Campion’s case, working with a Maori consultant did not prevent the film from receiving vehement criticism for its representations of the Maori, but for her, too, her settler genealogy informs the making of the film, as she made apparent in an interview:

I think that it’s a strange heritage that I have as a *pakeha* New Zealander, and I wanted to be in a position to touch or explore that. In contrast to the original people in New Zealand, the Maori people, who have such an attachment to history, we seem to have no history, or at least not the same tradition. This makes you start to ask, ‘Well, who are my ancestors?’ My ancestors are English colonizers – the people who came out like Ada and Stewart and Baines. (in Margolis, “Introduction” 1)

A different form of historical self-consciousness marks Harries’s *Manly Pursuits*, in which the biographies of prominent literary figures like Oscar Wilde, John Ruskin, Olive Schreiner, Rudyard Kipling and Lewis Carol/Charles Dodgson are plundered and parodied alongside those of colonial politicians like Rhodes, Leander Starr Jameson and Alfred Milner and big-game hunters like Frederick Selous and G. B. Challenger, while the entire story is narrated by essentially the only entirely fictional character in the novel. Similarly irreverent, Carey’s *Jack Maggs* takes liberties with Dickens’s life and his character Magwitch, claiming both the character as his transported criminal ancestor and *Great Expectations* itself as “a really Australian story” (“Powells” n.pag), although the novel is almost entirely set in Victorian England, which Carey portrays with quiet outrage as a place of exploitation of various kinds, notably the sexual exploitation of children and of servants. Carey’s response to an interviewer’s question about historical accuracy and research is especially revealing of his particular approach to using historical sources:

When you choose to write about nineteenth century London, you are entering very well travelled streets, and there is nothing in the least neurotic about being nervous about it. You are entering the territory of Dickens or Thackeray, Wilkie Collins. If you go to them for information, you will be nothing more than a plagiarist and a thief. Yet you must somehow – to put it bluntly – invade their territory and repossess it. How can this be possible? You need

maps, charts. You need spies, agents, correspondents from the past. Foreign spies are always the best. They see things the English themselves will never tell you. Only a German, for instance, will spend a page describing a particular method of preparing bread and conclude: 'The English call this toast.' In the eyes of foreigners one discovers a foreign land, all fresh and new and waiting to be put at the service of a 20<sup>th</sup> century novel. ("Randomhouse" n.pag.)

If the appropriation of Dickens's Magwitch serves as the vehicle for Carey's reclamation of convict history as a formative aspect of Australian settler genealogy, then Tim Greene appropriates Dickens's *Oliver Twist* in his film adaptation of the novel to recover a Muslim genealogy for his post-apartheid street-child in the Malay Quarter of Cape Town, and in this way registers, albeit implicitly, the history of Cape slavery, which in Christiansë's *Unconfessed* is explicitly restored from traces the author found in the Cape archives while she was doing research on "the direct, first-person slave narratives of the Cape Colony" ("Author's Note" n.pag.). From the enigmatic reference to a slave woman who had killed her young son, Christiansë restored Sila's life story, set largely on Robben Island. Her article on this research is an example of what Antoinette Burton terms "archive stories," which she defines as "narratives about how archives are created, drawn upon, and experienced by those who use them to write history" (6). It is moreover in the personal nature of Christiansë's encounter with Sila's story that the article can be read as a "testimon[y] about the embodied experience of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and political encounters between the scholar and the archive itself" (9), which, in turn, invites a reading of *Unconfessed* as an "archive story" of a slightly different kind, because it both originates from the archive and becomes in itself a kind of archive, a reading I pursue in more depth in Chapter 3. Christiansë's novel thus foregrounds the history of colonial settlement from the perspective of the exploited slave, whose 'settlement' registers in her re-naming as Sila van den Kaap in the slave records of her 'owners', when she had in fact been taken there by force as a child from Mozambique. In relation to the textual restorations of settler colonial ancestries central to most of the texts read for this study, this novel therefore functions contrapuntally by recovering a counter-genealogy from the history of slavery that traces routes through the African continent and also roots itself in the children born from slave women raped by their white settler 'masters'.

Similarly concerned with the retrieval of a marginalised history from the settler colonial archive, Atwood's research for her novel *Alias Grace* is based on the life of a young Irish servant who had been convicted of the murder of her Canadian settler employer, Thomas Kinnear, and implicated in, although never tried for, the murder of his pregnant

housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery. In her lecture on writing the novel, Atwood discusses the “sorts of questions that [her] fictional excursion into the nevertheless real Canadian past left [her] asking,” and she notes that “a different writer, with access to exactly the same historical records, could have – and without doubt would have – written a very different novel” (“In Search” 228). “I’m not one of those who believe there is no truth to be known,” she explains, “but I have to conclude that, although there undoubtedly was truth – somebody did kill Nancy Montgomery – truth is sometimes unknowable, at least by us.” In this novel, the counter-history – which has embedded within it the history of England’s earlier colonisation of Ireland and the consequent forced migrations of impoverished, starved Irish to its various other colonies, another story of replacement and displacement – is the ‘downstairs’ one of female domestic servants’ vulnerability to male employers who assume sexual access as a given prerogative, a scenario Carey similarly exposes in his portrayal of Mercy Larkin.

What is striking about both Christiansē’s and Atwood’s respective narrative experiments with the first-person voice as a means of making the dead speak and speaking to the dead is their reconfiguration of these histories as embodied stories, the voices of the past given flesh, their language made eloquent with the body’s sensations. It is a strategy and conceit typical of the reanimation work undertaken by the projects of restorying/restoring read for this thesis, which are all, in one way or another, putting the bodies of the past back together in a way that, although vulnerable to Jameson’s critique of postmodernist use of history as the “random cannibalization of styles of the past” (*Postmodernism* ix), more closely resembles the meticulous assemblage of parts into a new, reanimated corpus like that of Frankenstein’s experiment. Whereas the metaphor of the text as cannibal suggests incorporation through an indiscriminate, parasitic ingestion of other similar bodies, a counter-metaphorics more appropriate to the “resurrection work” (Schor 235) that these texts do already operates in their overt, self-conscious deployment of intertextuality and heteroglossia to reconfigure the text as a new, reanimated body made up of a variety of old fragments retrieved from the corpus of history.

This presence of the past as resurrected body is made visually immediate in Farber’s performance work for her travelling exhibition *Dis-Location / Re-Location* in which she stages the (re)fashioning of a post-apartheid white, female subjectivity rooted in colonial settlement and Jewish diaspora as a gothic horror story of painful metamorphosis through self-inflicted wounding, implantation and hybridisation. At the centre of this performance of a bodily metaphors of unsettlement is the doubled self of artist and Victorian settler foremother merged into the neo-Victorian composite protagonist Leora-Bertha. In a series of

visual narratives, this uncanny figure embodies the sense of (un)belonging and in-betweenness that troubles post-apartheid settler subjectivities that continue to be haunted by the (post)colonial past. Basing her work on the life story and letters of Bertha Guttman, a young Jewish woman brought to South Africa from Sheffield in 1885 to marry the Jewish entrepreneur Sammy Marks, Farber also brings into play her own Jewish lineage, and with it the history of the Holocaust and the diaspora, by using Freda Farber's narration of her family's immigration to South Africa from Latvia as voiceover to the video, along with her own reading from Bertha Marks's letters to her husband. This ambivalent encounter with the foremother is similarly enacted in the poetic disfiguring of the pioneering foremother's corpus of writing by Atwood in her use of Moodie's published accounts of settler life in Canada and by Krog in her use of the Cape journals and letters written by Lady Anne Barnard. As re-assemblages of fragments of these already troubled texts that double back on themselves in recounting their very different experiences of settler colonial life, the poems become bodies that channel the voices of the dead – consistently in Atwood's work in which Moodie is the speaker, but intermittently so in Krog's in which there are different speaker personas.

The analogy with Frankenstein's monster of course begs the question whether these texts are then themselves monstrous, which, if we recall that the Latin root of the word, *monere*, means 'to warn', leads us back to that other troubling question about "the politics of looking back and the motivations that underwrite such a need to look back" (Radhakrishnan 46). Although one might argue that even those texts that seem most conventional in their treatment of history and perhaps more obviously risk a nostalgic reification of the colonial past are nevertheless marked by the self-consciousness of a critical (post)settler sensibility, it does not necessarily secure for them immunity from the infections of "the unthought known," a term psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas uses to describe "that part of the psyche that lives in the wordless world" of the "grammar of being" (*Shadow* 3). Anticipating Clingman's later formulation of "a grammar of identity," which is constituted in the "correlation between how the self is put together and how we navigate ourselves through space and time" (11), Bollas's "grammar of being," as Gabriele Schwab explains, is established via "the modes in which an infant is received and cared for, and the ways in which its earliest sensory experiences are stimulated and organized" (107). Although it precedes the acquisition of language, it nevertheless remains vitally present "[e]ven after the symbolic order of language is put into play [...] inhabiting language as an unspoken dimension, or, as Bollas calls it, an 'unthought known'" (107). Because "cultures create a space for the dissemination and negotiation of a



tacit or secret cultural knowledge through indirect forms of figuration and communication,” Schwab argues, literature and other art forms function as “facilitators for such indirect [...] transference and transformation of a tacit cultural knowledge” (125). What this seems to suggest is that we are all, willy-nilly, subject to the hidden interpellative powers of cultural conditioning, which, in the context of settler genealogies leaves us powerless to question, resist or change. However, in a question that implies that agency is possible because we have the capacity to cultivate self-awareness premised on an attentiveness to our entanglement in a particular family history and genealogy, Bollas brings us precisely to the issue of ancestral influence and Abraham’s theory of “transgenerational haunting” when he asks:

Is it not possible that by eventually developing a limited relation to the unthought known in ourselves, we can then address the mysteries of our existence, such as the curious fact of existence itself, particularly the legacy of our ancestors carried as it is through the generations via the idiom of the inherited disposition? (*Shadow* 282-3)

In bringing Bollas’s question and what I see as its convergence with Abraham’s “transgenerational haunting” to bear on the projects of restorying/restoration considered in this study, I am also, through a return to Veracini’s contention that “[t]he stories settlers tell themselves and about themselves are crucial to an exploration of settler colonial subjectivities” (*Settler Colonialism* 103), making a claim for the importance of such projects in (post)settler contexts, which, even as they falter and fail, do the work of a particular kind of mourning which is, to some extent, also a necessary refusal to forego melancholia through their persistent attempts to waken the dead in order to speak to them. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, for example, argue that “melancholia might be said to constitute [...] an ongoing and open relationship with the past – bringing its ghosts and spectres, its flaring and fleeting images, into the present” (4). Perhaps best captured by historicist Stephen Greenblatt’s explanation – “I began with the desire to speak with the dead” (in Robinson 7) – this compelling desire to return to the past, to resurrect the dead and to make them speak is typical of neo-Victorianism broadly but notable also in the writing about writing by prominent authors like A. S. Byatt and Atwood. To return to the histories of settler colonialism and to retrieve from them the genealogies that locate one as inescapably implicated in the violence of ‘founding’ a place of belonging which was always contingent upon replacing and displacing those who already belonged there is, however, also to go far beyond the telling of

ghost stories and to enter “Into the Dark Chamber”<sup>7</sup> to confront the flesh-and-blood stories of the tangled “wounded histories” of perpetrators and victims archived there (Peterson 7).

This is, of course, to enter the place of intense contestation and recrimination, where one must heed, for example, Christiansē’s concern about “white Afrikaners” claiming to be “homeless” or “displaced” as “many agents of apartheid’s violence took up the language of victimization – that very language that apartheid denied its others – in order to claim their victimization by history” which, she argues, derives from “the desire to possess a place” (“Passing” 376). It is a claim to belonging and ownership that Veracini sees as typical of “classic settler accounts” which assert legitimacy through the settler’s suffering and hard labour that had improved the settled land. He argues that, “[a]s a result, settler colonial discourses emphasise victimology and displace history” (“Historylessness” 274). But it is as important in this context to take note of Toni Morrison’s reminder that we must pay attention to the “impact of racism on those who perpetuate it,” since, while it is obviously crucial to focus on the victims of racist policies and attitudes, it is “equally valuable [to make] a serious intellectual effort to see what racial ideology does to the mind, imagination, and behaviour of masters” (*Playing* 11-12). Risking a densification of quotations here, I nevertheless want to expand on the cautions and possibilities that accrue to the reading of these texts by turning to Jacqueline Rose’s response to Said’s *Freud and the Non-European*, in which she brings together Freud’s assertion that “[w]hat a people have in common [...] is a trauma” – referring to the act of murder that consolidates monotheism and which is also an act of founding violence – and Said’s reference in his book *Beginnings* to “a knowledge” which is “so devastating as to be unbearable in one’s own sight, and only slightly more bearable as a subject of psychoanalytic investigation” (75), a cause, one might argue, of exactly those screen memories Veracini sees operating in settler colonial narratives. Rose calls this “the other half of the story” because, she cautions,

trauma, far from generating freedom, openness to others as well as to the divided and unresolved fragments of a self, leads to a very different kind of fragmentation – one which is, in Freud’s own words, ‘devastating’, and causes identities to batten down, to go exactly the other way: towards dogma, the dangers of coercive and coercing forms of faith. Are we at risk of idealizing the flaws and fissures of identity? Fragmentation can engender petrification, just as it can be a consequence of historical alienation that a people, far from dispersing themselves, start digging for a history to legitimate the violence of the state. (76)

---

<sup>7</sup> This is the title of J. M. Coetzee’s essay on “The Writer and the South African State.”



Yet, if there is devastation there is also, as Rich's poem suggests, the possibility of the recovery of "the treasures that prevail," and the healing implicit in the act of recovery, which is not to capitulate to the easy sentimentalism of denial, the kitsch feel-good of the group-hug at the foot of the glittering rainbow, but to take seriously the cautious and cautioning optimism in Judith Butler's beautifully expressed elaboration on Walter Benjamin's vision of the "angel of history," which is in itself a beautiful, tragic elaboration on Paul Klee's painting "Angelus Novus" (*Illuminations* 257):

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. The storm is what we call progress. (257-258)

In her "Afterword" to the essays collected in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, which think through the consequences of displacement and the loss of home/land and its coinciding histories, Butler notes that "Benjamin and Freud both give a certain voice to the essays," which "might be said to survive the author, but not in a way that extends that author," because, "[i]ndeed, authorship is wrecked through its appropriation, and it is the strange fecundity of that wreckage" that interests her (469). Although largely concerned with histories consequent on exactly the kind of violent displacement of people typical of colonial settlement, Butler's paradoxical notion of the "fecundity" of "wreckage" and also its strangeness, its uncanniness, is nevertheless compelling when brought to bear on settler genealogies and the textual navigation of the (post)settler space, which one might still, optimistically, choose to see as "a sea of possibility" (to appropriate a refrain from singer-songwriter Patti Smith's "Horses"). In an essay on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the same collection, Christiansë describes her undertaking to write about Sila van den Kaap as "one of salvage" ("Passing" 377), and in that choice of word too, even as it registers disaster and loss, possibility ebbs and flows, which for the white (post)settler subject embarking on the work of salvage also must register as crosscurrents and undertows.

In my attempt to navigate these troubled waters in this study, Radhakrishnan's defence of Said's "ultimate advocacy of humanism, despite its problematic record and genealogy," offers a much-needed beacon, because, as he points out, it "is in fact diagnostic

of [Said's] immense confidence that by the sheer intensity and density of individual critical consciousness and human agency, systemic, historical, epistemological forms of negative baggage can be divested and shed" since he "entertain[ed] the hope that every culture can learn from its past mistakes and salvage itself as a just and fair possibility for the future" (23).



## Chapter 2

### Female Genealogy and a Bodily Metaphorics of Unsettlement in Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location*, Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* and Krog's *Lady Anne*

---

To speak about and search for a 'politics of location' is not to desire a final resting place, an essence that we can comfortably attach ourselves to, but a 'position' that works against disembodiment, immobilization and silence.

Joan Borsa (in Betterton, *Intimate* 162)

The body is not simply a sign to be read, a symptom to be deciphered, but also a force to be reckoned with.

Elizabeth Grosz (*Space* 120)

Rootless may be bad, but is rooted any better?

Germaine Greer (Preface x)

and instead my skin thickened  
with bark and the white hair of roots

My heirloom face I brought  
with me a crushed eggshell  
among other debris:  
the china plate shattered  
on the forest road, the shawl  
from India decayed, pieces of letters

and the sun here had stained  
me its barbarous colour

Hands grown stiff, the fingers  
brittle as twigs  
eyes bewildered after  
seven years [...]

the mouth cracking  
open like a rock in fire  
trying to say

What is this

Margaret Atwood – "Looking in a Mirror"



In the post-1994 period of transition to democracy, South African identities and histories were re-constructed and re-invented under the rubric of the utopian metaphor of the 'rainbow nation' inscribed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his Foreword to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report. Forming part of the ameliorative discourses of reconciliation and 'nation building', the metaphor invoked a new state of racial harmony

which relied on “black and white together [...] to close the chapter on our past.”<sup>1</sup> The imperative to move forward together as one nation was at that point indisputably urgent, but it also had embedded within it the temptation to forget or repress the horrors and complicities of “our past” – an entanglement of the histories of apartheid with those of colonial settlement (Dutch and English), interspersed with the histories of various diasporas and migrations, slavery and indentured labour. Here, with the necessary call for ‘closure’ on the past, the uncanny obtrudes at the threshold to the new nation to trouble its guiding metaphor, which implicitly references the biblical covenant after the flood, because, as Nicholas Royle reminds us, “the beginning is already haunted” (*Uncanny* 1). For South Africans with a settler colonial genealogy, this haunting continues to accrue to questions of home(land) and (un)belonging, raising the restless spectres of that other originary moment of arrival and settlement, and its consequent displacements and erasures. In South African artist Leora Farber’s 2007 to 2008 national travelling exhibition *Dis-Location / Re-Location* (an installation comprising photographic and video work and sculpture), these anxieties and desires are performed in a bodily metaphoric of unsettlement that appropriates and reconfigures the metaphoric of transcendence and rebirth that underpins the legend of the ‘rainbow nation’. By staging “the coming into being” of a post-apartheid white female subjectivity as a process of bodily transformation initiated through “the horror of self-violation” enacted on the already uncannily merged body of artist and Victorian settler foremother (Farber, “Dis-Location” 321, 320), Farber’s performance activates the Gothic as a hinge where postcolonial and neo-Victorian concerns intersect, a theoretical constellation with the female body at its centre that informs my reading of Farber’s work in conjunction with what I here propose as two poetic antecedents, Margaret Atwood’s *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970) and Antjie Krog’s *Lady Anne* (1989).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report (1998) can be found at <http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/commissions/1998/trc/index.htm>. My quotations are from section 1.1 par. 93. For a more extensive engagement with and critique of what David Simon terms “the foundational myth” of the ‘New South Africa’ (Introduction 7), see Adam Habib’s “Myth of the Rainbow Nation: Prospects of the Consolidation of Democracy in South Africa” and Meg Samuelson’s *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition*.

<sup>2</sup> Although I refer to Krog’s translations of the selection of the *Lady Anne* poems in *Down to My Last Skin* (2000), I rely on the original Afrikaans collection, using my own free translation of examples where necessary. Krog’s motivation for translating her poetry into English is discussed by Christine Marshall in “A Change of Tongue: Antjie Krog’s Poetry in English,” in which she relates it to Krog’s sustained metaphoric and emblematic use of the sole or flatfish (*tongvis* in Afrikaans – literally ‘tongue fish’) from *Lady Anne* onwards for both evolutionary adaptation and language, or tongue, a thematic concern also discussed by Louise Viljoen (“(Auto)biographical” 189). Marshall concludes, however, that “Krog’s translations of her poetry into English published in *Down to My Last Skin* have inevitably failed to do full justice to her poetry,” referring to Leon de

In the series of photographic stills and video footage of Farber's performances of the three central narratives of *Dis-Location / Re-Location* ("A Room of Her Own," "The Ties that Bind Her" and "Aloerosa"),<sup>3</sup> the artist's body, like the gothic haunted house or body possessed, plays host to or reincarnates its Victorian spectral ancestor in the composite persona of the protagonist, Leora-Bertha. Farber employs this figure in which past and present are irrevocably intertwined to embody the post-apartheid intensification of settler anxieties about the legitimacy of inheritance and ownership, and hence genealogy, and the debts consequent on historical crimes – fears that also inform the Gothic's concern with "transgenerational haunting" (Castricano, *Cryptomimesis* 16; Edwards, *Gothic Canada* xxix). In Farber's work, the question of what can be legitimately owned and safely disowned, and what then consequently owed and to whom in expiation or affiliation, shadows her attempts as "a white, middle-class Jewish female of British descent [...] to 'renegotiate' a sense of South African identity" (Farber, "Dis-Location" 320). Simultaneously, this requires her "to negotiate a sense of being 'African' within a postcolonial environment," given her "feelings of 'displacement' in relation to Johannesburg" and her "identification with [...] South African British colonial history and its current personal and public residues of identity construction" (322, 318).

While my reading of a metaphoric of unsettlement and the appropriation of the settler foremother's body in this chapter focuses on Farber's work, I refer to examples from Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* and Krog's *Lady Anne* as earlier works which enact a similar kind of disfigurement in the poetic dismembering of the chosen foremother's corpus of life writing (journals and letters). Atwood's inclusion here anticipates my reading of her novel *Alias Grace* in the following chapter, but its main purpose in this chapter is to introduce Canadian settler colonial history, reconfigured poetically and located specifically in a particular historical figure, as a counterpart to the South African context Farber and Krog invoke. Although it does not set out to restory the nineteenth century in its negotiation of Australian identity and the history of settler colonialism, Germaine Greer's writing on what she terms "the pain of unbelonging" is referred to here because of its resonance with the concerns that inform and emerge from the texts discussed, particularly in her quite different use of the figure of the foremother, her maternal grandmother, who Greer for many years

---

Kock's suggestion, in his *Mail and Guardian* review of the book, that the English versions fail to convey "the Afrikaans treasures of belonging and regret" (90).

<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I focus on "A Room of Her Own" and "Aloerosa." I return to my discussion of Farber's work in Chapter 5 of this thesis, where I look more closely at "The Ties that Bind Her."

imagined to be Jewish and thus representative of the diasporic or nomadic identity with which she identifies in opposition to the imperative to belong (Preface x).

Krog, a poet who is also recognised as an authoritative, and sometimes controversial, writer on the Truth and Reconciliation process – in *Country of My Skull* (1998),<sup>4</sup> an account of and meditation on her experiences as a reporter on the TRC – and on post-1994 South African identity – in *A Change of Tongue* (2003) – wrote *Lady Anne* based on her reading of the journals and letters of Lady Anne Barnard (1750-1825), a Scottish noblewoman who in 1797 accompanied her husband, Andrew Barnard, to the Cape of Good Hope, which had been ceded to the British in 1795.<sup>5</sup> Through Barnard’s intervention with Henry Dundas, the British Secretary of State for War (an early suitor and life-long friend), her husband had been appointed as Colonial Secretary to the Administration at the Cape – the first British civil administration was being established at the time – where they stayed until 1802 when the Cape was ceded to the Dutch after the signing of the Peace of Amiens. During their time at the Cape, she was the official hostess of the new administration under Lord Macartney, the governor, who allocated to the Barnards “the principal set of apartments” in the Castle of Good Hope (Lenta, “Art” 178). She also functioned as “Dundas’s unofficial observer,” “his eyes and ears at the Cape,” as Dorothy Driver describes her, by writing letters to him and extensively recording life at the Cape in her journals (“Lady Anne” 50, 49). Barnard revised these journals in her old age, offering them to a select readership of her sisters and “to any Friends of theirs who love her and have nothing better to do than read this by the fireside with Good Nature for their Companion,” her aim being “to be of use to Friends who may in future accompany their husbands as I am doing” (Barnard in Lenta, “Art” 171). Although she had

---

<sup>4</sup> The impact of the book is captured by Anthea Garman who points out that it “was widely reviewed by English and Afrikaans newspapers and magazines and it drew substantial attention internationally. In the next two years it garnered the following awards for Krog: the *Sunday Times* Alan Paton Award (shared with Stephen Clingman for *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary*); the BookData/South African Booksellers’ Book of the Year prize; the Hiroshima Foundation Award (shared with John Kani) and the Olive Schreiner Award for the best work of prose published between 1998 and 2000. *Country* received an honourable mention in the 1999 Noma Awards for Publishing in Africa and it also appears as one of “Africa’s 100 Best Books of the Twentieth Century” (an initiative of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair)” (“Mass” 3). The book was also turned into a film by director John Boorman, titled *In My Country*, starring Juliette Binoche and Samuel L. Jackson, and released in South Africa in 2005. As regards the controversial nature of Krog’s use of narrative point of view and poetic register in *Country of My Skull*, a text variously defined as “a hybrid work” (Saunders), “metajournalism” (Olivier) and “journalistic memoir” (Cook), Garman’s “The Mass Subject in Krog’s *Country of My Skull*” provides a good overview (14-15).

<sup>5</sup> Krog’s *Lady Anne* was awarded the prestigious Herzog Prize for Afrikaans literature in 1990. Margaret Lenta’s extensive writing on Lady Anne Barnard has been invaluable; see “Degrees of Freedom: Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Diaries,” “The Shape of a Woman’s Life: Lady Anne Barnard’s Memoir” and “The Art of the Possible: Lady Anne Barnard’s ‘Cape’ Writings and Their Survival.” She has also edited the two volumes of *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* (1999) and *Paradise, the Castle and the Vineyard: Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Diaries* (2006).

prohibited publication of the journals, she had ensured their survival by leaving them to an heir who had, as Margaret Lenta points out, “the means and tradition of preservation,” but they remained “inert for 170 years” (“Art” 182). Dundas had similarly preserved her letters to him “as a collection, and they were passed on in his family for over a hundred years” (177).<sup>6</sup> Now available in various published versions, Barnard’s journals and letters “provide the earliest records we have of a British woman’s life at the Cape” (Driver, “Lady Anne” 46).

Atwood’s earlier collection of poems similarly employs the autobiographical writing of a settler foremother, Susanna Moodie (1803-1885), whose *Roughing it in the Bush, or, Life in Canada* (1852) and *Life in the Clearings versus the Bush* (1853) describe her life as a British settler in Canada, where she had arrived with her husband, John Wedderburn Dunbar Moodie, and their first child in August 1832. Unlike Barnard, who remained at the Cape for only a few years and whose excursions into the interior were elaborately planned and well-stocked affairs about which she wrote in her journals and letters, Moodie settled in Canada, her “traumatic experiences of emigration and backwoods life” (Ballstadt, “Strickland” n.pag.) differing markedly from those of the aristocratic Lady Anne, as is evident from her *Roughing it in the Bush*, written with the intention to dissuade rather than encourage prospective emigrants of her class: “If these sketches should prove the means of deterring one family from sinking their property, and shipwrecking all their hopes, by going to reside in the backwoods of Canada, I shall consider myself amply repaid for revealing the secrets of the prison-house, and feel that I have not toiled and suffered in the wilderness in vain” (in Staines, Foreword ix). Moodie’s husband had at first resisted the move to Canada and apparently regretted that they had not instead settled in South Africa, where he had lived from 1819 to 1829, serving as magistrate at Umkomas, Natal, before returning to England, prior to their marriage in 1831 (they had met in 1830 at the home of Thomas Pringle). His *Ten Years in South Africa* was published in 1835, three years after their arrival in Canada (Ballstadt, “Moodie” n.pag.). Moodie had to rely on her writing for an income, particularly so when her husband became increasingly unable to support his family. Before moving to Canada, she had “been a writer of children’s tales and rural sketches as well as a poet and essayist” (Staines, Foreword ix), and, in addition to the two autobiographical books, continued from 1839 to 1851 to write serial novels, short stories, sketches and poetry for the *Literary Garland*; she also “contributed to and edited with her husband *Victoria Magazine: a Cheap Periodical for the Canadian People* from 1847 to 1848” (Smith, “Gender” 77). Whereas Barnard’s writing

---

<sup>6</sup> Lenta gives an extensive overview of the publication history of Barnard’s writing in notes to her various articles.



was constrained by the political sensitivities of her position in relation to the British government – having to negotiate her dependence on their goodwill for her husband’s employment and her indisputably privileged yet precarious position as a woman invited to comment on the male preserves of the colonial administration to which she had been given access – which accounts for her prohibition on the publication of her journals, Moodie, unhindered by political affiliation or dependence, pursued publication. Driven by inclination and financial need, she evidently felt no compunction about reporting what she saw and experienced, often turning to sensationalism for effect and persuasion, being “a literary lady” with an inclination to “[e]mbroider” and “fond of Charles Dickens,” as the Reverend Verringer and Simon Jordan in *Alias Grace* describe her (223, 221).

Atwood’s interest in Canadian settler history and in “the presence of the past in the fabric of contemporary human life” had, as David Staines points out, already found expression in poems from earlier collections, notably “The Settlers,” the final poem in *The Circle Game* (1966), and “Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer” in *The Animals in That Country* (1968), before the more comprehensive elaboration on this theme in *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, a volume of poetry that has been reprinted twenty-four times. When she had first read Moodie’s books, she had felt them to be “collections of disconnected anecdotes,” given coherence by “the personality of Mrs Moodie,” which struck Atwood as “reflect[ing] many of the obsessions still with us today” (Afterword 62). Only later did the poems take shape, having been “generated by a dream,” they “detached themselves from the books in the same way that other poems detach themselves from the events that give rise to them” (63). Although “suggested by Mrs Moodie’s books,” Atwood explains, these poems do not respond to “her conscious voice but the other voice running like a counterpoint through her work.” What registers for Atwood as “the inescapable doubleness of [Moodie’s] vision” is simultaneously diagnosed as the “paranoid schizophrenia” of Canadians at the time she begins to consolidate her career as, specifically, a Canadian writer, an occupation she would later describe in her book on writing as *Negotiating with the Dead*, drawing, with typical Atwoodian wit, the gothic analogy between writer and grave-digger (*Negotiating* 26).

Atwood’s excavation of Moodie as settler foremother through whom to negotiate Canadian national and cultural identity appears more straightforward or predictable than does Krog’s choice of Barnard, given her Afrikaner genealogy. Describing *Lady Anne* as “a postmodern epic,” Louise Viljoen suggests that “Krog interrogates her own situation as a white Afrikaans-speaking woman in the politically turbulent South Africa of the late eighties by using the historical figure of Lady Anne Barnard as a ‘guide’ [...] for her own life” (“*Lady*



*Anne*” n. pag.). Writing as an Afrikaans/Afrikaner dissident poet under apartheid who is inescapably compromised by her ethnicity, Krog’s choice of Barnard, a British colonial subject, as foremother complicates the fraught and shifting allegiances already evident in Barnard’s writing, where the writer’s subject position is simultaneously complicit with and resistant to an oppressive political system.<sup>7</sup> That such a negotiation of subjectivity must necessarily play out in the most intimate of relationships is made apparent by Viljoen in her essay on Krog’s use of the autobiographical mode in *A Change of Tongue* and the portrayal of her coming to writing while still at school in relation to and in conflict with her mother, Afrikaans writer Dot Serfontein. At first relying on her mother’s nurturing of her writing, the daughter, confronted by “the fact that the mother rates political loyalty to her Afrikaner heritage higher than loyalty to her [own] writing,” breaks away from this heritage and the apartheid nationalism associated with it, “cho[osing] resistance rather than loyalty to her Afrikaner heritage” (Viljoen “(Auto)biographical” 203). The later choice of Lady Anne as foremother does not, however, represent a simple shift of allegiance to the British strand of colonial settlement, but is rather one strategy among many employed in what Viljoen describes as Krog’s position of “constantly engag[ing] with the difficult reconciliation between her responsibility to write good poetry and her political responsibilities,” epitomised for Viljoen by the poem “parool” [parole] in *Lady Anne* in which the speaker struggles with the function and validity of poetry at a time of “gerugte van verdwynings / van martelings / van anonieme dodes” [rumours of disappearances, of tortures, of the anonymous dead] (36).

During the political state of emergency the poet herself falls into a state of poetic barrenness, a condition from which she attempts to write herself but fails, as the first poem employing Lady Anne’s autobiographical persona and voice, “twee jaar aankomende maand,” sets out in painstaking detail. In it, the soundings she attempts of that interior world from which poetry comes remain futile and thwarted – “ek split my ore na binne / klop teen the wande probeer trillings onderskep” (13, lines 18-19). After two years in which she is unable to write poetry – “twee jaar sonder ’n enkele reël donker // sonder ’n gedagte selfs wat sou kon tot dig” [two years without a single line of darkness, without a thought even that could come to light in a poem] (lines 3-4) – the poet initiates the project that will become

---

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Driver’s “Lady Anne Barnard’s *Cape Journals* and the Concept of ‘Self-Othering’” interrogates “a tendency in current critical fashion which denounces – with extraordinary ease – white South African writing for an apparently self-assured deployment of racist stereotypes, thereby displacing such stereotypes on to a vaguely defined and safely remote past and on to writer against whom the (politically cleansed) critic now emerges in radical opposition,” and offers instead “a reading which looks beyond stereotypes of ‘self’ and ‘other’ in order to disclose their moments of simultaneous unsettlement” in Barnard’s writing (47). I refer to Driver’s term “self-othering” below.

*Lady Anne*, the process itself becoming an integral part of the collection's (auto)biographical trajectory. In the epistolary poem that follows "twee jaar aankomende maand," the speaker tells S, to whom the letter is addressed, that she is searching for a new subject – "ek is op soek na 'n vrou met taal en transparante see // wat kan droogdok op papier" [I am searching for a woman with language and transparent sea that can drydock on paper] (15, lines 7-8), ending the poem-letter with the postscript, in English, that she is considering three possibilities, one of which is "Lady Anne Lindsay (Barnard)," notably the only English woman on the list (the other two being "Augusta de Mist, Mrs Koopmans de Wet"). Having made up her mind that Lady Anne is the one, she writes, in the poem that follows, a five-line dedication and salutation to her subject, in which she hails her in the first line with the formal "Wees gegroet Lady Anne Barnard!" and assumes the position of bard or praise poet in the second and third lines – "U lewe wil ek besing en akkoorde // daaruit haal vir die wysie van ons Afrika kwart" [Thy life I want to praise and from it pull chords for the tune of our Africa quarter]. The formality of address retained in the Afrikaans "U" is however tonally destabilised in the ambiguity of sustained hyperbolic veneration – "Ek knieval, buig en soen u hand" [I fall to my knees, bow and kiss thy hand], a subservience that culminates in the last line of the poem in which the poet appeals to Lady Anne to be her guide – "wees u my gids, ek – u benarde bard!" [be thou my guide, I – thy bemused bard!]. The poet's assertion of her limitations and unworthiness as praise poet registering in the word "benarde" is similarly undercut by the implication of clownishness in the word – "nar" being a clown or fool, suggesting that the whole endeavour in its excessiveness is a bit of a joke, after all, not to be taken too seriously. What is also at stake here is Lady Anne's aristocracy, the bowing and scraping of the speaker a thinly disguised mockery of British class hierarchy, but simultaneously self-directed in its thrust, the poet writing during a time of severe political repression and unrest, when these gestures and this choice of guide seem absurd. Yet, it is in this context where one may read the poet's foolishness implied by the word "benarde" somewhat differently in that it is the fool's prerogative and duty to speak the truth to the king, which furthermore brings to the fore how impossible such a task of truth-telling was under the conditions imposed by the state of emergency declared by the apartheid government at the time, making the position of poet as "bard" a circumscribed and straitened ["benarde"] one.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> P.P. van der Merwe, in "A Poet's Commitment: Antjie Krog's *Lady Anne*," also points to "[a] possible pun in 'benarde' [which] echoes the surname [Barnard] and may also recall the license of the court jester, an element of subservience which seems appropriate for Lady Anne but sounds ironic overtones in Krog's context of social conflict and class struggle," but does not pursue an in-depth reading of it (165).

From the start, then, the push and pull of ambivalence define the poetic project of ancestral recovery and (auto)biography, mid-way through which Krog intrudes two prose entries from her own journal, written when she visited the Lindsay estate, Balcarres, in Scotland, in 1987 to look at the original copies of Barnard's journals, a woman with whom she had been obsessed for many years (50). In the first entry, Krog recounts how on receiving a phone call from Lord Robert Lindsay, twenty-ninth Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, to arrange her visit to the estate, she breaks into a sweat, her English breaking down into single barbaric phrases ["Ek breek in a sweet om die gehoorbuis uit. My Engels radbraak tot enkele barbaarse frases"]. At the threshold to the world of this chosen foremother, the language of that world, which is not her mother tongue, deserts her as she is made inarticulate by anxiety verging on shame, her faltering speech that of the barbaric colonial or peasant, implicitly registering British colonial attitudes towards the Cape Dutch evident in Barnard's writing. In the second entry, Krog's description of her visit to the estate explicitly refers to class difference, her meeting with the Earl triggering the realisation that she had under-estimated Barnard's class, which in turn sets off a bodily response, instinctive in its compulsions, the poet suddenly having to contend with a head that wants to curtsy, a hand that wants to salute, an intimidation to honour ["Want ek worstel meteens met 'n kop wat wil knieval, 'n hand wat wil saluer, 'n intimidasie tot eerbetoon"], an impulse similar to the one described in "Wees gegroet Lady Anne Barnard!" but here there is a definite element of resistance, suggested by the word "worstel" [struggle/grapple].

In Krog's juxtaposition of poems in which it is the poet's autobiographical "I" that speaks with those in which it is Lady Anne who is the speaker, a dynamic similar to the "self-othering" Dorothy Driver identifies in Barnard's *Cape Journals* can be discerned, because, like Barnard, Krog "presents different facets of the self, as if the different speaking positions that constitute her subjectivity are engaged in negotiation (or contestation) with one another, the self engaged in dialogue with an 'otherness' within" (Driver, "Lady Anne" 46). In Krog's case, however, these "different speaking positions" are represented by both an exteriorised 'other' in the form of Lady Anne, who speaks in the first-person as a dramatic 'character' constructed by Krog from Barnard's letters and journals, and an interior self, 'othered' in the exteriorisation of the poet's autobiographical use of the confessional voice, which also in some poems directly addresses the Lady Anne 'character' or persona. In contrast, Atwood's sustained ventriloquism of Moodie's voice in *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* more closely resembles an interiorised "self-othering" in Moodie's ambivalence about almost every aspect of her life as a settler in Canada, capturing and perhaps even exaggerating in this

dramatisation the condition of the settler foremother whom Atwood describes in the afterword as “divided down the middle”:

she praises the Canadian landscape but accuses it of destroying her; she dislikes the people already in Canada but finds in people her only refuge from the land itself; she preaches progress and the march of civilization while brooding elegiacally upon the destruction of the wilderness; she delivers optimistic sermons while showing herself to be fascinated with deaths, murders, the criminals in Kingston Penitentiary and the incurably insane in the Toronto lunatic asylum. She claims to be an ardent Canadian patriot while at the same time she is standing back from the country and criticizing it as though she were a detached observer, a stranger. (62)

This notion of a divided self that Atwood in her afterword conceives of in terms of both voice (as pointed out above, she writes that she responded not so much to Moodie’s “conscious voice but the other voice running like a counterpoint through her work” [63]) and vision (what she describes as its “inescapable doubleness”), while it underpins her characterisation of Moodie and operates as a central thematic concern in the collection, is explicitly articulated as self-definition in the poem “The Double Voice,” which begins with the lines: “Two voices / took turns using my eyes” (lines 1-2). Premised on the conceit that eyes mirror the soul and speak, looking and speaking are conflated in these lines which lead into the uncanny doubled self-portrait of the two selves or “voices” that inhabit the speaker and look out / speak through her eyes, the “[o]ne had manners” (line 3), “[t]he other voice / had other knowledge” (lines 9-10). Co-existing, the two selves represent, on the one hand, an earlier, gentler, English Moodie, the epitome of mild, innocent Victorian womanhood, “paint[ing] in watercolours / us[ing] hushed tones when speaking / of mountains or Niagara Falls / compos[ing] uplifting verse / and expend[ing] sentiment upon the poor” (lines 4-8) and, on the other, the Canadian Moodie, who sees and knows the harsher, searing truths of bodily existence and survival, and, having achieved in time a tired pragmatism, lives with this “other knowledge”:

that men sweat  
always and drink often,  
that pigs are pigs  
but must be eaten  
anyway, that unborn babies  
fester like wounds in the body,  
that there is nothing to be done  
about mosquitoes (lines 11-18)

Through the speaker's "bleared and gradually / bleaching eyes" (lines 20-21), the English Moodie looks out on the "red leaves, / the rituals of seasons and rivers" (lines 21-22), as if nature's too fierce brilliance scorches the retina, makes, in its implacable endurance, the settler's life seem as insubstantial and transient as a figure fading from an old photograph. In contrast, the Canadian Moodie finds (and here the shift from seeing to finding suggests mobility rather than containment) "a dead dog / jubilant with maggots / half-buried among the sweet peas" (lines 23-25). The permeability, and even collapse, of boundaries between civilised, well-manner domesticity, associated with England, that "now unreachable" place ("First Neighbours" line 12), and a nature both grotesque and familiar in its intimate invasions, associated with life in Canada, is a sustained thematic preoccupation in the collection, which in "The Double Voice" turns on the twinned images of "unborn babies / fester[ing] like wounds in the body" and "a dead dog / jubilant with maggots" that in their inversion of what is considered 'natural' – babies grow and represent new life, a dog's maggoty carcass is a dead thing – open into the horror of bodily decay and disintegration.

Hinging on that uncanny coupling in "half-buried," Atwood's paradoxical collocations proliferate into a confusion of categories, the homeliness of a pregnant woman, a domestic dog, the garden with English sweet peas turned topsy-turvy to show within the living woman a putrefying embryo, within the dead dog a seething, "jubilant" life. Yet, what is striking about this poem is the speaker's tonal neutrality or impassivity, what I have earlier identified as a tired pragmatism, which resists a too easy reliance on either Freud's uncanny or Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection, which is for her "more violent" than "uncanniness" (*Portable* 233), to read these "unsettled remains" of colonialism.<sup>9</sup> What must once have been experienced (and still read) as uncanny has achieved for Moodie, it seems, a level of everydayness that no longer disturbs but must simply be dealt with, as best one can. Instead of violently expelling or abjecting what is disgusting to oneself one now wearily consumes what one associates with filth, knowing "that pigs are pigs / but must be eaten / anyway" (lines 13-15). That this pragmatism can be sustained is perhaps held in the precarious balance with which the English Moodie and her Canadian double continue to coexist as a subject riven by ambivalence, their "[t]wo voices / t[aking] turns using [her] eyes" (lines 1-2).

A number of critics have taken issue with Atwood's reconstruction of Moodie in the poems, in some cases also challenging her representation of contemporary Canadians.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I take the notion of "unsettled remains" from Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte's introduction to their edited collection of essays, *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, for example, points to Frank Davey's critique of Atwood's representation of Canadians as

However, as Erin Smith argues (and here the similarity with Krog's poetic negotiation of white South African national identity is apparent), as "part of the project of rewriting the past to make sense of the present and the place of a white Canadian [...] woman in it, the collection [...] tells[s] us more about Atwood [...] than about Moodie," a reading made overt in the title of S. Stephens's review of the book, "A Self-Portrait of Margaret Atwood," to which Smith refers ("Gender" 77). It is through this description of Atwood's poetic rendering of Moodie's life as self-portraiture, here briefly explored and extended to include Krog's more explicitly performed doubling and sometimes merging of poet and foremother, that I will return to Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location* and its overt visual referencing and performance of the imbrications of (self-)portraiture, history and genealogy. Amelia Jones, in her "The 'Eternal Return': Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment," explains that "[i]n the portrait image of any kind, a subject is apparently revealed and documented," whereas "[i]n the self-portrait, this subject is the artist herself or himself, and the promise of the artwork to deliver the artist in some capacity to the viewer, a promise central to our attraction to images, is seemingly fulfilled" (951). The assumption of a neat conflation of artist and image in the self-portrait – an assumption similar to the one that conflates poet and speaker or author and narrator and which feeds the reader's craving for autobiographical confession – is in the photographic self-portrait premised on the misplaced belief that the photograph "is a document of the truth." In the photographic self-portraits Jones discusses, an "exaggerated theatricality" works to "expose the apparently seamless conflation of intentionality with meaningful visible appearance in the self-portrait as an illusion" (949, 951), a strategy similarly employed by Farber in her performances of Leora-Bertha, which, as Kaja Silverman argues in a different context, "bring images from the past into an ever new and dynamic relation to those through which we experience the present, and in the process ceaselessly [...] shift the contours and significance not only of the past, but also of the present" (in Jones, "'Eternal'" 963).<sup>11</sup>

Whereas Krog's employment of the autobiographical mode in some poems – the poet speaking for and about herself – could be seen to constitute an obvious example of verbal self-portraiture, if one equates the two modes of self-representation, it is perhaps less self-evident whose portrait is being drawn in those poems which, like Atwood's, ventriloquise the foremother's voice. Poems in which it is the foremother who speaks are more obviously

---

"schizophrenic" in *Margaret Atwood: A Feminist Poetics* ("Gender" 76), whereas Susan Johnston in "Reconstructing the Wilderness: Margaret Atwood's Reading of Susanna Moodie" performs a sustained comparative reading of the "character" in Atwood and Moodie's writing.

<sup>11</sup> Jones looks at work by Claude Cahun, Cindy Sherman, Hannah Wilke, Lyle Ashton Harris and Laura Aguilar.



analogous to self-portraits of the foremother herself, whereas Krog's poems *about* the foremother are analogous to ancestral portraiture, but both these conceits rest on the poet's haunting presence, which like the shadowy figure of the woman in the yellow wallpaper in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story flickers in and out of sight. The point has already been made that it is through the recovery of the settler foremother that the daughter chooses to negotiate her own sense of postcolonial national identity, however ambivalent and fraught that process of restoration might be, in order to restore it for herself – telling it again but also telling it differently, returning to it but also turning against it. Conceived of as a doubling of ancestral portraiture and self-portraiture, Atwood's and Krog's poems anticipate Farber's work in imagining the postcolonial body uncannily inhabited or possessed by the colonial past, while it simultaneously reveals how present preoccupations with the past perform a reciprocal haunting. In their "investigation of the past in order to uncover clues to the present," Atwood's and Krog's books form part of what Rosemary Betterton identifies as an emergent trend in "1970s and 1980s feminist practices of writing, film-making and art," evident then and more recently in installation art and the centrality of the body, to map female postcolonial subjectivities (173). Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location* is exemplary of this development in contemporary art, because, like similar works discussed by Betterton, it performs what the latter refers to as a "[f]eminist writing of the self [...] resembl[ing] unfinished business, often taking the form of a series of movements between present and past, self and Other, towards the production of an identity that is still 'in process'."

Farber, by "[u]sing [her] body as a metonym for [herself] and Bertha Guttman," wife of nineteenth-century South African mining magnate and entrepreneur Sammy Marks, initiates a proliferation of allusions and doubles, couplings and becomings, transformations and decompositions that are played out by and on the body of the protagonist (Farber, "Making Room" 5). In its complex hybridity, this figure instantiates the "slippage between the central character and the text, between a physical body and the textual corpus" that Ann Heilman and Mark Llewellyn see in neo-Victorianism's exploration of "the inscription and textuality of the desire to repossess the Victorian" (*Neo-Victorianism* 108). The ambivalent to-and-fro between present and past, here and there, which constitutes the in-between (*dis- / re-*)location of the postcolonial settler subject's sense of place and identity is configured by Farber in the fantasy of hybridity enacted by Leora-Bertha as an enfleshment of the metaphor of rootedness. A commonplace in expressions of belonging, this metaphor is still more insidiously present in settler-colonial and nationalist discourses, and also, more recently, in claims to settler indigeneity. Unlike the certitudes that such claims to belonging imply – since

to *lay claim* has embedded within it always the risk of clamouring (from the root *clamare*) for the acknowledgement of rights and ownership, and the staking out of territory, the assertion of entitlement – Farber performs a bodily metaphors of *unsettlement* that invokes the uncanny shifts in meaning of the word *heimlich* circulating in and among the composites ‘homeland’, ‘motherland’ and ‘homesick.’ Her recovery of an unsettled settler foremother, through whom to make sense of her own post-1994 unsettledness, is a gesture similar to the “recovery of a lost or hidden maternal origin” that Jerold E. Hogle identifies as a Gothic motif in which “a patriarchal lineage and house turns out to be explicitly dependent on and rooted in the unpredictable possibilities of a forgotten, but finally uncovered, womanhood” (“Gothic” 10). Translated to the South African settler postcolonial context that Leora-Bertha inhabits, however, the metaphor of rootedness implicit in Hogle’s description becomes explicitly implicated in “the pain of unbelonging,” which Greer defines as “the kind of unremitting and inadmissible psychic pain” felt by white Australians of European descent (in Collingwood-Whittick, Introduction xiv), which must always be “lesser” and “salutary” when set against the “unbearable anguish” suffered by the Aboriginal peoples who had been “driven out of [their] spiritual landscape” (xi). Whereas in Australia, Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand an “independent” and “triumphant” white settler society must negotiate postcolonial identities in relation to and with both marginalised indigenous populations and diverse immigrant populations (Ahluwalia, “Citizenship” 65), in post-apartheid South Africa a white minority of largely British and Dutch descent has lost political power but retained economic power through business and land ownership. As beneficiaries of apartheid, those who have stayed in the country share with other postcolonial white settler subjects what Pal Ahluwalia identifies as the “dual burden” of recovering “their own narratives” and simultaneously acknowledging “that they have blocked the narratives of the indigenous populations which they have rendered invisible” (69), although, during the almost twenty years of post-apartheid cultural production, the narratives of those previously silenced and marginalised have increasingly moved to the foreground.

Writing on the Canadian Postcolonial Gothic, Sugars and Turcotte point out that the pairing of the “tools of the Gothic [...] with the language of the postcolonial in order to articulate and interrogate national identity constructs [...] is unsurprising,” because the Gothic “negotiates both internal and external disquiet” and “both enacts and thematizes ambivalence” (Introduction xv), a word that recurs in Farber’s writing and interviews on the exhibition, and which beats as the heart of Atwood’s and Krog’s poetic ancestral reincarnations. Neither does it surprise that it is the spectre of Victorian colonial



expansionism that haunts many postcolonial texts, either in a revisionary drive to ‘write back’ to the literary and historical canon and to give voice to the silenced colonised, or, as is the case with Farber’s visual narratives and Krog’s and Atwood’s poetry, in an attempt to negotiate the entanglement with colonial settler histories that persists as both identification and disavowal. The latter, often in the guise of the neo-Victorian novel, frequently resembles the first in recuperating marginal figures and revealing hidden histories. In *Jack Maggs*, his revision of Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, discussed in Chapter 4, Peter Carey, for example, recuperates Magwich, a criminal transported to the Australian penal colony, not only as a fictional character whose story deserves to be told, but as a settler ancestor. The personalised nature of this reinvention of the Victorian fictional character is apparent from an interview in which Carey challenges Dickens’s portrayal of Magwich as follows: “Dickens encourages us to think of him as the ‘other,’ but this was my ancestor, he was not ‘other.’ I wanted to reinvent him, to possess him, to act as his advocate” (“Interview” 2). The double work of what Dana Shiller describes as neo-Victorian fiction’s “essentially revisionist impulse” is evident in Carey’s aim “to reconstruct the past by questioning the certitudes of our historical knowledge,” which also, by “emphasiz[ing] events that are usually left out of histories [...] manage[s] to preserve and celebrate the Victorian past” (“Redemptive” 541).

Farber’s similar recovery of a settler ancestor, Bertha Marks, like Krog’s of Barnard and Atwood’s of Moodie, is perhaps more burdened with the weight of ambivalence accruing to an historical, as opposed to Carey’s fictional, character, although Carey’s plays out more conspicuously as a Bloomian “anxiety of influence” in his portrayal of Dickens in the character of Tobias Oates. In contrast to the disreputable though essentially well-intentioned rogue in both Dickens’s and Carey’s fictions, the historical Bertha Marks was a middle-class Anglo-Jewish woman brought to South Africa in 1885 as the young wife of Sammy Marks. Marks, a Lithuanian Jew who had come to South Africa via England in 1868, worked his way up from peddling to build an extraordinary business empire which benefited from his alliance with the Boer President Paul Kruger. For most of her married life, Bertha lived at Zwartkoppies, the Highveld property her husband had developed from an old run-down farmhouse to the equivalent of an English country estate, with the rose garden designed by Bertha, a project typically English in its colonial deployment of the embedded national metaphor of England as a garden already found in Shakespeare but more immediately pertinent to the colonial context referred to here in Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The Glory of the Garden.” In it, the speaker both celebrates the country – “Our England is a garden that is full of stately views / Of borders, beds and shrubberies and lawns and avenues” (lines 1-2), an

image of orderliness that conforms to David Lowenthal's observation that "[t]he English landscape is not natural but crafted [because] Englishmen tame and adorn nature" (in Kaufmann, "Naturalizing" 668) – and admonishes his countrymen that "such gardens are not made / By singing: – 'Oh, how beautiful,' and sitting in the shade" (lines 17-18), but by every person doing his share of the work, especially "grubbing weeds" (line 20), to ensure that "the Glory of the Garden [...] may not pass away!" (line 32). That Marks was not an Englishman, although married to an Anglicised Jewish woman, is perhaps a minor irony in the more complex play of identity formation enacted in the immigrant's making of a home and particularly a garden in the new country, which comes to represent, through the valences of botanical metaphor, the tensions between transplantation and hybridisation implicit in the process of settlement. Farber's work makes these tensions explicit in her juxtaposition of *veld* and "rose garden, which represents a colonial formalizing and cultivation of nature" (Farber, "Dis-Location" 326).<sup>12</sup> (An implicit irony, and one not noted by Farber, is that the rose is a product of the transplantation and hybridisation brought about by imperialism, because it originates from China but has come to be seen as absolutely English, and embodied in the typical femininity of the 'English Rose'.) However, in spite of these efforts at home-making, Bertha made frequent trips to their holiday home at Muizenberg on the Cape coast (where Cecil John Rhodes also had a cottage) and sojourns abroad, which were often a bone of contention between husband and wife, as their correspondence shows, because of Bertha's tendency to extend these visits indefinitely. One is tempted to read Bertha's excursions as an expression of resistance to the landlocked existence at Zwartkoppies, where the domestic demands of raising eight children and hosting Sammy's Sunday lunches for up to forty guests at a time must have been exhausting, in spite of the army of servants they employed, another cause for Sammy's grumbling.<sup>13</sup> Set against the childless Lady Anne Barnard who relished the role of hostess at the Cape of Good Hope Castle, and to whom Krog, in a poem self-defined as "our final showdown," points as a woman remembered because of her parties (*Down* 76; *Lady Anne* 95), Bertha seems a reluctant colonial hostess overburdened by domestic and maternal demands.

In choosing Bertha Marks as settler foremother, Farber traces a maternal genealogy based on her own Anglo-Jewish affiliation, which allows her to return to a point of colonial

---

<sup>12</sup> In a note to her article in *Cultural Politics*, Farber defines *veld* as a "South African colloquial term for the bush; Afrikaans in origin. The term could describe many varieties of South African landscape – in this instance, effort was made to locate the shoot in a site that epitomized a dry, uninhabited yellow grass scape, common to the Gauteng province in which Johannesburg and Pretoria are located" ("Dis-Location" 326).

<sup>13</sup> I rely throughout on Richard Mendelsohn's fascinating account of Bertha Marks and her marriage to Samuel Marks in "The Gilded Cage: Bertha Marks at Zwartkoppies" (27-39).

origin configured as a site of complexity and hybridity, but which also, as Sally-Ann Murray points out, “seems to step over her [mother], to overstep her recent, familial presence, and move into the more distant time-space and historical geography of a stranger [...] [;] Marks enables Farber’s exploration of ‘imaginative mothers’ and imagined female affiliations” (“Awfully” 50). Although registering as absence in the visual constructs Leora-Bertha inhabits, Freda Farber is, however, aurally present, speaking as herself in an autobiographical mode that implicitly echoes testimonies of the Holocaust – that other history and its settlements that shadow this ancestral recuperation – in the second part of the soundtrack in which, as Farber explains in her interview with Sandra Klopper, “my mother, Freda Farber, narrates her memories of leaving Latvia, aged three, and adapting to life in South Africa” (21). Inserted between “a voice-over narration of extracts from Bertha’s letters to her husband,” selected “because they reveal the frustration of a married Victorian woman, her loneliness, her concern for the Jewish upbringing of her children, and her ingrained colonial prejudices, attitudes and values,” and “the third section [which] ‘speaks’ for [Farber] as the post-colonial protagonist” and in which “you hear the jarring, discordant sounds of contemporary Johannesburg – car hooters blaring, people shouting, dogs barking,” her mother’s voice thus forms a copula that links past and present in the aural accompaniment to the installation’s visual narratives.<sup>14</sup> Displaced by discordant urban noise in the third section of the soundtrack, the murmuring maternal voices of the first two sections to some extent suffer the same erasure as does the composite figure of Leora-Bertha in the final sequence of “Aloerosa,” but as already disembodied presence these voices insinuate a compelling, haunting counterpoint that supplements and deepens the intimacy of the bodily metamorphosis on display, word becoming flesh in a manner that recalls Luce Irigaray’s injunction in her lecture “The Bodily Encounter with the Mother” that

[w]e must also find, find anew, invent the words, the sentences that speak the most archaic and most contemporary relationship with the body of the mother, with our bodies, the sentences that translate the bond between her body, ours, and that of our daughters. We have to discover a language [*langage*] which does not replace the bodily encounter, as paternal language [*langue*] attempts to do, but which can go along with it, words which do not bar the corporeal, but which speak corporeal. (*Reader* 43)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Farber notes that, “[t]owards the end, [the urban noise] begins to override the harmonious classical piano music underpinning all three sections” (in Klopper 21).

<sup>15</sup> In the interview with Klopper, Farber acknowledges that “Cixous[’s] and Irigaray’s evocation of a ‘feminine language’ that stands outside of patriarchal representation by drawing on the body has had a significant influence on [her] work” (13).

Irigaray first introduced the recovery of a forgotten and denied “genealogy of women” (44) as a corrective to what she saw as the “matricide” (36) that informs Western society and culture in this 1981 lecture, arguing that it is not only “within our family” that such a remembering and reclaiming need occur, but that it should be more expansive in its vision: “Nor let us forget that we already have a history, that certain women have, even if it was culturally difficult, left their mark on history and that all too often we do not know them” (44). Yet, the problematic of settler colonial history makes such a recovery one of profound ambivalence, the daughter, teetering always on a precipice, or “[d]iving into the [w]reck” like the speaker in Adrienne Rich’s poem, “to see the damage that was done / and the treasures that prevail” (lines 55-56). It is a position perhaps most consistently explored in Krog’s *Lady Anne* and exemplified in the poem “*jy word onthou vanweë jou partye*” [you are remembered because of your parties] in which the poet-speaker addresses Lady Anne as “vrou vir wie ek al soveel jare my mes slyp” [woman for whom I have for so many years whetted my knife] (95, line 4), echoing Krog’s description of Barnard in the entry from her journal referred to above as “’n vrou wat my obsessive was vir soveel jare” (50) [a woman who was my obsession for so many years]. The scenario imagined in this poem is an encounter between the poet and Lady Anne at her bathing place at the Castle of Good Hope, in which the speaker describes the naked, ageing body of the foremother in painstaking detail, its collapse and decay catalogued brutally: her yellowing toenails, sagging knees, the skin of her thighs beginning to loosen and wrinkle like the skin of an old apple, her blighted, drooping breasts (lines 5-9).<sup>16</sup> But there is in this listing not only the deliberate speculation of the daughter, who sees in the mirror of the foremother’s body her own future reflected, and is horrified, but also a coinciding obsessive, loving attentiveness that is intensely erotic. Looking becomes touching, distance becomes intimacy, as the speaker rests her hand on Lady Anne’s soft stomach, which nestles under this touch, yields to her fit vagina, clammy, a large cream-coloured oyster [“jou week buik koester onder my hand / gee lebbereg mee na jou fikse vagina / gommering ’n groot roomkleurige oester”] (lines 13-15). What Irigaray calls “the bodily encounter with the mother” is here enacted in its supreme ambivalence – “[t]he relationship with the mother [being] a mad desire [...] It remains in the shadows of our culture; it is its night and its hell” (*Reader* 35) – as the speaker acknowledges her affection

<sup>16</sup> Krog’s description of the ageing female body here anticipates the even more brutally honest confessional detailing of the changing body and its betrayals in her recent collection of poems *Body Bereft*, the cover of which – a photograph of an older woman’s naked body – elicited responses of outrage and shock typical of social taboo and prejudice, both ageist and misogynist, that the poems expose and negotiate.

for Lady Anne who has become beautiful to her, and touchingly brave (lines 18-19), she is overcome by tenderness (line 24), and yet, in this bodily closeness there waits the whetted matricidal knife, implicitly recalled in the Afrikaans “te lyf” (line 17), which suggests both the bodily closeness the speaker describes and an act of violence – ‘om iemand te lyf te gaan’ meaning to attack someone physically.

In the pull-back that follows intimacy, the speaker tries to recover the ground from which she has undertaken this poetic endeavour, questioning now what she is to make of the woman and her journal: implicated as she is in this intimacy, does she let her be, in her complexity, kaleidoscopic, or diminish her, compressed into trite slogans, drained into noisy racist, hoisted for the poet’s own nervy marriage (lines 26-29)? Does she stamp her journal as so utterly without the screen of judgement, so completely unrefined without dogma, exploiting in this her own lack of judgment (lines 30-33)? Unable to sustain this distance, the speaker, looking into Lady Anne’s narrow, guarded blue eyes, reverts to the personal, to what binds them as two women – the larger, political questions of the function of poetry in times of political unrest and tyranny abandoned – each with only one life in which they merely wanted to be loved forever (lines 36-37). Yet, at the still point of identification, achieved through a leap of imaginative, literary insight – which is analogous to the point of transference as conceived of by Kristeva who sees “imagination [a]s a discourse of transference – of love,” and “literary experience [...] as an essentially amorous experience, unstabilizing the same through its identification with the other” and thus self-altering (in Toye, “Towards” 46) – Lady Anne, conjured up, violated, and loved, is taken by the water of her bathing pool and melts into its lap, leaving the speaker to reach after her, bereft in the realisation of her devoted attachment, which, in its expression – “god ek is verknog aan jou” (line 44) – also registers tonally as astonishment.

The conceit of this imagined encounter between Krog and Lady Anne is partially ekphrastic in that the speaker is looking at and describing a pencil drawing of Lady Anne Barnard held in the South African Library in Cape Town, as a footnote suggests (95), which is also on the front cover of the book, an aspect of the poem that becomes more pronounced in its final stanzas. Unlike the near grotesque materiality of the descriptions in the early stanzas, there is here a greater delicacy of observation by which the speaker is, ultimately, undone into lamenting the utter, radiant uselessness of Lady Anne, whom she calls friend and beloved [“ontstem between ek jou vriendin liefste // jou totale stralende nuttelosheid”]. An earlier, untitled poem, beginning with the line “ek wou ’n tweede lewe deur jou leef” [I wanted to live a second life through you] (40), already anticipates in the more formally

contained structure of a sonnet Krog's ambivalent recuperation of Lady Anne as, specifically, a literary foremother, whom she here, in the final couplet – perhaps registering that ambivalence in its partial rhyme – angrily damns: “gearriveer met jou hele frivole lewe sit ek nou berserk / met jou op my lessenaar: as metafoor is jy fôkol werd” (lines 13-14). Having chosen Lady Anne as a means to write herself out of writer's block back into poetry, the poet at this point of her endeavour, arrives at the realisation that her subject has lived an entirely frivolous life, and, consequently, that as metaphor – the stuff of poetry – she is worth fuck all. The intimacy and eroticism that make the later poem so compelling and moving in its empathy and identification are here – ironically, considering the amatory inclinations of the sonnet, and yet oddly reminiscent of the Shakespearian tendency – subordinated to the poet's concern with her craft and the use to which the beloved (foremother) can be put. Unlike the later identification with Lady Anne based on their perceived mutual desire for a lasting, loving erotic union with a man in the single life span available to them, the speaker in the earlier poem imagines a second, literary life opening up to her through her subject by showing that this “Lady Anne Barnard” is, in fact, possible (line 2). Initially, the poet idealises and identifies with the foremother – she is both a mere chronicler of the daily bread in an era in which everything changes and also emphatically weaving a language of revolutions and conspiracies to free slaves and clinically steal from aristocrats (the speaker fantasises a trip into the interior with her to cut boere to the bone) (lines 3-8). She thus provides the poet with an admirable example of a woman writer able to negotiate the politics of her time, writing from within the privileges of class analogous to those Krog as an Afrikaner under apartheid inhabited and shunned. However, the speaker is soon disabused of this fantasy when reading Lady Anne's letters, from which she materialises, standing in front of the speaker: “hand in die sy as ligsinnige dwaas pen / in ink geslepe snob naïewe liberal” [hand on the hip a supercilious fool pen-in-ink shrewd snob naïve liberal] (lines 10-12).

The notion of a female genealogy, particularly a literary one, is also implicit in all its ambivalence in Virginia Woolf's claim that women should “think back” through their foremothers in *A Room of One's Own* (99), a text Farber appropriates for the once-off performance artwork “A Room of Her Own” with which she launched the exhibition in 2006.<sup>17</sup> In an interview with Klopper, Farber speaks about “a deep empathy with” Bertha,

---

<sup>17</sup> Farber launched the travelling exhibition of works produced during a three-year collaborative project with the fashion-design team Strangelove (Carlo Gibson and Siemek Pater) at The Premises Gallery, Johannesburg. The exhibition travelled to six South African national galleries, “chosen for their neocolonial associations” (Farber “Dis-Location” 326), and it had a clear didactic purpose in the educational programme and supplement, written by Willem van Rensburg, directed at primary, secondary and tertiary students. It has also generated interest from



whom she describes as “an historically marginalised figure” whose “story, one of colonial dis-location and re-location, loneliness, alienation and attempts to transcend these delimitations struck a chord in [her]” (in Klopper “Bertha Marks” 16, 15). Farber furthermore notes the “paucity of information on Bertha,” considering her husband’s “well-documented” life, which, she explains, triggered her curiosity and turned Bertha into “an enigmatic figure” for her (in Klopper 16). Farber’s identification of Bertha as “historically marginalised” is implicitly based on the gender politics of the time that relegated her to the silenced realm of the domestic in contrast to the recorded public life of her husband. As Mark Llewellyn points out, neo-Victorian texts “illustrate conflict and difference through their very act of undermining the stability of a presumed hegemonic historical narrative” (“Neo-Victorian” 165), and here, as in other feminist inflected neo-Victorian revisions of colonial history, it is the archive of the domestic, often in the form of letters and journals, that provides a counter narrative.<sup>18</sup> Farber’s retrieval of a female genealogy from a strand of South African colonial history often relegated to the margins of official histories, namely the Jewish diaspora, uncovers a woman trapped not only “within the patriarchal social constructs that dictated the day-to-day life of a Victorian wife, mother and woman,” but also, significantly, within a state of perpetual “homesickness for England” (Farber, in Klopper 16).

The entrapment and dis-ease of the Victorian woman suggested here recall Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s study of nineteenth-century women’s writing that centres on the figure of another Bertha, namely Bertha Mason Rochester in *Jane Eyre* (1847), as *The Madwoman in the Attic* of female literary imagination. In its exploration of (post)colonial settler unbelonging, Farber’s reincarnation of Bertha Marks as Leora-Bertha more specifically resembles Jean Rhys’s recuperation of Bertha Mason as the West Indian Creole Antoinette Cosway in *Wide Sargasso Sea* – one of the first rewrites of a nineteenth-century canonical text in which the Neo-Victorian Gothic intersects with the Postcolonial Gothic to recover a silenced history and “challenge dominant literary, political, and social narratives” (Sugars and Turcotte, Introduction xviii). In both cases, the recovered history is that of a marginalised woman, but one complicit in and contaminated by the colonial world she inhabits. However, in Rhys’s novel, that history also reveals the horror of dislocation and

---

a diverse range of scholars, as is evident from the 2008 collection of essays edited by Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*.

<sup>18</sup> Reading “the domestic space as an archival source” is a practice introduced and invited by historian Antoinette Burton in her *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (2003), and later elaborated on in two edited collections, *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (2005), with Tony Ballantyne, and *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (2005).



relocation suffered by Antoinette/Bertha in England, forcibly taken from the West Indies and incarcerated as the “disgusting secret” of the Rochesters (Brontë, *Jane Eyre* 295). The evident problematic of Creole identity played out in *Jane Eyre*, where, as Jenny Sharpe suggests, “the narrative function of the Creole stereotype is also to disassociate a pure English race from its corrupt West Indian line” (*Allegories* 46), is simultaneously one of English identity. If Englishness in the nineteenth century “was created for the diaspora – an ethnic identity designed for those who were precisely not English, but rather of English descent” (Young, *English Ethnicity* 1), then those returning ‘home’ to England from the colonies, especially those who had been born abroad, must always confront the possibility of exclusion and alienation, theirs always being an Englishness from elsewhere, not quite homely (*heimlich*), because not native (*heimisch*). As Rhys’s novel makes clear, Antoinette, whose Englishness is both diluted by her mother’s French blood and stained by her father’s association with slavery and miscegenation, is maddened not only by her English husband’s treatment of her but by homesickness (*Heimweh*), understood in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as “a disease of transplantation” (Dames, *Amnesiac* 31). Failing to acclimatise to England, the landscape and weather of which are utterly alien to her, Antoinette sickens because of her yearning to return to the West Indies, and it is this, Rhys’s novel suggests, that Brontë’s novel portrays as excess, pathology and aberration in its refusal of Englishness.

In contrast, Bertha Marks’s “homesickness for England” is representative of what was considered a more appropriate and socially sanctioned manifestation of nostalgia (Farber, in Klopper 16), which confirmed the primacy of England in the loyalties of colonial settler subjects abroad whose “identification with the mother country would produce neo-English mimicry” (Veracini, “Settler” 365). The settler colonial imperative to put down roots in the new colony – to settle in it and to settle it by taming the wild through cultivation – implicit in the metaphor of transplantation is made overt by Farber’s coupling of Bertha’s homesickness with “her desire to ‘recreate’ an English botanical and architectural environment on the Highveld” (Farber, in Klopper 16). Farber’s imaginative working through of her own sense of dislocation and alienation in post-1994 South Africa seemingly inverts the process of colonial settlement through transplantation by literalising the metaphor of rootedness in the performative ‘grafting’ of an aloe plant into the skin of the English rose Leora-Bertha.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Distinguishing her work from that of Australian artist Stelarc, Farber explains that “[i]n the series, the graft and its resulting hybrid formations are simulacra – illusionistic re-creations of a metaphorical process created through artistic make-up techniques and materials. Similarly, physical/psychical pain is visually evoked not

The first scene for the staging of Leora-Bertha's transformations in *Dis-Location / Re-Location* is Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, relocated to the (recreated) main bedroom of the Sammy Marks Museum in Pretoria, once the home of the Marks family. Although Farber reads this room as "a liberatory space" and "a physical and psychic space of transformation" (Farber, in Klopper 21), in the edited video and photographic stills of the inaugural performance artwork, "A Room of Her Own," the encroachment of a menacing wild into the rosy domestic interior, doubled by a similar invasion of the protagonist's body, evokes instead a sense of claustrophobia. In Farber's retelling, a female figure with close-cropped hair, wearing a long white petticoat with corset details worked in leather (a recurrent element in the exhibition), is seemingly engaged in the archetypically feminine activity of embroidery in a room markedly Victorian. Behind her, a glass door leading to a formal rose garden ruptures papered walls covered in an excess of full-blown pink roses, interior decoration magnifying exterior cultivation. What at first seems to be a pretty chocolate-box fantasy, trite and kitsch, tilts into incongruity at the sight of lanceolate aloe leaves among the embroidery tools and thread in the needlework basket on the table next to her. Then, the image shifts into the horror of nightmare: the woman, through the neatly seamed hole worked into the skirt of her petticoat, intricately detailed, is calmly stitching into place six of the aloe leaves that had been inserted into cuts in the skin around a *petit point* rose embroidered into her thigh. In the video sequence, wax roses bloodily melt and drop from the wallpaper in a slow, haunting decomposition. In their place, like uncanny doubles, asserting rightful ownership, as if breaking through the wall itself to take over the house that colonialism had built, uprooting but not quite displacing the interloper English roses, a proliferation of aloes stage a botanical return of the repressed. Simultaneously, the woman's body is undergoing a similar transformation: the aloe leaves implanted into her thigh have withered and the *petit point* rose has metamorphosed into "a new succulent hybrid plant" (Farber, in Klopper 19). No longer seated decorously on her chair – which, in the installation, is shown to have erupted into a proliferation of succulent hybrids – the woman first sits and then falls back onto the carpet in what could be a swoon of ecstasy or death, trails of red embroidery thread unspooling like bloody roots from the protruding veins in her bare leg, her shoe discarded, the white stocking hanging torn from her foot. Fallen into decomposition like the fleshy wax roses that surround her, Leora-Bertha's body becomes ground to the hybrid plant that steadily invades it, and is thus supplanted.

---

experienced" (Farber, "Dis-Location" 325).

The flesh-and-blood story enacted in “A Room of Her Own” suggestively hints that Woolf’s room too is a bloody chamber, in it the murdered body of the Victorian Angel in the House. In her 1931 lecture “Professions for Women,” Woolf described the act of liberation into writing as “[k]illing the Angel in the House” with a well-aimed inkpot (5), but this humorous account of the woman writer trying to rid herself of the tormenting and inhibiting Victorian foremother also contains an act of much greater, more intimate violence when the writer describes how, driven to desperation, she “caught her by the throat” to finally silence her (4). But the Victorian Angel returns, of course, because what Woolf’s humour veils is a Gothic story of ghosts and transgenerational haunting, of “need[ing] to do battle with a certain phantom” (3) again and again because “[i]t is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality” (5). In Farber’s appropriation, the phantom of the Victorian Angel in the House is fleshed out in the artist’s recovery of and merging with her colonial foremother in the figure of Leora-Bertha, her body the site upon which the “creation of new subjectivities is achieved through traumatically violent interventions” (Farber, in Klopper 17). Relocated to post-1994 South Africa, the room becomes a stage set, a room in a museum, a display case, a cabinet of curiosities, simultaneously a chamber of horrors and a *Wunderkammer*, unsettling and unhomely in its display of self-inflicted wounding and bodily collapse.

In the interview with Klopper, Farber identifies this last image of “A Room of Her Own,” significantly titled “Redemption,” as the final image of the exhibition because, she says, “Bertha/Leora has finally attained this rapturous transformation” (19). Although the word “redemption” implies a triumphant resolution, a movement out of the in-between of purgatory that precedes the achievement of atonement, a threshold crossed into the ‘New South African Rainbow Nation,’ Farber paradoxically also describes the “exhibition as inconclusively suspended on this endnote of deep ambivalence” (19). “Aloerosa” ends on a similar note of ambivalence, but here the narrative of ‘grafting’ that mirrors the one in “A Room of Her Own” is performed outside, firstly in the formal rose garden originally designed by Bertha Marks in the grounds of the Sammy Marks Museum, then in a grove of large aloes, and finally in the African *veld*. In the first image of the sequence, “Induction,” Leora-Bertha with intense concentration ‘grafts’ the aloe seedling into her forearm, an act of self-mutilation made uncannily domestic by setting it as a typical English colonial afternoon tea in a rose garden. The dissolving of the photograph’s lower edges in a blurry mistiness resembles both the clichéd soft-focus prettiness of nostalgic Victoriana and the nebulous images of ghosts in Victorian spirit photographs, but it also anticipates the eventual decomposition of the woman’s body implied in the final image of the sequence. The woman at the centre of this

first image, however, is encased in a rigid carapace, a corset beautifully crafted from cowhide that covers her breasts and abdomen. In contrast, the rosy flesh into which she inserts the plant appears shockingly vulnerable, the incision weeping a small tear of blood. In the images that follow, the implanted seedling roots into the veins of her arm, feeding there and, in a vigorous flourishing, in the images titled “Maturation I” and “Maturation II,” takes over her depleted body, sprawled in a state of abandonment on the ground. Except in the first image in the rose garden, the figure is consistently placed against a dark grey, almost black ground of either aloes, barren rock or menacing expanse of sky, starkly out of place and isolated in a landscape that appears at best indifferent, at worst hostile. The transformation Leora-Bertha’s body undergoes coincides with the loosening of the corset, its laces pulled open to expose the vulnerable human skin of her stomach between the hard edges of the animal skin, until, in the final image, aptly titled “Supplantation,” all that is left of her is the neatly re-laced corset abandoned in the *veld*, surrounded by young aloe plants.

Like the final image in “A Room of Her Own,” which, troublingly, resembles a glossy photograph of a murder scene – the averted face of the victim’s violated body allowing, or inviting, the viewer’s complicitous and lingering gaze – the images of the woman’s body in “Maturation I” and “Maturation II” insinuate the “conflat[ion] of the pin-up with the corpse” that Amelia Jones identifies in the work of Cindy Sherman and Hannah Wilke (*Body Art* 960). Here, however, it is exaggerated because the woman looking out at the viewer is smiling faintly, almost invitingly, enigmatically. How does one read this look when it is so unnervingly difficult to tell whether she is alive or dead or dying? Considering Farber’s assertion of Leora-Bertha’s “rapturous transformation” (in Klopper 19) in “Redemption,” and given her simultaneous acknowledgement of the ambivalence of this image, it is Sylvia Plath’s description of the dead woman in “Edge” that comes to mind: “The woman is perfected. / Her dead // Body wears the smile of accomplishment” (lines 1-3). However, what is finally accomplished is the erasure of the woman’s body from the frame of the closing image of the series: she has been taken out of the picture; she has gone to/turned to ground.

Farber’s own description of the implied violence and pain of the transformation in this series relies consistently on references to the Gothic and the uncanny:

In the “Aloerosa” series, my skin is the site of grotesque disfiguration – the violence of the plant’s implied growth is the product of a self-initiated violent action of cutting and insertion, arising from a desire to integrate or “belong,” yet it ultimately becomes a metaphor for cultural contamination and contestation. As foreign to the body, the aloe plant signifies insertion of an

alien culture, which takes root and disfigures the body through its forceful growth under the skin, turning I / Bertha into something akin to a “monstrous misfit.” Such bodily violation implies not only physical but also psychical trauma inherent in the acculturation and contamination processes. (“Dis-Location” 323)

Quite unlike the language of ecstatic transcendence she uses when speaking about “Redemption,” here there is an “emphasis on violent transformation” (Trotter, “Colonial” 18), which is reminiscent of what Frederick Jackson Turner in his lecture on “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (1893) considered foundational to the forging of a “new product that is American” (in Trotter, “Colonial” 9). Like “[t]he coloniser [who] becomes a coloniser by re-barbarising himself, by immersing himself in an alien culture” (Trotter, “Colonial” 9), the postcolonial settler subject imagined in “Aloerosa” must undergo a violent assimilation by taking the “alien culture” quite literally into her body (Farber, “Dis-Location” 323). In Farber’s imagined inversion of the project of colonial settlement through transplantation, Leora-Bertha, like the “colonist must want to obliterate [her]self, to turn into [her] opposite” and welcome “the violence with which an old identity is stripped away and a new one forged” (Trotter, “Colonial” 9). Whereas Turner’s idea of ‘going native’ is premised on the colonist first becoming “an Indian in order to become an American” (Trotter, “Colonial” 9) – “he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion” (Turner, in Trotter 9) – Farber’s turns on the practice of horticultural ‘grafting,’ the Anglo-Jewish ‘rose’ body becoming the stock onto which the African aloe is grafted. Here, Farber’s project diverges emphatically from the one Turner proposes, because it lacks the conviction of a triumphant regeneration into ‘a new product that is South African,’ to adapt Turner’s phrase. Instead, references to the grotesque and the monstrous suggest an ultimately failed experiment, akin to Frankenstein’s new creation. Although in both cases Terry Goldie’s observation that “[t]he settler ‘goes native’ in order to ‘become of the land’ at the very moment that the Native himself conveniently disappears” seems apposite (in Johnson, “Viking” 26), in Farber’s “Aloerosa” the solitary white woman who inhabits the landscape – in what could be seen as a reification of the colonial fantasy of *terra nullius* – undergoes a process of transformation that ends in the degeneration and displacement of the coloniser’s rather than the indigene’s body. As Farber notes, Leora-Bertha’s “bodily fluids and tissue serve both as nutrients and host to emergent hybrid specimens” and her “flesh replaces soil” (in Klopper 18). In the final image of the open *veld* with the discarded skin corset, emptied of her body yet still retaining its ghostly shape, complete transformation of

flesh into soil has seemingly been achieved: she becomes part of the land itself as her body is displaced into place.

The violent and intrusive self-fashioning of postcolonial settler identity thus suggested is integral to the enfleshment of the metaphor of rootedness that Farber stages with and on the reincarnated body of Bertha Marks as foremother and ‘motherland’ into which the new hybrid South African identity is rooted. By insinuating these slippages between foremother, motherland and homeland, she literalises the implied terms of the comparison – that the human body, like a plant, grows from the soil of the country of its birth from which it gains sustenance. In doing so, she uncovers an even older bodily metaphoric that circulates in the primordial metaphor of ‘mother earth,’ revealing there what Irigaray calls the “the body-matter of women” covered over by the abstractions of metaphor (“This Sex” 85), making apparent the “repressed connection between the body and the word” (Best, “Sexualizing” 190).<sup>20</sup> This evidently also speaks to Freud’s claim in “The ‘Uncanny’” that “[w]henver man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, while he is dreaming: ‘this place is familiar to me. I’ve been here before,’ one may interpret the place as being his mother’s body” (244). In Freud’s account of this “beautiful confirmation of the uncanny,” the “neurotic” man makes of “the entrance to the former *Heim* [home] of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning” an “*unheimlich* place,” thus turning the once homely familiar space of the mother’s body into its opposite, the *unheimlich*, where “the prefix ‘un’ [‘un-’] is the token of repression.” Hélène Cixous’s reading of this section of the “The ‘Uncanny’” is especially evocative in this context. She writes:

Liebe ist *Heimweh*: Love is a yearning for a country, according to popular wisdom. *Heimweh*: a yearning for a country, is a formulation which is always

---

<sup>20</sup> In *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, Marina Warner quotes from Hesiod’s description of the origin of the gods in his *Theogony* (c. 730-700 BC) where there was first only Chaos without form, “But next appeared / Broad-bosomed Earth” (70). Warner explains that the word “Gaia” [is] Greek for the earth as both matter and goddess” (119), and, in recounting Athena’s role in the myth of the founding of the Athenian state, tells how she had to “borrow the maternal, autochthonous womb from Earth herself” for Erechtheus, “legendary founding father of Attica,” who is “a type of native son of the soil, or autochthonous offspring.” In a note to her discussion of the importance of this birth from the native soil, Warner quotes from Plato’s *Menexenus*, which although a satire, “none the less reveals that the analogy between the motherland and the maternal body existed in his day” (349 n.77). The quotation, which becomes especially interesting in the context of settler claims to Indigenous status, is as follows: “And first as to their birth – their ancestors were not strangers, nor are their descendents sojourners only, whose fathers have come from another country; but they are the children of the soil, dwelling and living in their own land. And the country which brought them up is not like other countries, a stepmother to her children, but their true mother; she bore them and nourished them and received them, and in her bosom they now repose.”



interrupted by the interpretation which reads: regret and desire for “yearning.” But this yearning is also the yearning which renders the country for you a point of destiny. Which country? The one from which we come, “the place where everyone dwelt once upon a time and in the beginning.” The country from which we come is always the one to which we are returning. You are on the return road which passes through the country of children in the maternal body. You have already passed through here: you recognize the landscape. You have always been on the return road. Why it is that the maternal landscape, the *heimisch*, and the familiar become so disquieting? The answer is less buried than we might suspect. (“Fiction” 544)

The “whole array of intersignifications” evoked when the ‘mother earth’ metaphor is posited as the primordial substratum for the metaphor of ‘rootedness’ (the one metaphor in effect rooted in the other) calls to mind Paul Ricoeur’s conception of “root metaphors,” which are engendered when “[o]ne metaphor, in effect, calls for another and each one stays alive by conserving its power to evoke the whole network” of intersignifications (*Interpretation* 64). The pervasiveness of the metaphor of rootedness in everyday discourse furthermore suggests that Ricoeur’s idea of “insistent metaphors – those metaphors that are closest to the symbolic depths of our existence” – also applies (68).<sup>21</sup> The implications of this definition is in turn more fully articulated by Hans Blumenberg’s proposition of “absolute metaphors [which] ‘answer’ those supposedly naïve, principally unanswerable questions whose relevance lies quite simply in the fact that they cannot be eliminated because we don’t *ask* them, but rather find them *asked* in the foundation of existence [*Daseingrund*]” (in Adams, “Metaphors” 156). Deriving from those spectral questions of origin and belonging that haunt familial and national affiliations, the metaphor of rootedness operates as an “absolute metaphor,” because it forms “the substructure of thought, [...] the underground, the nutrient of systematic crystallizations” (Blumenberg, in Adams “Metaphors” 156).

Yet it is by “giv[ing] the metaphor literal significance,” as Catherine Belsey suggests in a different context, and thus “to defamiliarize it, to isolate it for contemplation” (100), that ‘rootedness’ reveals a fundamental principle of settler societies, namely their aspiration to *settledness*. In his article on settler colonialism and the disavowal of “founding violence,” Lorenzo Veracini describes how settler societies draw on entrenched Western political ideologies that view “the ‘family settled upon the soil’ [Condorcet] as the building unit of the state” (366), so as to consolidate the project of settlement, conceived of “as both an ideal society and as truer and uncorrupted version of the original social body” (365). This ideal is

---

<sup>21</sup> Ricoeur, in considering the relationship between symbols and metaphors, argues that “symbol is bound in a way that the metaphor is not. Symbols have roots. Symbols plunge us into the shadowy experience of power” (*Interpretation* 69).



explicitly premised on the fantasy of a depopulated country inviting settlement, a place where “[c]olonial gardens were planted with flowers and vegetables from the old country and the grander settler mansions were surrounded by the reassuringly English décor of rolling lawns and trim green hedges” (Collingwood-Whittick, Introduction xvi). This fantasy sometimes surfaces in neo-Victorian texts as a nostalgic celebration of an ‘Out of Africa’ or ‘White Mischief’ colonial chic, thus defaulting on Ann Heilman and Mark Llewellyn’s imperative that neo-Victorian texts “must in some respect be *self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians*” (*Neo-Victorianism* 4). Farber’s images to some extent play with this fantasy, only to undermine it with their unsettling gothic content. Thus, her enfleshment of the metaphor of rootedness, which is central to the colonial “fantasy of indigenization” (Collingwood-Whittick, Introduction xxiii), makes it strange and suspect in the South African postcolonial settler context, where it often remains uncritically embedded in discourses of white entitlement to ‘indigenous’ status that hark back to the settler colonial discourses of nineteenth-century imperialist expansionism.

Pursuing a trajectory of recovery and identification that culminates in scenes of apparent bodily decomposition and supplantation, Farber’s reincarnation of Bertha Marks performs a fleshy ventriloquism which, like Atwood’s and Krog’s poetic experimentation with (auto)biographical voice, gives expression to a defining ambivalence about belonging and a sense of place, also explicitly articulated by Greer. Underpinned by the history of colonial settlement, albeit representative of different trajectories and outcomes, they share what Atwood in her Afterword to *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* terms the “violent duality” of settler (post)colonial identity (62), which she conceives of as a psychic residue of the “inescapable doubleness of [...] vision” (63) and “Double Voice” (42) that for her define Moodie’s position as settler foremother, who, in the poem “Thoughts From Underground” (54) shifts from an initial clean hatred – “When I first reached this country / I hated it / and I hated it more each year” (lines 1-3) – to a position of compromise and ambivalence – “Then we were made successful / and I felt I ought to love / this country. / I said I loved it / and my mind saw double” (lines 15-19). Then as now, Atwood suggests, displacement and alienation are at the heart of settler identity. If Moodie was “divided down the middle,” contemporary Canadians fare no better, because they will always be “immigrants [...] even if [they] were born [there]: the country is too big for anyone to inhabit completely, and in parts unknown to [them they] move in fear, exiles and invaders” (Atwood, Afterword 62). What is required is a choice to stay because “[t]his country is something that must be chosen – it is so easy to leave,” but to make this choice is to choose “a violent duality.”

Atwood's description of the landscape as a vast and alienating backdrop against which the postcolonial settler figure moves, simultaneously "exile and invader," echoes Greer's description of white Australians as "tourists in their own birthplace, dashing from funny-shaped rock to funny-shaped rock, with only the vaguest idea of what might lie between" (Preface ix). Outspokenly suspicious of the metaphor of rootedness, especially as used by white Australians, Greer contrasts what she sees as the deep and inter-dependent relationship of the Aborigines with the land with the superficial and exploitative treatment of it by settler-invaders and their descendents. Speaking of her own situation as an Australian who does not identify with her place of birth yet who is inescapably shaped by it, she looks to a family and personal history of displacement, of names lost, discarded and invented, of imagined genealogies and affiliations, of "rooting [her]self in rootlessness" (ix). In this formulation, the terms of the analogy are disarticulated, effecting an uprooting of the metaphor from its ground, yet it simultaneously persists in what Greer identifies as an "erroneous notion that we should have roots, that human beings need roots" (ix) by relying on the metaphor of "rooting [one]self", even if only in a pervasive unbelonging. Whilst she makes a case for nomadic identities and points to the claustrophobia of belonging, Greer's confession of a near life-long identification with a Jewish diasporic identity through a maternal grandmother whom she *imagined* to be Jewish foregrounds the embedded paradox in the notion of being rooted in rootlessness as it reveals a compelling desire for a place of origin.<sup>22</sup>

For the settler foremothers that Atwood and Farber imagine, that place of origin is the lost Edenic Garden of England (the home to which Krog's chosen foremother Lady Anne Barnard returned) whereas their place of settlement is experienced as alien and even threatening. They must, as Stephen Turner points out with regard to settler ambivalence, "retain some sense of the old country self to be able to draw on a strong and authoritative identity [while] [,] in order to settle in the new country, to find oneself at home, the settler must forget the old country and become acclimatised, that is, discover a new-country identity" (in Sugars, "Impossible" 702). For Atwood's Moodie, the pervasive unsettledness of

---

<sup>22</sup> Although I do not explore the implications of what is elided in Greer's fantasy of a nomadic Jewish ancestry, represented by the figure of the 'wandering Jew' rather than the Israeli settler, because it falls outside the parameters of this thesis, I want to register it with the following quote, resonating as it does with the various issues discussed here, from Berl Katznelson, described by Eviatar Zerubavel as "one of Zionism's leading visionaries" (in Veracini, "Historylessness" 272): "[W]e cultivate oblivion and are proud of our short memory. ... And the depth of our insurrection [in Zionist parlance: settlement] we measure by our talent to forget. ... The more rootless we see ourselves, the more we believe that we are more free, more sublime. ... It is roots that delay our upward growth [in Israeli parlance: settlement]" (in Veracini, "Historylessness" 272; Veracini's parenthetical explanations).

settler subjectivity coincides with her sense of the bewildering encroachment of the bush and its animal and human inhabitants, which makes *being at home* impossible. In the poem “Departure From the Bush” (26) which ends the journal covering her arrival and life in the backwoods from 1832-1840, the speaker describes herself as “crept in / upon by green” (lines 2-3) and “[i]n time the animals / arrived to inhabit [her]” (lines 6-7); even though she “was not ready / altogether to be moved into” (lines 17-18), they were there, and she “was frightened / by their eyes (green or / amber) glowing out from inside [her]” (lines 22-24). The transformation is, however “not completed” (line 25) because interrupted by her husband’s letter summoning her to the city, and, as she departs, she feels “(instantaneous) / un-lived in: they had gone” (lines 34-35). The sense of relief at escaping, finally, and just in time, this place that had so very nearly claimed her for itself through metamorphosis, as she sees when “Looking in a Mirror” (24) – her “skin thickened / with bark and the white hairs of roots” (lines 6-7), her “fingers / brittle as twigs / eyes bewildered” (lines 16-18) – is, startlingly, undercut by what can only be read as a sense of loss, of a chance missed, in the last stanza of “Departure From the Bush”: “There was something they almost taught me / I came away not having learned.”

In the final poem of the collection, “A Bus Along St Clair: December,” Atwood’s Moodie haunts the streets and buses of twentieth-century Toronto, a menacing old woman, “who reveals the city as an unexplored threatening wilderness” (Atwood, in Staines xii): “I am the old woman/ sitting across from you on the bus, / her shoulders drawn up like a shawl; / out of her eyes come secret / hatpins, destroying / the walls, the ceiling” (lines 22-27). The wilderness that had once threatened to inhabit her when she “was not ready / altogether to be moved into” (“Departure from the Bush” lines 17-18) has been “bulldoze[d]” into a concrete jungle, a “wilderness of wires” (“A Bus Along St Clair: December” lines 11, 5). Finally absorbed into the landscape, Moodie returns after death as “the spirit of the land she once hated” (Atwood, in Staines 10), but her claim that “this is my kingdom still” rings hollow considering the last lines – both warning and threat – with which the poem and the collection end: “there is no city; / this is the centre of a forest // your place is empty” (lines 2, 29-31).

This insistence on the return of a repressed wilderness and the emptied out place of settler identity anticipates the perhaps more ambivalent *denouement* of Farber’s “Aloerosa.” Leora-Bertha’s going to ground at the point of narrative closure suggests an achievement of belonging through erasure similar to Moodie’s merging with the land through dying and burial. Atwood first introduced this trope in “Death of a Young Son by Drowning” (30), in which the description of Moodie’s young son’s burial – “I planted him in this country / like a

flag” (lines 28-29) – asserts settlement much more confidently than does her description of the futile attempts of her husband and two male neighbours to cultivate the wilderness in “The Planters” (16). In this poem, the speaker, who knowingly watches from a distance, describes the men’s refusal to face reality – “none of them believe they are here. / They deny the ground they stand on” (lines 11-12) – as a necessary strategy, a wilfully blind optimism, which protects them against being “surrounded, stormed, broken // in upon by branches, roots, tendrils, the dark / side of light / as [she] is” (lines 18-20). Unlike the “illusion solid to them as a shovel” (line 14) that what they plant in “this dirt is the future” (line 13), Moodie’s sense of her own vulnerability and futility is in “Dream 1: The Bush Garden” (34) figured as a nightmare in which the idyllic English garden transplanted to the colony as a bulwark against disorder, as imagined by Kipling, is shown to have “gone to seed” (line 3). Yet, there is beneath the surface – the speaker “could / see down through the earth” (lines 4-5) – a “curled,” “thrusting,” “fleshy” and “pulsing” root vegetable life (lines 6-10), while above ground, “[a]round [her] feet / the strawberries were surging, huge / and shining” (lines 11-13), like throbbing, moist hearts. When she “bent / to pick, [her] hands / came away red and wet” (lines 14-16): “In the dream I said / I should have known / anything planted here / would come up blood” (lines 17-20). On the fault line of gender, the complex of metaphors used in Atwood’s portrayal of the experience of pioneering colonial settlement converges in the play of connotative proliferations in which to plant seeds in the soil is like planting babies in the womb, where they also sometimes fester, is like burying the dead bodies of children which decay and from which grow plants that are like bloody reminders, the “disintegrated children” (“The Deaths of the Other Children” 41, line 16) now “spreading briars” (line 19) that “catch at [Moodie’s] heels with their fingers” (line 20). For Moodie, and women like her, the men’s naïve belief in planting for “the future” – being “Planters” of both seeds and babies – takes shape in a terrible embodiment that conflates womb and earth; maternal, their bodies are the *heimlich/unheimlich* threshold to future generations, yet, like failed crops, ploughed back into the earth, their dead children compost the settled land.

The centrality of the maternal as lived fact and as metaphor in Atwood’s recovery of Moodie as settler foremother is in Krog’s *Lady Anne* located in the poet-speaker’s own domestic life and not in that of the foremother’s who, paradoxically, is childless, her affections lavished on her younger husband. In the unfolding of Lady Anne’s (auto)biography, it is the interment of the body of this beloved Andrew Barnard that knots her to the continent that she had left behind, his lonely death of fever near Stellenbosch and burial near Green Point bulleted in one of the final poems in the collections, “*nóg familie nóg*

*vriende*” (104), in which Lady Anne starts by listing his few belongings returned to her – a handful of small relics of their love: a pendant with a lock of her hair, a green purse she had knitted for him (lines 2-4). Even this bond with the land is, however, tenuous, the distance between speaker and the place she struggles to grasp remaining even now unbridgeable because, as the poem which begins with the line “Drie Morawiese broeders huisves ons” (57) shows, it resists her attempts at capturing, framing in paint and in words. Based on Lady Anne’s description in her journal of their visit to the missionary station at Genadendal, the long poem culminates in the final two stanzas in Lady Anne’s frustrated attempts at drawing the landscape until she is overcome by the realisation that her page always remains a window pane, always spells distance, the point of entry remaining passive. Trapped behind glass, cut off from what she sees, Lady Anne does not suffer the encroachments of the wilderness that Moodie does because, one might argue, there is on her part never any intention to settle, to put down roots, her stay at the Cape nothing more than a sojourn, her return to England a given.

As artist and writer, her position as Krog pictures it here is perhaps implicitly symptomatic of what J.M. Coetzee identifies as an “historical insecurity regarding the place of the artist of European heritage in the African landscape [...] an insecurity not without cause” (*White* 62), but it nevertheless lacks the anxious ambivalence enacted in Farber’s visual constructions of figure and landscape in “Aloerosa” which, in turn, more closely resemble Moodie’s transformations, informed as this portrayal is by Atwood’s sense of Canadians, like Greer’s of white Australians, as “exiles and invaders” (Atwood, Afterword 62). That there is something there to be known, which yet remains essentially unknowable in the landscape, causes a pervasive sense of anxiety, because, as Justin D. Edwards argues with reference to the Canadian context, “the externalized *unheimlich* space that cannot be settled becomes internalized as part of the geography of the self” (Edwards, *Gothic* xx). In *Dis-Location / Re-Location*, this uncanny interior landscape of estrangement is performed as a flesh-and-blood story in which present and past are entangled in the hybrid figure of Leora-Bertha. Similarly preoccupied with questions of (un)belonging and settler genealogy, Krog’s and Atwood’s earlier poetic recovery and merging with their respective foremothers, like Farber’s, imagine the “formation of self-identity as lodged within the body, bodily borders and the instability of its margins, ambiguity and liminality or a state of ‘in-between-ness’” (Farber, in Klopper 14). As experiments with the (auto)biographical voice in poetry, these predecessor texts also open up the metaphorical range and potential of the historiographical, elaborating an embodied metaphoric of unsettlement which Farber’s visual dramatisations

extend to reconfigure the metaphors of transcendent rebirth that underpins the construct of the 'rainbow nation' as the violent metamorphosis of Leora-Bertha's body: fleshy ground for violent implantations generating "new hybrids" (Farber, "Dis-Location" 325). As a site and performance of radical unsettlement, then, *Dis-Location / Re-Location*, in attempting to come to terms with a genealogy of settler colonialism, cannot cede easy consolations, and seems to confirm Angela Carter's approving claim that "alienated is the only way to be, after all" (*Shaking* 12). However, in the ambivalent *denouement* of Farber's neo-Victorian gothic fantasy of hybridity remains haunted by the desire for settler indigenisation through a transformative process imagined as atonement – an 'at-one-ment' with the mother/home/land which must also always be an act of expiation.



### Chapter 3

#### **Bodies (Dis)Possessed and the Poethics of Improper Speech in Atwood's *Alias Grace* and Christiansë's *Unconfessed: A Novel***

---

[...] and today I must go on with the story. Or the story must go on with me, carrying me inside it, along the track it must travel, straight to the end, weeping like a train and deaf and single-eyed and locked tight shut; although I hurl myself against the walls of it and scream and cry, and beg to God himself to let me out.

*Alias Grace* (345)

Give me a language for this [...] Give me a language that will clean my throat of the noise that death makes when it has crossed a threshold [...] I am in a mood to be a fist of curses at their doors, my son, while you and your sisters and brothers go dancing where stars spin and sing.

*Unconfessed* (282)



Unlike Margaret Atwood's Susannah Moodie and Antjie Krog's Lady Anne Barnard, who are prominent figures in settler colonial histories and who were themselves chroniclers of nineteenth-century colonial settlement in Canada and South Africa respectively, the protagonists in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996) and Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed: A Novel* (2006) are figures recovered from the margins of these histories. Although they represent different types of diaspora – the emigration of impoverished Irish to other colonies in *Alias Grace* and the slave trade from Mozambique to the Cape in *Unconfessed* – Grace Marks and Sila van den Kaap, servant and slave, both guilty of murder and indefinitely incarcerated, their bodies subjected to repeated acts of exploitation and violence perpetrated with impunity by the men who own, employ or guard them, inhabit similar revisionist narrative experiments that attempt to find a form and language adequate to the portrayal and expression of an interiority fractured by recurrent trauma. In contrast to the conflicted affiliations of post-colonial daughters with their colonial foremothers enacted in the poetic dismembering of the mother's corpus, discussed in the previous chapter, the novels considered in this chapter unequivocally rearticulate the fragmented histories and genealogies they uncover in their fictional restoration of historical event and imaginative elaboration of character. Based on archival traces and often-contradictory second-hand accounts, Atwood's and Christiansë's telling of these "wounded histories" – a term Nancy K. Peterson uses to describe contemporary women's writing "against amnesia" – "exceed[s] normative narrative expectations" (*Against* 7) by refusing the coherent linearity associated with the realist conventions of historical fiction and incorporating stream-of-consciousness or interior



monologue for the improper speech of the body and the voices of the dead that inhabit or haunt it. Here, the poetic recurs as Martin Heidegger's "[p]rojective saying [...] which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into the world" ("Origin" 71) through a configuration of the materiality and sensuality of bodily existence that is both immanent and transcendent, grotesque and sublime, ecstatic and prophetic in its deliriums. While there is no simple equivalence to be drawn between the lives of the Irish servant Grace and the Mozambican slave Sila, both novels portray their female bodies as sites where the institutional dynamics of nineteenth-century patriarchy and settler colonialism intersect in acts of physical and psychic violence. In this convergence of the politics of the body and the poetics of the body, *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed* are, in their different revisionary modes, examples of "narrative as embodied theory," a notion central to Margaret E. Toye's "poethics of love" ("Towards" 50) with which I begin this chapter by tracing approximations and convergences in aspects of Luce Irigaray's ethics of love, Judith Butler's psychic life of power, Julia Kristeva's poetic language and Adrianna Cavarero's narratable selves in preparation for my reading of the novels.

### **Bodies (Dis)Possessed and the Poethics of Improper Speech: A Theoretical Preamble**

And unless it becomes the speech [parole] of the flesh, a gift and message of the flesh, speech remains an outer skin that again and again exhausts, flays, that falls and covers without giving up its secret.

Luce Irigaray – "The Limits of Transference" (*Reader* 111)



In her article "Towards a Poethics of Love: Poststructuralist Feminist Ethics and Literary Creation," Toye proposes that feminist theory revisit the "deep-seated resistance to academic engagement with the concept of love" (41) and points out that "the bases of thinking about love could be found to be going on, undercover, in theories of pain, mourning and trauma" currently occupying not only feminist theory but also "postcolonial and transnational studies of torture, war, terror, the diaspora, refugee studies and trauma studies in general" (43). Central to these theories is "the question of the body's, and [in feminist theory] particularly female bodies', relationship to pain," whether psychic, physical or both, and "the relationship of these bodies in pain to economies of representation." In reading Elaine Scarry's meditation on the "unshareability [of pain] through its resistance to language" (in Toye 44) with Julia Kristeva's analogous meditation on "[t]he language of love [a]s impossible, inadequate, immediately allusive" (in Toye 44), Toye notes that both theorists nevertheless also "stress

the transformative objectifying powers of language” (45), particularly in literary expression where the experience of pain and of love can be both shared and translated into a vocabulary and register available for use by others. For Scarry, pain’s “resistance to language” derives from the lack of object that for her typifies this interior state of consciousness and differentiates it from others like love for which the experience of the loss of its object will “begin to approach the neighbourhood of physical pain” (in Toye 45). For Kristeva, it is not only in this loss that love’s inarticulacy resides, but in what she sees as its revelatory, cataclysmic and vertiginous immediacy, when, “[u]nder its sway, one does not speak *of*” as one does “*after the fact*” (in Toye 45). As Toye points out, both theorists conceive of those moments when language, however inadequate, is found for the expression of either love or pain in terms of birth, renewal, newness: *In* love, according to Kristeva, “[o]ne simply has the impression of speaking at last, for the first time, for real” (in Toye 45), whereas for Scarry, “to be present when a person moves up out of that pre-language and projects the facts of sentience into speech is almost to have been permitted to be present at the birth of language itself” (in Toye 45).

Although marked by tentativeness (one has an “impression”; it is “almost to have been permitted”), these descriptions of language breaching silence, particularly the silence imposed by pain, inform Toye’s proposal of a “poethics of love” in which she resituates the neologism ‘poethics’ and “the mutually implicating discourses of ethics, politics, and aesthetics” (48) it foregrounds within a poststructuralist feminist frame.<sup>1</sup> This reconfiguration of poethics centres on the insertion of ‘the body’ as necessary mediating presence binding the different terms of the constellation, which forms the basis of Toye’s thinking towards an “embodied ethics” of love, underpinned by her engagement with Irigaray’s “sensible transcendental” and “proximate distance” (48), collocations echoed in Toye’s “embodied thought” (51).<sup>2</sup> Privileging the literary, she defines her “poethics of love” as a “theory/methodology” that focuses on the idea of “narrative as embodied theory” which she finds in “the poetic theoretical writings” of theorists like Irigaray and Kristeva and “the

---

<sup>1</sup> Toye provides a useful overview of the emergence of the term ‘poethics’ in her article, referring specifically to Michael Eskin’s own overview of the ‘subfield’ in his article “On Literature and Ethics” in the 2004 special issue of *Poetics Today*. Her work in the article I refer to here forms the basis of a larger book manuscript in progress, which is entitled *Towards a Poethics of Love*.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Whitford, in her editorial comments in *The Irigaray Reader*, explains the “sensible transcendental” as “a term which refers to the overcoming of the split between material and ideal, body and spirit, immanence and transcendence, and their assignment to women and men respectively. *Each* sex should be able to represent both possibilities” (117). Krzysztof Ziarek, in “Proximities: Irigaray and Heidegger on Difference,” points out that, “[u]nlike difference, proximity does not involve negation or opposition but establishes itself as a transformative passage or a between that instantiates relation as a bringing about of a future” (150).

theoretical narratives” of novelists like Angela Carter and Jeanette Winterson (49), two authors whose works, although peripheral to the focus of this thesis because British in derivation, are relevant here in their treatment of the historically located female body. Extrapolating from Toye’s work, I treat the literary revisions of the nineteenth century read here as examples of “narrative as embodied theory” because they are fictions in which narrative and embodiment converge while also implicitly theorising their own historical revisionism and literariness, but I do not explicitly pursue a reading of the two novels from the perspective of an ethics of love as proposed by Toye via Irigaray, leaving it instead as an implied touchstone.

The settler colonial economies where women’s bodies circulate as objects between men portrayed in *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed* – and in the latter culminate in the dystopic excesses of slavocracy – are inherently destructive of the “proximate distance” required for the “touch” which “binds and unbinds two others in flesh that is still and always untouched by mastery,” theorised by Irigaray in “The Fecundity of the Caress” (in Toye 47, 48).<sup>3</sup> Such an in-between space, as necessary precondition for an ethical relationship between two subjects, rather than between subject and object, is patently inconceivable to those for whom to touch is always to grasp and to be near is to violate the integrity of another’s body in an assertion of mastery, foreclosing – as a matter of life and death – the possibility of transformation and becoming that is latent in an exchange between two subjects.<sup>4</sup> For Irigaray, it is ‘wonder’, Descartes’s first passion upon which she elaborates in *The Ethics of Sexual Difference*, that allows and inaugurates an exchange “[w]here I am no longer in the past and not yet in the future” (in Ziarek, “Towards” 69) because “[t]his passion is not opposed to, or in conflict with, anything else, and exists always as if for the first time” (*Reader* 171). In its “radical temporality” as affect, it is for Irigaray “similar to Freud’s theory of drives,” according to Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, because she “seems to suggest that the drive might be an unconscious source of wonder since both originate on the threshold between the

---

<sup>3</sup> Here and in the later “Questions to Emmanuel Levinas,” Irigaray responds to what she sees as the erasure of the feminine as other in Levinas’s phenomenology of the caress because “[h]e knows nothing of communion in pleasure” (*Reader* 180): “Although he takes pleasure in caressing, he abandons the feminine other, leaves her to sink, in particular into the darkness of a pseudo-animality, in order to return to his responsibilities in the world of men-amongst-themselves. For him, the feminine does not stand for an other to be respected in her human freedom and human identity. The feminine other is left without her own specific face. On this point, his philosophy falls radically short of ethics. To go beyond the face of metaphysics would mean precisely to leave the woman her face, and even to assist her to discover it and to keep it. Levinas scarcely unveils the disfigurements brought about by onto-theology. His phenomenology of the caress is still implicated in it” (183-84).

<sup>4</sup> “Freud distinguishes between repression and foreclosure, suggesting that a repressed desire might once have lived apart from its prohibition, but that foreclosed desire is rigorously barred, constituting the subject through a certain kind of preemptive loss” (Butler, *Psychic* 23).

materiality of the body and language” (“Towards” 69). But wonder is prior to judgement, rejection, appropriation – “[b]efore and after appropriation, there is wonder. It is set apart from rejection, which expresses itself notably through contradictory positions... That which precedes suitability has no opposite” (Irigaray in Ziarek, “Towards” 69). It is “an ethical passion” because it “circulates between two subjects in an exchange that is for both a transformative and ongoing becoming, operating in a way comparable to the “middle voice” in grammar in which the verb form designates “an action that is both active and passive” (Ziarek 71).

If this ethical exchange between two takes place through language, then language itself when thought of in terms of Irigaray’s fecund caress or “amorous exchange” (*Reader* 43-44 ) could be seen as, at least potentially, that which traverses the proximate distance without laying claim,<sup>5</sup> without, one might argue, the interpellative foreclosures of subjectivation and subjection foundational to what Judith Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power* describes as Louis Althusser’s “doctrine of interpellation” (106). According to this account of the subject’s “coming into being as a consequence of language, yet always within its terms,”<sup>6</sup> the subject in responding to the call of the law by turning around to acknowledge and hence accept its interpellation enters “into the language of self-description – ‘Here I am’ – through the appropriation of guilt” (107). This “self-attribution of guilt” appears to be triggered by an already inculcated and compelling conscience within the one who turns around to submit to the law in what Butler describes as “an anticipatory move towards identity” (107). The trope of ‘the turn’ – the rhetorical figure itself also a “generative” ‘turn’ (4, 202) – that she identifies in her reading of Freud with Hegel, Nietzsche, Foucault and Althusser in *The Psychic Life of Power* – her project being to “rejoin the discourse of power with the discourse of psychoanalysis” in thinking towards the possibility of “political agency” (18) – pivots on the doubled gesture in which the turn towards the law is also, simultaneously and unavoidably, “a turn against oneself, a turn back on oneself” (107). Poised at the crux of this

---

<sup>5</sup> This refusal of the appropriative impulse in language, especially the language of love, is explicitly theorised in Irigaray’s *I Love To You* where the insertion of the preposition “to” interrupts the declaration’s objectification of the addressed beloved.

<sup>6</sup> In her introduction to *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler explains the “critical category” of “the subject” as follows: “‘The subject’ is sometimes bandied about as if it were interchangeable with ‘the person’ or ‘the individual.’ The genealogy of the subject as a critical category, however, suggests that the subject, rather than be identified strictly with the individual, ought to be designated as a linguistic category, a place-holder, a structure in formation. Individuals come to occupy the site of the subject (the subject simultaneously emerges as a ‘site’), and they enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language. The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition for its existence and agency. No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing ‘subjectivation’ (a translation of the French *assujétissement* [from Foucault])” (11).

paradox, the subject whose continued existence can be assured only in terms of the law which “requires subjection for subjectivation, then, perversely, [...] may (always already) yield to the law in order to continue to assure [his/her] existence” (112-13). This position of dependency is one of extreme vulnerability because inevitably open to exploitation, as Butler makes apparent in her example of the child’s “passionate attachment” to those upon whom his/her continued existence relies, even in cases of abuse and neglect (6-10).<sup>7</sup>

And yet, this is not to succumb to a fatalistic foreclosure of agency or to forego critique of the law whose call is passionately anticipated and turned to because, “[i]f conscience is one form that the passionate attachment to existence takes, then the failure of interpellation is to be found precisely in the passionate attachment that also allows it to work” (129). It is here in her refutation of Mladen Dolar’s suggestion that “love might be ‘beyond’ interpellation” (128), one that she nevertheless sees as “important,” that her thinking through interpellation’s necessary failure to constitute the subject fully, paradoxically, begins to approximate the futurity of Irigaray’s ethics in its longing, posed as a series of questions, for “a possibility of being elsewhere or otherwise,” necessitating a turn away from the law and yet enabled by it, that “demands a willingness *not* to be – a critical desubjectivation” – with its attendant implications for “linguistic survival” (130). Turning to Giorgio Agamben’s argument that “[t]here is in effect something that humans are and have to be, but this is not an essence nor properly a thing: *It is the simple fact of one’s own existence as possibility or potentiality*” (in Butler, *Psychic* 131), Butler retrieves “being” as the inexhaustible potentiality that remains in the face of every interpellation, arguing that “[s]uch a failure of interpellation may well undermine the capacity of the subject to ‘be’ in a self-identical sense, but it may also mark the path toward a more open, even more ethical, kind of being, one of or for the future.”

Earlier, in a formulation that recalls but differs in its points of departure from Irigaray’s notion of the interval as a space of ethical potentiality and mutually transformative exchange in a ‘middle voice’ into which two subjects enter volitionally, Butler suggests that “[t]he ‘turning around’ is a strange sort of middle ground (taking place, perhaps, in a strange sort of ‘middle voice’), which is determined both by the law and the addressee, but by neither unilaterally or exhaustively” (107).<sup>8</sup> This is evidently not to be thought of as a self-created “free zone” from where the subject assumes an independent agency, but rather as that

---

<sup>7</sup> Butler’s term “passionate attachment” developed from Wendy Brown’s essay “Wounded Attachments” in her *States of Injury: Freedom and Power in Late Modernity*.

<sup>8</sup> In an endnote, Butler acknowledges Hayden White’s suggestion of the idea (*Psychic* 208, n.2).

paradoxical place of “a reiterated ambivalence at the heart of agency” for which Butler uses the figure of “a crossroads” (17, 18). Moreover, because this is where law manifests as an object of passionate attachment, it is also “a strange scene of love” (128). (And here one is pulled by the lure of a digression, which in its vivid instantiation seems apt although tangential, to recall W.H. Auden’s poem “Law Like Love” and the lines, “And always the loud angry crowd, / Very angry and very loud, / Law is We, / And always the soft idiot softly Me” [155].) Butler’s reiteration of the word “strange” – “a strange sort of middle ground,” “a strange sort of ‘middle voice’,” “a strange scene of love” – in relation to this space signals its uncanniness, which is also suggested by its being a middle-place, a crossroads, a site marked for outlaw burials, hauntings, possessions, illicit transactions and magical transformations. Ostensibly outside the law, such places are in fact of the law, metonymically situating the intimacies and estrangements of being a subject under/in/outside the law and language – of subjectivation and subjection, which does not, however, diminish or erase their significance as places of risk and potential.

Although this is not a series of associations Butler pursues, she identifies and welcomes the risky potentialities inherent in those tricky moments when interpellation fails – when “the subject cannot quell the ambivalence by which it is constituted,” having colluded with an act of “misrecognition” by responding to a misnomer that simultaneously validates and condemns (17, 112). At this middle-place that borders on the feral, “the anticipation of culling an identity through identifying with the one who has broken the law” sets in play Althusser’s perpetual cycle of “acquitting oneself of the accusation of guilt” (108, 118) by conscientiously acquitting oneself well as a good, law-abiding and productive citizen in the proper mastery of taught skills, especially the skill of “speaking properly” (115). Yet it also, simultaneously, harbours, as a discursive, “quasi-fictive” site (5), the radically (counter)productive potential of improper speech. It is possible, as Butler points out with reference to Foucault’s suggestion of the possibilities of resignification, “that even the most noxious terms could be owned, that the most injurious interpellations could also be the site of radical reoccupation and resignification” (104), as is the case when Atwood’s Grace appropriates the designation “a celebrated murderess” (*Alias Grace* 25) and Christiansë’s Sila performatively embodies her exploitation as a “naaimeidjie” or fucking-girl as a fuck you to her exploiters (*Unconfessed* 8), examples I will discuss in more detail below.

But first I will return to Butler’s parenthetical and tentative insinuation of “a strange sort of ‘middle voice’” at the “middle ground” of the turn towards the law, discussed earlier, echoing as it does Irigaray’s invocation of the in-between voice that, neither active nor



passive, is always self-reflexive. For example, the verb in ‘I berate myself’ is situated in the middle voice because the subject both acts and is acted upon, neither entirely active nor entirely passive, but, in the verb’s reflexive inflection, both. This example is also pertinent to the discussion of interpellation as it captures Freud’s notion of a “special agency” – later termed the superego – “which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticising the self and exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our ‘conscience’” (Freud, “‘Uncanny’” 630). As Butler makes clear, even though “[s]ocial discourse wields the power to form and regulate a subject through the imposition of its own terms” (197), there is no simple acceptance or internalisation of these terms because “they become psychic only through the movement by which they are dissimulated and ‘turned’”:

In the absence of explicit regulation, the subject emerges as one for whom power has become a voice, and voice, the regulatory instrument of the psyche. The speech acts of power – the declarations of guilt, the judgment of worthlessness, the verdicts of reality – are topographically rendered as psychic instruments and institutions within a psychic landscape that depends on its metaphoricity for its plausibility.

The metaphoricity of both ‘voice’ and ‘place’ had already been implied by her early elaboration on ‘the turn’ as trope, itself a rhetorical turning, in the first chapter of *The Psychic Life of Power*, where, in a note, she refers to Hayden White’s description of tropes as both “deviations” from set meanings and generative of new meanings (in Butler, *Psychic* 201). Moreover, talking about or explaining the generative nature of tropes must it seems rely on the use of tropes, which is, as Butler suggests, “an operation of language that both reflects and enacts the generativity it seeks to explain, irreducibly mimetic and performative” (202). In relying on the metaphor of a geologically layered psyche, for example, psychoanalysis generates a proliferation of tropes with which to speak about this subterranean terrain made of words. The ‘talking cure’ thus sets out to sound those layers of the unconscious and consciousness as registers of voice in the subject’s recounting of life-stories, dreams and fantasies that are themselves a chorus of metaphors, a speaking in tongues, ventriloquisms, and the channelling of the voices of the dead.<sup>9</sup> At the threshold between the two layers

---

<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that Freud in “The Uncanny” should associate the turn of the figure of the ‘double’ from being “an assurance of immortality” for the child to becoming instead “the uncanny harbinger of death” once the stage of primary narcissism had been surmounted (a theory he would later revise) with the formation of the ‘conscience’ or superego in the later development of the ego (234): “The fact that an agency of this kind exists, which is able to treat the rest of the ego like an object – the fact, that is, that man is capable of self-



designated as the unconscious and consciousness, or, to use Kristeva's terms, at the thetic that marks the break between the semiotic, which is "the element of signification associated with drives and affects," and the symbolic, which is "the element of signification associated with position and judgment" (Oliver, "Introduction" 25), we are also at "the threshold of language" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 41), the place of interpellation and its necessary failures where poetic language, registering as "breach" (55), "transgression" and the crossing of boundaries (47), "puts the subject in process/on trial."<sup>10</sup>

For Kristeva, the thetic phase demarcates the subject's entry into the symbolic through language which is however never free of the infractions of the semiotic, and it is from this indispensable coexistence of the two realms and the tensions generated by it that all signification derives, but which poetic language, "through its sounds and rhythms," makes overt "[b]y reactivating the drives in language" (Oliver, Introduction 25). In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she explains the thetic as "absolutely necessary" but "not exclusive":

[T]he semiotic, which also precedes it, constantly tears it open, and this transgression brings about all the various transformations of the signifying practice that is called 'creation.' This is particularly evident in poetic language, since, for there to be a transgression of the symbolic, there must be an irruption of the drives in the universal signifying order. (50)

Conceived of as a place, a threshold for recurrent crossings between the unconscious and consciousness which the subject, who is both in process and on trial, inhabits, the thetic approximates Irigaray's in-between space and Butler's crossroads in its potential for transformation. Whereas for Butler the potential inherent here is one of ethics, of being elsewhere and speaking otherwise in relation to the law and its compelling interpellations, a subject position essentially political and social in its risky quest for agency,<sup>11</sup> for Irigaray, who is similarly concerned with the political and social in the ethics of sexual difference, there is also the added dimension of mimicry and the revolutionary play of poetic language,

---

observation – renders it possible to invest the old idea of the 'double' with a new meaning and to ascribe a number of things to it – above all, those things which seem to self-criticism to belong to the old surmounted narcissism of earliest times." In a note, he explicitly distinguishes it from the repressed material of the unconscious although what is rejected of course derives from those drives (357).

<sup>10</sup> First introduced in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, "*le sujet en procès*" has been translated as "subject-in-process" and "subject-on-trial" in an attempt to capture the double meaning of the French phrase "*en procès*" as both "in process" and "under legal duress" (McAfee, *Julia Kristeva* 38).

<sup>11</sup> According to Butler, "[t]hat agency is implicated in subordination is not the sign of a fatal self-contradiction at the core of the subject and, hence, further proof of its pernicious or obsolete character. But neither does it restore a pristine notion of the subject, derived from some classical liberal-humanist formulation, whose agency is always and only opposed to power. The first view characterizes politically sanctimonious forms of fatalism; the second, naïve forms of political optimism," both of which she eschews (*Psychic* 17).

the poet being the one who “risks life itself” (*Reader* 213).<sup>12</sup> Her notion of *mimétisme* – “usually translated mimeticism, com[ing] from the domain of animal ethology and mean[ing] ‘camouflage’ or ‘protective colouring’” (Whitford, *Luce Irigaray* 72), introduced in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, where she proposes that “[o]ne must assume the feminine role deliberately” (*Reader* 124) – is moreover suggestive of the kind of oppositional agency Butler, via Foucault, sees as a possibility in the appropriation of injurious interpellations, because, for her, “to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation” is to “begin to thwart it.” For a woman, “[t]o play with mimesis is [...] to try to locate the place of exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it.” By resubmitting herself to those “ideas [...] elaborated in/by a masculine logic” that relegate her to the merely bodily – “on the side of the ‘perceptible,’ of ‘matter’” – is “to make ‘visible’ by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: recovering a possible operation of the feminine in language.”<sup>13</sup>

Although her introduction of the element of “playful repetition” – which she later in the same essay describes as “[a] playful crossing, and an unsettling one” (*Reader* 125) – may appear to be an ameliorative gesture, Irigaray’s own performance of *mimétisme* in engaging the writing of male philosophers and their deployment of metaphor demonstrates that this is, on the contrary, a form of serious play driven by revolutionary purpose, because, like the deliberate appropriation of hurtful appellations, it is a tactical manoeuvre to outwit the law – to beat it at its own game. Conceived of in this way, the deliberate assumption of the feminine role as *mimétisme* is the potential excess latent in the interpellative compulsions of the “*masquerade of femininity*” – which Irigaray describes as the psychoanalytical “belief [...] that it is necessary to *become* a woman, a ‘normal’ one at that” (*Reader* 136) – into which the woman enters in order to achieve ‘femininity’ successfully. As a counterpart to Althusser’s notion of interpellation which introduces the dimension of gender, then,

---

<sup>12</sup> Whitford points out that the essay “He Risks who Risks Life Itself,” from which I take this quotation, not only makes apparent “that Irigaray reserves a special role to the words of the poet or lover: their function is to speak words that change or ‘touch’ the hearer,” but also “shows Irigaray at her most utopian in her incarnation as a poetic visionary” (“Introduction III” 163). The provenance of this essay furthermore demonstrates Irigaray’s ‘amorous exchange’ with two male philosophers, primarily Heidegger since it is the concluding chapter of her *The Forgetting of Air of Martin Heidegger*, but also Derrida, because she used a part of it in a conference on his “The Ends of Man.”

<sup>13</sup> In an interview, Irigaray distinguishes between Plato’s “two *mimeses* [...]”: there is a *mimesis* as production, which would be more in the realm of music, and there is the *mimesis* that would be already caught up in the process of imitation, specularization, adequation, and reproduction. It is the second form that is privileged throughout the history of philosophy and whose effect/symptoms, such as latency, suffering, paralysis of desire, are encountered in hysteria. The first form always seems to have been repressed, if only because it was constituted as an enclave within a ‘dominant’ discourse. Yet it is doubtless in the direction of, and on the basis of, that first *mimesis* that the possibility of a woman’s writing may come about” (*Reader* 134).

masquerade's turn is towards the call of the law of male desire and systems of representation, in which the woman turns on herself and "loses herself" (*Reader* 130) as she learns to acquit herself well in the proper speech of femininity.

As wily, self-consciously performed tactic, both the appropriation of injurious interpellations and *mimétisme* would seem to harness rather than instantiate the drives' disruptive energies, particularly in the provocations of confrontational parody, the freak show's knowing wink. It is in its aptitude for excess that such a tactic, being similarly "irreducibly mimetic and performative," shows its kinship with what Butler, identifying how attempts to explain the generativity of tropes must themselves generate tropes, describes as "an operation of language that both reflects and enacts the generativity it seeks to explain" (*Psychic* 202), discussed above. For Irigaray, the potential of *mimétisme* resides precisely in its elaborative and productive capacities, being thus generative in the bodily sense of reproduction and not merely imitative.

But there is another supplement to the masquerade, and by extension to injurious interpellations for women, that manifests in the somatic excesses of hysteria. Not obviously *deliberately* appropriative or imitative, yet nevertheless "irreducibly mimetic and performative," the gestural vocabulary of the hysteric is for Irigaray "a privileged place for preserving – but 'in latency', 'in sufference' – that which does not speak" (*Reader* 138), but this 'not speaking' is qualified in the following terms:

Hysteria: *it speaks* in the mode of a paralysed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also a forbidden speech . . . . It speaks as *symptoms* of an 'it can't speak to or about itself' . . . . And the drama of hysteria is that it is inserted schizotically between that gestural system, that desire paralysed and enclosed within its body, and a language that it has learned in the family, in school, in society, which is in no way continuous with – nor, certainly, a metaphor for – the 'movements' of its desire. Both mutism and mimicry are then left to hysteria. Hysteria is silent and at the same time mimes. And – how could it be otherwise – miming/reproducing a language that is not its own, masculine language, it caricatures and deforms that language: it 'lies', it 'deceives', as women have always been reputed to do. (*Reader* 138)

Unlike the fecund generativity of the space between two in proximate distance that Irigaray proposes as an achievable ethical potentiality, the "revolutionary potential in hysteria" that she identifies (*Reader* 124) more closely approximates Kristeva's disruptively poetic semiotic breaching of the thetic threshold, a "between" more akin to Butler's crossroads where the hysteric wanders – her silent shadow-play doubling the *mimétisme* of

her cunningly articulate sister. With Irigaray's doubling of hysteria and *mimétisme* we return to the uncanny place where "what was supposed to remain invisible" is made "visible" (*Reader* 124), a formulation that echoes Freud's in "The 'Uncanny'" where he refers to Schelling's definition of the term "as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (240) and which he links to "the process of repression," more specifically to "something repressed which recurs" and which is moreover "nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression." Having established this point, Freud immediately proceeds "to test our new hypothesis" by enlisting "one or two more examples" from "the realm of animism" (342), one being the inducement of uncanny feelings attributed to "death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts," and another being the "uncanny effect of epilepsy and of madness," viewed in the Middle Ages as caused by demonic possession.

With these two examples, I want to initiate my own return from a theoretical preamble which has followed various pathways always to circle back to the place of the threshold, the space between, the crossroads, the thetic in order to turn to the reading of the two novels that are themselves textual bodies possessed by the dispossessed dead, which in ventriloquising their voices employ a poethics of improper speech of the body at/as the threshold between different but impinging domains. We recall that for Kristeva, the revolutionary potential of the poetic derives from the incursions of the semiotic, which she describes – in language reminiscent of Butler's elaboration on the trope of the turn – "as a 'second' return of instinctual functioning within the symbolic, as a negativity introduced into the symbolic order, and as the transgression of that order" (*Revolution* 55). At this middle place where the insurrectionary drives constantly threaten to breach the ground of the thetic and to blossom like Grace Marks's red peonies in the cracks of the prison yard of the symbolic, where "[p]oetic language operates between sense and nonsense, meaning and nonmeaning" (Oliver, Introduction 26), we are in the realm of the body and its improper language of sensations, odours, sounds, but also, as Butler reminds us, in the haunted place of irrecoverable and unspeakable loss, of the lost ground of incomplete mourning and melancholia where "what remains unspeakably absent inhabits the psychic voice of the one who remains" (Butler, *Psychic* 196). In both *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed*, the protagonists' speech is transfigured by the dead that (pre)occupy them: Mary Whitney, Grace's fellow servant and only friend, who dies consequent to a backstreet abortion and 'possesses' Grace, speaks a language of fleshy irreverence and class mutiny that shadows Grace's own proper

speaking; and Baro, the young son Sila killed to procure for him a respite from Van der Wat's violence and ownership, is in his silence her most persistent spectral interlocutor on Robben Island to whom she recounts slavery's lost genealogies in a tongue incantatory and prophetic, and pungent with curses.

Richly generative in mimetic and performative potentialities, and founded in ambivalence at that "middle ground" of the turn towards the law, language at this place of recurrent turns and crossings, when compelled by the inarticulacy and silences of extreme intensities of pain, pleasure, fear extends its metaphoric ranging to an eloquent gestural vocabulary of the body, to a recovery of the animal in grunts, snarls, whines, whimpers, and, in the face of outrage, to laughter, that uncannily uncertain thing between human and animal, pleasure and pain. In her elaboration of a "feminine syntax" to be "deciphered [...] in the gestural code of women's bodies," the 'reading' of which is however made difficult because women's "gestures are often paralysed, or part of the masquerade [of femininity]," Irigaray identifies women's suffering and laughter as sources "for what resists or subsists 'beyond'" the intepellative injunctions of the masculine language that also sticks in the hysteric's throat (*Reader* 136).<sup>14</sup> In the two novels, laughter erupts in various registers from suffering and both authors employ it, and allow their protagonists to wield it, in ways that self-consciously radicalise it as an expression of defiance where speech must falter and fail, for laughter, as Kristeva points out, "lifts inhibitions by breaking through prohibition [...] to introduce the aggressive, violent, liberating drive" (*Revolution* 224). Erupting in the flesh as anarchic transformation, laughter, Sidonie Smith argues in her elaboration on Hélène Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa,"

[I]literally [...] breaks up the assembled and calm planes of the face; and as the movement of laughter breaks up the consolidated features of the face, laughter aligns the human with the animal, with the grotesque body. The effect of

---

<sup>14</sup> Irigaray's clarification of her use of the notion of "double syntax" – masculine and feminine – in an interview is pertinent here because she argues that, "rather than establishing a hierarchy between conscious and unconscious and subordinating one to the other, rather than ranking them as 'above' and 'below,' Freud might instead have articulated them and made them work as two different syntaxes" (*Reader* 134). Her explanation of what the feminine 'syntax' would entail elaborates on what I have earlier referred to as her notion of "proximate distance" and is also a refusal of the proper and property: "there would no longer be either subject or object, 'oneness' would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings, proper names, 'proper' attributes. . . . Instead, that 'syntax' would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation" (*Reader* 136).

laughter on the body elides the gap between species and gestures toward the instability of boundaries separating one species from another, unhinging secure placements in hierarchies of meaning. It also breaks up the elegant, cool, controlled planes of statuesque representationalism, forcing the irrational through the lucid planes of reason and control. The sound itself breaks through the language of phallogentrism, a call from beyond, from the body, from elsewhere. Ultimately laughter breaks up the consolidations of a universalised, rational, unifying truth, destabilising foundational notions of truth by traducing the boundaries of binary opposites: control and abandon, reason and the irrational, body and mind. (166)

Manifesting as a seismic upsurge of the drives in wordless bodily sounds that distort the facial features, laughter is at the extreme of those expressions of traumatically fractured interiority for which both Atwood and Christiansë attempt to find a language in their experiments with the poetic in interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness narration that coincide with sections of third-person narration – roughly equivalent in length in *Alias Grace*, whereas *Unconfessed* is predominantly a first-person narrative bookended by third-person sections. What makes these narratives ‘embodied’ is their consistent referencing or deployment of the body in its material fleshiness as threshold to self-narrations that appropriate injurious interpellations or perform through deliberate *mimétisme* and the involuntary gestural vocabulary of the hysteric or through laughter a parodic perversion of the institutional discourses that imprison the women who tell these stories. Although both novels rely on stylistic fragmentation – Atwood’s use of the patchwork quilt as structuring device and textual metonym best captures this refusal of linearity and the certainties of a singular, coherent account of a life – their protagonists consistently demonstrate a compulsion to narrate a coherent, singular life story to a particular interlocutor. There are therefore two contrapuntal narrative impulses, one at the level of authorial narrative construction which is self-consciously theoretical and suspicious in its engagement with historiography and the writing of fiction, and the other at the level of narrative voice and characterisation which, in contrast, shows the protagonists to be apparently unselfconsciously driven to narrate their own stories in a manner comparable to Adriana Cavarero’s notion of a “narratable self,” developed in *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* where she claims that “[e]very human being, without even wanting to know it, is aware of being a *narratable self* – immersed in the spontaneous auto-narration of memory” (340). The two novels thus contain in these two coinciding narrative impulses two contrasting notions of the self as “narrated” – Butler’s position – and the self as “narratable” – Cavarero’s position. Although both theorists have been influenced by Irigaray’s work and have responded to each



other's work, there are marked differences in their thinking. As Paul A. Kottman, Cavarero's translator, points out, to assume "that unique beings can become 'intelligible' only through the 'critical category' of the subject is, for Cavarero, part of a philosophical legacy which seeks to efface the unique, the particular," because, following Hannah Arendt, she argues that "the intelligibility of the unique existent is not 'first established in language,' but rather he/she is a flesh and blood existent whose unique identity is revealed *ex post facto* through the words of his or her life-story" ("Translator's Introduction" xiii).

Rather than the one undoing the validity of the other, however, these two approaches by coinciding in one text enable the author to negotiate the complexities and pitfalls of voice inherent in the recovery of historically dispossessed figures in fiction. On the one hand, the character is shown to be immersed in self-narration which takes the form of an unmediated poetic flow of free-associative recollection and projection – the dominant mode of narration in *Unconfessed* – or, on the other, as is predominantly the case in *Alias Grace*, the character's interior monologue consists of various 'voices' or registers that shift from dream-like flights of free-association usually associated with remembering interrupted by a self-consciously mediating voice that comments on or recounts daily events, which has embedded within it frequent references to the improper speech of Mary Whitney, and which is also marked by the rhetorical skill of a consummate storyteller. In both novels, the characters are shown to be consistently aware of their incarceration not only in the institutional structures of the law but in its various discourses, which is what underpins their tactical use of appropriation and *mimétisme*. Moreover, both authors structure their novels as fragments of narrative that self-interrupt and contradict, repeat and circle back to the same event but remembered differently, disrupting the achievement of a story completely told and instead mimicking the tendency to repetition and return that mark the psychoanalytical encounter, explicitly introduced in *Alias Grace* in the exchanges between Grace and Dr Simon Jordan, but in *Unconfessed* implicit in Sila's giving an account of her life to Baro, the one to whom she had given life and whose life she had taken.

Atwood's use of samplers from poems, journalism, court and medical reports and Moodie's journals as explicitly intertextual epigraphs which destabilise the notion of a given single truth has been much commented on, but it is Grace's persistent querying of the Bible as an authoritative text, particularly the story of "the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge" and the temptation of Eve (*Alias Grace* 534), that provides a more compelling example of how the character's own auto-narrative measures itself against those intertexts embedded in the conscience that triggers the turn towards the law in anticipation /



acknowledgement of guilt or induces entry into the masquerade of femininity. In the penitentiary, Grace recounts, “the drone of the Bible being read out loud” (277) during breakfast is drowned out by the bodily chorus of rude sound made by the female inmates with their “munching of bread,” “slurping of tea,” “shuffling of feet” and “snuffling of noses.” Atwood’s earlier inclusion of an excerpt from the *Punishment Book* of the Kingston Penitentiary, 1843, as an epigraph had already alerted the reader that the “[o]ffence” of “[l]aughing and talking” would be punished with “6 lashes; cat-o’-nine-tails” (11). In an early interior monologue, Grace with a mixture of devastating blandness – what one might see as the verbal equivalent of the “good stupid look” (43) she had “practiced” as a decoy to deflect intrusive questions – and mimicry of refined moral outrage exposes the absurdities and hypocrisies of a system that compels convicts to “read the Bible, and also tracts, as religion and thrashings are the only remedies for a depraved nature and [their] immortal souls must be considered” (30), when, she points out, “[i]t is shocking how many crimes the Bible contains.” In fact, “[t]he Governor’s wife should cut them all out and paste them in her scrapbook” of “famous criminals” (29).

In *Unconfessed*, Sila’s similar indictment of Christian hypocrisy is far more blatant and corrosive, and yet the language in which it is delivered is heartrending. Her re-appropriation of the story of the biblical Promised Land from the settlers who had appropriated it as founding myth to justify their settlement at the cost of others’ lives as destined and sanctified, for example, reinstates it as a story of slavery, but one of longed-for return to the land from which the slave had been stolen, while at the same time harnessing as analogy the plagues called down upon Egypt by Moses to expose the grotesque greed of the settlers:

Bring me to the place where I may gaze upon the valley of my youth. I am captive in a captive land where rulers push their mouths out, sucking at barrels in vineyards, there in the valley of death, and their cattle are many and their slaves are many and their sins are like unto a plague of locusts that eat not fields but bodies and hearts. Deliver me, I am weary and know things that bring me to my knees. (*Unconfessed* 204)

Like Atwood, Christiansē embeds the Bible in her protagonist’s narrative but does so in a more varied and sustained fashion, with the constant being Sila’s absolute and furious rejection of “the minister and Missus Minister” on Robben Island who “have their god and, worse, they have that book they say is not a book but the voice of their god” (346-47). It is of course also this book into which the slave-owning farmers inscribe their family trees and against which Sila appropriates the incantatory listing of names found in the biblical Book of

Numbers, repeating, as counter-narrative and mnemonic, a genealogy of slaves in her recounting of her life story to Baro. Even more radically appropriative is the way in which Sila's narrative mimics the poetic cadences of the Book of Psalms, rendering what is felt on the skin as an abrasive scouring of words into an exquisitely honed lament which is also curse and prophesy:

Well! Then! Bring me that book and its words.  
Who is it that brings me down? What shakes me?  
I am like a rose in a valley of death and the shadows fear no evil.  
I am like unto a rock that strikes a hill that breaks like a potter's vessel.  
I look unto the hills from whence cometh the wrath of a thousand plagues and  
in the mornings there are vines to bind me to the crusher's wheel. Yea, though  
I wash and wash at the water's edge, there is no balm and the angel of the lord  
breaks bread elsewhere and I must not laugh too loudly. (204)



### ***Alias Grace: Scheherazade in the Abattoir***<sup>15</sup>

A murderess is not an everyday thing.

*Alias Grace* (104)

It is always a mistake to curse back openly at those who are stronger than you unless there is a fence between.

*Alias Grace* (150)

[...] and it is better to laugh than to burst.

*Alias Grace* (188)

It is Grace's story that is dark; he feels as if he has just come from an abattoir [...] He would like to wash his hands [...] It is the only memory she seems to have forgotten, so far; otherwise every button and candle-end seems accounted for. But on second thought, he has no way of knowing that; and he has an uneasy sense that the very plenitude of her recollections may be a sort of distraction, a way of drawing the mind away from some hidden but essential fact, like the dainty flowers over a grave.

*Alias Grace* (215-16)

I'm telling this to no-one but you, as I am aware it is not the approved reading.

*Alias Grace* (534)

---

<sup>15</sup> Working on *Alias Grace*, one is automatically indebted to the already vast body of critical work on the novel and on Atwood's oeuvre which continues to grow, but I would like to acknowledge the work of the following scholars in particular, even if not directly referred to in this chapter: Holly Blackford's "Haunted Housekeeping: Fatal Attractions of Servant and Mistress in Twentieth-Century Female Gothic Literature"; Amelia Defalco's "Haunting Physicality: Corpses, Cannibalism, and Carnality in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*"; Carol Ann Howells's extensive writing on Atwood's work; Magali Cornier Michael's "Rethinking History as Patchwork: The Case of Atwood's *Alias Grace*"; Gillian Siddall's "'That is What I Told Dr. Jordan ...': Public Constructions and Private Disruptions in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*"; and Hilde Staels's "Intertexts of Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*."

In her “Author’s Afterword” to *Alias Grace*, Atwood writes that, “although it is based on reality,” the novel is “a work of fiction,” and sets out to explain that Grace Marks, her protagonist, “was one of the most notorious Canadian women of the 1840s, having been convicted of murder at the age of sixteen” (537). Widely reported in newspapers in Canada, the United States and Britain, the details of the murders of Scots settler Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper, Nancy Montgomery, who was also his mistress and found to be pregnant at the autopsy, were, as Atwood points out, “sensational.” After the murders on 23 July 1843, Grace, who was “uncommonly pretty and also extremely young,” ran off to the United States with her fellow-servant James McDermott, whom the press assumed to be her lover. It was not only “[t]he combination of sex [and] violence” that grabbed the attention, but “the deplorable insubordination of the lower classes” that stirred the imagination and caused anxiety, which may account for the summary hanging of MacDermott “in front of a huge crowd on November 21.” Grace, however, elicited mixed responses and although she too had been sentenced to death for the murder of Kinnear (which accounted for Montgomery’s murder not going to trial) had her sentence commuted to life imprisonment because her lawyer, Kenneth MacKenzie, “and a group of respectable gentleman petitioners [...] pleaded her youth, the weakness of her sex, and her supposed witlessness.” On 19 November 1843 she entered the Provincial Penitentiary in Kingston, but she remained an object of ambivalent fascination throughout the century, with opinions veering between her fearful and innocent enthrallment to MacDermott and he being the victim of her jealousy and monstrous seductions. The three contradictory accounts or testimonies Grace gave at the time – MacDermott gave two – arguably contributed to or even invited fantasies based on stereotypical nineteenth-century views of women as either domestic, sexually pure angels or sexually voracious temptresses, exemplified by the virulent misogyny with which Atwood has the prison guards treat Grace (*Alias Grace* 72-74). Atwood uses these stereotypes and the fantasies they spawned in her fictionalisation of the events and character to reveal how the class-system imported from the metropolis to the colony, particularly as it plays out between masters and female servants, achieves a particular volatility, a configuration of class, criminality and sexuality that Peter Carey similarly foregrounds in *Jack Maggs*, discussed in the next chapter.

Throughout the novel and in the Afterword to it, it is Grace’s extreme vulnerability that is stressed, both as a female servant in the homes of the men who employ her and as female prisoner in the penitentiary and lunatic asylum where she is at the mercy of guards and doctors alike. Atwood notes, for example, that Grace was sent back to the penitentiary

shortly after “the appointment of the humane Joseph Workman as Medical Superintendent of the asylum,” “where, records show, she was suspected of having become pregnant during her absence” (539). Although this was “a false alarm,” the important question Atwood asks is, “who at the asylum could have been the supposed perpetrator?” Since wards were segregated, “men with easiest access to the female patients were the doctors” (539). While in prison, Grace worked as a servant for the governor of the penitentiary – prisoners were hired out for day-labour at the time. She was pardoned and released in 1872, and from then on there are no records of her. Even with the available archival material, “[t]he true character of the historical Grace Marks remains an enigma” (539), because much of it is “so contradictory that few facts emerge as unequivocally ‘known’” (541). However, Atwood explains, “in the gaps left unfilled, I was free to invent” and, because “there were a lot of gaps, there is a lot of invention” in the novel (“In Search” 227).

Atwood first came across the story of Grace Marks in Susanna Moodie’s *Life in the Clearing* (1853) which followed her more pessimistic account of her life as a settler pioneer wife in *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852), the two canonical texts of Canadian settlement upon which Atwood based her earlier collection of poetry, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, discussed in the previous chapter. *Alias Grace* continues and elaborates on the project Atwood undertook in *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, but here recuperating the working-class Irish immigrant and murderess from the distorted, sensationalist accounts of her literary settler foremother whose journey from bush to town does not quite epitomise the ideal of settler triumphalism either since she had to write to support herself and an unemployable husband who always regretted their immigration to Canada, much preferring South Africa. In venturing to tell Grace’s story – representative of an aspect of settler colonialism compelled by the abject poverty and disenfranchisement caused by British colonialism in Ireland and hence one not as readily available to censure – Atwood complicates the narrative of Canadian settlement further by telling it from the perspective of the female domestic servant who had participated in the murder of her employer and a fellow female servant, his mistress. Although Grace and her family had left Ireland before the famine struck, this tragedy and its devastating impact on the lives of those who lived through it register explicitly in the novel when Grace describes “[o]ne poor Irishwoman” in the lunatic asylum who “had all her family dead, half of them of starving in the great famine and the other half of the cholera on the boat coming over; and she would wander about calling their names,” which makes her “glad [she] left Ireland before that time, as the sufferings [the woman] told of were dreadful, and the corpses piled everywhere with none to bury them” (34).

At the level of colonial politics, McDermott's and Grace's Irishness fed into the "Irish Question" to which the Reverend Verringer (who fought to have Grace freed and whose fictional counterpart employs the entirely fictional Dr. Simon Jordan to write a report to achieve this) refers when he tells Dr. Jordan, "[t]he Tories appear to have confused Grace with the Irish Question, although she is a Protestant; and to consider the murder of a single Tory gentleman – however worthy the gentleman, and however regrettable the murder – to be the same thing as the insurrection of the entire race" (91). Grace herself, when telling Dr. Jordan her early history, begins by referring to her confession, where she stated that she came from the North of Ireland, to point out how this information was used against her, saying: "I thought it very unjust when they wrote down that *both of the accused were from Ireland by their own admission*. That made it sound like a crime, and I don't know that being from Ireland is a crime; although I have often seen it treated as such. But of course our family were Protestant and that is different" (118). Atwood, in her lecture "In Search of *Alias Grace*: On Writing Canadian Historical Fiction," notes that in 1843, at the time of the murders, "Canada West was still reeling from the effects of the 1837 Rebellion" about government and land reform led by Radicals like William Lyon Mackenzie in which many Irish participated. McDermott, although Irish, had, however, joined the Glengarry Light Infantry as a soldier to quell the rebellious farmers, "having burnt a good many farms [...] and turned women and children out into the snow, and done worse to them besides, that was never printed in the papers," as Grace tells Dr. Jordan (*Alias Grace* 264). It is Mary Whitney, who befriends her when she first enters service with the Alderman Parkinsons, from whom Grace learns that the Rebellion

was against the gentry, who ran everything, and kept all the money and land for themselves; and it was led by Mr. William Lyon Mackenzie, who was a Radical, and after the Rebellion failed he escaped through ice and snow in women's clothing, and over the Lake to the States, and he could have been betrayed many times over but was not, because he was a fine man who always stood up for the ordinary farmers; but many of the Radicals had been caught and transported or hanged, and had lost their property; or else had gone south; and most of those left here were Tories, or said they were; so it was best not to mention politics, except among friends. (171)

In relating this part of her history to Dr. Jordan, Grace introduces Mary's story as inextricably intertwined with her own narrative and life, a point made explicitly by her in response to Dr. Jordan's question about her choice of the name Mary Whitney as alias after the murders, when she says, "without her, it would have been a different story entirely"

(117). Less obvious, however, is the intrusion of Mary's voice which starts to insinuate itself tonally and idiosyncratically into Grace's narration to coincide with her more overt invocations of Mary's "bold [...] speech" (173). At first subtly contrapuntal to Grace's own voice, Mary's voice increasingly gains force, as if Grace's frequent invocations, like those of a spirit medium, embolden her to take over or possess not only the narration but the body of the one who narrates, seemingly achieving full incarnation under hypnosis by Dr. Jerome DuPont, alias Jeremiah the peddler.

The history of loss and dispossession Mary confides to Grace is that her father's farm had been confiscated because of his involvement in the Rebellion – a property "he had cleared himself with much labour; and they had burnt the log house he'd built with his own two hands, while fighting off the bears and other wild animals; and then he'd lost his life too, through illness by hiding in the winter woods; and her mother had died of grief" (171-72). Even though she becomes homeless and a servant in the homes of the wealthy as a consequence of this, there is little of the victim in her will to "be revenged" and her "fierce" look, and in Grace's descriptions of her as "a fun-loving girl, and very mischievous," "an outspoken young woman" who "did not mince words" and who "had very democratic ideas" (183). Grace takes to the sixteen-year-old Mary at once, but is startled precisely by the improper speech of these "democratic ideas" about class, which she ascribes to Mary "being a native-born Canadian, as she did not have much respect for degree," parodying her employers behind their backs, and by her "coarse" (173) language, which she was "astonished," "shocked" and "surprised to hear [...] from a girl, and one so young and pretty, and so neatly and cleanly dressed" (172). Mary's 'nativeness' and concomitant rebelliousness are even more strongly established by her claim of a "Red Indian" grandmother, her black hair signalling this genealogy of 'outlaw' couplings and their hybridised progeny.

Mary's gentle mockery of Grace's expressions of outraged propriety ends in the two girls' laughter, now complicitous, Grace won over by Mary's playfully ribald prediction that she will soon be "singing mournful hymns like Agnes, and going around with a mouth pulled down all glum and saggy like an old maid's backside" (172). There are frequent such moments of irreverent laughter which Grace describes with exactly the kind of assumed censoriousness for which Mary teases her in her accounts to Dr. Jordan as "the high spirits of youth, which do not always take a very dignified form" (184). Here and elsewhere, Grace's overt performance of the role of one who has learnt how to speak properly is set off against Mary's improper speaking in a way that is too self-aware to be trusted, particularly in her narrations to Dr. Jordan. One such case is when, having recounted an anecdote in which Mary



tells her that “people dressed in a certain kind of clothing are never wrong. Also they never fart,” which is why servants must assume responsibility for such bodily embarrassments if they want to retain their jobs, Grace points to Mary’s “crude way of speaking,” referring not to her use of the word “fart,” but to her use of incorrect grammar as a breach of good “manners:” “She said *You done* and not *You did*. No one taught her otherwise. I used to speak that way as well, but I have learnt better manners in prison” (36).

The coincidence of a playful, parodically performed class insubordination fuelled by anger at injustice – “it angered her that some people had so much and others so little, as she could not see any divine plan in it” (36) – and the consistent use of language that brings “conversation down to a strongly emphasized bodily level of food, drink, digestion, and sexual life,” as Mikhail Bakhtin describes the intrusion of the carnivalesque (in Yaeger, *Honey-Mad* 209), is typical of Mary’s presence in Grace’s narrative. Mary’s speech is first invoked in an early interior monologue when, waiting in “the Governor’s wife’s parlour” (*Alias Grace* 23) to be inspected by yet another doctor, Grace sits for the first time on the settee reserved for guests and recalls Mary telling her that the reason “Mrs. Alderman Parkinson said a lady must never sit in a chair a gentleman vacated” was “[b]ecause, you silly goose, it’s still warm from his bum,” which makes it impossible for Grace not to think of “ladylike bums that have sat on this very settee, all delicate and white, like wobbly soft-boiled eggs.” The analogy between women’s bodies and food or women’s bodies as edible – recalling Atwood’s earlier *The Edible Woman* – runs through the novel, both in the first-person narrated sections and in the third-person narrated sections where Dr. Jordan’s focalisation, dreams and fantasies show an obsessive circling of women’s bodies, always marked by class, that is almost Jack the Ripper-like in its eviscerative intrusiveness. He thinks, when visiting the Governor’s home, that women “of the better classes, married ladies especially, with blameless reputations” are “drawn to him” because of the “forbidden knowledge” he possesses, having “opened up women’s bodies, and peered inside” (94). Imagining himself to be one of “the dark trio – the doctor, the judge, the executioner” with whom he shares “the powers of life and death,” he eroticises women’s response to him as passively masochistic: “To be rendered unconscious; to lie exposed, without shame, at the mercy of others; to be touched, incised, plundered, remade – this is what they are thinking when they look at him, with their widening eyes and slightly parted lips” (94).

In contrast to Dr. Jordan’s self-aggrandising and pathologically morbid eroticisation of women’s unconscious/dead bodies, which coincides with his counterpart fantasy of cannibalising such a consumable body, Mary’s carnivalesque turn to the flesh more often



than not stems from a childishly exuberant delight in the scatological as deflationary of class pretensions, which as parody, “not only parody in its narrow sense but all the other forms of grotesque realism[,] degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh” (Bakhtin in Yaeger, *Honey-Mad* 209). Contained within the highly self-conscious and cautiously constructed narrative Grace tells Dr. Jordan – with its many asides in interior monologue that note where and how narrative restraint and secrecy are elected over confession – Mary’s voice asserts a counter-narrative that challenges the biblically instilled and socially embedded mythologies of class and gender and the inequalities and prejudices they entrench. As alternative or oppositional sources of information, these counter-narratives also function as instruction and warning. For example, when Grace starts to menstruate for the first time and is terrified that she might be dying like her mother had done from some mysterious female malady, it is Mary who reassures and mothers her – “better than [Grace’s] own mother could have done, for she was always too busy or tired or ill” – and also challenges the belief that menstruation is “Eve’s curse,” and therefore something shameful, as “stupid,” saying that “the real curse of Eve was having to put up with the nonsense of Adam, who as soon as there was any trouble, blamed it all on her” (190). Mary uses this opportunity to warn Grace against “the gentlemen, who think they are entitled to anything they want; and when you go out to the privy at night, they’re drunk then, they lie in wait for you and then it is snatch and grab, there’s no reasoning with them, and if you must, you should give them a kick between the legs where they’ll feel it; and it is always better to lock your door, and to use the chamber pot.” She furthermore warns Grace against “trusting any kind of man” and that she “must never do anything for them until they have performed what they promised; and if there’s a ring, there must be a parson to go with it” (190).

There are various ironies being played out here, not least of which is that Mary did fall victim to seduction by her employer’s son, became pregnant and died as a consequence of a backstreet abortion, but at this point Dr. Jordan is unaware of the trajectory of this story. The overriding irony, however, is Dr. Jordan’s own position as interlocutor to whom Grace recounts a narrative that is a scathing critique of the male and class privileges he, a son and gentleman very much like the one who made Mary pregnant, represents. In the third-person narrated sections, shifts between focalisation and free indirect speech are used to devastating effect to expose Dr. Jordan’s interior and sexual life, which is “opened up” and “peered inside” in a way analogous to the way he had “opened up” and “peered inside” the bodies of “a good many women – from the labouring classes, naturally” when he was a medical student (84). It is in that unselfconsciously used “naturally” that his class privilege and prejudices are

revealed, because, for men like him, it is a given that it will always be the dead bodies of women like Grace, Mary and Nancy that end up on the slab for dissection – women already so absolutely reduced to the domain of the material, of the things and bodies they have to take care of in their daily lives as servants, that in death their bodies become what Patricia Yaeger terms “throwaway” bodies (*Dirt xi*), treated like the carcasses of animals.<sup>16</sup> Yet, while the ‘superior’ classes treat these bodies in their materiality as discardable and replaceable, they also, paradoxically, as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White argue, include the “low-Other” symbolically “as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life,” making “what is socially peripheral [...] symbolically central. The low-Other is despised and denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture” (in Yaeger, *Dirt* 67).<sup>17</sup>

This dynamic of repression made overt in the third-person portrayals of Dr. Jordan’s interior life is shown up to be yet another dimension of the hypocrisy of men who intrude into Grace’s life with their self-delusional fantasies and promises of rescue – “Help is what they offer but gratitude is what they want, they roll around in it like cats in the catnip” (46) – because Grace’s ventriloquism or channelling of the now-dead Mary’s voice produces a deflationary running commentary that refuses the role of quiet acquiescence imposed by what Cixous describes as being “riveted [...] between two horrifying myths: between the Medusa and the abyss” (“Laugh” 885). Whereas Grace’s use of proper speech as camouflage functions as an expression of Irigaray’s *mimétisme*, in Mary’s counter-narratives the explosive, ridiculing laughter of Cixous’s Medusa boisterously ruptures her pragmatism and common sense. Mary, for example, propounds the “democratic view” of pioneering self-improvement based on the belief that “one person was as good as the next, and on this side of the ocean folks rose in the world by hard work, not by who their grandfather was, and that was the way it should be” (182). Being a servant is “just a job of work” to accumulate a dowry in order to marry a farmer and then to employ servants of one’s own. The counter-narrative Mary tells is of upper-class uselessness and impotence, the world of the servants,

---

<sup>16</sup> Here it must be noted that McDermott’s body was treated similarly, because, as the Governor’s daughter Lydia tells the “disconcerted” Dr. Jordan, “[t]hey cut off his head [...] They have it in a bottle, at the University in Toronto [...] Like a big pickle” (102-103).

<sup>17</sup> While she refers to Stallybrass and White’s work, Yaeger’s *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing, 1930-1990* is more concerned with “the difficult figure of the throwaway body – to women and men whose bodily harm does not matter enough to be registered or repressed – who are not symbolically central, who are looked over, looked through, who become a matter of public and private indifference – neither important enough to be disavowed nor part of white southern culture’s dominant emotional economy” (68).

relegated to “the back stairs, in order to keep out of the way of the family” in fact being where “the real work of the place” happens, which is why their employers, those “feeble and ignorant creatures,” have been relegated by the servants to the front stairs to keep them from “getting all snarled up [...] and interfering” in the work, and “making a nuisance of themselves.” This radical inversion of class hierarchy mapped out on domestic space is an exposure of the stupidity and physical ineptitude of the masters: “it was a wonder they could blow their own noses or wipe their own backsides, they were by nature as useless as a prick on a priest,” Grace recounts to Dr. Jordan, interrupting herself, as she often does, to apologise for Mary’s dirty talk which had crept into her own gracious speech by saying, “if you’ll excuse me, Sir, but that was how she put it.” But Mary’s voice persists in its delightful outrages, in spite of Grace’s attempts at propriety:

[A]nd if they were to lose all their money tomorrow and be thrown out on the streets, they would not even be able to make a living by honest whoring, as they would not know which part was to go in where, and they would end up getting – I won’t say the word – in the ear; and most of them did not know their own arse from a hole in the ground. And she said something else about women, which was so coarse I will not repeat it, Sir, but it made us laugh very much. (182-83)

Smashing the façade of upper-class decorum that relies on an erasure of the body – already associated with the female, but abjected in its unruliness to the realm of the lower classes, where the working-class woman becomes the exploitable body *par excellence* – Mary’s instructions to Grace expose the secret world of dirt and excrement for which servants are made responsible and for which they metonymically stand in. The radical implication here is not simply the equalising one that they too shit – perhaps a *mimétisme* of Jonathan Swift’s “Celia” that inverts its misogyny and appropriates its scatology – but that what these “feeble” people produce is nothing but useless shit. Moreover, the bodily intimacy between servant and employer is shown to be a potential source of power because, as Mary through Grace explains to Dr. Jordan, “we washed their dirty linen and therefore knew a good deal about them; but they did not wash ours, and knew nothing about us at all. There were few secrets they could keep from the servants” (183). Yet, there is a game to be played here too, one that requires a complicit subterfuge, but which also implicitly ridicules the pretensions of the upper classes: “and if I was ever to be a chambermaid, I would have to learn to carry a bucket of filth as if it was a bowl of roses, for the thing these people hated the most was to be reminded that they too had bodies, and their shit stank as much as anyone’s, if not worse.”

Atwood does not write a triumphalist account of the subaltern's victory over adversity – there is never any doubt that the feistiness and rebellion that speak through Grace belong to a young girl who had not escaped the trap she astutely identified and mocked, and that it is the story of her death at the hands of a man like Dr. Jordan – in both his medical and gentlemanly roles – that forms the bloody centre of Grace's narrative from which Dr. Jordan wants to exculpate himself by “wash[ing] his hands” (215). He is unquestionably implicated in Grace's accusation – “And you are the first person I have told about the doctor, Sir, but it is my true belief that it was the doctor that killed her with his knife; him and the gentleman between them. For it is not always the one that strikes the blow, that is the actual murderer; and Mary was done to death by that unknown gentleman, as surely as if he'd taken the knife and plunged it into her body himself” (206). His sense of Grace's story as “dark” and like an “abattoir” shows a surprising squeamishness, given his accounts of dissections and the morbid turn of his sexual fantasies, in spite of the way in which it picks up on Grace's description of Mary's corpse as “a carcass hung up at the butchers” (207) and the “bad smell” (205) of “wet straw, from the mattress, and also the salty smell of blood,” which is like the smell “in a butcher shop.” What Dr. Jordan is after, of course, is the truth about Grace's involvement in the Kinnear-Montgomery murders, which he sees “as the centre of Grace's narrative” (338) – that other bloody abattoir to which she had or claims to have lost the key and from which she deflects him like a cunning Scheherazade with her skilful story-telling.

The comparison to Scheherazade is first introduced by Grace's lawyer, Kenneth MacKenzie, when Dr. Jordan visits him and asks whether Grace had been lying to him, to which MacKenzie replies: “did Scheherazade lie? Not in her own eyes; indeed, the stories she told ought never to be subjected to the harsh categories of Truth and Falsehood. They belong in another realm altogether. Perhaps Grace Marks had simply been telling you what she needs to tell, in order to accomplish the desired end” (438). One reason for the analogy, the lawyer suggests, is that, like Scheherazade, Grace wants “‘[t]o keep the blow from falling’,” because, as Foucault writes about *The Thousand and One Nights* in “What Is an Author?,” she tells stories “in order to forestall death, to postpone the day of reckoning that would silence the narrator” (102). Yet, as Cavarero points out, although staving off not only her own death but the death of other virgins should she fail in her attempts to entertain and enthrall the sultan with the storyteller's trick of narrative suspension, Scheherazade's weaving of a proliferation of intertwined, remembered stories, one generating another, in what could be read as a flow of free-associative elaboration, coincides with her generation of sons (*Narratable* 121), thus consolidating her marriage to the sultan through an equivalent erotic

fecundity. From within the sultan's boudoir – place of numerous nuptial deflorations and strangulations, reminiscent of Bluebeard's bloody chamber – she uses her voice “to keep death outside the circle of life” (Foucault, “What” 102), and in the process her womb itself becomes the life-generating circle, in which the sultan's refusal of the (pro)creative feminine in his fear of sexual betrayal is transformed, his virility recuperated and made flesh in his sons, because he allowed himself to be “knowingly seduced” by and complicit in her subterfuge (Cavarero, *Narratable* 123).

MacKenzie's analogy breaks down precisely at the threshold to that bloody chamber the womb where death and sex intersect in Grace's interlocking narratives of the mercilessly exploited bodies of women, their fecundity a death sentence: First, there is the story of her mother's body depleted by numerous, unwanted pregnancies and her eventual death in the ship over from Ireland to Canada, her stomach distended by a “hard swelling” that at first seems like another pregnancy but is a malignant tumour (137). Next is the central story of Mary Whitney's bleeding and dying body, the baby “cut out of her” by the “the doctor that the whores went to, when they needed it” (203, 202). Then, there is Nancy Montgomery's changing body – “plumping out, like a raisin in hot water,” which Grace realises, as if “kicked in the stomach,” her “heart going hard like a hammer,” is because “[s]he was in a delicate condition. She was in the family way. She was in trouble” – which ends up slaughtered in the cellar of Kinnear's house (321). Unlike the celebration of the erotic and procreative that Scheherazade's impregnated body represents, life perpetuated by her in stories and sons, Grace's dismayed “[o]h no, oh no” at the realisation of Nancy's pregnancy, coming from a body done in by the kick of traumatic memory, tolls a more ominous warning that echoes in her stories of pregnant, bleeding, dying women and culminate in her final unsent letter to Dr. Jordan in which she tells him that she too, at the age of forty-six, might be pregnant, “[b]ut then it might as easily be a tumour, such as killed my poor mother at last [...] It is strange to know you carry within yourself either a life or a death, but not to know which one” (533).

The intention to seduce that MacKenzie imputes to Grace's story-telling with his reference to Scheherazade, while not entirely inaccurate – for are not all storytellers motivated by this desire? – does not take into account that the desire to please in Grace's case is a more mixed affair, as is evident in the tonal ambiguities of her description of what she feels at seeing the “animated” Dr. Jordan “writing eagerly” – “It does my heart good to feel I can bring a little pleasure into a fellow-being's life; and I think to myself, I wonder what he will make of all that” (328). The proper speaking/thinking Grace does here is unsettling

precisely because it captures the undertone of insincerity so often typical of proper speech, which is compounded by her explicit ‘authorial’ self-consciousness about how her story will be ‘read’ by her ‘reader.’ Placed in juxtaposition with a much earlier, distinctly more (auto)erotic description of her experience, then still new, of this relationship with Dr. Jordan – to all intents and purposes her scribe – the controlled self-consciousness of the storyteller differs markedly from the poetic unspooling of free-association typical of the stream-of-consciousness sections, which one reads with a sense of glimpsing, briefly, Grace at her most unguarded because her language seems to break from both the conscious control imposed by the imperative to speak properly and from the rude speech Mary’s possession intrudes:

While he writes, I feel as if he is drawing me; or not drawing me, drawing on me – drawing on my skin – not with the pencil he is using, but with an old-fashioned goose pen, and not with the quill end but with the feather end. As if hundreds of butterflies have settled all over my face, and are softly opening and closing their wings.

But underneath that is another feeling, a feeling of being wide-eyed awake and watchful. It’s like being wakened suddenly in the middle of the night, by a hand over your face, and you sit up with your heart going fast, and no one is there. And underneath that is another feeling still, a feeling like being torn open; not like a body of flesh, it is not painful as such, but like a peach; and not even torn open, but too ripe and splitting open of its own accord.

And inside the peach there’s a stone. (79)

Atwood’s own explanation of Grace’s “strong motives to narrate, but also strong motives to withhold” in her lecture “In Search of *Alias Grace*” makes the point that it is “the only power left to her as a convicted and imprisoned criminal” who is in an obviously inferior class and gender position to her interlocutor. This partly accounts for her selectivity, but her narrative is also “dependent on what she remembers; or is it what she says she remembers, which can be quite a different thing?” (227). What Atwood ascribes to late twentieth-century “uneasiness about the trustworthiness of memory, the reliability of story, and the continuity of time” clearly inform her treatment of memory and story-telling in the novel, a theoretical self-consciousness typical of those novels Toye describes as “theoretical narratives,” but the simultaneity of Grace’s control over the narration and Mary’s eruptions into and possession of that narration seems to exceed these explanations. Early in the novel, when Grace tells Dr. Jordan about their passage over from Ireland, she self-consciously employs the rhetoric of polite discourse, but in a register that verges on the insulting. She prefaces her account of people vomiting and defecating in buckets in the over-crowded hold, these “being overturned



by mistake” (134) in the dark, “the stench [being] enough to turn your stomach inside out” with “[a]nd if you’ll forgive me for mentioning this, Sir, there were no proper ways to relieve yourself,” only to continue to describe in detail the bodily abjection endured and observed, which “was like being a suffering soul in Hell.” Evidently noticing the effect this account has on Dr. Jordan, she ends this description with “[b]ut I did not mean to offend your sensibilities, Sir. The ship was after all only a sort of slum in motion, though without the gin shops; I hear they have got better ships now,” followed by the suggestion, “[p]erhaps you would like to open the window.” At once distancing herself from this devastating childhood experience which coincided with her mother’s death by maintaining control over the narration of the experience and asserting through her use of the vacuous formulas of polite speech an equality with Dr. Jordan which is, however, also intrinsically critical of his “sensibilities” – that “after all only a sort of slum” gently inserted to needle those tender “sensibilities” – there is no recourse here to cover her own use of ‘crude’ speech by invoking Mary. Yet this voice is uncannily similar in tone and register to the voice that emerges from Grace under hypnosis as that belonging to Mary (464-69).

Possessed by traumatic memory, taken over by it, Grace’s language under hypnosis – whether read as authentically induced by DuPont or performed in collusion with him – displaces entirely the demure speech with which it coincides in much of Grace’s narration, and it also, strikingly, differs from the delicate, wounded speech that one has come to associate with the poetic idiom of her ‘authentic’ interior world where resides other, deeper memories of early childhood abuse and neglect. The ‘truth’ that Dr. Jordan wants to unlock, based on “his theories [that] the right object ought to evoke a chain of disturbing associations in her” (105), is specific in its preoccupation with the question of Grace’s guilt or innocence in the Kinnear-Montgomery murders by awakening her repressed memory of the event, and to this end, he “[e]very day [...] set some small object in front of her, and [...] asked her to tell him what it causes her to imagine,” hoping that “various root vegetables [...] will lead downwards: Beet – Root Cellar – Corpses, for instance; or even Turnip – Underground – Grave.” While his invitation to narrate her life story solicits stories from her that are explicitly related to the one that preoccupies him, she resists the seductions of the game he assumes is hidden from her but which she evidently grasps and distrusts, responding to it with her “good stupid look” (43) and a counter narrative of domestic detail in which, as he notes with frustration, “every button and candle-end seems accounted for” (215). And yet, after she recounts the story of Mary’s death to him, he also wonders whether “the very plenitude of her recollections may be a sort of distraction, a way of drawing the mind away from some hidden



but essential fact, like the dainty flowers over a grave” (216). It is in the listing of everyday domestic detail, of what Dr. Jordan thinks of as “a series of cookery methods” (104), “a catalogue of household objects” (160) – and what Atwood in her lecture on the novel describes as “the now-obscure details of daily life” that “past recorders” considered “too mundane and unimportant to record,” such as “how to clean a chamber pot, what footgear would have been worn in winter, the origins of quilt pattern names, and how to store parsnips” (“In Search” 225) – that Grace produces a poetics of servitude with its litany of routine tasks to deflect the intrusions of Dr. Jordan’s attempts “to evoke a chain of disturbing associations in her” (*Alias Grace* 105).

Yet, even in this retreat into the homely mundane as a defence against the sensational there is an insinuation of horror biding its time, like the temptation of having “arsenic [...] about the house” (527). Perhaps Grace herself never quite allows us to forget that, unlike *The Arabian Nights* where it is the sultan who is murderous, in her story it is she, the Scheherazade figure, who is the “celebrated murderess” (25), an appellation first used by Moodie in her *Life in the Clearings* which Grace appropriates with some relish:

The reason they want to see me is that I am a celebrated murderess. Or that is what has been written down. When I first saw it I was surprised, because they say Celebrated Singer and Celebrated Poetess and Celebrated Spiritualist and Celebrated Actress, but what is there to celebrate about murder? All the same, *Murderess* is a strong word to have attached to you. It has a smell to it, that word – musky and oppressive, like dead flowers in a vase. Sometimes at night I whisper it over to myself: *Murderess, Murderess*. It rustles, like a taffeta skirt across the floor.

Murderer is merely brutal. It’s like a hammer, or a lump of metal. I would rather be a murderess than a murderer, if those are the only choices.  
(25)

The erotic charge of this word with its dangerous “smell” of decay and its sexy susurrations is echoed in Dr. Jordan’s later sexual fantasy in which he too “whispers to himself” the words “[m]urderess, murderess”: “It has an allure, a scent almost. Hothouse gardenias. Lurid but also furtive. He imagines himself breathing it as he draws Grace towards him, pressing his mouth against her. *Murderess*. He applies it to her throat like a brand” (453). The outlaw glamour of this word, its suggestion of excess and transgression, secures for Grace an identity to inhabit and a story to tell in which her survival stands as a spectacular refusal of the victimhood of Mary Whitney and Nancy Montgomery, against whom she “had a rage in [her] heart for many years [...] for letting themselves be done to death,” the “full weight of which”

(531, 532) she feels she had to carry. Finding herself “rescued” by Jamie Walsh (whom she had met while working for Kinnear and who testified against her in the murder case) after being freed from prison, she realises that she “must act like someone who has been rescued,” someone who is no longer seen as “a celebrated murderess” but “perhaps as an innocent woman wrongly accused and imprisoned unjustly, or at least for too long a time, and an object of pity rather than of horror and fear” (513). It is a new story that “calls for a different arrangement of the face,” one she finds difficult to get “used to,” knowing that in this domestic happy ending with its more private perversions, she has become merely ordinary, nothing special after all: “Of course to those who do not know my story I will not be anybody in particular.”



***Unconfessed: Corpus Delicti – Corpus Lamentatio***<sup>18</sup>

A woman moved from master to master, farm to farm, from the district’s prison to the big town’s prison. A woman fit for a hanging. Child murderer.

*Unconfessed* (19)

Only those who must eat and are not plagued by words can forgive me. I will say, hyenas, I surrender to you and you will not care that what you eat had a name, was called by that name before I came to live in the wretched stink of this place called Sila [...] You will laugh your shivering laugh, because you will have tasted surrender.

*Unconfessed* (106)

Hsst! A woman named Sila is running like a mad thing from one end of the island to the other. She moans like a cat, whines like a dog and shits like a cow.

Help me! Help me!

*Unconfessed* (146)

There is no language to make them ashamed. Nothing I had to say could be beautiful. Not after things done. Not for me. Not for them. I and they were offended by my presence, though I – more than they – know how to love.

This thing we learn, this love, has a mouth that asks and asks for the impossible.

*Unconfessed* (241)




---

<sup>18</sup> Like *Alias Grace*, *Unconfessed* has garnered much critical interest and, even though I do not directly refer to them, I would like to acknowledge the following scholars whose work on the novel and on Cape slavery I found invaluable: Gabeba Baderoon’s “‘This is Our Speech’: Voice, Body and Poetic Form in Recent South African Writing” and “The African Oceans – Tracing the Sea as Memory of Slavery in South African Literature and Culture”; Margaret Lenta’s “*A Chain of Voices* and *Unconfessed*: Novels of Slavery in the 1980s and in the Present Day” and “Sentencing Slaves: Verdicts of the Cape Courts, 1705-1794”; Jessica Murray’s “Gender and Violence in Cape Slave Narratives and Post-Narratives” and “When ‘Good’ Mothers Kill: A Representation of Infanticide”; and Meg Samuelson’s “‘Lose Your Mother, Kill Your Child’: The Passage of Slavery and Its Afterlife in Narratives by Yvette Christiansë and Saidiya Hartman.” I was also asked to examine Maria Geustyn’s Master’s thesis on “Representations of Slave Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid Fiction: The ‘Sideways Glance’,” supervised by Meg Samuelson, while writing this thesis.

In the article “‘Heartsore’: The Melancholy Archive of Cape Colony Slavery,” which appeared three years after the publication of *Unconfessed*, Christiansë gives an extensive overview of the context from which she culled the story of Sila van den Kaap, creating, like Atwood did in her lecture on *Alias Grace* as historical fiction, an explicatory scholarly narrative to accompany what she in a different context referred to as “a fictionalized account of a vanishing woman” (“Author’s Note” n.pag.). Christiansë was diverted from her original archival research project to find “the direct, first-person slave narratives of the Cape Colony” and to uncover under what conditions and in what “forms [...] traces of self-articulation” could emerge when she came across the story of “a slave woman in an outlying district of the Cape Colony,” who, on 24 December 1822, “cut the throat of her nine-year-old son. She had, court records later reported, planned to take her own life. Instead, she buried her son in a shallow grave and left the farm on which she was enslaved to walk to another, where she gave herself up to the district’s Field Cornet, or local militia officer” (“‘Heartsore’” n.pag.). The first archival trace of this woman who had been sentenced to death by hanging in 1823 but who had still been alive in a Cape prison three years later that caught Christiansë’s attention was in “a memorandum between the Colonial Office in London and the colony’s Acting Governor,” dated 1826, where she appears as an anomalous item in the bureaucratic listing of mundane colonial concerns. While there were various, contradictory accounts of Grace Marks available to Atwood, Christiansë found “almost nothing” in the “fragmented records and palpable silences of criminal proceedings,” pursuing instead this “shadow figure” in the archive where she “recognized [her] under various related names, including, most frequently, Sila van de Kaap.” Later describing this “accidental” archival “encounter” as “uncanny” because she “came to be haunted by a powerful trace of this woman’s ‘voice’” (“Author’s Note” n.pag.), Christiansë worked in the Cape Town archives, the British Library, and the Public Records Office in Kew for the years it took her to write the novel, “pulled” by

that trace, a single word that all of the official documents seemed unable to resist. That single word was the Dutch *hertseer*, which the Colonial Office translated directly into ‘heartsore.’ Not ‘grieving’ or ‘griefstruck,’ but this forceful, corporeal, yet strangely nonexistent word, ‘heartsore.’ It is the one real word that she utters when confronted with her crime.

Compelled by this faint but persistent voice, made flesh in a word that quietly, insistently speaks its singular bodily agony in defiance of the law of “the country of lies”

where “[t]ruth was a foreign language” (*Unconfessed* 9), Christiansë, in writing the novel, endeavoured “to recover [...] some sense of the life and conditions Sila lived in and from which she attempted to speak” (“Author’s Note” n. pag.). Paradoxically, it is Sila’s “failed but effectual attempt to summon the law” when she gives herself up to the Field Cornet that, although “bound by and within the archival record and this record’s relationship to colonial law,” appears as a disruptive breach “through which we can glimpse her, perhaps even hear her, some 150 years later” (“Author’s Note” n.pag.). Christiansë’s preoccupation with finding a way to recover this voice from the archive is explicitly negotiated as one informed by subaltern theory in her article on Cape Colony slavery where she argues that Sila “occupies that position so well described by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’” because, “[a]ccording to Spivak’s theory, Sila is structurally muted in that, although we have words from her, the state never granted her full subjectivity, and her utterances remained, for them, utterly illegible” (“Heartsore” n.pag.).

Registering the pitfalls of such an endeavour to recover the subaltern’s voice from the archive and to speak on her behalf, Christiansë elects a “radically fragmented” narrative structure, which she describes as “the only form that would resist any narrative longing for a complete, consoling recuperation of the colonial record on [her] part and, perhaps, a reader’s” (“Author’s Notes” n.pag.). This turn towards structural fragmentation, in which the fragmented body of the novel metonymically encodes Sila’s broken history and body, coincides with a turn towards the free-associative poetic fugues and threnodies of her stream-of-consciousness narration which, like the island-encircling sea, “moves like a thing that lives deep beneath its own skin” (*Unconfessed* 46). The narrative complexity of the novel thus mimics the psychoanalytical process of uncovering traumatic memory through a process of association that moves closer, gradually, to that core, that wounding moment – deferred, approached obliquely, and with eyes averted, until caught in the cross-currents and undertows, pulled in and under, learning to swim by drowning. In this experiment with voice, interiority and traumatic memory which coincides with the imperative to capture and convey the history of Cape colonial slavery, centring on Robben Island as site of incarceration from where the liberation of future generations will be spearheaded, Christiansë appears to be guided by Toni Morrison’s suggestion in her preface to *Beloved*, a novel in various ways counterpart to *Unconfessed*, that “[t]o render enslavement as a personal experience, language must get out of the way” (xiii). Sila’s story begins in the childhood trauma of the slavers’ raid on her village (*Unconfessed* 192) and the journey by sea from Mozambique to the Cape where she “woke up out of the darkness and the rolling world and the endlessness of

weeping” (216) to find herself in the world of “the demon dead” who speak “the language of death.” Severed from conscious memory of her early childhood – “[w]hat [she] remember[s] is very thin” (120) – she carries a residue of it within her body, which when stirred by a “smell of something would make [her] head spin” or “would be like a smack.” What is both remembered consciously and felt bodily at moments of recurring trauma as a sense of extreme disequilibrium is “the washing of water against the big ship that carried [the] Mozbiekers to this land,” being “down in that hole [...] sick with the rolling and the smell and with the sound of their voices calling names that never answered” (151).

This complexity of structure and voice registers from the start in the employment of third-person narration in the first part of the novel (7-40), where Sila’s focalisation and the increasing encroachment of free indirect speech anticipate the first-person narrated core with its recurrent tonal and stylistic shifts between stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue, which is frequently closer to dramatic monologue in that there are various implied interlocutors, most regularly the ghost of Baro, the son Sila killed, but also the ghosts of Johannes, the first man she loved, and of Oumiesies on whose farm she grew up. She also speaks to Lys, a fellow prisoner on the island who contracts leprosy, both in her presence as friend and lover, but also in her absence after she dies. The novel opens in the prison cell where Sila had been kept, “forgotten” (8) by the British colonial powers, on the day when she is visited by “the new superintendent” (7), sent over by “the king of the English” (12) “to the Cape to fix up prisons,” a man who does not enter, but remains at “the entrance of the cell” (7) – like the reader, on the threshold of this history. Although he clearly wields power, the woman in the cell – still unnamed – notices his “uncertainty” (7), observing him from a perspective that inverts the hierarchy of power they inhabit, because endorsed by privileged focalisation in the repetition of the pronoun “she,” followed by verbs or phrasal verbs which all suggest how alert she is and how knowing, in a sequence of sentences that start as follows: “She could make out”; “She knew why;” “She waited and could see [...] she remained seated”; “She let it [...] and relished”; “She knew about him”; “She had been invisible”; “She said nothing.”

Already at this point of entry into the narrative, the woman’s interior voice as embodied presence occupies the textual space, as corporeal as her brutalised, incarcerated body, irrefutably present in the fury with which it confronts every outrage suffered, its refusals and vulnerability, and even its pungency, because, in a novel that obsessively obtrudes the olfactory – even more so than *Alias Grace* does – voice, like the body, seems also to exude odour in its tonal intensities. The man who stands at the door to her cell,

although he looks at her, does not, at first, speak to her directly but to the guard who had consistently used her as an object of transaction, an institutionally sanctioned pimp who makes money from selling her body to other guards, his “quick counting of coins” (9) fixing the deal as his “rough laugh” mocks the man who, having paid to rape her, now disgusted, “ran to wash himself.” The superintendent also, immediately, smells her, and from the first reiteration of this proliferating word that registers what, according to William Ian Miller, is at the lowest level “in the hierarchy of senses” and has been linked “to the sexual” in a “long history” of “unrelenting misogyny” in which it is “the odors emitted by women that kill male desire” (Miller 349), that Sila’s narrative generates an incarnation that is defiant in its vital, poetic materiality – a body of evidence that is also a book of lamentations. What Sila sees at this moment – and will later remember – is “De Laurentz [...] with his handkerchief over his nose, his hat in his hand” (*Unconfessed* 322) because “[t]he smell had assailed his nostrils when he first entered, but now he could smell the bed” (7). Willing “it [to] reach him,” she “relished the satisfaction of seeing his small step backwards.” The sequence in which De Laurentz is first “assailed” by the smell and then locates its source as “the bed” recalls Susan Stewart’s argument that “the sensation of smell becomes stronger and stronger as one approaches its origin, and the person following an olfactory sense in this way becomes more and more enveloped by the power of that force until the point where it is impossible to hold it at a distance” (*Poetry* 32).

What startles and yet creates a sense of exhilaration is Sila’s observation of and pleasure in seeing the effect of the smell of her body’s degradation on this “superintendent of cleanliness and order” (*Unconfessed* 8), to whom she had been “invisible” (7) among the other inmates in the prison yard, reduced to being “one of those people he had been so good at keeping obedient.” For it is at this point that she also realises that “smell,” indiscriminate at first, manifests for him as the “stench” of sex, and sees how it breaches his sense of civilised propriety with its animal rankness when he is literally taken aback – he takes “a small step backwards.” In the face of the patent absurdity of the guard’s response that “[s]anitation is a problem” and De Laurentz’s irritated demand – “What the hell does that mean, man?” – Sila feels “the laughter bubble up in her throat,” the kind of laughter she will later describe as “the worst kind” (33), and the antithesis of the “real laughter” (218) she shares with Lys. It is in this demand for meaning when all meaning had already collapsed, when he, finally, turns to her to ask, “What have you to say for yourself?” (8), that she finds a response, not in words, but in the devastating eloquence of her demeaned body’s gestural appropriation of the role assigned to her, in parody, her body a mirror held up to reflect not her humiliation but



their hypocrisy: “She lay back and laughed, drawing her skirt up. This was how they liked it, filthy and stinking. He should know that, superintendent of cleanliness and order. The naaimeidjie was here. Yes, he should know who and what this place had made of her in all these years she had been forgotten.”

Defiant and provocative, this assertion of bodily presence in the undeniable materiality of dirt and stench turns on the appropriation of exactly those wounding interpellations that dehumanise by reducing her to mere matter as an exploitable, discardable female body, marked as enslaved and criminal, because it enacts a contra-diction of these terms that in perverting them reclaims subjectivity by making her body in its extreme vulnerability matter or signify, and in doing so refusing the annihilating power of institutional forgetfulness. It is, however, an act of reclamation that cannot be sustained against the force of the realisation, in spite of its familiarity, that the system she confronts with hopeless bravado can make sense of her existence only in terms of her value as the property of one man or another, as “Sila van den Kaap, slave to the burgher Jacobus van der Wat” (8). Although this is a realisation that makes her sit up, she is also overcome by a sense of physical dislocation suffered as a form of vertigo – “the walls spun” – which coincides with overwhelming nausea as the “sour damp straw of her bed reached her nostrils,” and which recalls as somatic memory the “dark and rolling world” (13) of the ship into which she, “a child stolen from her mother,” had been “pushed” and from which, in a travesty of birth, she had again been “pushed out into this world.” At this and other moments when she is overcome by “the wretched stink of this place called Sila” (106), there is, paradoxically, also a visceral sense of self, for which Cavarero’s word “*sapore* – literally, a ‘taste’ or ‘flavour,’ but which could also mean a ‘scent,’ a ‘tang,’ a ‘zest’” (Kottman, Introduction xxviii) seems apposite, particularly when used as “the verb *assaporarsi*, which means to ‘have a taste of oneself,’ or ‘to recognize one’s own scent or flavour.’” Paul A. Kottman, the translator of Cavarero’s *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, makes the further point that “[t]he word *sapore* is phonetically close to *sapere* [knowledge], but the emphasis falls, instead, on an experience that one has of being familiar with oneself bodily rather than intellectually. One senses oneself to be oneself without having to think about it, rather than knowing oneself to be oneself through reflection.”

Whereas Sila’s wilful appropriation of her body’s degradation as a form of defiant speech is directed outwards, operating at the gestural level by lying back and lifting her dress to expose her sex and also at the level of sense by willing the smell of her body to reach the superintendent, the coincident bodily speech suggested by Cavarero’s notion of a self-



knowing that manifests in the recognition of “one’s own scent or flavour,” which, interestingly, recuperates the lower-order senses of taste and smell as confirmation of existence, is self-directed and self-affirming. Although there is certainly a sense of vertigo as the world tilts and spins, the smell of her own body confirms Sila’s physical existence to herself in a world that not only sees her as “filthy” (*Unconfessed* 8) but treats her like dirt, a concept which in its metaphoric range offers, as Yaeger points out in her work on women writers of the American south, “a category of alienation that has peculiar powers of abjection” (*Dirt* 65). The “uncanny presence of disposable bodies” (1) that Yaeger identifies in southern women’s writing is especially pertinent in this context, providing in the shared history of slavery an analogous “atmosphere of neglect, desuetude, or dehumanization – foregrounding the background of a society that throws people away, that treats them as objects” (80).

In thinking with Christiansē about Sila’s body and life as always extremely precariously situated within the political economy of Cape Colony slavery,<sup>19</sup> I want to bring into conjunction the etymological root of the word “vulnerable,” which William McCuiag, translator of Cavarero’s *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*, reminds us comes from “the Latin noun *vulnus* [...] meaning ‘wound’” (vii), and that of “precarious,” which, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, reverts back to the root for “prayer” – *precaria*, the feminine form of the Latin noun *precarius*, “obtained by entreaty.” In the constellation of meaning thus procured, Sila’s wounded body in its unutterable vulnerability is itself a prayer for intercession, relief, release, inarticulate and at the edge of reason, its reiterated “Help me! Help me!” more the whimpers of a hurt beast than words (*Unconfessed* 146), and finding eventual consolation only in the lover’s soft laughter, whose body, cleft as her own, broken into, confesses, and confesses love. In the prison cell, it is De Laurentz’s capacity to be taken aback, affected by having to confront not only the brute fact of Sila’s continued existence in spite of the death sentence passed on her for the murder of her child but also the existence of her child Meisie as material evidence of the use to which her body had been put by the guards, which creates an opening, even if only fleetingly, for a potentially transforming exchange. When he turns to Sila with “questions that were not orders or commands that had all the answers already” (9), she hears “something in his voice” that compels from her body its desperate entreaty: “‘Help me, master!’” However, when he returns, after having “left, so

---

<sup>19</sup> This term is now almost inevitably associated with Butler’s use of it in her post-9/11 book, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, but my use of it here, although absolutely implicated in her discussion of “vulnerability” and the question of “What *makes for a grievable life?*” (*Precarious* 20), retains its more general usage, while also locating it as more specifically applicable to the context of Cape Colony slavery.

quickly she thought she had dreamed the whole visit,” Sila, recognising his disbelief and confusion as signs of a vulnerability particular to his situation, grasps that “[h]e knew nothing” (12).

In an earlier reach of empathic understanding of De Laurentz, riven by the deepest ironies, Sila’s horror at being forgotten is channelled in free indirect speech through mimicry of his voice – a shift into intertwining but conflicting sensibilities that will form a more consciously performed part of her later first-person narrations. In these first pages of the novel and in this section in particular, we thus catch the cadences of a barely repressed outraged hilarity almost impossible to distinguish from the howls of despair which will become the constant unsettling discordance in Sila’s narrations:

How on earth could she have been here all this time, under their noses, and not be noticed, she and her child, the one she called Meisie despite the name they wanted her to use? How could they have forgotten about her, *forgotten*? But he could not bring himself to ask these questions, they would have exposed his ignorance, and a great superintendent of order could never admit to such a thing. (7-8)

In this example, outrage derives from the intersecting injustices of the colonial system De Laurentz represents, and which he, in his ignorance and naivety, hopes to change. It is a system that Sila, in contrast, knows intimately because of the psychic and physical wounds it has inflicted on her. From this place of deep knowledge, she recovers, in a shift of register breathtaking in its delicacy and tenderness, a simple pity for this man whose vulnerability she first notices in “a thread working its way loose around a button,” seeing in it how this system “would try to undo the very secrets of life that held this man together” and how he would disintegrate under its pressures – “His cuffs would fray. His buttons would fall, roll away, and be lost. His sharp blue eyes [...] would cloud with anger, confusion, disappointment, defeat, and he would sail back to his king’s land and disappear” (13). The impulse to inform and warn, to spell out these dangers to him and in so doing dispel their power to corrupt him, comes from what resurfaces in the novel as her “know[ing] how to love” (241) as both mother and lover, the two seeming to coincide here and awakening in her, simultaneous with the impulse to warn, the desire to tell him her own story, in a paragraph that reiterates the following sequence of clauses: “[s]he should have told him,” “[s]he would tell him,” “[s]he would tell him,” “[s]he should have said” (13). In this inaugural moment of Sila’s desire to tell her life story to another person, which is also related to her capacity to love, one is reminded of Cavarero’s proposition that in both love and friendship “[t]he narratable self’s

desire for narration manifests itself in autobiographical exercises in order to entrust one's own story to another's storytelling" (*Relating* 114), but which in this novel finds its culmination in what could be read as the autobiographical cul-de-sac of speaking to the dead, driven by an imperative to recount, over and over, a genealogy of wrongs done and by whom, the names of those who suffered and disappeared, the places taken from and to, that one day when things broke and bled.

In the fragmented retrospective narrative that circles the day of Baro's death, returning to it in an obsessive retelling, there is a darker, more perverse and ultimately destructive counterpart to Sila's deployment of the defiant speech of her body and empathetic reading of De Laurentz's vulnerability. Motivated by her fierce will to survive the humiliation and violence of Van der Wat's repeated rapes without surrendering to despair, she "decided enough was enough," but instead of refusing him, as she had planned, "ready to be beaten," she acts on instinct, knowing [i]n a heartbeat [...] what had to be done," and "walk[ing] away from him towards the barn," she knew that "she had shifted the line between them and knowing this shifted it even more" (*Unconfessed* 36). Sila's increasing confidence in the knowledge she derives from her body's response to the situation culminates in the sense that "[s]he had understood something about this man and needed to hide what she knew," and in an attempt at self-preservation indistinguishable from revenge, she begins "reserv[ing] a part of herself for the barn" and "ke[eping] herself from him in the day, cleaning, washing, scrubbing, in the house." The sexual dynamic she thus initiates and thinks she controls escalates in intensity, with Van der Wat becoming increasingly "excited" and "seeking her" and his wife becoming more and more complicit in it:

She could see, too, in his wife's glances each morning that they were both prowling around her, bemused, but filled with hate [...] They could not help themselves. They wanted something of her. What it was neither she nor they could say but, slowly, she began to understand that this wanting was born of a thing that these two people who claimed that they owned her, like a cow or horse, feared. And so she told her body to bring forth some sign of power. At first it was the way Van der Wat trembled when he pushed himself away when he had finished. She willed her body to speak to his, not before, not during, but after. And he trembled, always. After. And was confused. And grew angrier by the day. (36-37)

The target for their shared hatred and anger, predictably, becomes Sila's young son Baro, who receives daily beatings that increase in severity, and who, publicly, embarrassingly transgresses the line separating slave and master by presuming a familiarity with Van der Wat

in mimicry of his son. On this “day of broken things” (38), Van der Wat reinstates the proper order this act threatens by “pick[ing] Baro up by the arm and sw[i]ng[ing] him away like a piece of rubbish” (39) and beating Sila in front of his guests. As “disposable bodies” (Yaeger, *Dirt* 67), mother and son register as “rubbish” in the settler colonial hierarchy (*Unconfessed* 39), and neither Sila’s attempt at sexual manipulation nor her appropriation of precisely those terms like “filth” and “vuilgoed” (36) that derive from the categories that sustain this hierarchy to put Van der Wat in his place, albeit silently, can succeed in dismantling the structures that claim ownership of her and her children.

Sila’s killing of her son is fundamentally a refutation of this asserted ownership and the concomitant treatment of herself and her child as property, reduced to dirt and discarded at will. As an act of care and ownership – “I had taken my boy” (240), she tells Baro – this most tender of murders can be read as an assertion of what Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* proposes as the mother’s dominion over the child “in the estate of nature” (in Cavarero, *Horrorism* 22), which, as Cavarero explains, “indicates the state in which mankind finds itself, outside, and apart from any political or civil institution.” Maternal dominion is therefore secured by the “natural condition” where there is no “matrimony or any other form of contract between the parents”; not, however, because the mother gives birth and therefore life to the child, but “because the very survival of the newborn depends on her.” According to Hobbes, “[t]he title of dominion over the child, proceedeth not from the generation, but from the preservation of it; and therefore in the estate of nature, the mother in whose power it is to save or destroy it, hath right thereto by that power” (in Cavarero, *Horrorism* 22). Although Hobbes’s argument refers to the newborn child in its utter helplessness and dependency on the mother’s care (a similar analogy is also central to Butler’s work on vulnerable bodies, as mentioned above), Sila’s decision to take Baro’s life is motivated by the recognition of her own inability to protect and preserve his life under the conditions imposed by enslavement (as is also the case when Sethe decides to kill Beloved in Morrison’s novel). In language that recalls Euripides’s *Medea*, who, when killing her sons, notes that “children’s skin is soft, and their breath pure” and says to herself, “though you kill them, they were your beloved sons” (in Cavarero, *Horrorism* 27), Sila describes the killing as a *pieta*, but here the mother is the killer and the son will be resurrected only as a ghost that haunts her:

I had lifted my dear boy onto my lap and held him, and had stroked him and known that he was already beyond all of them, even me. And that there was no hope, already, long before I stroked my boy’s throat, that he would not sleep in the ground for three days and rise again to tell me that I had made him

greater than all of them. No, I could say nothing of the way love had required that I crush all horror even as I faced it. (*Unconfessed* 242-43)

As the informing principle of Sila's action, love also recalls Baro from the dead to become the haunting interlocutor to whom she tells her life story, with his death as the "heart sore" upon which it turns and shatters. Although she frequently adjures his ghost to "listen to me" (54), to what "I tell you," with the didactic and mnemonic imperative implicit in her incantatory listing of names and events (see, for example, 34, 39, 215), she more often praises him in a litany of endearments that sings him into being: "Let me see you. My boy. My lovely boy" (42); "Sweet boy. Sweet, sweet boy," for whom she had "longed" and to whom she makes restitution by offering him the island as a gift: "It is your island now, Baro. I am giving it to you because I have already worked enough to claim it for you" (50). Christiansē's description of the novel as "Sila's fierce love song to her son Baro" ("Author's Note" n.pag.) is therefore most apt at those moments when the intensity of maternal love is expressed in a sustained lyricism, which, as the following example shows, shifts into the prophetic mode typical of Sila's poetic appropriations of biblical cadence and style:

*My pretty boy with the sun in your eyes. Look, it is me, your mother. I sing a song for you and it will carry over the years and the light in your eyes will finally become true at the light of the end of one day, and the sunrise of another. Keep your heart safe. Son of my heart, son of my life, I know the meaning of the light in your eyes. (Unconfessed 116)*

Sila's eruptions into prophecy with their tendency to abrupt segues into curse are a volatile archive of the country's history which in the novel registers as a predicted future of blighted generations in conflict, but which imagines into being other, more hopeful resolutions from the place of Sila's imprisonment, Robben Island. One extraordinary example of such a prophesied future is Sila's vision of the Great Trek and the battle of Blood River that anticipates the destructive consequences to unfold from it:

Roads push up from the water's edge and lead across rivers. In the distance, far over there, only the eyes can travel when the body is weary. In that distance the wheels creak and complain and crack sometimes, dragging away from the town that keeps growing. So many wagons. They drag slowly. And men and women, children, stand at the edge of cliffs and shake. They want years that no one can live in. They shake. Can you see them? It is as if they are at the place that not a step more can be taken and – *Hoo!* Watch! Watch! They beg their god for rewards. They make promises that bind.

*Blood for blood. (73)*

What is suggested here is that the violent preoccupation with settling the Promised Land for future generations, with spilled blood as covenant with a god that sanctions and protects, can only be grasped as a form of possession, as dangerous as it is deluded. Sila's incantatory teachings and curses, which also lament and chronicle, place those generations possessed by the lust for land and ownership in juxtaposition with those dispossessed generations upon which they feed to achieve and sustain this monstrous delusion – already in the first pages of the novel, the greed of slave owners manifests as cannibalism when Sila thinks of them as “[t]he demons of the world [who] had swallowed up her children as they had swallowed so many before them” (9). At the level of superstition, the curse operates as a form of magical revenge perpetrated from a distance, but it is also, as an act of language, as incantation and spell, potent in its capacity to claim a sense of immediate reversal and restitution. In one such curse, Sila tells Baro: “Let them cry like boys. I will tell them of boys who have been made to cry [...] Let them turn around in circles. I will close them in the circle of my curses and their tears will be as a liquid that melts rocks” (89). That the curse also serves a didactic purpose is evident in Sila's tutoring of Baro to avenge the crimes perpetrated by the settlers into future generations – following this curse, she tells him that “[t]he pleasures of striking are many and your mother is teaching you what is what in these matters” – an aspect of Sila's narrative that further complicates the already fraught terrain of maternal love that in caring becomes murderous and in loving restitution demands from the murdered son's ghost a perpetual revenge.

Simpler, gentler, less fierce and also more effortlessly playful, the friendship and love between Sila and Lys recover for Sila a capacity for love that also returns her to delight and laughter, and which here, as I move towards the conclusion of the chapter, leads me back to the notion of a “poethics of love” with which I started. When Sila tells Baro, “Lys is my friend” (59), it is as if we enter that middle space where love in its infinite potential to transform becomes, for the first time, possible. Lys comes into Sila's life and story with laughter, “fresh out of that rolling in the salt and with nothing dry to wear [...] She laughs – she can laugh like nobody's business [...]. She looked at me and laughed again but with good laughter. Here, you know, laughter is a way of crying or of adding salt to a beating, but her laughter is not like that.” At first Lys's laughter is directed at the guard who is shouting at her that she is “a lazy yellow bitch,” recalling Sila's own ridiculing laughter when de Laurentz discovers her in prison and her coinciding defiant appropriation of terms of abuse hurled at her, because, as Sila tells Baro, Lys, similarly at the receiving end of such abuse from the



guards on Robben Island who call her “Lazy Lys,” also “works hardest at that name,” claiming the charge of being “im-pyu-dent” as a badge of honour rather than shame (60, 59). When she turns her laughter towards Sila, however, it transforms into the kind of complicitous laughter that joins Grace and Mary in *Alias Grace*, but it also exceeds the dimensions of that complicity because it is, in and of itself, transformative. It has within it and solicits a reciprocal “feeling of wonder, surprise, astonishment” (Irigaray, *Reader* 171), miraculous in this “world of liars and thieves” (*Unconfessed* 59) where the women prisoners’ bodies are broken and broken into repeatedly by the guards, whose “hungers go beyond all decency” (64), the stench of the rotten meat they eat hanging around them like “bad things [...] demons,” their utter corruption manifest in their inability to laugh naturally, having to rely on “telling jokes to each other.”<sup>20</sup> Pocketed within this world of violence, like a talisman against evil, the women’s laughter becomes the language of a tender, playful eroticism, an “amorous exchange”:

Lys and I save our laughter for when the night is curled around itself. Then we start. First one, then the other. We just start a little laugh, then it is big, but we keep our blankets against our mouths. We come together in one bed so that our laughter does not even have the space of the small room to cross. When Lys laughs against me I feel something of peace. Our bodies are warm and laughing. (161)

In this small place of consolation and reprieve made of their two laughing, loving bodies, the poetics of a traumatised, brutalised embodiment that Sila speaks, and which her narrative itself metonymically instantiates as fragmented corpus, is transformed as Sila’s own body recovers a fragile sense of well-being with Lys, to whom she sings this loosening and release in the softening cadences of tenderness retrieved in the face of unceasing violence, and in spite of the certainty of inescapable loss:

You are my good, quiet day, Lys. You make a place for my back to rest and all aching stops, and when my face relaxes I know that it was pulled up, strained. You are my good day, and my quiet, Lys. You make a place for my stomach to relax, and when it does I know that it was twisted and turned like a dirty old sheet taken away by a stream before I could catch it and wash it and lay it out. And my heart is what I thank you for most, Lys, even though it is like a sore where a stick has broken skin. There is no safe place for a heart, but my good days are in you. (207)

---

<sup>20</sup> In both *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed* the vicious behaviour of the prison guards shows up the maddening ironies of the word ‘guard’ in this context. Sila, for example, tells Baro, “I tell myself, those who guard prisoners are prisoners of the prisoners. Some days it is a lie that works” (60).



Shifting from her lyrical and incantatory invocations and exhortations addressed to Baro, spoken in the double voice of outraged, murderous maternal love, these addresses to Lys in her absence assume instead the nuances of the lover's discourse as elegy – eros and loss coinciding in what Diana Fuss defines as the genre's "investment in reparation, resuscitation, [its] earnest attempt to buoy the living by holding on to the dead" (*Dying* 7).<sup>21</sup> Although this might equally apply to Sila's songs of mourning for Baro, which, as responses to his haunting absence that also call him into being conform to Fuss's definition of elegies as "answers to a call – responses to those beyond our reach, yet responses all the same" that "are also themselves calls – attempts to restore communication" (109), I want here to distinguish between the mother's lament for her dead son in its complex range of expression that forms the novel's core, making it in its entirety "Sila's fierce love song to her son Baro," as Christiansë describes it ("Author's Note" n.pag.), and the brief, delicate interruptions of the lover's elegy for the lost beloved and friend.

Deeply fraught as the maternal is in *Alias Grace*, which ends with Grace not knowing whether she is pregnant or dying of a tumour as her mother had done, her thought that "[i]t is strange to know you carry within yourself either a life or a death, but not to know which one" (533) reiterating that anxious mix of sex, death and the pregnant body that pervades the novel, it is in *Unconfessed* the place of a terrifying duality that tilts always into horror because of the systemic perversion and exploitation of the maternal by slave owners and perpetuated by the prison guards, their repeated rapes not only breaking into Sila's body but causing her to carry "[a]nother child," caught in the certainty that "[a]fter all these years, [her] body still has no say in what happens to it" (133). Yet, *Unconfessed* valorises Sila's unremitting, even obsessive maternal love that persists in spite of this violence and which achieves in her loving murder of Baro a near transcendence of slavery's violent appropriations of the bodies of mothers and their children. It is this iconic image of the mother and dead son around which Sila's maternal lamentations circle, which, even in its self-conscious and ironic mirroring of the biblical pieta with its promise of the son's resurrection, nevertheless confirms the conventional privileging of the son both symbolically and genealogically, identified and challenged by Irigaray. The novel does, however, propose an alternative symbolic configuration in the erotic embrace of Sila and Lys, which is

---

<sup>21</sup> Roland Barthes prefaces his book from which I take this notion of *A Lover's Discourse* by describing this discourse as "of an extreme solitude" (1), and Fuss, in *Dying Modern: A Meditation on Elegy*, supports her claim that "the poetry of loss will always surpass the poetry of love, for the simple reason that love is defined by loss" by paraphrasing from Barthes's book his intimation that "love is the desire to be taken along" (101-102).

transformed into a feminised pieta when Sila holds Lys's dying body, ravaged by leprosy (335). But even in this, the erotic displaces the maternal and is contrapuntally articulated in the bereaved lover's elegy which mourns and celebrates the beloved – the dutifulness of the maternal suggested by the word pieta joyfully transfigured in the now remembered laughter and reciprocity of tenderness that had healed Sila's fractured body and its 'heartsore' heart on "good days" (207), the beloved friend's dear body and voice recalled and called to. And it is in this refusal of irrefutable absence that Fuss locates the elegy's ethics in her claim that "in a very real sense ethics is elegy: speaking, acting, and surviving in the face of loss, no matter how irretrievable those losses may be" (*Dying* 7).

Recalling and imaginatively elaborating on archival traces of the lives of Grace Marks and Sila van den Kaap, the two novels discussed in this chapter perform a literary-historical recovery that is in each case analogous to elegy conceived of as "lessons in responsibility" by Fuss, who argues that the elegist "repeatedly acknowledges that before a call can be answered it must be fully heard" (110), an imperative that informs the approach of both writers. Atwood makes this point explicitly in her lecture on *Alias Grace* when she says about the past that "[w]e have to be listening first, before it will say a word; and even so, listening means telling, and then re-telling" ("In Search" 228). Christiansë makes a similar point when she writes that "in the end, the archive may be all [...] those who were part of the vast body of 'nobodies' in the service of 'somebodies'" have because "it may be the only scene of possible appearance":

In these circumstances, one must learn how to listen to echoes of subjects for whom one might not have adequate language; one must also learn how to discern what they might have been trying to say within the statements attributed to them (but that could very well represent the redactions of colonial officials – notaries, court reporters). In addition, one must prepare to hear and interpret any echo of the unsaid as something that could be nothing more than a trace. ("Heartsore" n. pag.)

Refusing (fore)closure, even as they elaborate possible answers to riddles that these archival traces pose, *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed* sustain in their experimentation with fractured narrative form and voice a deliberately embodied, impudent colloquy between those 'nobodies' and the 'somebodies' they serve.



## Chapter 4

### Settling Men: Family Romances and Ancestral Plots in Carey's *Jack Maggs*, Greene's *Boy Called Twist*, Grenville's *The Secret River* and Harries's *Manly Pursuits*

---

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden – demi-paradise –  
This fortress built by nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands;  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,  
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings

William Shakespeare – *Richard II* (II.1: 40-51)

And this is what [England] must either do, or perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest of men; seizing every piece of waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea [...]. Will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts; faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of irreverence and ephemeral visions?

John Ruskin – “Imperial Duty”: Inaugural Lecture at Oxford, 8 February 1870  
(in Harries, *Manly Pursuits* 41-43)

‘I know. God damn. I do know, Sir. But you see, I am a fucking Englishman, and I have English things to settle. I am not to live my life with all that vermin. I am here in London where I belong.’

Peter Carey – *Jack Maggs* (179)

The liberation of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development. It is quite essential that that liberation should occur and it may be presumed that it has been to some extent achieved by everyone who has reached a normal state. Indeed, the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations.

Sigmund Freud – “Family Romances” (236)



In their archival recovery and writing of the stories of those “‘nobodies’ in the service of ‘somebodies’,” both Atwood and Christiansë are compelled by the drive to restore “the histories of the marginalised, the forgotten, the unrecorded” which A.S. Byatt identifies as a frequent point of origin for the writing of historical fiction (*On Histories* 11) and which, in its broadest sense, also informs the postcolonial project and has become the *sine qua non* of much that is produced under the rubric of the neo-Victorian (as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis). That there are significant differences between the contexts and situations of the

two historical figures upon which these novels are based is self-evident; their respective archival presences marking the distinct historical marginalities which play out in future trajectories of political and socio-economic enfranchisement of the demographic groups the two women might be said to represent in each context: the Irish in Canada and Africans in South Africa. In spite of these differences, however, *Alias Grace* and *Unconfessed*, in singling out the histories of female domestic servants and female slaves and condemning the entrenched violence of settler colonialism as a system of exploitation rooted in patriarchy, pursue a similar recuperative objective, which parallels the rendering of a chosen foremother and the self-mirroring encounter with her in Farber's, Atwood's and Krog's texts, although they are implicated differently in the difficult questions accruing to the recovery of settler colonial histories and genealogies. In their shared turn to a history and genealogy of nineteenth-century women – albeit that their positions within the respective settler colonial contexts are sharply differentiated along the lines of class and privilege that separate the servant Grace Marks from the middle-class settler Susanna Moodie, the Mozambican slave Sila from the Scottish aristocrat Lady Anne Barnard or the South African imperial 'aristocrat' Bertha Marks – the texts discussed in the previous two chapters thus form a unit distinct from those I focus on in this chapter in which it is the world of men and the plots they appropriate, the properties they own, the houses they build and inhabit and the gardens they plant that embody the colonial (pre)occupations of the past through which their authors negotiate present senses of (dis)location.

Explicitly responding to the history of British settlement of Australia and South Africa and the question of an inherent and transplanted Englishness, with its implicit problematic of inheritance and ownership and its legacies of human and environmental displacement and devastation, Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997), Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* (2006) and Anne Harries's *Manly Pursuits* (1999) map an ancestral plot in which historical fact and character are deployed fictionally to serve the specificities of the terrain they negotiate and the work of restoration they undertake. In this, Carey's and Grenville's Australian novels form an obvious pairing, as much for their differences of approach and style as for their similar turn to what Bruce Woodcock describes as "the traditions of Australian convict literature epitomised by Marcus Clarke's classic novel *His Natural Life* (1885)" (121) and which *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* defines as the "revaluation of Australian history in which the convict experience is seen as significant in the development of the national psyche" (in Woodcock 121). For many years unacknowledged or actively suppressed by white settler families, this "convict stain" as Robert Hughes in his

*Beyond the Fatal Shore* documentaries terms it (in Woodcock 121), has “more recently [...] become a cause for commemoration” (Woodcock 121) in a manner analogous to the recovery of slave ancestry – usually a slave foremother – by Afrikaner families in post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, one might argue, these claims of affiliation to histories of suffering and displacement that are not of the colonised indigenous people but of those ‘captured’ and ‘transported’ against their will to the colony (and here I do not intend to conflate what are evidently two contextually distinct histories) serve as ameliorative and distancing strategies for those implicated in the histories and legacies of settler colonialism. In the case of South Africa, they also function as attempts to countermand the assertions of racial purity and superiority that formed the basis of the apartheid regime with its roots in colonial seizure of land. As narratives that plot the achievement of credibility or legitimacy, even if unavoidably compromised by being embedded in genealogies of privilege sustained through land ownership and the benefits of wealth it underwrites, these settler ‘family romances’ thus often lay claim to what is conceived of as a rebellious, outlaw familial strain by identifying with the exploited underdog, whether convict or slave, or with that group of perennial outcasts the Irish.

The analogy I draw here is necessarily limited in not giving due attention to the variables in the constituent aspects of convict labour in the settlement of Australia and slave labour in the settlement of the Cape colony, or in mapping how vastly different the socio-economic consequences were for the pardoned convict who became propertied and the freed slave who remained disenfranchised, as well as for their descendents. It also shifts the parameters of my analysis by introducing the legacy that unspools from Dutch colonisation of the Cape, a digression which I use not only to draw attention to the contradictions inherent in contemporary discourses of national identity from the perspective of genealogies of colonial settlement in South Africa and Australia, but also to register the demographic fact of landownership, particularly of farmland, in the Cape, historically and at present. Sila’s reiterated journey from farm to farm in *Unconfessed* makes this apparent, as does Tim Greene’s South African screen adaptation of Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* (1837), *Boy Called Twist* (2004), in which the recovery of a Muslim genealogy for its post-apartheid *Twist* by inference recalls the history of slavery Christiansë fictionalises. Read in this chapter

---

<sup>1</sup> A recent example of the literary recovery of such a history is André P. Brink’s novel *Philida* (2012). Rian Malan, in his review of the novel, however dismisses it as “just entertainment,” and, finding “Brink’s assertion that almost everything in *Philida* is based on ‘historical fact’” rather “silly,” he makes the point that when Brink wrote his first novel on slavery *A Chain of Voices* “[t]hirty years ago,” “such writing was daring (and deeply disturbing to those of us whose ancestors were complicit in the crime of slavery),” but that writing about it now “just seems manipulative and opportunistic” (n.pag.).

as a South African counterpart to Carey's Australian appropriation of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861), *Jack Maggs*, in which *Oliver Twist* is used intertextually, the film also implicitly connects the world of early nineteenth-century British settlement at the Cape in which *Unconfessed* is set with its fin-de-siècle decline and fall fictionalised in Harries's *Manly Pursuits* in which it is embodied by the imperial Colossus Cecil John Rhodes during his later years at his Cape mansion Groote Schuur or the Great Granary.

As is evident from *Unconfessed*, slave women were used by their 'owners' to breed 'stock' and their children sold off; only rarely would a marriage have been contracted between master and slave to confer the legitimacy of the patronymic on children conceived through such a union and hence secure their right to inheritance, particularly of land,<sup>2</sup> whereas what both *Jack Maggs* and *The Secret River* show is the entrenchment of family ownership of land secured by convict settlers in Australia, which is in itself also a confirmation of the transcendence of the shame of both history and class through the achievement of wealth and social status – stories, then, of nobodies becoming somebodies. Even though very different from the Australian reclamation of convict ancestry, the turn to either real or fantasised slave ancestry by white, often farm-owning South Africans, implicated as it is in post-apartheid debates and anxieties about the redistribution of land and questions of Afrikaner indigeneity, similarly participates in what Veracini identifies as a shared set of recurrent settler disavowals that conceal “the actual operation of settler colonial practices”:

The settler hides behind the metropolitan coloniser (the settler is not sovereign, it is argued; ‘he is not responsible for colonialism’ and its excesses), behind the activity of settlers elsewhere, behind the persecuted, the migrant, even the refugee (the settler has suffered elsewhere and ‘is seeking refuge in a new land’). The settler hides behind his labour and hardship (the settler does not dispossess anyone; he ‘wrestles with the land to sustain his

---

<sup>2</sup> In *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition*, Meg Samuelson points out that a counterpart to claims of slave ancestry, which also draws attention to the enslavement of the indigenous Khoisan people from the time of Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in 1652, is the claim to descent from Krotoa, named Eva by the Dutch, “a young girl of the Goringhaicona Khoisain clan [who] was taken into the Dutch East India Company Fort” and who became a translator and “the first female cultural broker in the colonial contact zone” (16). However, as Samuelson shows, “[t]he key event now highlighted in her biography by those white South Africans who, through identifications with her, aim to assert their own belonging in the nation is her status as the first indigene to marry a European (the Danish surgeon, Pieter van Meerhof) and bear his children” (16). Referring to Carli Coetzee's essay on Krotoa as mother-figure in the iconography of the New South Africa, Samuelson points out that the reconfiguration of her as “the rainbow Mother” whose “womb [i]s the crucible in which Africa and Europe meet” (21) relies on “an act of amnesia” (20), an argument similar to the one I develop here, because, “[c]ast out of current memorialisation is her poor treatment in, and exclusion from, the colonial society she helped to build; forgotten, too, is her vexed relation to the children through whom present-day descendants now trace their claims of belonging to the nation” (20).



family'). Most importantly, the peaceful settler hides behind the ethnic cleanser (colonisation is an inherently non-violent activity; the settler enters a 'new, empty land to start a new life'; indigenous people naturally and inevitably 'vanish'; it is not settlers that displace them – in Australia, for example, it is the 'ruthless convicts' that were traditionally blamed for settler colonialism's dirty work). Settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production. (*Settler Colonialism* 14)

In both cases, what was under one dispensation a shameful secret kept carefully hidden – slave-ownership, miscegenation and the concomitant fear of an impure blood line, on the one hand, and the stigma attached to descent from a transported criminal, on the other – is under another recuperated for social and political cachet in its alignment with the new against the old. Yet, as suggested by Veracini, these reclamations also function to obscure and implicitly disavow precisely what is at the root of settler colonialism, namely the violent displacement and eradication of the Indigenous people of the place colonised.<sup>3</sup> Freed from private anxieties about public exposure of these shamefully tainted blood lines – what is bred in the bone will, after all, it is believed, out in the flesh – these secrets are now owned up to and owned, becoming in the process the type of deflecting narrative that in effect covers over a much deeper shame and hence, according to Veracini, operating in ways similar to a Freudian “screen memory, an inaccurate reconstruction that obscures what really happened” (“Settler Collective” 371). He points out that, because “screen memories display a focus on particulars of relatively little significance as a way to foreclose analysis of a traumatic past, they can be especially interesting for what they reveal in the act of concealment” (372). Rather than see these “reconstructions of the past that operate like screen memories [as] dishonest, consciously concealing or inherently untruthful,” a more productive approach would be to cultivate “[a]n awareness of compromises between repressed elements and

---

<sup>3</sup> The question of what would constitute an appropriate response by present-day descendants of settlers remains a vexed one. Kate Mitchell, writing on Grenville's *The Secret River*, points out that “Australian public debate in the last two decades since the bicentennial celebrations has been characterised by deep division over what form a response should take: the acknowledgment of shame and/or guilt, an apology, or various forms of reparations and compensation, including the possibility of restoring native land titles to the dispossessed” (“Australia's Other” 266). In this context, a distinction is made between ‘guilt’ and ‘shame’ by the historian Robert Manne and the philosopher Raymond Gaita, for whom ‘guilt’ would be inappropriate since “no individual could bear responsibility for the crimes of others,” whereas ‘shame’ would be more suitably ethical “because Australians were implicated in their country's past and shared a legacy of historical shame” (in Mitchell 266). As Mitchell explains, “they are asking white Australians to empathise with the victims of colonial violence, while identifying themselves with the perpetrators, enacting a double consciousness that [...] partakes of a doubled temporality, which interweaves postcolonial present and colonial past in the ethical act of shameful recognition/acceptance of the traumatic *continuity* rather than dissociation from and rupture with the past *as* past” (266-267). Veracini makes the point that “in South Africa, or Peru, for example – truth and reconciliation commissions were able to more effectively approach traumatic histories,” but he notes “that the scope of their mandate was explicitly framed in ways that would not cover the legacies of colonial and settler colonial pasts” (“Settler Collective” 374).



defensive mechanisms” as “an essential part of the interpretation and reinterpretation of settler sources and their historiographies” (373). The example Veracini uses to explain “the repressive nature of a defensive mechanism” is the progressive excision of Aboriginal people from Australian historiography, leading from their prevalence in nineteenth-century narratives to a “sustained repression by the mid-twentieth century,” which, if approached like the analysis of a recurring dream in psychoanalysis (374), would reveal how the defensive mechanism of denying the existence of the Indigenous people and their prior occupation of and right to the land operates as a “disavowal of any founding violence” (367).

As a form of shared self-exoneration that represses both the history and the guilt associated with it, the truth being known by all, but ‘forgotten’ or ‘not seen’, it is “one essential feature of the politics of memory in settler colonial contexts” (372), defined by the historian Eviatar Zerubavel as “mnemonic myopia” (in Veracini, “Settler Collective” 372), which is also evident in the aftermath of later repressive regimes and genocides amongst those who had benefited or had been actively or passively complicit. An obvious example would be the Holocaust, but the more immediately relevant one here is Apartheid South Africa with its origin in the complex history of colonial settlement by the Dutch and English. The first Dutch settlements were augmented in 1689 by French Huguenot refugees, settled by Simon van der Stel on farms in the Berg River valley, who through integration with the Dutch became prominent in the establishment of a separate Afrikaner ethnic grouping that emerged in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> When English settlement expanded under the aggressively expansionist British colonial rule that followed, the Afrikaners asserted their independence from British imperial control, eventually culminating in the second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). This, in turn, generated its own traumatic and divisive history in the founding of the Afrikaner nation – what Veracini refers to as “foundational traumas” (“Settler Collective” 364) – when Boer and Boer sympathiser farms were burnt down by the British, and women and children placed in concentration camps.<sup>5</sup> This war was precipitated by the

---

<sup>4</sup> According to historian T.R.H. Davenport, “[d]uring the latter part of the seventeenth century it was [Dutch East India] Company policy to encourage white settlement, and this policy led to the influx of some two hundred Huguenot refugees in 1689,” but resistance by free burghers – the first real Dutch settlers of 1657 who were not merely sojourners under the employ of the Company keen to return to Europe – “led to a clamp-down on immigration from Europe, of which there was very little during the eighteenth century” (*South Africa* 19). Even when immigration was again encouraged in 1750 in an attempt to stimulate the weak Cape economy, “the settlement attracted few newcomers.” Davenport explains that “[t]he Afrikaner people, an amalgam of nationalities, came gradually into being during the century after Hendrik Bibault described himself as an ‘Africaander’ in 1707.”

<sup>5</sup> Although, as Davenport points out, “it was a war between whites” which “was fought to determine which white authority held real power in South Africa,” and “laws forbade the carrying of arms by blacks” (144), the war involved and profoundly affected the lives of black South Africans, who “also found their way into

failed Jameson Raid (1895), led by Rhodes's friend Leander Starr Jameson on the Republic of Transvaal under the Boer President Paul Kruger. Driven by Rhodes's growing imperial ambitions and secretly supported by the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, its failure, however, compelled Rhodes to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. Although he and his Chartered Company survived the Parliamentary Inquiry held in London, he withdrew from its board, his political career and health severely compromised. These events form the background to Harries's *Manly Pursuits*, which fictionalises many of the primary characters involved, notably Rhodes, Jameson, Chamberlain and Alfred Milner, and also brings apparently peripheral role players like the writers Rudyard Kipling, who had a home on the Groote Schuur estate, and Olive Schreiner, whose initially intense friendship with Rhodes became an equally intense animosity, into the ambit of its plot.

It is Schreiner – Harries's character and its historical original – who is most pertinent to my discussion here because of her active and public refusal of precisely the type of disavowal of founding violence that Veracini speaks of. In 1897, Schreiner published what Liz Stanley describes as “the controversial, indeed at the time highly scandalous, anti-Rhodes and anti-imperialist allegorical novella *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*,” in which she exposed the atrocities committed against the Shona by troops employed by the Chartered Company, underwritten by the British Government, in quelling rebellions in Matabeleland and Mashonaland (“Encountering” 198).<sup>6</sup> In *Manly Pursuits*, Schreiner's novella is first referred to without being explicitly named when Francis Wills – the narrator, whom Harries, in her acknowledgements, describes as “practically the only character in the book who exists only in my imagination” (n.pag.) – gives an account of his sea voyage to the Cape with the British songbirds Rhodes had commissioned him to bring to the Great Granary, during which

---

concentration camps, without the same amount of publicity as [was given to] the white” camps (145). At the end of the war, the number of deaths in these camps was “considerably higher” than in the white camps (146).  
<sup>6</sup> Stanley's overview in a footnote of the broader historical context from which this text emerged makes the trajectory from settler colonialist policies to apartheid rule explicit: “1870: diamonds are discovered in New Rush, later Kimberley, in the Orange Free State: gold is discovered on the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal, the South African Republic. 1890: Cecil Rhodes becomes Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and works closely with Afrikaner Bond MPs. 1890 and 1891: the first and second ‘strop’ or ‘Master and Servant’ Bills to allow white employers to beat black servants are introduced but narrowly defeated. 1894: the Glen Grey Act is passed, black landholdings are severely reduced and differential franchise is put in place; a curfew bill and a pass bill are narrowly defeated. 1894: Rhodes's British South Africa Company is chartered by the British Government to annex and rule territories in southern Africa on its behalf. 1895: the Chartered Company annexes the territories of the Ndebele and Shona, known then as Matabeleland and Mashonaland and later as North and South Rhodesia; farmers and miners become frontier magistrates dispensing very rough justice; compulsory labour of black for whites is instituted and black landholding is reduced. January 1896: the Jameson Raid, an attempt to annex the Transvaal, takes place, with Rhodes and Chamberlain in the background. June and July 1896: the Ndebele and then Shona uprisings against Chartered Company rule start, taking nearly 18 months to ‘quell’ by Chartered pioneer companies of paid volunteer troopers. *What does ‘quell’ mean here? It means the Maxim gun, dynamite, the erect penis, fire, the rope. When did apartheid begin? 1894*” (217).

the ship's Captain tells him "with some pride that those slim volumes in his hold were the equivalent of two thousand sticks of dynamite" (69-70). It is first explicitly named when Wills discovers a copy of it in Rhodes's library,

ostentatiously opened upon a fifteenth-century Buhl bureau, to display its frontispiece image: a truly shocking photograph of a number of dead Negroes dangling from ropes in a foreign-looking tree, while a larger number of white men pose for the picture beneath it, smoking, and at ease, as if unaware of the corpses in the boughs above them. (51)

Included as the frontispiece to the first edition, but excluded from the 1898 edition, this image was an outraged challenge to the wilfully assumed ignorance of the complicit – whether colonial settler or the English 'at home' – which made the nightmare world of imperial genocide inescapably, visually present to the reader in its immediacy, the bored indifference of the white men who outnumber their victims registering the dehumanisation of those who dehumanise in the "pose" of an already achieved forgetfulness of a past of their own (mis)creation that is still "dangling" with them in the picture.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore not surprising that when the novella was republished in South Africa in 1974, "the photograph was pasted in at one edge only: censorship meant that it was removed from copies sold in South Africa for a number of years, although the photograph appeared in the copies sold in Britain," as Stanley points out (201).

Brought into Harries's historiographic metafiction as a point of convergence for the various ironies that the title *Manly Pursuits* inaugurates and which are played out in the novel's thematic clusters, this image of the masquerade of colonial masculinity mimics in its brutal excess and insouciance the iconography of the Great White Hunter, the killing of indigenous people conceived of as both a necessary military act and also little different from the killing of animals for pleasure. Harries parodies the figure of the hunter-explorer and undermines its glamour in her portrayal of G. B. Challenger, "that famed elephant hunter and explorer," whose poodle Mary "had endeared herself to the nation through her playful acts of bravery and devotion, which included rescuing her master from the fury of a wounded rhinoceros by jumping in its path, and twirling a coloured ball upon her nose" (6-7), and of

---

<sup>7</sup> In her essay on the novella, Stanley includes the following excerpt from the journalist Frank Sykes's approving account of hangings of this kind outside Bulawayo: "There is a tree, known as the hanging tree ... Hither the doomed men were conveyed. On the ropes being fastened to their necks, they were made to climb along an overhanging branch, and thence were pushed or compelled to jump... This adoption of 'lynch law' may not commend itself to the ultra humane ideas associated with Exeter Hall, but ... actions which under other conditions might be regarded as brutal were justifiable – nay, absolutely essential – at such times as these" (203).

Frederick Selous, “the famous explorer, rumoured to be the model for Rider Haggard’s Allan Quartermain,” whom Wills sees in a Molly house in London that caters to homosexual and paedophilic tastes (which he visits with his friend Oscar Wilde), “delivering a blood-thirsty résumé of his hunting life in Africa” (194): “So – in the space of six months’,” he tells his audience, “in a voice devoid of emotion,” “I shot twenty-four elephants, nineteen buffalo, two zebra, five black rhino, four white rhino, four warthog, two giraffe, one hippo, one lion and fifteen assorted antelope” (194-95).<sup>8</sup> A key role player in the Chartered Company’s incursions into Mashonaland – Rhodes asked him to lead its troops in 1890 – Selous embodies the soldier-hunter archetype of imperial mythology which has also migrated into mythologies attached to the South African border wars (for example, one of the most feared special forces units established in 1974 in Rhodesia, the Selous Scouts, was named in celebration and emulation of the man and his life). The type is also chillingly imagined and allegorised by J. M. Coetzee in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) in the character Colonel Joll, whose quietly menacing presence is introduced on the first page of the novel when the Magistrate of the imperial outpost at which Joll arrives describes their first meeting as follows:

We sit in the best room of the inn with a flask between us and a bowl of nuts. We do not discuss the reason for his being here. He is here under the emergency powers, that is enough. Instead we talk about hunting. He tells me about the last great drive he rode in, when thousands of deer, pigs, bears were slain, so many that a mountain of carcasses had to be left to rot (‘Which was a pity’). I tell him about the great flocks of geese and ducks that descend on the lake every year in the migration and about native ways of trapping them. I suggest I take him fishing by night in a native boat. (1)

In its allegorical conflation of empire and apartheid as regimes of torture, *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a sustained meditation on these enmeshed histories which in Harries’s novel are merely implied in the references to Schreiner’s allegory *Trooper Peter Halket* and its photographic frontispiece.<sup>9</sup> Whereas Coetzee takes the reader “Into the Dark Chamber” to

---

<sup>8</sup> The William Webb photograph of the white hunter, posed with his pith helmet and knee-high leather boots, his rifle and an African boy, most probably a tracker, suitably exoticised, at his side, on the cover of the first edition of the novel is suggestive of a queer aesthetic in which the hyper-masculine shows signs of a camp effeminacy which Harries brings into play with her insertion of Oscar Wilde into the narrative via Wills’s friendship with him.

<sup>9</sup> Teresa Dovey argues that “Coetzee has two histories to contend with: the history of his own discourse, rooted in the discourses of imperialism, and the suppressed history of the colonised, which has to be recuperated without being arrogated to colonial discourse. He cannot simply choose to deny the relation of his writing to prior modes of colonial discourse, and he cannot unproblematically recuperate the history of the postcolonised. The former presents him with the problem of avoiding the unwitting repetition of available modes of (colonial)

the tortured body of the Barbarian girl, “[t]he desired, female colonised,” as David Atwell suggests, “well known as a trope of colonial discourse, whether she represents the interior and its material riches, the landscape or the purely psychic abundance of the unknown” (79), in Harries’s novel that body is screened by the body of the white colonial woman, Schreiner, at whom is directed the “sniggeri[ng]” misogyny of the male homosocial enclave at Rhodes’s Great Granary, which coincides with its virulent racism (104). When the “frontispiece photograph” to Schreiner’s novella is again referred to in *Manly Pursuits*, it is when Wills, overcome by “a sudden desire to eavesdrop” on “an animated male dialogue” between Kipling and an unnamed man, overhears a conversation in which these twin prejudices feed on each other:

‘She calls him “death on niggers” when we all know the natives fairly worship him! I’ve seen for myself how they follow him round like dogs, longing for him just to throw them a smile or a glance. *Life* on niggers, more like. Jobs for niggers. And possibly, one day, civilisation for niggers.’

His companion snorted. ‘She’s one of these New Women who feel it is their duty to shriek about male domination, sexual inequality, and all that rubbish. In my book, she’s nothing more than a female hysteric who isn’t able to reproduce herself. Lost her child recently after a series of miscarriages. It’s unbalanced her mind. But you know of course the real reason for this outburst?’

‘Well?’

The unseen speaker sniggered. ‘The truth of the matter is she’s been in love with our host for the last ten years. Fancied herself his missus, you might say. When it was clear there were to be no wedding bells, she turned nasty. Don’t know how her husband puts up with her antics.’ (104)

Reducing Schreiner’s political allegory to the hysterical rants of failed femininity and thwarted eroticism, the men in their loyalty to “the Colossus,” as Rhodes is referred to throughout the novel, may be said to represent white Cape Colony opinion at the time, most colonials being unequivocal in their support of the Chartered Company troops in Mashonaland, and unwilling to give credence to Schreiner’s imputations of genocide based on first-hand accounts, such as the one she recounts in a letter to her friend Betty Molteno in 1897:

Did I tell you of the educated Christian Kaffir who came to see us the other day? I fancy I did. He had been up in Matabele-land talking to the chiefs and

---

discourse in his writing and the concomitant need to divest them of their authority; the latter with the problem of his writing taking upon itself an authority which it does not have, and so perpetuating the very power relations between coloniser and colonised which it seeks to avoid” (139-140).

indunas there ... He said, 'They say they fought for death.' ... they had never had any hope of conquering the white man or driving him out, but their treatment was such that death was the one thing they desired. The Chartered Company are trying to drive them down into the fever swamps to live where they must all die by inches. Ah, my dear friend, it is these things that are so terrible to me. (in Stanley 208)

In *Manly Pursuits*, the references to the frontispiece photograph thus register the buried history of the extermination of indigenous people for their land – an embedded mnemonic, one might argue – upon which had been erected the “multi-gabled, classically colonnaded, whitewashed under a sweep of red-tiled roof” Grootte Schuur in the shadows of Table Mountain, its “grandeur” still associated with Rhodes’s “extremity of ambition,” even though it had subsequently also served as the home of a number of Nationalist Party presidents and had been the location for the May 1990 meetings between then President F. W. de Klerk and then future President Nelson Mandela that inaugurated the transition to democracy (Simons 8). But there is an aspect of that history of imperial genocide which readers of Harries’s novel who are unfamiliar with Schreiner’s novella would not be called upon to remember because it is screened by the photograph itself, which portrays the conflict as involving only men, and by the novel’s more overt concern with Schreiner and her attempts to prevent the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. It is this aspect of the attack on the Shona and of Schreiner’s allegory that Stanley foregrounds in her article on the novella, when she observes that “there is an interesting gendered ‘figure/ground’ effect in *Trooper Peter Halket* that concerns the *modus vivendi* of imperial expansionism” (208), because while “[t]here is an entirely male ground to the book” it also

contains a number of ‘stories within a story’ and its female Africans are figuratively central to its ethically central ‘story within the story’, for the narrative that Peter Halket tells to Jesus contains multiple instances of sexual expropriation and sexual terrorism which had occurred ‘off scene’, including sexual assault, rape, the Maxim gunning of women and children in Shona kraals, blowing up elderly women hiding in caves, and raping and then murdering women. (208-209)

This is not to detract from what Harries achieves in *Manly Pursuits*, in which it is precisely, as the title suggests, the “entirely male ground” composed of the male homosocial relationships that sustain Rhodes’s imperial project it seeks to expose, bringing into focus the



underlying racism, misogyny, repressed homosexuality and paedophilia that it harbours.<sup>10</sup> In its self-conscious juxtaposition of the Jameson Raid inquiry and Oscar Wilde's trial, the narrator Wills being pivotal in the intersecting lives of the various role players, the novel participates in the neo-Victorian preoccupation with the 'other' sexualities of the Victorians, one which is also evident in Carey's *Jack Maggs*. Here, however, it allows Harries to introduce paedophilia as a counterpart to their misogyny, which was an aspect of the erotic lives of so many of these men, whose erotic obsession with little girls found visual expression in the photographs of Lewis Carroll/Charles Dodgson (155), a friend of the narrator whose photographic pursuit of the little girl Maria in the gardens of the Great Granary leads to his eventual expulsion from this paradise when he is discovered by Mrs Kipling (335). Moreover, Harries shows that John Ruskin, whose exhortations to young Englishmen to "found colonies" in his speech at Oxford in 1870 inspired the young Rhodes (41) – whom the narrator sees there, "ecstatic, as if his fate had been revealed to him, and the rest of his life accounted for" (42) – similarly preferred young girls (26), his "revulsion" at the sexually mature female body leading him to burn, Frank Harris tells Wills and Wilde, "a portfolio filled with painting after painting not only of the pudenda of women, but of women twisted into erotic positions in the ecstasy of love" painted by "his hero, his god Turner" (233). It is an act of destruction that has its symbolic counterpart in Wills's erasure of the image of Schreiner he had inadvertently captured in one of his photographs and which was "spoiling" it: "Fortunately it is simple to remove unwanted images: a few movements of my fingers under the light would cause the intruder to fade into the darkness of the interior forest when I redeveloped the negatives" (103). Harries's novel could be seen to re-introduce the figure of the woman, Schreiner, into the "entirely male ground" of the picture of that male homosocial

---

<sup>10</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* is the foundational study on male homosociality, a concept she takes from sociology to identify a "pattern of male friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality" in English literature from the mid-eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth century (1). In the context of my own argument, her clarification of the dangerous slippages between homosociality, homosexuality and misogyny in the introduction to the study is salient. She explains that, because "this study discusses a continuum, a potential structural congruence, and a (shifting) relation of meaning between male homosexual relationships and the male patriarchal relations by which women are oppressed, it is important to emphasize that I am not assuming or arguing either that patriarchal power is primarily or necessarily homosexual (as distinct from homosocial), or that male homosexual desire has a primary or necessary relationship to misogyny. Either of those arguments would be homophobic and, I believe, inaccurate. I will, however, be arguing that homophobia directed by men against men is misogynistic, and perhaps transhistorically so. (By 'misogynistic' I mean not only that it is oppressive of the so-called feminine in men, but that it is oppressive of women.) The greatest potential for misinterpretation lies here. Because 'homosexuality' and 'homophobia' are, in any of their avatars, historical constructions, because they are likely to concern themselves intensely with each other and to assume interlocking or mirroring shapes, because the theatre of their struggle is likely to be intrapsychic or intra-institutional as well as public, it is not always easy (sometimes barely possible) to distinguish them from each other" (20).



world Rhodes had created at the Great Granary and in so doing foregrounding her as a significant role player in (counter)imperial politics by reminding the reader of her courage in writing *Trooper Peter Halket* and including as a frontispiece the photograph of the hanging of the Shona men by the troopers of the Chartered Company.

In Harries's neo-Victorian historiographic metafiction, the description of this image triggers a series of associations that will, if we know Schreiner's allegorical novella, take us to the "dark chamber" of colonial founding violence, a place that William Thornhill, the protagonist in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, knows to be "the closed room in his memory, where he could pretend it did not exist" (290). This novel, which follows the realist conventions of historical fiction more closely than does *Manly Pursuits*, is, unlike Carey's *Jack Maggs* which is set largely in England, consistently haunted by the displaced, starving, hunted Aborigines whose land is being wrenched from them. In this it always implicitly acknowledges that colonial settlement is premised on the extermination of indigenous people, but it also explicitly describes three acts of extreme violence against the Aborigines. Thornhill is an essentially decent man who, because he discovers "a piercing hunger in his guts: to own [land]. To say *mine*, in a way he had never been able to say *mine* of anything at all" (110), becomes compromised by the fears and imposed loyalties and dependencies of settler life. One such reluctant but seemingly unavoidable alliance is with Smasher, a neighbour on the Hawkesbury River, and a character whose unremitting, violent racism is central to all three these acts of violence with which Thornhill is confronted and with which he becomes complicit.

The first such act is when he visits Smasher to buy a dog to frighten off the Aborigines and Smasher offers him a woman he had chained in his hut:

He thought it must be a dog, but in the moment of the thought he saw that it was a person crouching with a stripe of sunlight zigzagging down its body: a black woman, cringing against the wall, panting so he could see the teeth gleaming in her pained mouth, and the sores where the chain had chafed, red jewels against her black skin. (262)

Stunned by what he sees, Thornhill leaves without buying a dog, desperate to get away from this scene that "filled him with shame" (264) because he is irrevocably compromised by his failure to intervene and cannot even think to tell his wife about it: "Thinking the thought, saying the words, would make him the same as Smasher, as if Smasher's mind had got into his when he saw the woman in the hut and felt that instant of temptation. He had done

nothing to help her. Now the evil of it was part of him.” The second such realisation of his own complicity and the silence to which it binds him – “He knew that he would not tell anyone what he had seen” (290) – occurs when he discovers the bodies of the Aborigines who had drunk the poisoned water of “Darkey Creek,” one of the few places left on the river for them to retreat to, and amongst them, “a boy, still spindly in the arms and thin in the chest, a lad no more than Dick’s age, on the ground, his knees drawn up to his belly. From his mouth hung tendrils of the vomit that was all around his head and the lower part of his body was shiny where it had emptied itself” (288). Thornhill is unable to help the child in his protracted dying, and leaves him behind, knowing that his silent presence at the meeting at his own home where Smasher first threatened to “*Give ’em a dose of the green powder*” (278) and pulled from his pocket “a pair of human ears, dark brown, hacked off rough” (279) made him as guilty as the men who had done the actual poisoning.

Progressively pulled into the escalating violence against the Aborigines fomented by Smasher and his cohorts, Thornhill actively participates in the attack they orchestrate on the Aborigines who live on Thomas Blackwood’s property (315-23). This act represents his full initiation into founding violence, his corruption complete because this act is also perpetrated against a man who has been a friend to him, and who has also consistently opposed and withdrawn from settlers like Smasher, having ‘gone native’ by living in peace with the Aborigines according to his philosophy that there “*Ain’t nothing in this world just for the taking [...] A man got to pay a fair price for taking [...] Matter of give a little, take a little*” (108). It is, moreover, an act that, while it consolidates his position in the settler community, since people “wanted to stay on the good side of William Thornhill, who was too rich a man to make an enemy of” (340), also loses him his son Dick, who “had gone by himself one day some time after the affray. Still a young lad, he had paddled across the river on a log and then walked all the way along the Branch till he got to Blackwood’s,” where he had remained to take care of the man Smasher had blinded with his whip on the night of the attack. Eventually, the boy comes to be known as “Dick Blackwood,” which gives Thornhill “a shocked feeling, like the cut from a razor” (341). There will be, as Grenville shows in her sequel to *The Secret River*, *Sarah Thornhill*, no reconciliation possible between son and father because of the son’s refusal to lock his knowledge of his father’s guilt in a “closed room in his memory” and to “pretend it did not exist” as his father had always done (290), and his mother, and the community of settlers, whose *Gazette* creates the screen memory that will allow them to exonerate themselves, to believe that they are all good people:

The natives had been guilty of depredations and outrages. There had been an affray and the settlers had dispersed them.

It was not exactly false. Nor was it quite the way Thornhill remembered.

The *Gazette* did not mention the woman Thornhill could not forget, baring her teeth at him in the gloom, the blood so bright on her skin. Or the boy, arching like a fish against the hook in Sagitty's damper. (337)

Veracini's turn to the psychoanalytical notion of 'screen memories' in his consideration of settler disavowal of founding violence also brings into play the coinciding notion of the Freudian 'primal scene', that moment when the child first confronts parental sexual intercourse and conceives of it as an act of paternal violence ("Settler Collectives" 369). In the settler colonial context, "if we understand the pervasive and ubiquitous relevance of a settler libidinal investment on the notion of 'virgin land', and take into account the inherently ambivalent nature of 'motherland' in settler discourse" (370), the child's outraged sense at having his claim of primacy annulled by the father's prior claim to the mother's body is translated into the settler's

painful discovery of the Indigenous 'other' [which] produces then aggressiveness and disavowal; a circumstance where a forceful drive to disavow is paralleled by a drive to eradicate. As Indigenous people ostensibly enjoy a prior and meaningful relationship with the land, their presence painfully upsets a settler libidinal economy focusing on 'unspoilt'/untouched circumstances and 'providential gifts'. (370)

Seen in terms of the oedipal scenario, the settler's aggression and disavowal are symptomatic of the elaborate psychic displacements, repressions and defensive mechanisms needed to sustain "the fantasy of an exclusive relationship with the (mother)land" as "terra nullius in the face of manifest Indigenous attachment to land," which accounts for the emergence of screen memories.<sup>11</sup> Chris Prentice, to whose work Veracini refers, similarly notes the oedipal dynamics suggested "in historical, political, and cultural discourses" of white settler nations in which "references to the Imperial Mother, to daughter-colonies, and to the Manhood of Nation" are prevalent (in Veracini, "Settler Collectives" 375). Prentice concludes that, in "the separation from the Maternal Continent," the "emergence of Nation can be likened to the

---

<sup>11</sup> According to Patrick Brantlinger, "[d]uring the nineteenth century, the idea that Australia was *terra nullius* or a land that, prior to the arrival of the first fleet in 1788, belonged to nobody became the legal doctrine that helped dispossess the Aborigines of the entire continent. *Terra nullius* remained in force until 1992, when the Australian Supreme Court struck it down in the Eddie Mabo land rights case (Reynolds 1992). A key way the colonizers represented the Aborigines, *terra nullius* rendered them as completely subaltern as any legal fiction could possibly do: assuming the Aborigines even existed, they possessed nothing, because they had no conception of property or territory; thus, Australia belonged to the colonizers" (*Victorian* 93-94).

erection of the phallic ‘I,’ the Self whose passage through an historical-cultural mirror-stage confers the image of autonomy, unity, integrity, and identity.” For the settler colonial son, this self-image of national identity “is valued as autonomous, but it is valued on the basis of its specular similarity to British cultural and institutional models” (Prentice in Veracini, “Settler Collectives” 376).

Taking Veracini’s and Prentice’s observations as points of departure, I want to introduce Freud’s ‘family romance’ here as an additional and crucial third component and expression of the oedipal scenario to consider when we interpret and reinterpret settler sources and their historiographies, and to propose it as particularly apposite to the ancestral plots mapped in the retellings of the story of settlement in texts like the ones read for this thesis, but narrowed down to the specificities of the novels and film discussed in this chapter. The ‘family romance’ was conceived of by Freud as occurring in the pre-adolescent stage of the child’s development as he/she attempts to separate from his/her parents. A growing awareness of the parents’ inadequacies, their perceived slights and failure to fully reciprocate his/her love, and rivalry with siblings with whom the parents’ love must be shared provoke the compensatory and wish-fulfilling day-dream “of being a step-child or an adopted child” (Freud, “Family Romances” 236): “[T]he child’s imagination becomes engaged in the task of getting free from the parents of whom he now has a low opinion and of replacing them by others, who, as a rule, are of a higher social standing” (237-38). Once the child discovers “the sexual determinants of procreation” and knows that “‘*pater semper incertus est*’, while the mother is ‘*certissima*’” (238), the dynamic shifts from “the first (asexual) stage” to “second (sexual) stage of the family romance,” the child exalting his father but creating erotic fantasies motivated by “his desire to bring his mother (who is the subject of the most intense sexual curiosity) into situations of secret infidelity and into secret love-affairs.” For Freud, as should be evident from this scenario, this is a ‘boy’s own story’ – “for a boy is more inclined to feel hostile impulses towards his father than towards his mother and has a far more intense desire to get free from *him* than from *her*”; “the imagination of girls” also being “much weaker” (237) and thus incapable of these byzantine intricacies reminiscent of “historical intrigues” (239).

This fantasy extends, especially in the younger child, to imaginative multiplications of his mother’s infidelities to rob his siblings of legitimacy and hence, inverting the original family romance, “the hero and author returns to legitimacy himself while his brothers and sisters are eliminated by being bastardized” (239). Freud reassures his reader (who might feel “inclined to turn away in horror from this depravity of the childish heart or feel[...] tempted,

indeed, to dispute the possibility of such things”) that, in spite of the desire for “revenge and retaliation” carried over from the first to the second stage of “these imaginative romances” (239), “these works of fiction, which seem so full of hostility, are none of them really so badly intended.” Rather, “they preserve, under a slight disguise, the child’s original affection for his parents” because the aristocratic replacement parents fantasised by the child are exalted versions of the real parents, but as they had once seemed to the child “in the earlier years of his childhood,” the loss of which is compensated for by these nostalgic, regretful and angry day-dreams.

For the child who had been in one way or another displaced from his/her original family and who grows up with another family, for example in the case of adoption, “[t]he natural tendency to construct family romance fantasy leads [...] to speculat[ion] about imaginary parents,” as it does for other children, but, as Steven Nickman points out, “the actual past loss of objects intrudes painfully,” as does the knowledge of having been adopted, which works against the playful element necessary for the fantasy to function as a helpful aid in the achievement of autonomy and separation from parents (in Horner and Rosenberg, “Family” 134-35). Weighted with intolerable significance, the fantasy traps the child in the “sense of having an unknown origin” (135), which causes him/her to be haunted by what M. Frisk terms an “hereditary ghost” and to experience what H. J. Sants calls “genealogical bewilderment” (in Horner and Rosenberg, “Family” 134). The debates these terms have generated about the impact of adoption on child development are not at issue here, but rather the way they return us to Abrahams’s theory of transgenerational haunting and the Gothic when brought to bear on settler and post-settler family romance in historiographies and historical (meta)fictions.

Already in the Victorian novel, in which the orphan figure in search of family is perennial – the happy ending of the marriage plot frequently coinciding with the (re)discovery of family and, as in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, an inheritance reinstating kinship connections that also endorse a recovery of class status – the family romance is deeply embedded at the level of plot and characterisation. In Dickens’s novels in particular it is a recurring preoccupation, his waifs and strays often being at the mercy of dangerous or morally ambiguous adults, in many cases parents or surrogate parents, in a world that, while it has good in it, tends to the bad. It is, nevertheless, possible to overcome or resist temptation or corruption, and to find as a reward and consolation a family and home of one’s own, as does Esther Summerson at the end of *Bleak House*. This transfiguring optimism is at the heart of the marvellous turn of events at the end of *Great Expectations* in which the plot turns back

on itself as if to start over again with a familiar set of characters newly configured into a family that radically improves upon the one with which the novel begins. Returning to the forge after an eleven-year absence to visit Joe Gargery and Biddy, who replaces Pip's terrifying sister as Joe's wife, a marriage that brings together the two characters that represent absolute goodness in Pip's life and narrative, the now chastened Pip looks into the kitchen to see the following peaceful scene (one recalls, of course, Mrs Joe's prior chaotic domestic reign):

There, smoking his pipe in the old place by the kitchen firelight, as hale and as strong as ever though a little grey, sat Joe; and there, fenced into the corner with Joe's leg, and sitting on my own little stool looking at the fire, was — I again!

'We giv' him the name of Pip for your sake, dear old chap,' said Joe, delighted when I took another stool by the child's side (but I did not rumple his hair), 'and we hoped he might grow a little bit like you, and we think he do.' (356)

As if in a magic mirror, the scene here both reflects and transforms – in its benevolent, calm domesticity and confirmation of the family as legitimately constituted of father, mother and children without surrogates or interlopers – the opening scene of the novel and the beginning of Pip's autobiographical narrative, a scene similarly of naming, which takes place in the cemetery at the graves of his parents and five brothers, and begins with the following short paragraph: "My father's family name being Pirrip, and my christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip" (9). Although Pip's status as the legitimate son of his father is never in any doubt, the question of fatherhood is central to the novel and to the orphaned character, with Joe and Magwitch squaring off as paired opposites in surrogacy, about whom Pip, however, feels a strangely similar mixture of feelings – affection, indebtedness, embarrassment, guilt, shame – typical of the adolescent whose attempts at separation from the parent, as Anna Freud notes, derive from "ruthless disillusionment" (in Horner and Rosenberg 133).

The figure of the benevolent mother undergoes its own process of disintegration in the gothic excesses of Miss Havisham, who not only exploits Pip's fantasy that she is his fairy godmother, but manipulates and corrupts her adopted daughter Estella, whose biological mother, Molly, is a murderess compelled by the lawyer Jaggers to serve him. Estella's life, rather than Pip's, seems to exemplify the family romance come true – the daughter of



impoverished criminals, Molly and Magwitch, she is handed over when still a baby to the wealthy, propertied Miss Havisham, a figure more witch than fairy godmother, her benevolence essentially self-serving and therefore tainted and tainting. Much of Pip's autobiographical narrative is concerned with the mystery of Estella's parentage, which he sets out to solve, while he does not, however, attempt to solve the mystery of who his benefactor might be because he so wholeheartedly believes and wants it to be Miss Havisham. His fantasy, which he offers as "the clue by which I am to be followed into my poor labyrinth" (179), expresses both the desire to be owned as her legitimately adopted son and the desire to take ownership of Satis House as her heir and the husband of her adopted daughter, a fantasy also of restoration which in its violence borders on usurpation: "She had adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it to me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin." As a form of wish-fulfilment, this deflection tangentially introduces latent anxieties about incest (fundamental to Freud's oedipal family romance, which also, however, as its elaboration in the Gothic shows, plays a part in sibling eroticism). If Miss Havisham is his benefactor and hence operates as a surrogate mother, Estella is by implication his sister, even if only by adoption, which makes marriage to her impossible or at least questionable – an ambiguous affiliation that also bedevils the similarly gothicised relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. In solving the riddle of her parentage, he uncovers that she is in fact the daughter of his real benefactor, Magwitch, but he will withhold this information from her, heeding in this Jaggers's question, "[f]or whose sake would you reveal the secret?" (308). A similar anxiety would ostensibly assert itself here, but Pip makes it clear that none such exists because, he tells the reader, "I was not related to the outlaw, or connected with him by any recognisable tie" (333), which, while it thwarts his chances of inheriting the tainted Australian wealth of the former convict (Miss Havisham's clean English money being infinitely preferable) simultaneously legitimises him as a true, albeit poor son of (Mother) England who endeavours to make his living in the more lawful and socially sanctioned enterprises of imperial expansionism in Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Pip's most generous act of compensation is to his friend Herbert Pocket, for whom he had secretly secured nine hundred pounds from Miss Havisham to buy a partnership for him in Clarriker and Co, a trading company. After Magwitch's death, the penniless Pip joins Herbert and his wife Clara in Egypt where Herbert is in charge of the "small branch-house in the East" (309). Edgar Rosenberg, in his editorial notes to the Norton Critical Edition of *Great Expectations*, explains that, "[b]y Pip's day, Egypt had long become a center of British trade with the Middle East, its importance consolidated by the establishment of an overland route from Alexandria to Suez in 1829" (309).

In *Oliver Twist*, the son's legitimacy and the naming and inheritance that confirm it drive the family romance plot, in which Monks, or Edward Leeford, the legitimate but corrupt eldest son of Mr Brownlow's now-deceased friend Edwin Leeford, seeks to get rid of Oliver, his illegitimate half-brother who stands to inherit "the bulk of his [father's] property" (344), which he had bequeathed in equal parts to Oliver's mother, Agnes Fleming, and to their child. However, since Agnes died in childbirth, Oliver is the sole heir if found and if the will comes to light – an end Mr Brownlow pursues and Monks works to thwart. In this story, too, an embittered and vengeful mother utterly corrupts her child and blights his life, because, although it is suggested that Monks may be naturally bad, it is apparent that his mother, by whom he "had been trained to hate" his father, fostered this propensity for evil in him. He defiantly tells Brownlow and Oliver that, on her deathbed, she had made him – then twenty years old – swear that he would, if he found the child alive, "hunt it down; never to let it rest; to pursue it with the bitterest and most unrelenting animosity; to vent upon it the hatred that I deeply felt, and to spit upon the empty vaunt of that insulting will by dragging it, if I could, to the very gallows-foot" (345). In this novel, legitimacy is however not conferred by the legal dictates of the patronymic alone, but literally by the will of the father and, moreover, by what Dickens in his preface to the third edition of the novel describes as "the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last" embodied by "little Oliver" (3), whose role as 'prince elect' in this family romance is already hinted at in the first chapter:

Wrapped in the blanket which had hitherto formed his only covering, he might have been the child of a nobleman or a beggar; it would have been hard for the haughtiest stranger to have assigned him his proper station in society. But now that he was enveloped in the old calico robes which had grown yellow in the same service, he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once – a parish child – the orphan of a workhouse – the humble half-starved drudge – to be cuffed and buffeted through the world – despised by all, and pitied by none. (19)

John Forster, Dickens's friend and biographer, wrote that the suffering children in Dickens's novels "were not his clients whose cause he pleaded with such pathos and humour, and on whose side he got the laughter and tears of all the world, but in some sense his very self" (in Tomalin, *Charles Dickens* 26). Dickens had confided in Forster his awful humiliation at having to work in a blacking factory when his father was imprisoned in the Marshalsea debtor's prison, where, even after his father's release, he had to continue, feeling

acutely the shame of being thus exposed to the charity of a friend with whom his father visited the factory, telling Forster that “[n]o words can express the secret agony of my soul [...] the sense of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position ... My whole nature was penetrated with grief and humiliation” (in Tomalin 25). But it is also remarkable, as Claire Tomalin suggests in her recent biography, that what the child feels and the adult recounts derives from “his belief in his own capacities and potential” (25), which he must sustain in the face of parental neglect and failure to recognise and reward his exceptional abilities, even more painfully so because he must see another child, his sister Fanny for whom money to pay for the expensive tuition at the Royal Academy of Music was always forthcoming, getting what he craves and feels he too deserves. In later years, recalling the public piano concert at which Fanny received a prize from the King’s sister, Princess Augusta, he tells Forster: “I could not bear to think of myself – beyond the reach of such honourable emulation and success. The tears ran down my face. I felt as if my heart were rent. I prayed, when I went to bed that night, to be lifted out of the humiliation and neglect in which I was” (in Tomalin 28). Although Dickens asserts that “[t]here was no envy in this,” one might speculate that the boy’s repression of what is considered inappropriate envy at the developmental stage in which the family romance fantasy emerges naturally as wish-fulfilment and consolation leads to him to create alternatives to compensate for this disappointing family scenario. He thus through sublimation embarks on the career of author in which he tells and retells the story of abandonment and recovery in its various guises. One such story is that of *Oliver Twist*, who becomes a gentleman, a status the accomplishment of which not only preoccupied the young Dickens, but which he shared with his young protagonist Pip and with his benefactor, the transported convict Magwitch, who proudly claims the achievement of “making a gentleman” and being “the owner of such” (242).

In *Jack Maggs*, Carey picks up on Dickens’s childhood hurts and disaffection and their consequent sedimentation in the character of the adult author, renamed Tobias Oates, whose ambition is fed by a craving for social acceptance and a hunger for love that is insatiable: “No one who knew Tobias [...] had any understanding of his unholy thirst for love. He had not known it himself. He did not know the curse or gift his ma and pa had given him: he would not be loved enough, not ever” (52). Carey retains the debt-ridden father, but gives him the added criminal dimension of having killed a man (279), a charge he disputes and from which he is exonerated but which haunts his son. Five years old when his father is imprisoned in Newgate and left to fend for himself “[i]n a city that would as soon have trampled him into the mud” (259), the boy resolutely fights his way clear of this fate:

although “cast off [...] he would not be flotsam”; and having been “denied a proper school [...] he had learned to read and write and he had made himself, by will, a sorcerer of that great city.” This history accounts for his “obsession with the Criminal Mind” (62) and his ready sense of himself as “its first cartographer” (126) after he first mesmerises Jack Maggs and discovers the “secret history” of this transported but returned convict (213), whose ‘birth’ from the mud of the city and subsequent criminal career stand as a stark reminder of what his life might have been and might yet still become if he were to lapse into “feared poverty” (280). The contract between them that will allow Oates to mesmerise Maggs in exchange for finding the Thief-taker is ostensibly to cure him of the *tic douloureux* from which he suffers, but it is in fact a ruse by the cash-strapped author to use Maggs’s “hidden history” (128) as the source for a novel, an endeavour in itself criminal because reliant on fraudulent bookkeeping: “There were, as in all crooked businesses, two sets of books, and had Jack Maggs seen the second set he might have recognized scenes (or fragments) more familiar to him [...] the writer was stumbling through the dark of the convict’s past, groping in the shadows, describing what was often a mirror held up to his own turbulent and fearful soul” (128).

The proliferation of uncanny doublings that flicker and unfold in this *mise en abyme* of distorting mirrors where authors and characters meet and merge in constantly shifting pairs follows the compelling logic of transgenerational haunting embedded in the biblical curse that the sins of the fathers will be visited upon their sons in a pattern of inescapable returns.<sup>13</sup> Shackled to the legacy of his still living father, Oates’s pathological need for love and approval, coinciding with his fear of financial collapse, leads him into criminal behaviour, played out not only on his young sister-in-law’s pregnant body but also manifesting for him in the “angry red pustule” (252) on his infant son’s chest: “as the little fellow shrieked, as the great river of puss flowed forth from the lanced boil, Tobias Oates cried shamelessly, or so it appeared to all who saw him. In truth, however, the shame was very deep, and when he saw the evidence of infection pour forth from his son’s innocent body, he felt the poison to be all his own” (268). The guilt and shame he feels are weighted not only by the obvious sin of adultery and its imminent exposure threatened by Lizzie Warriner’s changing body but also, implicitly, by the imputation of incest, whether conceived of as sin or crime. Nancy F.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Exodus 34: 6-7: “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*” (*King James Bible*).

Anderson points out that it increasingly preoccupied the Victorians as it emerged as an issue, albeit delicately skirted, in public debates about the question of whether marriage with a deceased wife's sister should be prohibited by law on the basis of degrees of consanguinity or affinity, with the implication that all such marriages could be annulled and the children issuing from them declared illegitimate. First introduced as a matter for clarification into the House of Lords in 1835 because of its apparent ambiguities,<sup>14</sup> it was formalised in the "Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill" introduced in parliament in 1847 as an attempt to secure the validity of such marriages contracted before 31 August 1835 but in fact causing further restrictions by the addition of a clause that "made marriages of both affinity and consanguinity contracted after that date absolutely void" (Anderson, "Marriage" 67). The heated parliamentary and public debates that followed, resulting also in the establishment of the Marriage Law Reform Association, which fought to have these restrictions repealed, continued as the bill to legalise such unions unconditionally was defeated repeatedly until 1907 when it was finally passed (these marriages had been legal in the British colonies since the 1870s and 1880s). Although the bill and the debates it generated may seem tangential to Carey's novel, its portrayal of Oates's middle-class domestic arrangement – his wife's younger sister, Lizzie Warriner, living with the married couple and performing various domestic tasks in exchange for board and lodging<sup>15</sup> – registers in Oates's adulterous transgressions precisely those anxieties about incest and the parameters of its definition, whether overtly stated or implicit, that were at issue, and which certainly also played a role in Dickens's own domestic situation, firstly with Mary Hogarth, his wife Catherine's sister, who died inexplicably at seventeen while living with them and whom he romanticised and mourned throughout his life – evidently the source of Carey's Lizzie Warriner – and later, after his separation from Catherine, with her sister Georgina, who stayed with Dickens after Catherine left the marital home. This 'in-law' relationship thus extends by analogy the

<sup>14</sup> In her overview of the Bill, Anderson explains its provenance as follows: "The existing law, based on the 1533 Henrican statute fixing the degrees of consanguinity and affinity, specified that marriages within prohibited degrees could be annulled at any time within the lifetime of both spouses by the Ecclesiastical Court. Lord Lyndhurst argued that the uncertain status of such 'voidable marriages' created an inconvenience and hardship for the married persons and especially for their children, who could during their parents' lifetime be declared illegitimate. His specific motive was to guarantee the legitimacy and inheritance of the son of the seventh Duke of Beaufort, who had married his deceased wife's half-sister, a relationship within the prohibited degrees. Lyndhurst proposed that parliament pass a bill to limit to two years the time within which marriages could be annulled" ("Marriage" 67).

<sup>15</sup> As Anderson points out, "[t]he particular relationship of a man and his deceased wife's sister became the focus of controversy because the sociological conditions in Victorian England made it especially sensitive. It was the common pattern in Victorian families for unmarried 'redundant' women, which the 1851 census revealed composed almost forty percent of the female population ages 21-44, to live with a married sister, and to take care of the children if the mother died, a not uncommon event in that age when the maternal death rate was still quite high. The possibility of a widower wanting to marry the sister was therefore real" ("Marriage" 73).

potential for incest incubating in the hothouse atmosphere of the Victorian home, in which, as Anderson points out, “the rigid Victorian code of morality, restricting extra-familial heterosexual relationships, dammed up libidinous feelings,” which were directed exclusively towards family members – an observation Freud made about childhood eroticism but which in the Victorian family “continued throughout a lifetime, with the most ardent love bestowed on parents, and even more commonly, because more available and less hampered by hierarchical distance, on brothers or sisters” (70).

This intense sibling eroticism played out as a form of incestuous bigamy by Oates and Lizzie is made overt in the exchange between them when, left alone after the doctor leaves (having pocketed Lizzie’s necklace in lieu of payment), she addresses him as ““dear Brother”” and he asks her to ““Say it”” (275), to which she responds, ““Husband”” (276), and he, “hearing that forbidden word, embraced her once again, smothering her in kisses,” his fear of discovery forgotten. This is a pivotal moment in the plot, because Oates’s earlier sense of his “life [...] unravelling” (258) is confirmed at this point when Lizzie tells him that she is pregnant and, while they are “talking thus, in low agitated voices,” his wife Mary walks in on them. Having been made alert, although deflected by them, her suspicions will manifest as “rage” (402) when confirmed by “her sister’s behaviour,” a realisation first repressed and suffered somatically as an “itchy rash across her back,” her “tears [...] contained within the water blisters which had risen in the middle of these red weals” (403), but later acted out in procuring abortion pills from Mary Britten, which she surreptitiously puts in her sister’s tea. Coinciding with her husband’s equally surreptitious procurement and use of Ma Britten’s pills to achieve the end of aborting Lizzie’s child, without her knowledge, this act causes her sister’s death and makes wife and husband unwitting co-conspirators in the murder of both interloper child and mother.

Even this conjugal *paso doble* of secrecy and guilt is routed through the relationship between Oates and Maggs. When, on their way to Gloucester to find the Thief-taker, Maggs introduces the bartering in secrets that would bind Oates to silence about the “frigging secrets” (329) he had “robbed” (48) from him under mesmerism, Oates tells him about Lizzie’s pregnancy, a “bad secret” (330), “a secret twenty times as bad as yours” (331), he claims, relieved to get it off his chest. It is only later, on their return, that Maggs discovers the extent to which he had been “burgled” when he hears Oates refer to Sophina (384), his childhood love, and reads the first chapter of Oates’s novel based on his life in which he describes their relationship. The interlocking discoveries and disclosures of secrets that converge in this moment will lead to the abortion of Lizzie’s baby and to her death because



Maggs subsequently takes Oates to Ma Britten, the woman who had raised Maggs and who is the source of his own unfulfilled craving for love – “a strange woman, my Ma,” he tells Oates, who had glimpsed her as “a shadow, passion, hurt, an inky malignancy in Jack Maggs’s dreams” (325). For the similarly blighted Oates, who “had spent a dreadful year, his fourth, in a home for orphaned boys [...] where he had been bullied continually,” then returned to “a mother who was most loudly inconvenienced by his presence” and who soon abandoned him to the indifferent care of his father (259), it is therefore “not hard to see the boy in [Maggs], to imagine the orphan’s hunger for affection” (325). But Maggs’s story – unfolding under the influence of Oates’s mesmerism and in the counterpart autobiography that he himself writes in invisible ink in letters to the young man he considers his adopted son, Henry Phipps (Carey’s version of Dickens’s Pip as a weak, homosexual exploiter of susceptible male servants, who is also implicated in a suicide) – introduces a history of abandonment and rejection that is even more extreme than Oates’s, the metonymically twinned figures of (surrogate) mother, the abortionist Ma Britten, and motherland, Mother Britain, shifting it into the universalising mode of allegory in which “the relationship between the [transported] convict and the parent,” England, is configured as “essentially an abusive relationship” (Carey, “Powells” n.pag.).

When Oates first uncovers the story of Maggs’s childhood, it is the mystery of his birth, “the infant Maggs ha[ving] been thrown off London Bridge,” that immediately intrigues the writer, triggering the classic family romance that Maggs is “a bastard son of noble parents” as the source of the fiction he intends to make of Maggs’s life (*Jack Maggs* 292). It is an idea that reflects his own desire for such an origin, which Carey takes from Dickens’s biography, but it also registers the perennially popular and literary fascination with this romantic figure, here signalled by Oates’s reference to the notorious eighteenth-century poet Richard Savage, a friend of Samuel Johnson who wrote his biography, and whose life Richard Holmes, in his book on their friendship, *Dr Johnson & Mr Savage*, describes as follows:

Savage’s life was seen from the start as containing the elements of a crime thriller, which would appeal to a popular as much as a literary readership. Savage, as his very name seemed to suggest, was a poet-killer with a peculiar violence in his relationships. His story begins in an aristocratic divorce court, emerges in the world of publicity and the new monthly magazines, continues in a murder trial, touches upon fashion, politics and royalty, and ends suddenly and disgracefully in a debtor’s prison. More than any other English poet since

Marlow, Savage's reputation was notorious and his true identity problematic, though for very different reasons to Marlowe's. (5)<sup>16</sup>

Maggs's own epistolary account of his 'birth' from the Thames mud differs markedly from Oates's romanticised transformation of it into fiction, the autobiographical voice Carey thus introduces shifting the focus from Pip's privileged account in *Great Expectations* to that of the transported convict who returns to England to see the "orphing" (*Jack Maggs* 372) who had fed him when he was in chains and on his way to the prison ship and to whom he had in turn become a secret benefactor. Whereas Dickens includes Magwitch's voice in Pip's sustained first-person narrative largely as a plot device, wringing from it also some pathos in deepening characterisation, Carey's employment of the epistolary mode embedded in the third-person narrative that shares focalisation between Oates and Maggs, and extends to minor characters like Percy Buckle, the footman Constable and the maid Mercy Larkin, achieves for this narrative of the convict's impoverished and exploited childhood and adolescence a confessional register inescapably intimate in its detailing of suffering, loss and longing. These elements are already present in Magwitch's much more sparse account – "short and handy" (258) – when he tells Pip and Herbert Pocket, "In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail. There, you've got it. That's *my* life pretty much":

'I first became aware of myself, down in Essex, a thieving turnips for my living [...]. I know'd my name to be Magwitch, chris'end Abel. How did I know it? Much as I know'd the birds' names in the hedges [...]. So fur as I could find, there warn't a soul that see young Abel Magwitch, with as little on him as in him, but what caught fright at him, and either drove him off, or took him up [arrested him] [...]. That was the way it was, that when I was a ragged little creetur as much to be pitied as ever I see.' (259)

As counterpart to Pip's own story of origin in which the narrator, at the start of his autobiographical narrative, returns to his child-self at the graves of his parents and siblings in the act of self-naming, which is also to "define and justify – authorize – the plot of his

---

<sup>16</sup> Although consistently contested by the woman he claimed to be his mother, Lady Macclesfield, Savage persisted in his belief that he was her and the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Rivers's illegitimate son. Holmes's interpretation of this compulsion is worth quoting here for its insightful rendering of how childhood loss and abandonment seed the adult poet's consoling fantasies: "Much of the evidence, documentary and otherwise, is reconciled if we assume that through the disrupted, unhappy circumstances of his childhood, Savage was genuinely deluded about his identity. There is one further tragic consideration, if we accept anything that Savage said about the personal sufferings of being an orphan or bastard. In childhood and adolescence he lost three people in succession whom he may have looked upon as mother-figures: a nurse, Mrs Portlock; an affectionate 'godmother', Mrs Lloyd; and a wealthy aristocrat, Lady Macclesfield. We could say that it was Richard Savage's peculiar fate to lose his mother three times over, and to be left with nobody to love him but the Muse of Poetry" (235).

ensuing life,” as Peter Brooks suggests (“Repetition” 680), Magwitch’s brief autobiographical history of extreme deprivation and ostracism stands in stark contrast to its privileges – the boy Pip although orphaned is yet housed, fed and even loved by his sister’s husband. It is from this radicalising impulse in Dickens’s portrayal of a life reduced to the bare bones of basic survival that Carey takes his cue, seeming also in this to turn to Dickens’s portrayal of child abandonment and abuse in *Oliver Twist* for Jack Maggs’s story, which begins in utter abjection, a child discarded like rubbish, and, unlike his predecessor, nameless: “Maggs was not my father’s name,” he writes, “but a name given to me by my foster mother who believed I talked too much. What my father’s name was I cannot tell, for when I was just three days old I was discovered lying in the mud flats ’neath London Bridge” (106-107).<sup>17</sup>

Dickens’s outraged condemnation in *Oliver Twist* of an ostensibly charitable parish system for the care of orphans – many of whom were ‘illegitimately’ conceived out of wedlock – but which is in fact a front for the self-interested exploitation of these children for financial gain, its hypocritical functionaries like Mr Bumble, Mrs Mann and the members of the Board all corpulently self-righteous, is ventriloquised by the intrusive third-person narrator. His parable of “the experimental philosopher” (*Oliver Twist* 20) who starves his horse to prove that it needs barely any food is a devastating condemnation of the ‘social experiment’ implemented by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which made it common practice for these abandoned babies to be “farmed” in the workhouse “under the parental superintendence of an elderly female,” in this case Mrs Mann, paid adequately to feed the infants but who, “proving herself a very great experimental philosopher,” devises a system horrifying in its consequences:

[F]or at the very moment that a child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that it sickened from want and cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases, the miserable little being was usually summoned into another world, and there gathered to the fathers which it had never known in this. (20)

The prime cause of this system is implicitly identified as the failure of fathers to take responsibility for the care of the children they seed, contributing in this way to the

---

<sup>17</sup> Wesley Stace’s neo-Victorian *Misfortune* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005) provides an interesting point of comparison because, although very different in its more baroque elaborations on the inheritance plot and closer in spirit to Mervyn Peake’s *Gormenghast* trilogy (1946-58), it pivots on the discovery of a baby boy who had survived abortion on a rubbish heap outside London by a nobleman who raises him as a daughter and heir.

dehumanisation of impoverished future generations vulnerable to exploitation by criminals like Fagin, whose role as surrogate father to his band of ‘lost boys’ is, however, suggestive of an alternative version of the family romance in which what is desired is not the entitlement of lawful aristocratic origin but its flaunting in the choice of belonging to an aristocracy of outlaws, here embodied by the sartorial and verbal flamboyance of the Artful Dodger.<sup>18</sup> As the counterpart to the world of the parish and workhouse authorities, Fagin’s world operates as a paradox because, although indisputably violent and abusive, it is also indisputably more vital and kinder to the children, who are fed, not starved, taught skills to survive in a world that has discarded them and, even though they are put at risk because of it, are nevertheless given some measure of agency, severely circumscribed and questionable though it might be. The anarchic charms of Fagin’s domestic and familial rearrangements are particularly evident in the numerous stage and screen adaptations of the novel, but for Dickens this version of the family romance has to give way to the conventional one, now adjusted to accommodate the Victorian elevation of the upper middle classes to the position of desired privilege and legitimacy, in which Oliver, the “bourgeois prince incognito” as Shari Hodges Holt describes him (255), is safely reinstated at the centre of the home and family, a point to which I shall return later in my discussion of Tim Greene’s *Boy Called Twist*.

In *Jack Maggs*, Carey appropriates the Dickensian family romance in both its conventional and outlaw manifestations, causing them to converge in the transported criminal’s transformation into a landed colonial gentleman, who, having fathered numerous children, can die peacefully of old age in “a musty high-ceilinged bedroom” in his Australian home, “his weeping sons and daughters crowded round his bed” (462), unlike his fictional forebear Magwitch, who dies in a prison on English soil, his Australian property, “certain lands of considerable value,” now “forfeited to the Crown,” his ‘adopted son’ Pip deprived of his inheritance (*Great Expectations* 333, 332). Taking up the themes of absent fathers and their surrogates in both *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, Carey opts for the consolations of the earlier novel’s resolution by returning Maggs to his abandoned Australian sons with Mercy Larkin to mother them, and giving him a prosperous life as patriarch of a large “clannish and hospitable” family, “at once civic-minded and capable of acts of picturesque

---

<sup>18</sup> My embedded reference here is to the “lost boys” in J. M. Barrie’s play *Peter Pan, or The Boy who Wouldn’t Grow Up* who end up in Neverland with Peter Pan after being lost in Kensington Gardens by their nannies and remaining unclaimed by their parents. This fantasy of escape from domesticity, associated with the world of women, and the adult world in general forms an interesting counterpart to Fagin’s anarchic reconfiguration of the family.

irresponsibility,” who also, like their father, “left many stories scattered in their wake” (*Jack Maggs* 462).

Although Carey is obedient to an authorial impulse similar to Dickens’s that seeks to make amends for the childhood of loss and deprivation scripted for the character, he does so only late in Maggs’s life, unlike Dickens who saves Oliver from a life of crime under the tutelage of his surrogate father Fagin when his biological father’s identity is revealed and his illegitimacy effectively erased by the recuperative powers of this father’s will’s endorsement of him as heir. In contrast, Maggs is irrevocably shaped by his criminal surrogate mother and father, Mary Britten and Silas Smith, who take him in and exploit him, his real father’s name and hence his origin remaining a mystery and his eventual success in the colony entirely due to his own resilience and hard work. Dickens, to achieve the emotional effect through which his social commentary is driven home, first shows the extremities of suffering to which the child, fallen from grace because of his mother’s fall into extramarital sex (a theme of maternal transgression and its impact on the life of the child born from it that Dickens will develop further in the figure of Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House*), is exposed. Appalled and infuriated, the narrator gives the following account of the child, already reduced to animal desperation by starvation, who is then further dehumanised by Mrs Sowerberry, wife of the undertaker who takes Oliver from the workhouse, when she tells the servant to feed him the scraps of meat set aside for the dog:

I wish some well-fed philosopher, whose meat and drink turn to gall within him; whose blood is ice, whose heart is iron; could have seen Oliver Twist clutching at the dainty viands that the dog had neglected. I wish he could have witnessed the horrible avidity with which Oliver tore the bits asunder with all the ferocity of famine. There is only one thing I should like better; and that would be to see the Philosopher making the same sort of meal himself, with the same relish. (41)

In Carey’s version, filtered through Maggs’s autobiographical epistolary account of his origin, it is the three-day-old infant himself who becomes the bundle of rags over which other scavenger children fight like a pack of dogs over a scrap of meat:

I was picked up by the Mudlarks. I do not recall this, but have so oft been told of my Good Fortune that for many years I saw them in my dreams: wraiths pulled up from the stinking mud of the Thames. These half-starved scroungers found the strength to fight for my shawl and bonnet with such a passion that it was always said by Silas Smith – my Benefactor – that it was a wonder I was not torn in two like the child divided thus by Solomon. (107)

We are here in the nightmare world of what Patricia Yaeger in a different context refers to as “a culture of neglect” epitomised by “the difficult figure of the throwaway body” (*Dirt* 67, 68), especially the infant’s body – that emblem of precarious and vulnerable existence singled out by Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero, whose work I discuss in the previous chapter in relation to the recurrence of this symbolically loaded figure in Atwood’s and Christiansë’s novels. For Yaeger, “[b]odies in rags are closer to the limits of the human, closer to the body itself as rubbish or waste” and she points to “the power of cloth remnants, dirty or clean, for gathering a constellation of social problems, for calling up an atmosphere of neglect, desuetude, or dehumanization – foregrounding the background of a society that throws people away, that treats them as objects” (80). Saved from suffocation in the “stinking mud” of the Thames but never quite cleansed of its contamination, the infant is taken by his “Benefactor” (*Jack Maggs* 107), dubiously described as “what passes for a Kind Man in my history” by Maggs (130), to Mary Britten who lives in “Hell’s Doorway” (109). Her immediate response is “to threaten with the bricks she had for the purpose of discouraging the rats,” telling Silas, “You take your rubbish somewhere else” (108).<sup>19</sup> Although convinced by Silas’s money to take in both the child and his “Benefactor,” who also brings his small daughter Sophina with him, to live with her and her son Tom, she nevertheless persists in confirming the boy’s status as unwanted “rubbish” by telling him “often enough, that [...] she did not want [him]” (108): “I grew up being told these stories, and I never liked them even as a child. I heard a hundred times how I was starved and thin and wrinkled like a rag etcetera, how she washed me, wrapped me in a piece of clean grey blanket and persuaded me to take a little barley water” (109). Yet, in spite of being “gruff and fierce” with him, he writes, “she also did her duty by me in those years. She grew me up” (131) – echoing Pip’s description of the equally fierce Mrs Joe who “had brought me up ‘by hand’” (*Great Expectations* 12).<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> In the chapters narrated by Maggs, Carey foregoes inverted commas to indicate dialogue, hence the absence of single quotation marks within the double to register dialogue when I quote from these sections of the novel.

<sup>20</sup> Rosenberg points out that Pip “deliberately misconstrues” the phrase which “means ‘bottle-fed,’ a more expensive method than breast-feeding,” which accounts for “Mrs Joe’s bragging and Joe’s approving comments” (*Great Expectations* 12, n. 1). Ma Britten’s criminalising surrogate mothering interestingly inverts in its ambivalent dutifulness Mrs Joe’s reforming foster-mothering of a brother, twenty years her junior, whom she sees, he tells us, as “a young offender whom an Accoucheur-Policemen had taken up (on my birthday) and delivered over to her, to be dealt with according to the outraged majesty of the law. I was always treated as if I had insisted on being born, in opposition to the dictates of reason, religion, and morality, and against the dissuading arguments of my best friends. Even when I was taken to have a new suit of clothes, the tailor had orders to construct them like a kind of Reformatory, and on no account to let me have the free use of my limbs” (*Great Expectations* 24).



The family thus brought into being by expediency and need harbours from the start its own violent undoing in the various oedipal scenarios that play out as tensions and rivalries between the characters, always fuelled by Tom's jealous attachment to his mother for whose affection and approval he single-mindedly competes with Silas and Jack, a madness that eventually causes Silas's imprisonment, the abortion of Jack and Sophina's baby, Sophina's death by hanging, Jack's transportation to Australia and Tom's own death. The sibling rivalry between Tom and Jack is exacerbated by Jack's apprenticeship to Silas, who teaches him his trade in thieving and gives him "lessons" (130) in reading the hallmarks on the silver objects they steal, Tom's job being to scavenge meat at first, although he is later sent away to be apprenticed to a carpenter, a separation from his mother that fuels his jealousy of Jack, who remains behind. Jack's equivalent but less jealously demanding need for Ma Britten's love – "I would have given up all lessons," he writes, "if I could have had Mary Britten love me, and call me Son" – is expressed in being "useful" to her (146). However, even though he succeeds in earning her praise for "carrying the King's silver" in the face of Tom's hatred – "I hate him," Tom says; "I'll kill him [...] I'll drown him" (148) – his wish to have her "claim [him] as her own," this "force of Nature, the Ma," who is also "the Queen of England," both midwife and abortionist (131), is painfully thwarted when she confirms Tom's assertion of ascendancy: "I'm not the Mud Rat. I'm the son" (147). What Jack has to confront is the confirmation of her maternal affection and preference as "she softened in a way [Jack] rarely saw her do, and she clasped the bawling boy to her breast and stroked his hair," saying, "You are the man [...]. You are the man that gets the meat." Moreover, she makes it abundantly clear what Jack's role is in her schemes for her son's future: "You may kill him," she tells Tom, but you may as well cut off your arm, for it is this sooty fellow who is going to take you out of this pit. It was what he was raised to be. It was what you carried home his meat for" (148). The psychic wound thus unthinkingly inflicted is so devastating to the exhausted child's sense of self that it is only years later, in his epistolary autobiography, that the adult recalls this incident and confronts it as repressed trauma:

It is only now I write this down for you, I allow myself to feel what I must have known all those many years ago. At the time I felt a buzz or hurt, but I was tired, and full of soup, and once I saw I was not to be murdered, I wanted nothing more than sleep.

It is only now I feel the fury in my furnace: that the bitch would make this speech before a little nipper, letting him know that he had been raised for a base purpose like a hog or a hen. (148)

The collaborative cruelties of mother and son culminate in the forced abortion of Jack and Sophina's baby, who becomes another "throwaway body" (Yaeger, *Dirt* 68), treated like rubbish: "It is a cess pit they throw him in" (*Jack Maggs* 289), Maggs remembers under Oates's mesmerism, which follows shortly after Oates's infant's boil had been lanced when he had had to confront his own culpability and shame, having impregnated his sister-in-law, a node of intersecting plotlines that also foreshadows his later procurement of abortion pills from Mary Britten. Reaching towards the repressed memory at the root of Maggs's facial palsy – for which Oates had created the legend of "the Phantom" (66) – that, when confronted, will cure him of its tyranny, Oates is unable to grasp Maggs's violent resistance to his attempted interventions. When Jack, "weep[ing] uncontrollably," says, "Dear Lord, dear Lord. His sweet little cheek is cut open," Oates "received an insight. 'Look, Jack, look, the wound is healed. When his wound is healed, yours will be too. It is the same wound'," he says, but Maggs resists absolutely: "I want it' [...] 'I want it,' cried Jack Maggs [...] 'I want it, fool. It is all I have left of him'" (66). Maggs will later, in a letter to Phipps, recall this loss with a tender serenity that suggests the healing and release of conscious mourning: "There lay our son – the poor dead mite was such a tiny thing. I could have held him in my hand. And on his queerly familiar little face, a cruel and dreadful cut" (341). This differs markedly from his intense reclamation of traumatic memory as the necessary transference of a wound from the discarded body of his aborted child to his own, a mnemonic in the flesh that encrypts older layers of childhood trauma in a palimpsest of scars, the boy Jack being barely out of childhood himself when he confronts his own offspring as offal in a cess pit in an uncanny doubling of his infant self, face-down in the Thames mud.

In his book on Carey's writing, Woodcock argues that, in *Jack Maggs*, "[f]amily relationships, particularly parenting, orphaning and adoption, are to be understood literally and as metaphors for the responsibilities of society as a parent to its children" (*Peter Carey* 124), an analogy Carey has himself used in interviews to speak about Britain's treatment of transported convicts in the nineteenth century, and one whose implications he makes overt in his character Ma Britten who is the allegorical embodiment of the bad mother country. Transposed to post-1994 South Africa by film director Tim Greene in his *Boy Called Twist*, the familiar analogy between place of origin and maternal body is made similarly troubling in its imputations of abuse and neglect. The idea for the film was first triggered by a poster appealing for support for Cape Town's street children, its question "Is this the way the Mother City treats her children?" cleverly manipulating the popular and marketable image of it as "the Mother City" of South Africa, with its stereotypical connotations of nurturing and

homeliness that conjure up the image of an always generous, always welcoming place loved by locals and tourists alike, and one not immediately analogous with the London that Dickens portrays in *Oliver Twist*. The poster's insinuation that this mother city, pretty and glamorous as she may appear to be, is also a "regular right-down bad 'un'," to quote Noah Claypole's bullying allegation about Oliver's mother (*Oliver Twist* 54), propels Greene's transposition of location and period in his adaptation of the novel as a means of addressing what he describes as South Africa's "legacy of brutality that makes events in 'Twist' utterly plausible and sadly appropriate" (Greene, "A Twist" n.pag.) – not only in its portrayal of street children, but also in its suggestion of the broader impact of poverty on the lives of children, and their vulnerability to Aids, gangsterism, prostitution and forced labour.

Typical of the period of transition to democracy after the 1994 election, Greene's *Boy Called Twist* celebrates its 'New' South Africanness under the flag of Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 'Rainbow Nation', albeit with an optimism that shows the wear and tear symptomatic of what Achille Mbembe recently diagnosed as South Africa's "gradual [...] awakening to the fact that this is but an ordinary country" following "a decade of self-congratulations" ("Rule" 34). The film was a product of the first growth-spurt of the New South Africa's young film industry and one of ten South African films screened at the 2004 Cape Town World Cinema Festival, many of which were also adaptations, ranging from Bonnie Rodini's portrayal of late nineteenth-century rural South Africa in Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* to a cluster of films dealing with the more immediate history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and events related to it, including *In My Country*, John Boorman's adaptation of Krog's *Country of My Skull*, referred to in Chapter 2. Greene's adaptation diverges from the relatively conventional translation of novel to screen seen in these films, particularly Rodini's, in appropriating the nineteenth-century British novel as a starting point to make a film about street children in contemporary Cape Town, which implicitly comments on the ever-widening gap between rich and poor.

In *Boy Called Twist*, Victorian London and its class stratifications become contemporary Cape Town where class is shown to be explicitly racialised in a "demographic mix," which is, as Lesley Marx points out, "especially pertinent to the racial fusions of the Western Cape and to the shifting demographic construction of poverty and crime in the country" ("At the End" 265). Four years into democracy, then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, speaking at the opening debate on reconciliation and nation building in the South African National Assembly, had similarly, but perhaps more covertly, turned to the Victorians, appropriating Benjamin Disraeli's metaphor of "two nations" to speak about the

country's rich and poor, still divided along the racial lines entrenched by apartheid.<sup>21</sup> In 2004, Greene described his appropriation of "a plot from London in the 1830s" as "a strategy to distance [him]self from [his] own liberal urges to be helpful," an undertaking indicative of a growing impatience with the felt imperative to make socially 'meaningful' or didactic films ("A Twist" n.pag.). Yet, following Dickens's fanciful denouement of his family romance, in which, as U. C. Knoepfelmacher describes it, "[t]he orphaned Oliver recovers his genteel origins upon his final adoption by a belatedly masculinized Mr. Brownlow" ("Boy-Orphans" 1), Greene's film does not quite escape its liberal impulse to make things right for Twist by returning him to his middle-class family – the English Mr Brownlow here re-invented as Twist's Muslim grandfather, Mr Bassedien, who lives in the picturesque Bo-Kaap, or Malay Quarter, with its roots in Cape slave history (David Lean in his 1946 screen adaptation similarly casts Mr Brownlow as Twist's grandfather, which is not the case in the novel). Sharing Dickens's concern with the impact of poverty on the lives of children, particularly those abandoned to fend for themselves who are preyed upon by criminals of various stripes, Greene employed twenty-six street children, or 'strollers' as they refer to themselves in a surprisingly Dickensian way, to play Fagin's band of pickpockets, with the view to their continued employment in the film industry.<sup>22</sup> Greene also transforms Dickens's Jewish 'Kidsman' into Feyagin, whom he describes as an "amakwerekwere West African guy," whose unruly mane of dreadlocks snakes around his face, as distinctive as Fagin's red hair.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of foregrounding the plight of street children, Greene's film remains remarkably reticent in its portrayal of their lives, even though he includes a scene in which the children, including Twist, are shown sniffing glue, the accompanying music adding to the dream-like quality of their drugged night journey through the city streets. There is, however, no evidence of the threat of sexual exploitation and violence hounding these children at night, as, for example, portrayed by K. Sello Duiker in his award-winning first novel *Thirteen*

---

<sup>21</sup> Mbeki was speaking at the opening debate on reconciliation and nation-building at the South African National Assembly in Cape Town, and said: "South Africa is a country of two nations. One of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographical dispersal. It has ready access to developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure [...]. The second and larger nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the largest affected being the women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general, and the disabled. This nation lives under conditions of grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure" (Mbeki, "Statement" n.pag.).

<sup>22</sup> Johann le Roux and Cheryl Sylvia Smith in their article "Public Perceptions of, and Reactions to, Street Children" refer to "[s]troller bands" and distinguish between "low-risk activities known as strolling, parking, and 'aanklop' (begging)" and "[h]igh-risk activities such as theft, robbery, and prostitution," noting that "[i]n South Africa it is theoretically possible for a child as young as seven to be arrested, held in custody, charged, tried, convicted, and sentenced without the presence of a lawyer or even a parent" (902).

<sup>23</sup> Edna Bradlow points out that the term 'Kidsman' was used to describe criminals like Fagin who trained children as thieves ("Children's Friend" 156).

*Cents*, which is narrated in graphic detail and with devastating immediacy by the thirteen-year-old orphan Azure.<sup>24</sup> This is not to suggest that *Boy Called Twist* fails because of the ameliorative optimism that coincides with its darker vision of post-apartheid Cape Town. Rather, what interests me here is how the film, in updating these elements already present in the Dickens novel to tell a story familiarly New South African for its entertainment value and mass appeal also, in its re-configuration of place, time and characters, simultaneously but not necessarily self-consciously opens a door into the shadowy *mise en abyme* of the old South Africa, and of Victorian Cape Town, with its imbricated histories of settler colonialism and apartheid, and the economies of slave and indentured labour that sustained them.

In this resolutely contemporary retelling of *Oliver Twist*, these histories are never directly invoked, but like uncanny doubles they haunt the story of Twist's journey towards discovering his own family history, which the film also overtly inscribes as a recovered Muslim genealogy intrinsically of the Cape, and specifically located in the Malay Quarter of the city where Mr Bassedien lives. This location with its brightly painted vernacular cottages has become a visual cliché in films made for the tourist market, but in *Boy Called Twist* this setting also potentially functions as 'screened memory' – to appropriate and literalise Freud's notion of the 'screen memory' for the way in which this backdrop visually registers Twist's origin from a genealogy of slavery and emancipation for viewers familiar with the history of this location.

One aspect of this history emerges from the film's reference to the use of child labour on Western Cape wine and fruit farms during apartheid, a legacy of colonial slavery and indentured labour, which, the portrayal of Twist's and other orphans' 'placement' on farms suggests, is still entrenched in the post-apartheid child welfare system and continues even under the rainbow of the new nation. Yet, in this, it unwittingly 'screens' another spectral history, imbricated with the history of slavery and emancipation, which ties Victorian Cape Town to the colonial metropolis, one hinted at in the novel when Monks, Oliver's villainous half-brother who obsessively pursues the child's corruption, exhorts Fagin to make Oliver "a sneaking, snivelling pickpocket," with the intention of getting "him convicted, and sent safely out of the kingdom; perhaps for life" (*Oliver Twist* 178). Concurrent with the transportation of convicted felons, including women and children, to Australia, but less well remembered because more invisible, the British government sought to rid London of its hundreds of feral

---

<sup>24</sup> The novel was first published in 2000 and won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 2001 for the best debut novel in the African region. Duiker based the book on his own experiences while living in Cape Town. He died in 2005 at the age of 30.

children by sending them off to the Cape Colony, which, in the 1830s, faced the anticipated disruption of their slave-driven labour force on the eve of “imperial emancipation legislation” (Bradlow, “Children’s” 174). Employers looked about them for an alternative, more easily exploitable workforce, which they found with the assistance of the Children’s Friend Society at the Cape of Good Hope, a society typical of “nineteenth-century England’s preoccupation with philanthropy and profit,” which, as Edna Bradlow points out, undertook to transport delinquent boys from London’s slums and workhouses to the Cape as “the best way of supplying free labour while solving the problem of the labour glut (‘the crowded table’) in the mother country” (158). The shiploads of boys who arrived at the Cape “perceived themselves as chattels, disposed of at a ‘white cattle market’,” and their employers treated them as though they were slaves, exploiting them shamelessly, as Bradlow discovered in her reading of archival material – newspaper reports, letters and court records. Moreover, as she also learnt from accounts of the attitudes of these employers, “once a white performed menial work in the company of black folk he or she ceased to belong to the ‘aristocracy of skin’” (176). However, it is more than likely that the family lines unspooling from these children’s lives, even if they remained working-class, were reinstated to this ‘aristocracy of skin’ under the protection of the rule of apartheid.

The quite different history of class mobility that is at the heart of *Boy Called Twist*’s restoration of the orphan’s Muslim genealogy located in Cape Town’s Malay Quarter, however, paradoxically coincided with political disenfranchisement under the racist colonial and apartheid dispensations. In his article on “Black Ethnicities, Communities and Political Expression in Late Victorian Cape Town,” Vivian Bickford-Smith explains that, by the 1870s, “Cape Town’s Malays were [...] ex-slaves or their descendents” who were predominantly also Muslim, their “[c]onversion to Islam” giving them “a sense of psychological ‘self-ownership’” and also providing “material support for the poor and social status for the wealthier which may have been denied to them by bourgeois white exclusiveness” (445-6). The term “Malay” was increasingly used by whites to refer to all Muslims, regardless of their ancestry, but it was also, as Bickford-Smith points out, “adopted by numbers of people so categorized to describe themselves, at least in their dealings with whites.” A distinctive Cape Malay ethnicity had by this time been established, visibly Muslim in its religious practices, “distinctive dress, education in Arabic and culinary and medical practices,” and underpinned by “occupational ties” – “small shopkeepers, fruit vendors, tradesmen, coachmen’ as well as fishermen, artisans and a handful of professionals” – which was “concentrated in [what was then known as] District One and [...] on the slopes



of Signal Hill, an area that became known as the Malay Quarter” (446). The small western-educated and largely middle-class élite could at that time qualify for the vote and were politically active and outspoken in the press in their support of a non-racial Cape constitution and equality before the law, a position strongly informed by emancipation (453). However, their support of white politicians and of the British against the Boers did little to help them achieve their political goals.

This history intersects with the events being played out at Rhodes’s Great Granary on the neighbouring slopes of Table Mountain portrayed in Harries’s *Manly Pursuits*. During the Jameson Raid, which “polarized white politics at the Cape,” black people in the Cape Colony supported the British with the view to greater political franchise, and, as Bickford-Smith points out, “[a]t the 1898 elections, under pressure from the Kimberly B Branch [the Coloured branch of the pro-British South African League], Rhodes changed his election platform from ‘equal rights for all whites’ to ‘equal rights for all civilized men’ south of the Zambezi” (458). A perennial feature of Cape politics from the colonial period to the present, this cynical manipulation of racial categorisation by a politician turned on the term “Cape Coloured” which was at the time “increasingly adopted as a self-descriptive ethnic label by people who were not accepted as white and who did not think of themselves as Natives or African” (458).

In its geographical and temporal transposition of Dickens’s story from Victorian London to post-apartheid Cape Town, haunted as this Mother City remains by her colonial and apartheid pasts, and by making the Malay Quarter or Bo-Kaap the place of Twist’s origin and home-coming, Greene’s film construes a family romance which, although essentially true to Dickens’s one of a recovered middle-classness, also, simultaneously, adds layers of complexity to it by making Oliver/Twist a Muslim boy saved from the streets of post-apartheid Cape Town, indifferent mother to increasing numbers of street children who uncannily resemble their Dickensian counterparts, but who are, predominantly, not white. By reading these traces of Cape Colony history in the film as ‘screened memory’ and pursuing them like the images in a recurring dream one is thus led through the unfolding of association into the “dark chamber” of slavery which Yvette Christiansë’s *Unconfessed* compels us to enter. However, unlike Harries’s references to Schreiner’s *Trooper Peter Halket* and its frontispiece photograph in *Manly Pursuits* which explicitly invite a reading of British colonial atrocity and founding violence in relation to Rhodes’s settling at Groote Schuur, Greene’s employment of the Malay Quarter is not self-consciously invested in the memory work I impute to it in my reading. Moreover, the ancestral claims made by the genealogy it

uncovers as family romance are not those in which Greene is personally invested, although, as a white South African, he is nevertheless implicated in the history within which it is embedded. In this, the South African film differs from Harries's novel which, shuttling as it does between Victorian Cape Town and Oxford, may be said to register, implicitly, the split affiliations and locations of post-settler white South African Englishness – according to the novel's note on the author, Harries "was born and educated in Cape Town," but she moved to England when "she became involved in the anti-apartheid movement" (n.pag.).

In their different ways, then, both the South African film-maker and novelist thus appear to avoid tying their respective projects explicitly to recovery of a particular settler ancestor figure, although both Rhodes and Schreiner may be said to operate, at least potentially, as such opposing 'parental' figures in *Manly Pursuits*. Here, too, however, Harries's metafictional play with historiography queers the pitch, as her use of the following excerpt from Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* as one of the epigraphs to the novel – the other is from Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* – shows:

Generally, the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their places in nature, will leave most progeny. But in many cases, victory depends not on general vigour, but on having special weapons, confined to the male sex. A hornless stag or spurless cock would have a poor chance of leaving offspring. (n.pag.)

Suggestively framing the novel's portrayal of Rhodes with its imputation of male impotence as analogous with British imperial failure to sustain its genealogical hold on the colony by "leav[ing] most progeny," this epigraph also anticipates the fate of the Great Granary, which, when Rhodes died on 26 March 1902 with no male heir incumbent, "had been bequeathed to prime ministers of a non-existent federated South Africa," none of whom were until 31 May 1910, when the Union of South Africa was signed into being, "*ex officio*, entitled to live there and the house therefore stood empty for some time after Rhodes's death" (Simons 28). The first Union prime minister to move into Groote Schuur was the Afrikaner General Louis Botha with his wife and five children, but, according to Phillida Brooke Simons, "there was one room that Mrs Botha kept resolutely locked. This was Rhodes's bedroom, a place that she regarded as so private and so imbued with his singular personality that it would be an impertinence to allow strangers to enter it" (29).

It is this bedroom that Harries's narrator, Wills, summoned there by the Colossus, describes as "a great net of latticed glass and wood, flung out to capture as much of the mountain view as possible" (82). From its windows,

[t]he eye naturally travels upwards, from the wide stone stairway that cuts through the geometry of the Dutch garden, through the terraced lawns and crescent of hydrangeas, to the pine-forested foothills wherein graze zebra, llamas, fallow deer and kangaroo in apparent harmony, and finally up the purple rock-faces of the central mountain, untouched, as yet, by my master's hand.

The heart of Empire, "[m]ore of an office than a bedroom" (83), its "whitewashed walls" are "adorned" with "flags, firearms and photographs," one of which is "of himself in the company of grinning young men, inscribed *The Conqueror of Matabeleland*." Built "twice," as Wills emphasises in parenthesis, "on the ruins of an old barn that stored the First Settlers' crops," as if it "gives you some sort of sacred power – a mantle of belonging," by Rhodes, "a vicar's son from some provincial market town in England, with plans to ruin and subjugate the descendents of those very Settlers he admires so much" (4), Groote Schuur is "a museum piece" rather than "a home," "a collection of items and styles [...] a house on show" (306).<sup>25</sup> Rhodes's bedroom is the repository of secret histories – its "collection of little treasures" (85), as Rhodes describes the contents of his "small safe," opening up associatively to "Wilde's story [...] [a]bout the nightingale and the rose," and leading to Rhodes's confession, "I identify with Wilde in a number of ways." More openly displayed, registering the historical strata upon which this estate is built, are "an old-fashioned blunderbuss, evidently taken from the heart of an oak tree on the estate, hung above some links of an ancient Arab slave chain" (84), and various photographs and etchings commemorating the life of "the richest man in Southern Africa" (85).

---

<sup>25</sup> The commander of the first Dutch settlers at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck, had had three granaries built on the "De Ronden Doorn Bosjen" (now Rondebosch) site where, in 1656, he had order "a quarter of a morgen (0.21 hectares) of virgin fynbos to be ploughed and sown with wheat, rice and oats" (Simons 9). His journal entry notes that the first granary, which was to become De Schuur and later De Groote Schuur, should be "large enough to ensure adequate storage not only for the grain, but also for the tithes in kind that the farmers were obliged to deliver to the Company." Phillida Brooke Simons's coffee table book on Groote Schuur, with photographs by Alain Proust, maps its history, as the subtitle indicates, from *Great Granary to Stately Home*. One small anecdote in this history brings Lady Anne Barnard, the settler ancestor figure discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, into this "dwelling house," owned at the time by Johannes Pieter Baumgardt, whose wife, "Johanna, made a point of cultivating 'the right people', calling on Lady Anne Barnard as soon as that shrewd observer and critic of Cape society arrived from England on 4 May 1797," shortly after which "the Barnards dined with them," Lady Anne subsequently describing their hospitality as "the best of any to be found at the Cape" (9).

Through Wills's descriptions of the house and estate, the novel extends its critique of the colonial project as not only devastating to indigenous peoples but also to the plants and animals of their colonised countries, harvested and hunted to near extinction, but also displaced and eradicated by the importation of plants and animals from other, often also colonised locales. Little impressed, at first, he describes the house as “[a]ll teak and whitewash, flags and firearms, and a bath eight feet long hollowed from a slab of granite”; “great dark rooms, inhaling the bitter aroma of tropical hardwoods (six shiploads brought in from the East Indies) just because he wants historical continuity” (4). Moreover, “like some sort of Capability Brown of the Cape, grooming the mountainside to look like the gardens of a stately home,” Rhodes had replaced the “natural habitat of the mountain,” its “scrubby fynbos – the odd thorn bush throwing out a torrent of hot perfume; flowerheads that sprout fur and feathers instead of petals; lilies that burst into bloom only after a savage mountain fire; and silver trees with leaves like daggers” (5), with “dark forests,” the “pine plantation” “resembl[ing] the inky depths of the *Schwarzwald*” (35).

Wills's part in this ostentatious endeavour – which includes the importation of a variety of exotic animals, including lions and giraffes, to the estate – is to bring his “nervous British birds” (4) to sing to the ailing Rhodes, who superstitiously believes that it will cure him. Rhodes introduces Wills to the company at a Great Granary dinner as having

‘brought with him some two-hundred songbirds – nightingales, blackbirds, thrushes – from the mother country [...] to be released from their cages into the forests surrounding the house, and there they will fill the air with the glorious sounds of the English countryside which we all know and love.’ (214)

The point is, of course, that most of the birds die and that those that survive do not sing, Rhodes having changed his instructions that the “cargo of songbirds that would leave Southampton in time for the Cape Town October spring” would instead leave in April to arrive at the Cape in autumn, when “all mating would cease and there would consequently be no birdsong for the nameless millionaire who required it so urgently” (7). Compromised by the public exposure of his experiments on songbirds at Oxford by anti-vivisectionists, followed by a nervous breakdown, Wills is in no position to negotiate, and sets off for the Cape on a project doomed to failure, the impact of which one might consider negligible when compared with the devastation wrought by men like Selous and Challenger, whom Kipling

confronts with the question: “And would you not say that a man like yourself has done untold damage to the indigenous wildlife of Africa, to say nothing of its social structures?” (272).<sup>26</sup>

In the conversation prior to this question, the big-game hunter’s paean to the gun, by which he claims to be “‘possessed’,” gives way to nostalgia: “‘Even twenty years ago,’ he says, ‘Africa was still the *terra incognita* where we Europeans might at last come to know ourselves’” (271). This exchange, taking place as it does in Rhodes’s Great Granary at the turn of the century, captures exactly the conditions which, according to Veracini, will in their achievement consolidate “a triumphant settler colonial circumstance” (*Settler Colonialism* 22). Although the Cape at this point had not “ceased to be a dependency of a colonising metropole,” it had to a great extent “tamed the surrounding ‘wilderness’” and largely “extinguished indigenous autonomy,” gradually working towards the “Europeanisation and indigenisation” which, Veracini argues, “respond to the complementary needs of transforming the environment to suit the colonising project and of renewing the settler in order to suit the environment” (22). The “‘changes in the land’” that necessarily coincide with Rhodes’s establishment of his showpiece home and its surrounding garden might thus be read metonymically as “correspond[ing] with the making of a ‘new man’,” because “settler colonial traditions are particularly concerned with the possibility of regenerated manhood” (22-23) and “mobilises peoples in the teleological expectation of irreversible transformation” (99).

This transformation can only be fully achieved when the settler abandons the dream of a return to the motherland. In both the Australian novels discussed in this chapter the possibility of return features as a misplaced obsession that cannot be sustained in the face of Mother England’s abandonment of the criminal transported to the penal colony. What is demanded here is a renegotiation of what it means to be English achieved through a process of transformative triangulation that places the self in a sustained relation to both the place of origin and the place of settlement simultaneously. Reading Said’s essay on *Great Expectations*, Carey was, for example, struck by the notion of a displaced and circumscribed Englishness imposed on the transported convict whose punishment dictates that he never return to England, his home and motherland, while he yet inhabits a place ostensibly English,

---

<sup>26</sup> The starlings Rhodes imported have over the years flourished in South Africa and are by some considered a pest. One of the most delightful moments in the novel is when Wills hears from a distance “the blissful music of the English countryside” emanating from the Great Granary aviaries, only to find “[t]he entire clamour tumbled from the cage of the starlings who had, to the last bird, given up their vow of silence and were simultaneously exercising their syringes not so much in song as in unadulterated mimicry!” (263, 264).

but which for him can never be home, compelling him thus in spite of the danger it entails to return to England to see the ‘son’ he had made a gentleman:

But I also started to think about what Magwitch was doing, which informed what Jack Maggs later does. It seemed to me: here’s this guy; he’s cast out from his mother country; he presumably suffers terribly in the place that he’s sent; he makes money there; he’s a free man; he has a conditional pardon so he can live there forever in comfort – but what does he want to do? He wants to go home to England and live with this replica, this English gentleman that he has somehow manufactured – a new member of the class that’s abused him in the first place. (“Powells” n.pag.)

It is this perversely self-destructive and delusional homing instinct that Carey makes the heart of his retelling of Magwitch’s story, because, he notes in an interview, “*Great Expectations* is not only a great work of English literature; it is (to an Australian) also a way in which the English have colonized our ways of seeing ourselves. It is a great novel, but it is also, in another way, a prison. *Jack Maggs* is an attempt to break open the prison and to imaginatively reconcile with the gaoler” (“Randomhouse” n.pag.).

In undertaking this jailbreak from the prison-house of the colonial canon as the preamble to a reconciliation with it, Carey’s novel embarks on a project of restoration, but in reverse, because Maggs’s return to England is imagined as a journey of recovery of a brick-and-mortar Englishness represented by the London houses he remembers, owns, enters and, finally, repossesses as Australian when he returns there a free man to settle in “the grand mansion on Supper Creek Road, whose construction [Mercy] so pugnaciously oversaw and whose servants she so meticulously supervised” (Jack Maggs 462). He thus lives out the thwarted promise of Magwitch’s sacrificed Australian life, a trajectory of settlement Carey’s novel condenses in a few pages at closure, but which Kate Grenville in *The Secret River* details as one in which it is precisely the shift to being the owner of property and the employer of servants that constitutes the founding of a new class of colonial Englishness, premised as it also is on the displacement and eradication of indigenous people.

For William Thornhill, settlement starts with the sensation that he is “the only man on earth [...] Adam in Paradise” in “his own new-coined world” and that it is “astonishing how little it took to own a piece of the earth” (138). He claims the piece of land he perceives as an extension of his own body – when he first sees it, “[h]e almost laughed aloud, seeing it as just the shape of his own thumb, nail and knuckle and all” and he immediately names it “Thornhill’s Point” (110) – by “dragging his heel across the dirt four times, line to line. The



straight lines and the square they made were like nothing else there and changed everything. Now there was a place where a man had laid his mark over the face of the land” (138). Having settled his family on this piece of land does not, however, Grenville shows, root him in it as much as does the sense of ownership, of being the master of it, achieved when he takes on transported criminals to work for him as servants, one of whom happens to be a man he had known in London, but who he and his wife – who tell him to call her “*Mrs Thornhill*” – now treats as an inferior (183). What Thornhill realises – and it is Grenville’s use of focalisation which secures the novel’s most remarkable moments of insight into the false consciousness that marks settler identity when the good man’s conscience is overridden – is that the “pleasure they had both taken in playing the game of master and servant, in their early days in Sidney,” when Sal was ostensibly his ‘master’ into whose care he had been given, “[t]his business with Dan was another kind of pleasure altogether, and no game” (183).

At first, he is surprised at his own conduct because “he had not known that he had it in him to be a tyrant,” but this soon gives way to an undiluted relishing of his newly achieved status as “a gentleman” and landowner, at leisure, overseeing his labouring servant:

He felt something swell inside him like a yawn welling up from the belly. *Strolling*. That was the word. He was strolling, and carrying nothing more backbreaking than this little spray of leaves. Strolling as a gentleman might form the Old Swan to Temple Stairs, jingling the coins in his pocket and waiting for the watermen to beg for his custom. (187)

It does not take long for Thornfield to inhabit this role completely and, following the attack on Blackwood’s place, there is no possibility of return, the novel seems to suggest, his transformation, and his wife’s, complete and also absurd in its pretensions: “For newcomers, William Thornhill was something of a king. [...] His wife had become something of a queen” (328). The “fine stone house” they had built was more properly referred to as “a villa” because “[t]he word had a tone about it that Thornfield liked, even though it came awkwardly to his tongue.” And yet, the unease remains, even at the novel’s closure, like the rock carving of the fish made by the indigenous people whose land he had appropriated and on which he had built his own house, which “was not quite what Thornhill had pictured. Something was wrong with the way the pieces fitted together” (329) and “[h]e could not understand why it did not feel like triumph” (349).

Symbolic of the dry heart of settlement, its travesty, is Sal’s walled English garden: “That wall – higher than a man, and with only one gate in its perimeter – kept out everything

except what was invited in” and in it “the ground had been cleared” for a “bleak rectangle” in which “[d]affodils and roses were planted” (332), and “real trees [...] with proper leaves that fell off in the autumn” (333):

In spite of her care the garden did not thrive. The roses never put their roots down. They clung to life, but were little more than stalk. The daffodils were planted but no trace of them was ever seen again. [...] Of the two dozen poplars they had planted, most became nothing more than twigs after a few weeks. Sal could not bear to pull them out of the ground. When the wind blew, the corpses swivelled loose in the ground in a parody of life. (333-34)

The ancestral plot falters absolutely at this point of (en)closure and we are compelled to return to Farber’s room with its dripping, bloody wax roses, its encroaching aloe forests, and the strange desuetude of the woman whose body has become bewildered ground.



## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### Getting Under the Skin of Settler Colonialism

---

Begin, though, not with a continent or a country or a house, but with the geography closest in – the body.

Adrienne Rich – “Notes Toward a Politics of Location” (212)

The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The functions of its different parts and their relations afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body.

Mary Douglas – *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (115)

Emma: [...] I saw a mark ... on the back of his neck ... a birthmark – oval about the size of ... a small leech. I could not help looking at it ... I could not keep my eyes off it. It must be a sign.

Reza de Wet – *A Worm in the Bud* (23)

[T]here is no way of understanding political identities and destinies without letting fantasy into the frame. [...] [F]antasy – far from being the antagonist of public, social, being – plays a central, constitutive role in the modern world of states and nations. [...] Like blood, fantasy is thicker than water, all too solid – *contra* another of fantasy’s more familiar glosses as ungrounded supposition, lacking in foundation, not solid enough.

Jacqueline Rose – *States of Fantasy* (4-5)

How then does the human subject imagine a different reality that haunts the history of the present as a powerful absence?

R. Radhakrishnan – *History, the Human, and the World Between* (14)



In this concluding chapter of the thesis, I circle back to its beginning and my discussion of the (dis)articulations of metaphor and embodiment in relation to Farber’s *Dis-Location / Re-Location* in Chapter 2 so as to home in on the sustained, multivalent presence of the body in the projects of restorying and restoration of settler colonial histories discussed in the study, which thus provides a point of convergence for its various navigational trajectories, albeit one that resists closure because of its volatility as “a force to be reckoned with” (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* 120). My reading of these textual bodies marked by the history of nineteenth-century British settler colonialism and its afterlives has been informed throughout by Grosz’s argument that “[i]t is not simply that the body is represented in a variety of ways according to historical, social and cultural exigencies while it remains basically the same; these factors actively produce the body as a body of a determinate type” (x). In some chapters, the body

moved to the foreground of the discussion and in others it retreated into the background, but here I narrow the focus on it considerably to achieve a close-up look at its surface, the skin, as “a place of encounter” (Benthien 2) by starting with a selection of examples from texts discussed in previous chapters before turning to De Wet’s *A Worm in the Bud*, Campion’s *The Piano* and Ward’s *River Queen* in which the conjoined dimensions of the staged visual narratives of Farber’s photographed and videoed performances are dispersed more conventionally in drama and film. The South African play is apposite here because in it the psychic abrasions of contact are skin-manifest as the stigmata of encounter between Englishwoman and Boer – a scenario that enlarges the parameters of Pratt’s “contact zone” to include the variable of interactions between settler groupings representative of different European colonial interests competing for ascendancy and primacy of tenure through which to claim an ‘authentic’ indigeneity. Referencing distinct moments in the history of Aotearoa New Zealand, the two films foreground contact between settlers and indigenous people, an encounter largely absent from texts discussed in the thesis, and they moreover register the influence of Maori presence as marked in tattoos on the settler’s white skin, which is why they are apt here. In *River Queen*, skin is also breached in the act of reciprocal desire between two adolescents, the settler protagonist’s body inseminated by her Maori lover to incubate the love-child who embodies the fantasy of salvage at the heart of the new ‘family romance’ with which the film ends, a configuration similarly present in *The Piano*’s closing scenes. By focusing my own closing discussion on these moments of cinematic closure and their articulations and disarticulations of ‘family’ and ‘romance’, I come back to my preoccupation with the ethics of love and Irigaray’s notion of “proximate distance.” However, these texts are not treated as culminating destinations but are, instead, like the other texts read here, points of departure inviting return.

In the discursive domain of contemporary politics, the “figural analogy between the human body and the community” which originated in Classical Greek thought and later found expression in the Medieval image of ‘the body politic’ has been reduced to “banality” in its use as a “frequent, if now faded, metaphor,” as Cavarero points out (*Stately Bodies* ix). But, even in its banality, this “relationship between the body and politics” particular to Western thinking remains a “strange” one (vii), because inherent in it is the dichotomising move that establishes ‘politics’ as the realm of the rational in opposition to “the murky licentiousness of bodies and their regime of mere biological necessity” on which is premised the expulsion of the body from the “founding categories” of the polis (viii). That these categories are specifically gendered as male and female, and marked by the culture-nature binary, is made

overt in, for example, the Victorian middle-class construct of separate spheres – the male space of public endeavour and the female space of private domesticity.<sup>1</sup> Although much rehearsed in feminist thought, I here reintroduce it via Cavarero’s summary to open up a view onto the mimics of the settler body ‘gone native’ and its failed or achieved hybridities. Since the “body banished by politics” is both “substantially female” and as such “terrifying,” Cavarero argues,

[i]n thinking of the body as woman and woman as body, the polis founded upon the male synthesizes within a single idea everything it considers to be its dreaded other. This other then corresponds to whatever the polis has already liquidated and conquered. Rooted in the female, corporeality is represented as the prelogical stage of a life that is still a blind end in itself. It is thus the precinct of that animal immediacy – naturally unregulated, cannibalistic, and incestuous – from which the civilized community of men takes an unbridgeable distance of polar negation. (ix)

However, uncannily, “through metaphor, the body returns to politics, indeed illustrating and sanctioning political organization in images of a ‘body politic’ complete with head, heart, organs, and members” (vii), thus “retriev[ing] the body as the shaping metaphor of political order” (viii). Piling paradox upon paradox, the returned metaphorised body “which politics welcomes” to the city has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis, because, unlike the “banished” female body, “uncontrolled, symbiotic, and obscure,” it “is a male body, largely static and bloodless, whose nature has been tamed to the commands of an overbearing reason that determines its functioning and structure” (x). This figure of ‘the body politic’ undergoes further transformations consequent on the use to which it is put in different historical contexts and by different political dispensations, the variables of which Cavarero traces in her exploration of the banished female body.

In the settler colonial contexts with which this thesis concerns itself, the ‘body politic’ as metaphorical construct expands into the figure of the late-imperial Colossus embodied by Rhodes, confidently bestriding the African continent from the Cape to Cairo, laying claim to land for settler representatives of Victorian Britannia.<sup>2</sup> This figure, in its hyperbolic excess of imperial triumphalism, is also somewhat absurd, and as a political cartoon registers incipient anxieties about England’s colonial reach into Africa. Already at the time of the Crystal Palace

---

<sup>1</sup> A particularly useful overview of shifts in thinking about these ‘separate spheres’ is Amanda Vickery’s “Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronologies of English Women’s History.”

<sup>2</sup> I here refer to the political cartoon of Rhodes as the colonial version of the ancient Greek statue of the Colossus of Rhodes, stretching a telegraph wire from the Cape to Cairo, which appeared in *Punch* on 10 December 1892, drawn by Edward Linley Sambourne.

Great Exhibition in 1851, however, another type of anxiety about imperial expansionism had begun to assert itself as coincident with anxieties about the potential loss of Empire's holdings abroad, represented by the figure of Mrs Jellyby and her unruly brood of children in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-53), whose philanthropic endeavours are focussed on settling "from a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives as Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger" (53), while her domestic duties as a middle-class mother are flamboyantly neglected. The point being made is that charity should start at home, in England itself, because, as Timothy Carens points out, "Mrs Jellyby at once symbolizes the negligent middle-class mother and Britannia astray, a motherland who seeks to nurture the benighted children of the tropics before attending to her own 'neglected and untaught children'" (86). In a letter, Dickens is emphatic in his view that "the home and the foreign, are *not* conducted with an equal hand; and that the home claim is by far the stronger and the more pressing of the two"; "before it wanders elsewhere," he asserts, "a great commercial country" like England should rather spend its money on "the utter removal of neglected and untaught children from its streets" (in Carens 85). It is a concern evident in his portrayal of desperate poverty as the cause of children's vulnerability to criminal exploitation, as I point out in Chapter 4 in my discussion of Greene's and Carey's appropriations of *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*, in which the city or country, configured as bad mother, carries the allegorical burden of domestic neglect and abandonment, a figure *Jack Maggs's* Ma Britten embodies.

In his novel, Carey also picks up on and exploits another pervasive concern that starts to express itself at this point in the figure of Dickens's returned transported criminal, Magwitch, who brings with him the possibility of contamination from the colonies abroad, but who at the same time solicits pity to coincide with fear, and hence causes the ambivalence that feeds anxiety, associated with other colonial outcasts and scapegoats like the white creole Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, whose body carries the burden of Empire's legacy of slavery on its West Indian plantations. Similarly attuned to the discords in colonial genealogy, Jean Rhys had anticipated Carey's postcolonial recovery of Magwitch as ancestor by thirty years with her recovery of Bertha Mason in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which she makes apparent how in Brontë's novel "the narrative function of the Creole stereotype is also to disassociate a pure English race from its corrupt West Indian line," as Jenny Sharpe points out (46). Female, mad and sexually profligate, Bertha's body is consistently marked by her association with colonial slavery as black and animal in *Jane Eyre's* narrative, and as such, one might argue, it is exemplary of the body expelled from the polis as identified by



Cavarero. In this case, however, the body is returned home and banished to the attic of the imperial metropolis where it is a wilfully forgotten yet volatile secret, because the civilising mission of enlightened colonialism which ostensibly dissociates itself from the dehumanisation of slavery in fact relies on it to sustain the home-ground of British estates like Rochester's Thornfield and Jane Austen's Mansfield Park.<sup>3</sup> What is played out on Bertha's body is the issue of racial purity and colonial contamination through miscegenation, because, as Sharpe explains, "[d]ue to the long history of racial mixing in Jamaica, the scandal the creole represented to the British was the possibility of a white person who was not racially pure," and, although Bertha is "a member of the white-identified planter class," she is "perhaps more threatening than a free person of color, for she shows that 'whiteness' alone is not the sign of racial purity" (46).<sup>4</sup> It is an anxiety also registered in the figure of the imperial adventurer who, with his manliness rejuvenated by his experiences abroad in the colonies, returns home but retains, even if only as a trace, the marks of his contact with that other world and its temptations, as is the case for Walter Hartright in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860), and which in neo-Victorian mode A. S. Byatt reconfigures in the character of William Adamson in her novella *Morpho Eugenia* (1994).

In *Bleak House*, with the noticeably growing dirtiness of the Jellyby children due to their mother's neglect, the encroaching stain of Africa, for example, starts to seep into the fabric of English middle-class domesticity in a reversal of her 'enlightening' philanthropic efforts, hinting at the permeability of the boundaries between metropolis and colony, and here registering as bodily transformation in the darkening skins of Mother England's children. As Anne McClintock has shown in her discussion of Victorian advertisements for Pears' Soap in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, "the peculiarly intense preoccupation with rigid boundaries" of the Victorian middle class plays out in "imperial

---

<sup>3</sup> Said in his essay "Jane Austen and Empire" – in *Culture and Imperialism* – first highlighted this relationship between England and its West Indian colonies, registered by Fanny Price's reported question about slavery to her uncle, Sir Thomas Bertram, after his return from his estate in Antigua. Interestingly, Canadian film director Patricia Rozema, who acknowledges Said's influence in an interview with Hiba Moussa, makes this off-the-page world overtly present on screen in her adaptation of the novel. Said's essay on Dickens in the same volume similarly influenced Carey's decision to write *Jack Maggs*.

<sup>4</sup> Sharpe's explanation of how the term 'creole' was used at the time situates Bertha in relation to debates about colonialism and racial intermixing. She writes: "In Jamaica, the term creole may have designated all native-born population (both of African and European origin), but in England it was a derogatory name for the West Indian sugar plantocracy. *Jane Eyre* is a novel of the 1840s, a time when slavery was so unpopular that only those who directly benefited from it continued to defend it. Bertha Mason is a female version of the 'immoral West Indian planter', a literary stereotype that, following the abolition of the African slave trade, was commonly invoked as 'a useful shorthand for depravity'. [...] The particular form of Bertha's insanity bears the signs of an idle plantocracy in the state of decline. Since the self-indulgence of the planter class was considered responsible for feeding its vices, it is not madness that is the cause of Bertha's moral degeneration but rather the other way around – her 'excesses' have strained her miniscule mind to the point of unhinging it" (45-6).

fiction and commodity kitsch, [in which] boundary objects and liminal scenes recur ritualistically” and are associated with bodily hygiene and domesticity that register metonymically as white skin (33):

As colonials traveled back and forth across the thresholds of their known world, crisis and boundary confusion were warded off and contained by fetishes, absolution rituals and liminal scenes. Soap and cleaning rituals became central to the demarcation of body boundaries and the policing of social hierarchies.

If colonial contamination is feared to be so insidious that it can breach even the ocean to reach back to England, as Dickens’s portrayal of the dirty Jellyby children suggests, then up close its powers to mark the English body are to be treated with extreme caution and prophylactic care, again as Dickens implies in *Bleak House* with his portrayal of Doctor Allan Woodcourt, who is described as “[a] brown sunburnt gentleman” (710), stained by his imperial sojourn. In this character, who is a physician, Victorian ideas about masculinity, imperial endeavour and hygiene converge, because, although it was necessary for the Englishman to “acquire the very sort of experience and authority needed at home through imperial adventure and military service,” as Carens points out (87), it is best, Dickens makes clear, to return home to work in “the great wilderness” of London, as Woodcourt does, and not to risk going back to the colonies (*Bleak House* 748). Tending to the ailing bodies of Mother England’s impoverished and abandoned children, Woodcourt moreover embodies those doctrines and practices of personal and social hygiene McClintock sees as operating at the boundaries between the classes as a form of *cordón sanitaire* (33). However, in his case it fails, because contamination is carried across class boundaries by Jo, the crossing sweeper he takes care of, a boy who is constantly told to “move on” (*Bleak House* 308) and who inadvertently carries the small pox to the woman Woodcourt will eventually marry, the female protagonist Esther Summerson, whose face is ravaged by it.

Unlike the sojourner who returns home to dilute the effects of the colony by becoming again convincingly domestic and English, and white, the settler is by definition the one who must stay, clear a space, dig in, and put down roots, and through this process of transplantation and home-country-making find ways to secure the territorial boundaries of English identity, blazoned by skin like a flag hoisted. In the colony, the body of the settler, generally considered male, now stands in for the body politic of the colonising nation, both flesh and transfigured into metaphor and symbol, its epidermal perimeter bristling with

significance. As the skin of the imperial body politic thus stretches to accommodate its colonies, it becomes increasingly more vulnerable to infection, more porous, and as boundary more precarious. While the settler's bodily margins in this way symbolically represent the margins of Empire, as a body he also inhabits the margins of Empire, anxiously exposed to contact and encounter with the indigenous people whose presence he must somehow negotiate as manifest absence.

Already at its moment of origin in Greek thought where it coincides with questions about the nature and location of the soul, the notion of a body politic seems implicitly to presuppose the disavowal of indigenous presence upon which colonial settling is premised, because, as Veracini argues, it "is crucially located in Western hermeneutic traditions," with "Plato, for example, refer[ing] to the relationship between body and soul as 'colonisation': *katoikizein* (specifically the act of settling a colony)," which implies that "the soul descends into an inanimate body like settlers begin inhabiting a place" (*Settler Colonialism* 93). As a "founding metaphor" it both confirms the settlers' belief that "they are the first real inhabitants of the place they settle" and implies that,

if colonisation and settlement are an appropriate metaphor to describe the relationship between soul and body, the reverse is also true, and the soul's proprietary command over the bodily matters that is typical of Western explanatory systems is mirrored by a settler determination to possess and dominate a place. More importantly, confirming a powerful drive towards disavowal, there are no indigenous people in Plato's metaphor; settler colonisers see no indigenous person as they proceed to inhabit the land. (93)

And yet they are indisputably, bodily there, which accounts for the further intensification of anxieties about physical proximity and the consequent fears of miscegenation, the erotic breaching of bodily boundaries between settler and 'native' that would result in the absolute erasure of such boundaries in the mixing of blood – a transgression made flesh in the newly conceived body of a child, instigating an improvisational segue from the pre-scripted and proscribing harmonics of settler genealogy. "[A]ll margins are dangerous," as Mary Douglas points out, and "[i]f they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered," the implications in this instance being that, if "[a]ny structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins" (*Purity* 121), then the imperial body politic as an idea is put under tremendous pressure at precisely those points of physical contact that play out between its settler representatives and the indigenous peoples whose presence is denied and, paradoxically, also confronted and exploited. At these places, which Pratt terms "contact zones," the encounters

forced by the settler's violent incursions into already inhabited land are not simply those of "conquest and domination" – as the invader's perspective of a "frontier" to be pushed ever further would have it – but are rather "interactive" and "improvisational" (8), which is why they pose such a risk to the settler's representational integrity, since his/her body is potentially receptive and susceptible to influence and hence may incubate unsettling metamorphoses.<sup>5</sup> The embodiment of such fears of irreversible transformation is the cautionary figure of the settler 'gone native', either as a consequence of captivity – white captives frequently choosing to stay with their captors, as in the case of Caroline Perrett, abducted by the Maori in 1879 when she was eight years old, on whom Ward partially based the character of Sarah O'Brien in *River Queen* – or as a freely chosen way of life – as in the fictional example of Blackwood in Grenville's *The Secret River* or, to some extent, George Baines in *The Piano*.<sup>6</sup>

Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton's elaboration on Pratt's term in their conception of "the body-as-contact-zone" is especially pertinent here because they foreground the importance of the body's "capacity as an archive for the pleasures of human experience and the violences of history, colonial or otherwise" (*Bodies* 407). They argue that "[u]nder a variety of social, economic, and political constraints it has exhibited a remarkable flexibility and resilience as both a category and as the *matériel* of history," which is why, "[f]ar from serving as passive slates on which the past has written, bodies have consistently been agents in their encounters with history" (407). As meaning and matter, bodies compel our attention as multivalent and capacious because always inhabiting – and hence participating in place-making – the "indeterminable position" of being "neither – while also being both – the private or the public, self or other, natural or cultural, psychical or social, instinctive or learned, genetically or environmentally determined," which, as Grosz points out, makes the body a "particularly powerful strategic term to upset the frameworks by which these binary pairs are considered" (*Volatile* 23-24).

---

<sup>5</sup> Pratt defines the "contact zone" as "the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (8). She notes that "[a] 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other," and it "treats the relations among colonizer and colonized [...] not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and often within radically asymmetrical relations of power."

<sup>6</sup> This anxiety was registered by Benjamin Franklin with regards to settlers who chose to stay with their 'Indian' captors, as Patrick Brantlinger points out, and by Sir Harry Johnston, administrator of British Central Africa, who wrote, "I have been increasingly struck with the rapidity with which such members of the white race as are not of the best class, can throw over the restraints of civilisation and develop into savages of unbridled lust and abominable cruelty" (in Brantlinger 85).

With the exception of Christiansë's Sila van den Kaap and Greene's *Twist*, the bodies in the texts discussed thus far have by and large been those of settler ancestral figures, imagined from the shifting grounds of the (post)settler colonial locations in relation to which their creators attempt to negotiate a sense of (un)belonging and (dis)identification by returning to the troubling histories from which their settler genealogies originate. In most cases, the "contact zone" imagined is not that within which settler colonists and indigenous peoples encounter one another – Grenville's novels being the exception here – but, rather, one in which trans-historical contact between (post)colonial writer/artist/filmmaker and settler ancestor is configured as potentially transformative – although not necessarily recuperative – of both parties through the project of restorying and restoration. Contact of this nature largely occurs implicitly in the textual encounter between creator and character/historical figure, the notion of "the-body-as-contact-zone" operating in the disfiguring textual play with the foremother's or forefather's body or corpus, for example in Atwood's and Krog's poetry and Carey's and Harries' novels. In Farber's *Dis-Location / Re-Location*, this encounter is explicitly enacted by/as/in the composite body of the protagonist, Leora-Bertha, which is itself the zone of contact made flesh and (home)ground for the hybridising transformation of both (post)settler self and settler other through grafting and implants, as discussed in Chapter 2. I want to return to that body glowing white at the centre of the three performed visual narratives that constitute the installation to look more closely at the skin which invites our gaze with its delicate vulnerability – exaggerated by the hyperbolic metonym of the animal skin corset worn by Leora-Bertha, which at the last is all her bodily remains, a remnant suggestive of ritual flaying.

In her remarkable investigation of "the question of the body surface as the place where identity is formed and assigned" by tracing the historical development of "conceptions and rhetorical patterns that see skin as a boundary and contact surface," Claudia Benthien notes that, "[s]ince the 1970s, a large number of artists, especially women, have been preoccupied with skin," producing "works and performances [that] deal quite concretely with skin as a place of encounter" and in doing so "expand[ing] the genre of self-portrait to encompass their own bodies, bodies moreover, no longer merely represented as likeness but whose very surfaces become a canvas" (2). Farber's work evidently falls into this category of performative self-portraiture, but here I want to pursue the propitious intersections of Benthien's notion of the "skin as a place of encounter" with Ballantyne and Burton's notion of the "body-as-contact-zone" in my turn to the central narrative, "Ties That Bind Her," in *Dis-Location / Re-Location* as the point of departure for my reading of "human skin [as] both

an organic and an imaginary reality” (8) in the focus texts with which I conclude this thesis. In the interview with Klopper, Farber notes that, in contrast to “A Room of Her Own” and “Aloerosa” in which her own sense of displacement is at stake, “Ties That Bind Her” – “in which the protagonist is shown trying to preserve her English cultural heritage” by “inserting a rose cameo into her breast” – deals explicitly with “Bertha Marks’s experience of displacement” (16). Suggesting a less seamless conjoining of artist and foremother, this distinction, however, affords Farber “an intense experience of ‘being Bertha’,” causing her “to feel a deep sense of ‘empathetic unsettlement’ with her” because, as Farber explains, “she is on one level a reflection of my colonial legacies” (18). Staged in the main bedroom of the Sammy Marks Museum where the protagonist places herself in “what was Bertha Marks’s ‘place’, looking into the mirror that once reflected her image,” “Ties That Bind Her” thus enacts the doubled play of empathetic identification as (self)reflection or mirroring, which Farber explicitly asserts by saying that, “[t]herefore, facing my own image from the physical and metaphorical position she had previously occupied, I was able to engage with my past while living it in the present” (in Klopper 27).

This seemingly benign self-(m)other regard is, however, not the whole story, as signalled by “various kinds of scissors, pocket knives, bandages, tins filled with African trade beads, pins, sewing needles and blood-stained balls of cotton wool” (in Klopper 31) on the dressing table, because what is enacted in the place of the foremother and before her mirror takes the form of a painstaking breaching of the skin to insert into it, as if into a pocket for safekeeping, the keepsakes of Englishness – a rose cameo attached to a pearl necklace and choker. For Farber, “the rose is used as a signifier of whiteness and ‘Englishness’” and “the protagonist’s body is intended to represent the quintessential ‘English rose’ onto which the ‘African’ aloe is grafted” in the first and third narratives (in Klopper 18). In “Ties That Bind Her,” the botanical metaphor of trans- and implantation through grafting central to *Dis-Location / Re-Location* is made overtly artificial, however, as its use here brings into play the sub-textual references to aesthetic surgery embedded in all three narratives by making the scenario a claustrophobic feminine space of solipsistic self-preoccupied, self-regarding narcissism in which no contact with an external world is envisaged as it is in the other two narratives.

The single albeit composite body contained in the museum bedroom intensifies one’s awareness of the absence of other bodies from all three visual narratives, which suggests that for Farber’s (post) settler subject, performed as the merged body of artist and foremother, coming to terms with “[her] place within the present moment in postapartheid South Africa”



whilst being bound by the ties of “[her] inherited Eurocentric, particularly Anglo-Saxon, past and the deeply ingrained colonial legacies it carries” (in Klopper 26) is an encounter with the self rather than with others which is necessarily isolating in its introspective withdrawal from contact. This figure is always seen to be working on her own bodily transformation, which in “A Room of Her Own” and “Aloerosa” is metaphorised as botanical hybridity achieved through grafting, a conceit with which Farber brings Homi Bhabha’s theory of hybridity to bear on her own sense of dis-location in post-apartheid South Africa as that of being “in-between.” In the interview with Klopper, Farber explains her interest in hybridity as follows: “I am intrigued by the fact that, like the idea of ‘grafting’, ‘hybridity’ has biological etymology: it was originally used in reference to the offspring of two plants or animals of different species or varieties” (18). She goes on to link it explicitly to Bhabha’s theory of the “third space,” which she sees as “generative and fecund,” quoting Bhabha’s claim that it “enables other positions to emerge ...[,] displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.” For her, “[t]his ‘third space’ allows for unpredictable outcomes to emerge from the interactions of cultures, giving rise to new identity formations,” noting that for Bhabha, “entering this space encourages a perception of difference as ‘neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between’” (18).<sup>7</sup>

But what precisely does this particular “in-between” space look and feel like, considering the emptying out of Leora-Bertha’s body in the final image of “Aloerosa” in which it is suggested that to inhabit the space of hybridity is to be supplanted (the title of the image being “Supplantation”)? One is here reminded of Antony Easthope’s critique that “Bhabha privileges difference over identity and effectively treats hybridity as a transcendental signified”; thus, in “privileging difference, Bhabha invites us to try to live in difference, in a state of pure hybridity, actually in the ‘interstices’,” from which “[w]e are to pose the question of community ‘from the interstitial perspective’ [...] and invited ‘to inhabit an intervening space’,” which, Easthope warns, one should “hesitate before trying” because “what is being recommended is only too like the state of psychosis” (345).<sup>8</sup> Farber, in

---

<sup>7</sup> In “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” (in *The Location of Culture*), Bhabha sets out various aspects of his notion of colonial ‘hybridity’ and ‘mimicry’ as it pertains to the conduct of the colonised in relation to the coloniser. “Hybridity,” he writes, “is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the reevaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination” (112).

<sup>8</sup> Bhabha makes explicit that his notion of ‘hybridity’ does not represent the resolution of dialectical conflict in a

describing Leora-Bertha's "experience of liminal in-between-ness" and increasing bodily desuetude in "A Room of Her Own" and "Aloerosa" in terms of "the Victorian construct of hysteria," appears to celebrate precisely this dispersal of identity, since the poses of "fainting and/or collapsing, losing self-control and/or self-discipline and therefore, also, personal restraint and dignity [...] mimic the release of sublimated desires recorded in Victorian representations of hysterical women," which she sees as a "heightened, transformative, emotional state" analogous to "rapture and the sublime" (in Klopper 19), a now-familiar move in feminist appropriations of the hysteric as transgressive force, and one also fiercely contested as an agential *cul-de-sac*.<sup>9</sup>

In constructing these images, Farber used the nineteenth-century French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot's photographs of hysterics treated at the Sâlpêtrière Hospital in Paris – "a kind of visual iconography of hysteria" at the centre of which are "the *attitudes passionelles* or series of 'passionate gestures' (picturesquely and theatrically mimed by the hysteric) consisting of vivid physical representations of emotional states such as terror, hatred or love" (in Klopper 19). Farber accordingly sees "Aloerosa: Supplantation" – "the final scene in the series" – as the portrayal of an achieved "sense of liberation that simultaneously implies an experience of loss" after Leora-Bertha "finally discards her constricting Victorian corset," which for her represents a "loss of dignity." From this discussion of hysteria, Farber moreover initiates the transitional argument that the "ambivalent emotions" of the hysteric can be compared to Melissa Steyn's "characterisation of the attainment of hybridity, described as a narrative of 'letting go and taking on ... the need to let go of old selves'" in *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be*:

This is the narrative that bespeaks those who are prepared to live closer to the edge, where 'edge' does not signify an abyss, but the transition where familiar and unfamiliar meet ... this position insists that a new self must be negotiated in the infinite spaces between the past and the future, the old and the new, the European and the African, the white and the black. (Steyn in Klopper 19)

But, one is compelled to ask in response, where in the picture is "the African" or "the black" and, moreover, where did "the European" or "the white" disappear to? Because, in spite of

---

neat synthesis (113-14). In contrast, the botanical hybrid, whilst not being one or the other, is nevertheless not in-between but something new – as Farber's composite term "Aloerosa" makes apparent.

<sup>9</sup> There is an interesting interplay between the elements of hybridity and the hysteric's mimicry in Farber's work, which links to my discussion of Irigaray's *mimétisme* as feminine masquerade in Chapter 3, but which I am unable to pursue here. Anne McClintock's insightful comparison in *Imperial Leather* of Bhabha's 'hybridity' and Irigaray's work on feminine mimicry is particularly apposite here (61-65).

Farber's claims of transcendence, the disquieting final image although approximating the empty landscape of the sublime is cluttered by the corset – a remnant of discarded skin, which one might want to read as analogous to the shed skin of a snake signifying growth, or, given Farber's reliance on the botanical meaning of hybridity in the grafting of the aloe into Leora-Bertha's skin, as the last remains of the woman's body now supplanted by the aloe, which would be more congruent with the connotative interplay between the Afrikaans words *vel* (skin) and *veld* (the wild landscape), recalling also Steyn's assertion, quoted by Farber, that "[a] white skin is not a skin that can be shed without losing some blood" (in Klopper 18).

Given that the cutting edge of the blade Leora-Bertha wields in these images, turned as it is on her own skin, is instrumental in the process of self-transformation, whatever the outcome we read into the narrative's denouement, I here return to "Ties That Bind Her," wherein the model of hybridity for an acculturated identity gives way to what I see as the alternative but coinciding model of the palimpsest – which, like the hybrid, has been appropriated by postcolonial theory<sup>10</sup> – because the knife inscribes a different skin-graft/graph on the 'body-in-process' performed in this narrative.<sup>11</sup> The recent prevalence of the palimpsest as a theoretical concept follows on what Sarah Dillon points to as a "consistent process of metaphorization of palimpsests from the mid-nineteenth century (the most prolific period of palimpsest discoveries) to the present day" (243). The first palimpsests were "created from the seventh to fifteenth centuries primarily in the scriptoriums of the great monastic institutions such as Bobbio, Luxeuil, Fleury, Corbie and St Gall" as scripts were written and over-written in a recycling process on calf skin or *vellum* (Dillon 244), a word that locks into the connotative accruals to the Afrikaans words *vel* and *veld* referred to earlier in my discussion of Leora-Bertha's corset and returns me to the white skin of the composite body of the protagonist and its eloquent wounds in "Ties That Bind Her."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Dillon, in the article on which I base my reading of the palimpsest, explains in detail the appropriation of this model by postcolonial theory from the work of Michel Foucault on the necessary coincidence of genealogical and archaeological approaches in the reading of history, which is even more extensively elaborated on by R. Radhakrishnan in *History, the Human, and the World Between*.

<sup>11</sup> My own appropriation here is of Kristeva's notion of "*le sujet en process*"; in Chapter 3 of this thesis I explain in a footnote that it was first introduced in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, and has been translated as "subject-in-process" and "subject-on-trial" in an attempt to capture the double meaning of the French phrase "*en procès*" as both "in process" and "under legal duress" (McAfee, *Julia Kristeva* 38).

<sup>12</sup> Dillon's overview of the historical origin of the palimpsest as a process instigated by the need to recycle vellum is an informative supplement to the argument I embark on here: "Such recycling of vellum arose due to a combination of factors: scarcity and expense of writing materials; physical deterioration of existing manuscripts from which reusable vellum was then sourced; and changing historical and cultural factors which rendered some texts obsolete either because the language in which they were written could no longer be read, or because their content was no longer valued. Palimpsests were created by a process of layering whereby the existing text was erased, using various chemical methods, and the new text was written over the old one. But the most peculiar

The sequence of implantation performed in this narrative – Leora-Bertha first embeds the rose cameo under the skin of the breast, then a process of healing follows as the skin ‘grows’ over both the cameo and the pearl necklace and choker attached to it, forming a visible cicatrice of raised nodules under the skin, onto which she sews the buttons of the African trade beads that remain pendant on top of the skin over the ghostly traces of their pearl doubles – mirrors “the process of palimpsesting and subsequent textual reappearance” that Dillon describes with reference to the term “involuted,” coined by Thomas de Quincey: “The palimpsest is an involuted phenomenon where otherwise unrelated texts are involved and entangled, intricately interwoven, interrupting and inhabiting each other” (245). Here, then, ‘the African’ is brought into the picture and ‘objectified’ as trade beads ‘buttoned’ onto the ‘European’ body of Leora-Bertha in a way that is not only ‘palimpsestic’ in making visible “the process of layering that produces a palimpsest,” but also ‘palimpsestuous’, a neologism Dillon glosses as follows: “‘Palimpsestuous’ does not name something as, or as making, a palimpsest. Rather, it describes the complex (textual) relationality embodied in the palimpsest” (245). A palimpsestuous reading would therefore require attention not to either surface or depth, but to both simultaneously in their intricate, “interlocked” (255) and difficult, shifting intimacies, as is suggested by De Quincey’s word ‘involuted’ which shares the Latin root *volvere* – roll – with its kin-word ‘involved’ for which the OED identifies the denotative values of to “wrap (thing *in* another)”; “entangle (person, thing, *in* difficulties, mystery, etc.); “implicate (person in charge, crime, etc.)”; “include (*in*)”; “imply, entail”; “complicated in thought or form.” With these values in mind, one might then consider the palimpsestuous body performed by Farber as a model of the ‘body-in-process’, which coincides with Kristeva’s notion of the ‘subject-in-process’ / ‘subject-on-trial’, found in the focus texts of this conclusion, because in the “complex (textual) relationality” that Dillon imputes to the palimpsest as an “embodied” concept one also finds its linkages with Benthien’s notion of skin as “a place of encounter” and Ballyntine and Burton’s “bodies-in-contact,” elaborated in their related notion of the “moving subject,” with its implicit punning play on affect – to be emotionally moved by – and kinetic movement between different locations (“Politics” 2 ff), which, in turn, also recalls Irigaray’s “proximate distance.”

---

and interesting fact about palimpsests is omitted from the OED definition. Palimpsests are of such interest to subsequent generations because although the first writing on the vellum seemed to have been eradicated after treatment, it was often imperfectly erased. Its ghostly trace then reappeared in the following centuries as the iron in the remaining ink reacted with the oxygen in the air, producing a reddish-brown oxide. This process has been encouraged by the use of chemical reagents and ultraviolet light in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and by more advanced imaging technologies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries” (244).

At this point in the chapter (which will from here on undoubtedly register in its hasty palimpsestic layering of examples the anxiety symptomatic of imminent closure compelled by the form and length of the doctoral thesis), I revisit Carey's *Jack Maggs* to retrieve from it two distinct models of the body as a house that can be "burgled, plundered" – which is Maggs's experience of Tobias Oates's mesmerism (44) – and its surface – the skin of Maggs's scarred back – as "a page of his history" that can be read, sympathetically as Percy Buckle first does or exploitatively as does Oates, who reads it as that of "a scoundrel" (123).<sup>13</sup> For Oates, his mesmerism of Maggs, gives him the power to "possess [...] [a] memory I can enter, and leave. Leave, and then return to. [...] What a treasure house," he tells his sister-in-law and lover, Lizzie (123), whose response to seeing "the sea of pain etched upon the footman's back, a brooding sea of scars, of ripped and tortured skin" is a gasp of horrified sympathy (121). Similarly affected, Mercy Larkin sees where "the long, cruel fingers of the lash were visible. It was a shocking thing, to see those scars glistening like torture in the candlelight" (449).

On the one hand, then, Carey, in a novel that is obsessed with houses and house-breaking, relies on the "analogy between the house and the human body [with its] long iconographic and metaphorical tradition," which makes the house, as Benthien notes, referring to Hans Blumenberg's concept, "the 'absolute metaphor' of the body, since it can be considered (at least in Western thought) as universal and self-referential" (25). From this perspective, memory is stored in the brain, as if in a locked storage room or attic filled with wonders, as Oates implies with his claim: "This Australian of ours holds his life in his cerebrum. He carries pelicans and parrots, fish and phantoms, things the Royal Botanist would give a sov or two to hold" (124). On the other hand, Carey's playful sending-up of the figure of the writer, representing both Dickens and himself, brings into play Oates's writerly "method to approach his subject by way of the body" which coincides with his mesmeric incursions into the house of his subject's mind (427):

When he had set himself the task of writing about Jack Maggs, he had first produced a short essay on his hands, pondering not merely the fate of the hidden tendons, the bones, the phalanges, the intercarpals which would one day be liberated by the worms, but also their history: what other hands they had caressed, what lives they had taken in anger.

---

<sup>13</sup> I refer the reader to Elizabeth Grosz's extensive and informative overview of the various approaches to reading embodiment in *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*.

One may impute to Oates a propensity for palimpsestuous reading, were it not evident from Carey's characterisation that Oates's involvement as a reader in Maggs's history of suffering is at best superficial and exploitative. Inaugurating a juxtapositional dynamic, Carey's description of the scene of Maggs's flogging at Morton Bay in the third-person voice and focalised by Maggs insists on the visceral immediacy of the body in pain (253-54) – which recalls Christiansē's and Atwood's similar detailing of bodily sensation in their novels. By deliberately inserting this original moment of scarring, the event of inscription noted by Buckle as “a page of his history” is both confirmed as an historical record of violent encounter and radically destabilised because pages of paper do not feel pain as skins do, while it simultaneously takes us inside Maggs's mind where the registering of bodily agony coincides with the transmutation of memory into the fantasy of a return to England:

The flies might feast on his spattered back; the double-cat might carry away the third and fourth fingers of his hand; but his mind crawled forward, always, constructing piece by piece the place wherein his eyes had first opened, the home to which he would one day return, not the mudflats of the Thames, nor Mary Britten's meat-rich room at Pepper Alley Stairs, but rather a house in Knightsbridge whose kind and beautiful interior he had entered by tumbling down a chimney, like a babe falling from the outer darkness into light. Clearing the soot from his eyes he had seen that which he later knew was meant by authors when they wrote of England, and of Englishmen. (454)

Various ironies about Maggs's history as a ‘house-breaker’ in England and ‘brick-maker’ in Australia – through which he accrues his wealth and status as a man of property – circulate in this description, but the one most salient to my discussion, although implicit, does not yet register here, emerging only at the novel's end when Maggs's home-coming to Australia as settler and pillar of society is premised on the screening of the “page of his history” that marks him as a transported convict by the accoutrement of property and propriety. Although not an erasure, which is impossible, it is nevertheless a repression of the body's now improper history, which must be over-written and written over.

The similar scenario portrayed by Grenville in *The Secret River* does not rely on the scarring of the convict-settler protagonist's body but instead places different types of scarred bodies in juxtaposition in the “town of scars” the Thornhills first inhabit in New South Wales. Looked at from the perspective of William Thornhill's focalised observations, an explicit comparison is made between the scars on Daniel Ellison's body caused by flogging on the ship from England – “Thornhill watched over weeks as the wounds thickened into lumps, the skin slowly closing” (93) – and those marking the skin of one of the “black natives [...] who



hung about the Thornhills' hut, so black his skin swallowed the sunlight, a man "[t]hey called [...] Scabby Bill because his face had been mauled by the smallpox" and "[o]n his muscular shoulders and chest were rows of scars" (92-93). Thornhill thinks about these differences as follows:

On a lag's back the point about the scars was the pain that had been inflicted, and the way they marked a man to his dying day. The scars on Scabby Bill's chest were different. It seemed that the point was not so much the pain as the scars themselves. Unlike the net of crisscross weals on Daniel Ellison's back, they were carefully drawn. Each scar lined up neat next to its neighbour, a language of skin. It was like the letters Sal had shown him, bold on the white face of the paper. (93-94)

Itself a palimpsest of layers of interlocking histories and discursive ambiguities, this description both risks the charge of settler racism in the exoticisation of the black skin and charges the settler with being a contaminating scourge marked on the face of the Aborigine, while it simultaneously solicits pity for the convict whose flogged back is an agonising mnemonic inscribed by the imperial penal system, because, as Nietzsche points out, the belief that "[i]f something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory," which "is a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on earth," because "it has its origin in the instinct that realized that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics" (in Grosz, *Volatile* 120).

For the illiterate Thornhill, whose wife Sal is teaching him to read, the marks on the Aboriginal man's skin in their neat symmetry resemble letters – he sees it as "a language of skin" – which he is unable to decipher, although he evidently attempts to do so by comparing them to the scars on Ellison's back that are legible to him as the penal system's painful encoding of the convict's body. While he recognises that, unlike the convict's scars, their meaning resides "not so much [in] the pain as the scars themselves," he cannot make sense of them, partly because, one might argue, recalling the experiences of the unnamed first-person narrator in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, he stares himself blind against what he has already imagined as a voracious light-consuming blackness – the man is "so black his skin swallowed the sunlight." Since "[t]he dark skin is nontransparent," as Benthien points out in her reading of Ellison's novel, it is conceived of by whites as "a mere empty shell offering no insight of any kind into the person's state of being" (163), an erasure of subjectivity and interiority that Thornhill's comparison of the scars to letters written "bold on the white face of the paper" confirms, while also making familiar – homely – what he experiences as an uncannily

inscribed emptiness, an analogy that performs its own uncanny involution of elements: the man's "chest" becomes a "face"; "black" becomes "white"; "skin" becomes "paper."

In *Sarah Thornhill*, the sequel to *The Secret River*, Grenville shows how what is incipient in the ambivalence of Thornhill's response as a failure of imaginative empathy sediments into "a failure of love" in his treatment of his son's best friend and his daughter's great love, Jack Langland, whose mother was a "darkie, long dead," which, "it was no secret," made him "half darkie" (34).<sup>14</sup> If Jack Maggs's back is a "page of his history," then Jack Langland's body is read for the history of miscegenation that marks it, and in these readings are registered the already shifting attitudes of the settler community he inhabits, as Sarah, the narrator of the story and Thornhill's daughter, explains:

When Mr Langland went with Jack's ma, New South Wales was by all accounts a rough place. Not much between a man and starvation and not too many women other than the native ones. A man did what was natural. As for the children that come along, the old hands like Pa and Mr Langland thought it was nothing so very terrible. [...] But things had changed. The ones that come later, and come free, drew the lines strict. *Sent out* and *come free*, white and black. Mr Langland was a churchy sort of feller now and had got himself a respectable wife. Wouldn't like to be reminded he'd been happy enough once upon a time to bed a native woman. (34)

Even Sarah, in her love, screens this history – noting that it would be "like stealing a sheep or knocking a man down for the coins in his pocket" to say it because it would "mortify," and she is quick to point out that "in Jack's case [...] you wouldn't pick him straight away" although he was "[d]ark in the face," since many men who went to sea, as he did, were so. Moreover, like "the rest of us," she says, Jack "[t]alked about *the blacks* the same as everyone did" because "[t]hey were strange to him the same way they were strange to us." Jack, in his misplaced loyalty to Thornhill, whom he sees as a surrogate father of sorts, eventually compromises himself by bringing a little mixed-race Maori girl fathered by Will, Thornhill's son, who had drowned in a storm, from New Zealand to Australia. Treated abominably by Sarah's stepmother – whose "hatred" of the child and of Jack because of their "bad blood" is devastating to both (241) – the girl, whom they name Rachel, soon dies,

---

<sup>14</sup> In his "Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech," J. M. Coetzee uses this phrase in the following statement: "At the heart of the unfreedom of the hereditary masters of South Africa is a failure to love. To be blunt: their love is not enough today and has not been enough since they landed on the continent; furthermore, their talk, their excessive talk, about how they love South Africa has consistently been directed towards the land, that is, toward what is least likely to respond to love: mountains and deserts, birds and animals and flowers" (97).

herself barely out of childhood, either from an abortion or in childbirth, in “[o]ne of those places where girls in trouble went” (242).

Recalling in her (fictional) autobiography the events that led up to the day Jack left her, following his confrontation with Thornhill and the malicious conniving of her stepmother, Sarah, having at last spoken to her estranged brother Dick who had gone when still a boy to live with Blackwood (discussed in the previous chapter), begins to understand and acknowledge her own complicity as, ultimately, a form of dishonesty and a failure of love. Finding it unbearable “to touch the open wound of the idea of Jack,” because “[s]omewhere tangled up in that idea was a lie,” she realises that it was “[n]ot the lie Ma told, that he’d gone off out of pride. The bigger lie was mine. I lied to myself about who he was” (260). She recalls her pride at having claimed at the time that she did not “care if he’s black white or brindle” and in doing so had “[b]rushed aside his darkness,” unable to see that what she was telling him was “that I’d take the white part of him but not the black.” Sarah’s overwhelming sense of Jack’s estrangement from her on the day he leaves – “the man I knew as well as myself had become a stranger” – is only later understood in terms of his own shift in understanding the implications of the history he embodies and the choice he consequently makes, because he “[k]new the colour of your skin and the colour of your mother’s skin wasn’t a thing you could brush aside” (261). She realises that, “[i]f Jack looked a stranger that day, it was because he had always been one.” “I saw now what I could not see then,” she acknowledges, retrospectively able to recognise her own willed deflection of attention away from his skin, which, in the world they inhabit, marks him, more than skin-deep, as a stranger, even to her, and as such not to be known “as well as myself.”

Grenville’s novel thus apparently refuses the consolations of interracial love as an ameliorative alternative to conflict, which is the core plot device of Ward’s *River Queen*, the gently optimistic historical (family) romance with which I shall conclude this chapter and thesis. However, the novel does not forego consolation entirely, because in the unfolding of Jack Langland’s history there is much that resembles the potentialities of newly configured identities imagined at the denouement of Ward’s film, and these are, as in Ward’s film, marked on the skin as Maori tattoos or *moko*, which also register the characters’ mobility between different places and groups, whilst they are yet visibly marked as identifying with a particular group. Throughout the novel, references to *moko* recur, since Jack and Will regularly go seal-hunting on ships to New Zealand and bring back stories about “the natives” who have “[t]attoos on their faces all over chin, cheeks, nose, everything” and are “[m]ad for fighting [...] tribe against tribe, the winners sitting down after and eating the losers” (38).

Jack explains in detail how these are made by a “[s]pecial clever man” who “[g]ets a little chisel, a little mallet. First time cut the skin. Second time put the ink in. Saw it done to a feller once. Tight as a bowstring, not to cry out with the pain of it.” It is as he recounts this story that Sarah’s stepmother asks him if the Maori are “black” and, when he tells her that they are “[m]ore a brown,” she implicitly and maliciously reminds him that he too is not black as “our natives” are and also not white as the Thornhills are by asking, “[l]ike your kind of colour skin?” Nettled by his stepmother’s rudeness, Will tells Jack: “Get yourself one of them damn tattoos [...]. Pass for a New Zealander,” which is exactly what Jack eventually does, having also married a Maori woman. When after years of absence he returns to Australia to retrieve from Sarah the story of Rachel’s death, she sees that “[e]very one of the lines on his face was a ridge of scar. A picture carved into the living flesh” (270). To her, it is an indecipherable mask, which makes her want to “brush away the marks on his face, so [she] could see what he’s thinking” (278), this man who “had travelled into a different self” – “Another man had been carved out of the one [she’d] known” (275). However, conceding to Jack’s request to return with him to New Zealand to tell Rachel’s grandmother and others the story of her death, Sarah sees in his child, Maria, a genealogical palimpsest of interlocking histories and geographies, which suggests not only a hopeful resolution to the tragedy of her own failure of love but also signals that she has learnt to read skin palimpsestuously:

She carried so much in her, this girl. Hinewai, and Hinewai’s mother and father, all the way back, the life of this place. Jack too, and through him Mr Langland, and the woman whose kin I’d got a glimpse of at the house by the lagoon. All those men and women, coming together in this solemn big-eyed child staring at the woman her father had brought. (296).

In Reza De Wet’s *A Worm in the Bud*, a text I include in this chapter because it registers as an anomaly in its portrayal of skin that is not marked externally, but burns with shame from the inside out to manifest as red weals, there is no concession to the consolations of romance whatsoever. Set in the early twentieth century, following the Anglo-Boer War, in “the Cape Colony” (5) and in England, sites simultaneously represented on a divided stage, the play is construed around the letters and diaries written by Emma Burnett, an Englishwoman who comes to South Africa to work as a governess to the children of a widowed Afrikaner or Boer, Mr Brand, who lives with his sister on a farm in the Karoo. Excerpts from these letters and diaries are read by her sister Katy in England, following Emma’s suicide on the farm, at a meeting of the “Society for the Prevention of Inequality of

Woman” (3). Functioning as a form of flashback, the action shifts back and forth between the “highly pregnant” (2) Katy’s reading, interspersed with her writing letters to her father, and Emma’s writing, marked off spatially into a “diary area” and a “letter area” (1). In the opening scene, Katy establishes Emma’s “philanthropic dedication” to “the plight of the Boer women and children during and following the war,” conscientised by “the reports of Miss Emily Hobhouse” (3), which had led to her undertaking to bring “the light of knowledge into the darkness of ignorance and work among the rural Afrikaners,” while she also kept a journal “in which she recorded the customs and nature of the Afrikaner” with the view to “foster a greater understanding between our two nations, which might lead to a lasting peace” (3). Self-consciously employing a missionary register and the discourse of ethnography, Emma sets herself the task of “unearth[ing] the authentic Boer in his natural habitat” in “the wide and solitary veld, the hidden valleys, the distant hills, and there, on his farm, draw him out and study him” in order to challenge the stereotype of

the Boers [as] a dirty lot who don’t use table napkins, an illiterate set of brutes who have never heard of Kipling, an utterly unrefined people whose knowledge of art is sadly deficient, in short a backward, stupid, unprogressive, half-civilised people who are too thickheaded to know they are standing in the path of that Juggernaut, progress, and must in the end be crushed beneath its wheels. (4)

Her romanticised counter-version is, however, equally stereotypical and certainly not free of the prejudices she seeks to challenge, because her “true boer” is “essentially an agriculturist and a hunter,” “a good horseman and a remarkable marksman,” who, “[w]ithout anything to shoot at” would find “his life [...] not worth living” (4). He is also “extremely conservative, and with strangers brusque and taciturn,” but “very hospitable” when you gain his trust; moreover, he “does not drink deep: he is religious with a gloomy, stern religion.” Tending to be “sturdily built” because of his “open-air life with lots of beef and cabbage and milk,” which is how his ancestors had lived, the Boer “fears God and loves his country, but cannot tolerate to be enlightened.” There are echoes here of Harries’s ventriloquism of Olive Schreiner’s paean to the Boers in *Manly Pursuits*, where she tells Alfred Milner, “her audience of one”:

‘As a child I was brought up to despise the Boer. I remember being given a handful of sugar by a Boer child and throwing it away when I thought no one was looking because I thought I would have been contaminated if I’d eaten it. But later, when I lived among them for five years as a teacher on their farms,

watching them in all the vicissitudes of life from birth to death, I learnt to love the Boer; but more, I learnt to admire him. I learnt that in the African Boer we have one of the most intellectually virile and dominant races the world has seen; a people who beneath a calm and almost stolid surface hide the most intense passions and the most indomitable resolution.’ (282)

De Wet’s version is, however, much closer to parody in Emma’s sustained use of hyperbole and superlatives, which also signals the volatility of her highly strung nature and her barely repressed sensuality. Her generalised interest in the Boer as type almost immediately gives way to the singularity of erotic obsession with Mr Brand, whose bodily proximity becomes increasingly excruciating to her senses, heightened to a pitch of maddening sensitivity by the heat, insect sounds and bites, and the human smells of those around her. The hysterical “little laugh” that punctuates her speech whenever it is about Mr Brand signals how brittle the mask of Victorian sexual propriety is that she tries to keep in place but which slips and shatters to show her entirely exposed and vulnerable to a desire so intense that it feels like demonic possession, and it mortifies her with shame, literally to the point of death when she takes an overdose of laudanum to escape from it, fuelled by the fear that a “malignant growth might even now be festering in my womb. [...] A monstrous conjunction of our noble, Aryan lineage and that ... mongrel!” (29).

One is never sure whether Mr Brand is in fact taking advantage of her isolation on the farm and her evident susceptibility to his presence, or whether she imagines his nightly visits to her room, but this contact, real or imagined, marks her skin (De Wet’s punning use of the surname Brand is to be noted here: in Afrikaans *brand* means ‘to burn’, neatly doubling the point of the English denotation ‘to brand’ or mark):

When I woke up this morning, I looked for the marks. And there they were!  
 All over my body! (*Touches herself*) Here and here ... here ... here. (*Moans*)  
 Ah, I am in torment. The red weals. That is what happens ... when he touches me ... He ... scorches my flesh ... His hands burn with a ... terrible heat. And this (*almost whispering*) And this is how I know ... that he’s been here.  
 Looking at me. Touching me. Everywhere. While I am asleep ... So excruciatingly painful. When I awake ... I writhe in agony ... Hardly a night passes ... when it does not happen. (*Loudly, with revulsion*) He leaves his marks on me. (20-21)

Benthien notes that the “word ‘shame’ and the word ‘skin’ share the same Indo-Germanic root, which means ‘to cover’,” and that “[s]hame and skin are therefore closely related etymologically and conceptually,” which is why “the desire to conceal oneself is inseparable from the philosophical as well as psychological concept of shame” (100). Moreover, as Leon



Wurmser has argued, “shame is practically synonymous with sexual exposure and with the sexual organs themselves,” making all feelings of shame immediately traceable to this source, which coincides with the sense of being unworthy of love, because “dirty” or “untouchable,” and it therefore “always appears with the fear of rejection, ridicule, or abandonment” (in Benthien 100). From the moment Emma, encouraged by Miss Brand, “leaves off wearing corsets in [the] heat,” the word ‘shame’ enters her speech, at first playfully at this point – she is “ashamed to admit” that she had done so, and wonders what her mother would have said, having “taught [her two daughters] that the correct corsetry could fortify one against hell itself” (10) – but then with increasing intensity when she begins to feel “ashamed” of her own thoughts, which have been “[p]olluted” and “defiled” (21), whereas Mr Brand “[s]hamelessly” looks at her (16) and in church “pressed his thigh against” hers without “shame – No shame!” (22); she becomes preoccupied with dirt and cleanliness (23). It is as if the ‘stays’ that kept her corporeal boundaries in place fall away with the corset and she becomes like the cats that she saw flayed alive for their skins – a folk cure for a child suffering from pneumonia (19) – a skinless thing, “writhing in agony,” vulnerable to penetrations both physical and mental, and pregnant with it, in body or in thought, there seems to be no distinction to be drawn, she feels the boundaries of her self so utterly compromised.

In a letter Miss Brand writes to Katie exonerating her brother from wrongdoing, the word “ashamed” again crops up, but this time it is to describe Mr Brand’s feelings caused by the way Emma “was always looking at my brother,” and she ends by re-asserting the boundaries that had been breached when they had allowed the strange Englishwoman, who “was very funny in the night,” into their home: “My brother says he is getting an Afrikaans teacher next time” (29). Undoubtedly humorous in its staunch return to what is familiar, this turn away from the stranger is also troubling because more emphatic in its severance even as it mirrors Emma’s increasing repulsion, which culminates in the word “mongrel” with which she brands the Boer, because, even here, at the point of self-annihilation, Emma remains ambivalently caught between disgust and desire. In her encounters with Mr Brand, she “slyly” relishes his animality – “Mr Brand eats like an animal! He licks his lips like an animal! Scarlet tongue and red lips” (13) – while pretending to herself that she despises him. She sees in his “birthmark” a “sign” (23), of what she does not say, but we may read it as a counterpart to the weals that mark her own skin, albeit in his case a confirmation of the imputed racial impurity she spits out in the word “mongrel.” Glossing Hans-Thies Lehman’s theory, Benthien points out that “[t]he individual who is encircled and pierced by shame has

no other means of escape than the futile attempt to withdraw into [her]self,” often retreating behind the mask of the blush, which “accentuates the corporeal boundary,” and which as such “resembles the death-feigning reflex (*thanatosis*) in animals” (101). Reading Emma’s weals as the shattered fragments of a blush meant to mask her shame but too fragile to withstand the conflagration of her own disavowed desire, one might consider her suicide as a desperate attempt at the recovery of integrity, the stasis of death her most perfectly achieved camouflage. But it is also a withdrawal into negation, as it forecloses the transformative potential of (loving) contact, desire and the maternal, all of which are central to the re-imagining of nineteenth-century Aotearoa New Zealand as a settler colonial contact zone in *The Piano* and *River Queen*.

Ada MacGrath, the protagonist in Campion’s *The Piano*, similarly chooses suicide in the penultimate scene of the film when she intentionally places her foot in the loop of rope tied to her piano which she commands Baines, her lover, to throw overboard as they leave her husband Stewart’s settlement in the bush for the town of Nelson. Suspended underwater with her ankle tied to the piano which had been her voice throughout the film, since she is an elective mute from childhood – and which had been the object traded for land between Baines and Stewart, and subsequently used by Baines in his bargaining with Ada for her sexual favours – Ada achieves a kind of surreal quietude after the fierce triangulated passions that had led to her husband chopping off the tip of her index finger with his axe because her daughter Flora had betrayed her attempt to send a piano key inscribed with a love message to Baines. However, Ada’s “will” asserts itself and, choosing “life,” as her voice-over tells us, she kicks free of the rope that ties her to the piano, surfacing with the help of the Maori oarsmen who had dived into the sea to look for her – a scene, then, of re-birth or baptism in which the piano is shed like the carapace of an outworn self from which she emerges into the new life with her chosen lover, not the man to whom her father had sent her from Scotland. Unlike that initial journey by sea that marks the settler’s transition from mother country to colony as symbolically transformational, but which seems to have no effect on Ada, this shorter crossing, during which she falls overboard and floats, anchored to the piano in an oceanic in-between that is measured both on the horizontal as between the place of departure and the place of arrival and on the vertical as between the ocean bed and its surface – a marine cross-roads of sorts, where her body hangs suspended between death and life – changes her because she emerges altered, divested of the weight of the past, and able to move forward, albeit from one place of settlement to another. This oceanic moment of immersion is, however, one she carries with her as a memory, recalled in bed at night because, her voice-

over tells us: “Down there everything is so still and silent that it lulls me to sleep. It is a weird lullaby and so it is; it is mine.”

She claims this “weird” oceanic space of the unconscious as her own from the civilised domesticity of the urban home she now inhabits with her daughter Flora and a surprisingly transformed Baines, who, although still bearing the partial Maori *moko* on his face,<sup>15</sup> seems uncomfortably constrained and diminished by his clothing, in stark contrast to the images of him in the bush, where he appears completely at ease in his own skin, particularly in the scene where, naked, he lovingly wipes the piano in an act of transferred care for Ada, which, rather than fetishising the instrument, betokens an eroticism that is deeply affecting because of its tenderness. What Champion achieves here is to make Baines’s vulnerability as a consequence of his love for Ada visible in the unguarded “nakedness of the human skin,” which Benthien notes, quoting Emmanuel Lévinas, is “external in a more radical sense than the outside of the world,” because “[h]uman nakedness questions me – it puts the self that I am in question – it questions me in its unprotected and defenceless weakness as nakedness” (in Benthien 99). Even so, responses to Baines have been mixed – and not unlike those associated with Emily Brontë’s Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, which Champion identifies as an influence on the film, because of its “passion and romantic sensibility” (in Hardy 69) – not only because of his sexual bargaining with Ada but also because of Champion’s decision to portray him as a settler gone native who registers this choice as visual display in partial *moko*.<sup>16</sup>

In a review of the film, Alan Stone writes that “[w]hatever else Baines is, he is a perfect Levi-Straussian figure: a white man gone native with tattoos on his face, he mediates the categories of British and Maori” (182), but academic, film maker and Maori activist Leonie Pihama, in her critical essay on the film, “Ebony and Ivory: Constructions of the Maori in *The Piano*,” dismisses Champion’s use of *moko* in her portrayal of Baines as a “Pakeha-Maori” (a settler gone native) because, she argues, “Baines, in wearing what is supposedly a partial *moko*, exemplifies the appropriation of Maori identity. The *moko* is a form of identification. It carries your *whakapapa*, your genealogical links, visibly on your face. It’s a powerful statement of being Maori” (127). She goes on to quote the film’s

---

<sup>15</sup> In the glossary of terms in the Cambridge Film Handbook on *The Piano*, edited by Harriet Margolis, *moko* is defined as follows: “Facial carvings, the design for which get handed down from one generation of Maori to another; thus, *moko* often express genealogical links associated with tribal and subtribal groups. Although the closest English equivalent for the term *moko* is tattoo, both the cultural significance and the process of carving the *moko* differ from that of the tattoo” (xii-xiv).

<sup>16</sup> The film has received a great deal of critical attention since it was first screened, notably in the *Screen* dossier on the film (Autumn 1995), and numerous other academic articles.

costume designer, Janet Patterson, as saying that “Baines had given up his culture; he is not Pakeha (white New Zealander) nor a Maori; instead he’s somehow suspended between the two, though inclined towards the latter, evident from the tattoos on his face. He has gone bush and has a strong relationship with the Maori people” (127). For Pihama, “Baines is clearly more ‘native’ than he is ‘civilized’,” but he nevertheless remains white enough to be available to Ada as a lover who is the “antithesis of the uptight, colonial, controlling white man epitomized by Stewart,” her husband (128).<sup>17</sup>

While in the bush, Baines is indeed consistently contrasted with Stewart – described by Ann Hardy as “the putative patriarch” who is yet “a vulnerable man who comes to understand that he has been sabotaged by the limited definitions of masculinity within which he has tried to live,” noting that Campion considers him “the most interesting character in the film” (82). Their differences are played out not only in their competing interests in Ada but also in their very different negotiations of contact with the Maori, with Stewart exploitative in his appropriation of land and Baines less obviously so, since he has learnt to speak their language, respects their customs and has been accepted by them. Predictably, considering the films adherence to romance, he is the one Ada, herself an outsider, will choose, but not without cost, because she is punished when Stewart chops off the tip of her finger, her body thus irrevocably marked by this transgressive love.<sup>18</sup> Even though Baines appears to lose his

---

<sup>17</sup> Brantlinger points out that “many of the early British settlers in New Zealand became ‘pakeha Maoris [sic],’” like Frederick Manning, who wrote an autobiographical account of his life as a white trader, who had married a Maori woman and had children with her, in *Old New Zealand: A Tale of the Good Old Times* (1863), in which he states: “I am a loyal subject to Queen Victoria, but I am also a member of a Maori tribe; and I hope I may never see this country so enslaved and tamed that a single rascally policeman, with nothing but a bit of paper in his hand, can come and take a *rangatira* [chief] away from the middle of his *hapu* [clan], and have him hanged for something of no consequence at all, except that it is against the law” (in Brantlinger 86). In considering Campion’s portrayal of Baines, Jane Stafford’s discussion of the suitor of the protagonist in Edith Searle Grossmann’s *The Heart of the Bush*, published in 1910, who is “associated with the primitive energy of the natural world,” is useful, because as she points out – referring to Linda Hardy’s notion of “natural occupancy” – “[a]lthough not native, he seems to have gone native – an important distinction. It is one thing to assume the positive characteristics of authentic primitivism, another to be confused with a present day member of the indigenous race” (165). She notes that when Adelaide’s English suitor refers to Dennis as a “half-caste fellow,” she rebukes him, and claims for him the Celtic genealogy of “Highlander” father and Irish mother, undiluted by “native blood” but nevertheless “one traditionally closely associated with Maori” (165). Stafford moreover points out that, in contrast to the representation of “the figure of the indigene [...] in fixed stereotypes” that “derived from European Romanticism’s conception of the noble savage,” the figure of the Maori “was also inflected by associated theories of Celticism by Matthew Arnold, Ernest Renan, and the writers of the Celtic Twilight. Both the Celt and the Maori were seen as having qualities of authenticity, courage, spirituality, and oneness with the natural world” (166). In both *The Piano* and *River Queen*, the element of “Celtic genealogy” is prominent – Baines is a Scot and Sarah is Irish.

<sup>18</sup> This scarring is analogous to Jack Maggs’s loss of two fingers when he is whipped at Morton Bay, but it is perhaps more clearly similar to Mercy Larkin’s romantic wounding when, trying to protect Maggs, she puts up

attractive romantic ‘primitivism’ in the move to Nelson, the dishevelment of thwarted desire tidied up because he is now conjugally replete, the tonal ambiguities of Ada’s voice over in the closing scene of the film – she says: “I teach piano now in Nelson. George has fashioned me a metal fingertip; I am quite the town freak, which satisfies” – invite a reading of this achieved propriety at closure as a performance knowingly put on to secure social integration through mimicry, which nevertheless fails to convince the town entirely, revealing itself as a circus act, a freak show family, with a tattooed man, who is half pakeha, half Maori, a woman with a metal fingertip who plays the piano and an angel child doing cartwheels in the garden. A patriarch himself, as the film’s configuration of family at closure suggests, Baines has replaced Stewart as a more naturally loving father figure to Flora because he is a more desiring and desired lover to her mother, which not only sutures the wounding severance caused by the conflict between maternal love and erotic love, culminating in Flora’s betrayal of her mother, but also confirms that Eros has not been entirely displaced by the household gods of settler domesticity. However, the playfulness here is undercut by Ada’s recollection of herself suspended in that in-between marine space – neither here nor there, up or down – it is a state of isolation and introspection that resembles Leora-Bertha’s in *Dis-Location / Re-Location*. The film therefore suggestively works with the reconfiguration of the settler family as satisfyingly, romantically irregular – Flora is ‘illgitimate’ and Baines is married, as is Ada, which makes their relationship adulterous, flaunting social and fictional conventions – while it also shows in its alternative vision of Ada’s oceanic in-betweenness a coinciding withdrawal from this family romance. However, in spite of its outlaw credentials, this fantasy reverts to type by over-writing the Maori influence inscribed as *moko* on Baines’s face with its confirmation of the settler family’s whiteness, which, throughout the film is blazoned by Ada’s skin, in the same way that the marked presence of the Maori on screen is entirely erased at closure.

In contrast, Ward uses romance overtly in *River Queen* to confirm and celebrate the ameliorative merging of Irish settler and Maori native in the figure of the child born from the brief union between the sixteen-year-old Sarah O’Brien, who lives with her father, a doctor, in a garrison town on the banks of Te Awa Nui, the Great River, and a Maori boy who soon dies of “coughing sickness.” The film centres on Sarah’s attempts to recover her child, called Boy, who is kidnapped when he is seven years old by his grandfather, the tribal tattooist, and

---

her hand and Henry Phipps, under Percy Buckle’s influence, shoots off her ring finger. In *River Queen*, Wiremu Katene, Sarah’s Maori lover and uncle to her son, trades his trigger finger – he chops it off himself – in a negotiation with his cousin who works for the British soldiers who captured Sarah’s son, Boy, to secure the child’s freedom.

is set against the background of the “mid-nineteenth century period [1868] of the New Zealand Wars, when imperial and colonial government forces engaged in a string of battles with the Maori tribes over issues of land and sovereignty,” as the screen note in the opening scenes of the film informs us. Roger Nicholson – whose article on the interplay between “history and film, history and romance” in *River Queen* informs my reading of Ward’s use of romance here – argues that “[r]omance, for example, may be inherently hybrid: an impure genre (or tissue of genres) that may in fact lend itself, in a filmmaker’s hands, to the critical and revisionist project of historiographic metafiction” (n. pag.). In *River Queen*, it plays out in the interweaving of “a remarkable love story” and “an equally sensational history of colonial warfare, as if the one both demanded and explained the other,” metonymically configured in the opening scenes of the film, as Nicholson suggests, by “a diary and a map.” Whereas “the diary has the force of testimony, as if the private, intimate history were the history that counts,” confirmed by the autobiographical authority of Sarah’s voice over, “[t]he map works differently,” because, “[a]s an aerial shot of the territory across which Sarah’s quest romance will range, it signals more immediately the public, geo-political dimensions of the colonial history into which her life is bound.”

In both the opening and closing scenes of the film, images of the ripped out pages of Sarah’s diary being cast into the sea by her are shown, accompanied by her voice over, which locates her position as diarist, storyteller and chronicler of the war where the river opens into the sea at Castlecliff, her place of arrival and settlement after her journey up-river with Wiremu Katene to heal the ailing rebel chief Te Kai Po, during which she is also reunited with Boy, who had been raised by Wiremu, his uncle, and again down-river, during which she undergoes the transformation that marks her as pakeha-Maori. Whereas Sarah’s adolescent love for Boy’s father registers as youthful folly, her relationship with Wiremu represents a serious contravention of the boundaries that separate settler and Maori, a crime which, particularly in a time of war, as the British commander, Major Baine, tells her, amounts to treason. This is exacerbated by her willingness to heal the Maori rebel chief, which implies a shifting of loyalties to the side with which her son explicitly aligns himself, having become entirely integrated into his father’s tribe during the time of his separation from his mother. Sarah, now targeted by Major Baine for her transgressions, escapes down-river with her son and lover, but is shot by Wiremu’s cousin, who works for the British, while she stands in the river, bathing the recent chin *moko* her son had carved into her skin at her behest to sever, irrevocably, her ties with other settlers.



As a counterpart to Ada's immersion in and surfacing from the ocean subsequent to her wounding by Stewart in *The Piano*, Sarah's symbolic death and rebirth are configured not as descent and surfacing – it is, of course, also not an attempted suicide – but rather as immersion into the current of the river that delivers her, alive, to the ocean where she is able to establish a new life with her family that opens into possibility. This possibility is embodied by her son, who, at the moment of his mother's baptism into her new life, undergoes a coinciding process of initiation as her tattooist, in that moment both inscribing tribal genealogy on her face and assuming the role of tribal tattooist, and thus confirming the legacy of his grandfather, whose role he will take up and transform to become a travelling tattooist, crossing between British and Maori to ply his trade. Nicholson argues that “the family tableau of Sarah, Wiremu, and Boy” in the closing scene of the film “has the air of ideological allegory, as though miscegenation – New Zealand's favourite, fraught, national myth – ruled here as the seed of future social and cultural harmony, the symbolic marker of a national cultural identity that refuses to give credit to racial differences” (n.pag). At closure, then, Ward shows us his configuration of the family romance in the reunited group's embrace when Boy, now grown into a young man, returns in his horse and wagon, which advertises his trade as tattooist (suggesting the Irish gypsy lineage that Ward might want us to imagine is part of his mother's bloodline). Nicholson aptly sums up this moment's significance as follows:

[T]he point of the embrace lies in the way it signals the hybridity of historical romance itself, a once-colonial narrative mode now affording nostalgic pleasure as it imagines a moment in the national past when, however awkwardly, social and cultural difference could be resolved at the personal level. Historical romance, in this instance, offers a backwards-looking but future-oriented gaze; its future anterior tense, so to speak, at once resets the national clock, recuperates the past, and prefigures the arrival of Aotearoa – a new New Zealand, where whiteness is no longer a guaranteed virtue. It offers, in short, a quasi-magical solution, won by art, for the release of social tensions: a cultural fantasy that speaks poignantly, if indirectly, of the deadening, oppressive reality for which it serves as a form of compensation. (n.pag)

Although pertaining to a “cultural fantasy” specific to Aotearoa New Zealand, Nicholson's reading here is also more broadly relevant to the projects of restorying and restoration of settler colonial histories in the variously located texts I have explored in this thesis, capturing as it does the implications of the “backwards-looking but future-oriented gaze” they turn on troubling but compelling genealogies to come to terms with present senses

of (dis)location and (un)belonging. Here, as I arrive at the conclusion to my own navigations, I want to augment Nicolson's reading of Ward's film by turning to Boy, who not only embodies the fantasy of resolved colonial conflict through miscegenation, but also, importantly, represents in its potentiality the figure of the "moving subject" who resists the reactionary impasse of hybridity and mimicry by actively assuming "the disposition of crossing" that Clingman sees as necessary to the navigational approach (26), which opens up rather than forecloses the possibilities inherent in encounter. It is therefore significant that he is a tribal tattooist who works at that most intimate place of encounter, the skin, which he inscribes – perhaps palimpsestuously – as he crosses – back and forth – the in-between navigational space of the colonial 'contact zone'. In this character, one might argue, we come close to the embodiment of what Irigaray envisages with her notion of "proximate distance," because, as Krzysztof Ziarek explains, "[u]nlike difference, proximity does not involve negation or opposition but establishes itself as a transformative passage or a between that instantiates relation as a bringing about of a future" (150).

And yet, compelled as I am by the seductive possibilities this figure instantiates here at the point of closure where my own resistances succumb to the desire for the ameliorative, consoling resolution this romance offers, the cautions necessarily inherent in the project I have undertaken in this thesis reassert themselves. Having taken as a point of departure in the introduction to this study Veracini's contention that "[t]he stories settlers tell themselves and about themselves are crucial to an exploration of settler colonial subjectivities" (*Settler Colonialism* 103), my basic premise has been that the restorying/restoration of nineteenth-century British settler colonialism in literature, film and art from the perspective of post-settler subjects whose genealogies are entangled with such histories continues to warrant close, sustained scrutiny. This, I have argued, is important not only for the consideration of how and why they retell these pasts, but also for what they implicitly or explicitly grapple with in their variously inflected negotiations of the afterlives of settler colonialism in the present, raising questions and concerns that remain globally pertinent. Noting the trend in recent historical fiction to return to the Victorian era and the critical attention it has garnered, particularly under the rubric of neo-Victorian studies, I have endeavoured with this study to establish the metafictional turn to histories of settler colonialism as an especially productive site for theorising the possibilities and risks of the neo-Victorian. While self-consciously preoccupied with tropes of haunting and spectrality, which this thesis elaborates on in its discussion of Abraham and Torok's notion of "transgenerational haunting," neo-Victorianism, in both its primary and secondary manifestations, is also haunted by the spectre

of its own proclivity for nostalgic reification, which I have here addressed by introducing Bolas's theory of the "unthought known" and Freud's work on "screen memories" as they intersect, thus forming a triangulated theoretical frame with "transgenerational haunting" that enabled my reading of the intricacies of affiliation and disavowal embedded within these texts. With this reading strategy, coupled with my contention that Freud's notion of the "family romance" can be productively employed to think through the implications of the recurring motif of ancestral recovery that informs the narrative plotting of these texts, I hope to make a contribution to future research in the interdisciplinary field of neo-Victorian studies. Moreover, the South African focus of this thesis significantly extends the parameters of this field by introducing to it texts and contexts not previously considered under its rubric, while it also, reciprocally, brings neo-Victorian studies into conversation with South African studies.

## Bibliography

---

### Primary

- Atwood, Margaret. *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- . *True Stories*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.
- . *Alias Grace*. London: Virago, 1998.
- Campion, Jane. Dir. *The Piano*. Australian Film Commission, 1993.
- Carey, Peter. *Jack Maggs*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.
- Christiansë, Yvette. *Unconfessed: A Novel*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2006.
- De Wet, Reza. *Two Plays: A Worm in the Bud & Concealment*. London: Oberon Books, 2007.
- Farber, Leora. *Dis-location/Re-location* (Produced in collaboration with Strangelove). 2007-2008.
- . *Dis-location/Re-location Catalogue*. University of Pretoria, 2013.
- Greene, Tim. Dir. *Boy Called Twist*. Aurelia Driver, Clare van Zyl and the Fab 1000, 2004.
- Grenville, Kate. *The Secret River*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006.
- . *Sarah Thornhill*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2012.
- Harries, Ann. *Manly Pursuits*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.
- Krog, Antjie. *Lady Anne*. Bramley: Taurus, 1989.
- . *Down to my Last Skin: Poems*. Johannesburg: Random House, 2000.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. London: Vintage, 1997.
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. London: Penguin, 1997 [1966].
- Ward, Vincent. Dir. *River Queen*. Silverscreen Films and The Film Consortium, 2005.

### Secondary

- Abraham, Nicolas and Maria Torok. *The Wolfman's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986.
- . *The Shell and the Kernel*. Vol. I. Nicholas T. Rand, ed. and trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Ackroyd, Peter. *Dickens*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990.
- Adam, Ian and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism*. London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1991.
- Adams, David. "Metaphors for Mankind: The Development of Hans Blumenberg's Anthropological Metaphorology." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52.1 (1991): 152-166.
- Ahluwalia, Pal. "Citizenship and Identity in a Settler Society." *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies*, 10.1 (2001):63-73.
- Anderson, Nancy F. "The 'Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill' Controversy: Incest Anxiety and the Defense of Family Purity in Victorian England." *Journal of British Studies* 21.2 (Spring 1982): 67-86.
- Arias, Rosaria and Patricia Pulham, eds. *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- . "Introduction." *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past*. Rosaria Arias and Patricia Pulham, eds. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010: xi-xxvi.
- Atwell, David. "Reading the Signs of History: *Waiting for the Barbarians*." J. M. Coetzee: *South Africa and the Politics of Writing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. 70-87.

- “A Twist on SA’s Film Scene”. South Africa.info.  
<http://www.southafrica.info/about/arts/twistmovie.htm#.U8VsSSxOVjp> [Retrieved: 2012/01/13].
- Atwood, Margaret. *Eating Fire: Selected Poetry 1965-1995*. London: Virago, 1998.
- . *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- . *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2004.
- . “In Search of *Alias Grace*: On Writing Canadian Historical Fiction.” *Curious Pursuits: Occasional Writing*. London: Virago, 2005.
- Auden, W.H. *Collected Shorter Poems 1927 – 1957*. London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1988.
- Baderoon, Gabeba. “The African Oceans – Tracing the Sea as Memory of Slavery in South African Literature and Culture.” *Research in African Literatures* 40.4 Writing Slavery in(to) the African Diaspora (Winter 2009): 89-107.
- . “‘This is Our Speech’: Voice, Body and Poetic Form in Recent South African Writing.” *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies* 37.2 (June 2011): 213-227.
- Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. M. Holquist. Trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.
- Ballantyne, Tony and Antoinette Burton, eds. *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005.
- . “Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories.” *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. 1-15.
- . “Postscript: Bodies, Genders, Empires: Reimagining World Histories.” *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. 405-423.
- . eds. *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- . “Introduction: The Politics of Intimacy in an Age of Empire.” *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 1-28.
- Ballstadt, Carl P. “Moodie, John Wedderburn Dunbar.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. IX. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1976. [Online] Available at: [www.biographi.ca/en/bio/moodie\\_john\\_wedderburn\\_dunbar\\_9E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/moodie_john_wedderburn_dunbar_9E.html). [Retrieved: 2013/09/11].
- . “Strickland, Susanna (Moodie).” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. XI. University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1976. [Online] Available at: [www.biographi.ca/en/bio/strickland\\_susanna\\_wedderburn\\_dunbar\\_9E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/strickland_susanna_wedderburn_dunbar_9E.html). [Retrieved: 2013/09/11].
- Barnard, Anne Lindsay, Lady. *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800*. Vols. 1 and 2. Eds. Margaret Lenta and Basil Le Cordeur. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society (Second Series, No. 29 & 30), 1999.
- . *Paradise, the Castle and the Vineyard: Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Diaries*. Ed. Margaret Lenta. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2006.
- Barthes, Roland. *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage, 2002.
- Bates, Neil. *Cecil Rhodes*. Hove, East Sussex: Wayland, 1976.
- Beaucom, Ian. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Belsey, Catherine. *Critical Practice*. London: Routledge, 1988.

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968. 83-110.
- . "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.
- Benthien, Claudia. *Skin: On the Cultural Border Between Self and the World*. Trans. Thomas Dunlap. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Bergland, Renée L. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2000.
- Best, Sue. "Sexualizing Space." *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*, eds. Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn. London: Routledge, 1995. 181-194.
- Bester, Rory. *Floating Free*. Berni Searle *Float* Catalogue. Cape Town: Bell Roberts, 2003.
- Betterton, Rosemary. *Intimate Distance: Women Artists and the Body*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Bewes, Timothy. *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Bickford-Smith, Vivian. "Black Ethnicities, Communities and Political Expression in Late Victorian Cape Town." *The Journal of African History* 36.3 (1995): 443-465.
- . "The Fairest Cape of Them All?: Cape Town in Cinematic Imagination." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34.1 (March 2010): 92-114.
- Blackford, Holly. "Haunted Housekeeping: Fatal Attractions of Servant and Mistress in Twentieth-Century Female Gothic Literature." *Literature Interpretation Theory* 16 (2005): 233-261.
- Blanc, Marie-Therese. "Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* and the Construction of a Trial Narrative." *English Studies in Canada* 32.4 (Dec 2006): 101-128.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Migrant Metaphors: Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Bollas, Christopher. *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- . *The Christopher Bollas Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Borsa, Joan. "Towards a Politics of Location: Rethinking Marginality." *Canadian Women's Studies/Les Cahiers de La Femme* 11.1 (1990): 36-39.
- Boyd, Kelly and McWilliam, Rohan. *The Victorian Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Bradford, Helen. "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zones, c.1806-1879." *Journal of African History*, 37.3 (1996):351-370.
- Bradlow, Edna. "The Children's Friend Society at the Cape of Good Hope". *Victorian Studies* 27.2 (Winter 1984): 155-177.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Victorian Literature and Postcolonial Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Brantlinger, Patrick and Willam B. Thesing, eds. *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Brink, André. *Chain of Voices*. London: Faber and Faber, 1982.
- . "Stories of History: Reimagining the Past in Post-Apartheid Narrative." *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, eds. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998. 29-42.



- Bronfen, Elizabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1847].
- Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. London: Penguin, 1978 [1847].
- Brooks, Peter. "Repetition, Repression, and Return: The Plotting of *Great Expectations*." Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Edgar Rosenberg. A Norton Critical Edition. New York and London: Norton, 1999. 679-689.
- Brown, Wendy. "Wounded Attachments." *States of Injury: Freedom and Power in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. 52-76.
- Buelens, Gert, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, eds. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Burkitt, Katharine. *Literary Form as Postcolonial Critique*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012.
- Burns, James. "Biopics and Politics: The Making and Unmaking of the Rhodes Movies." *Biography* 23.1 (Winter 2000): 108-126.
- Burton, Antoinette, ed. *Politics and Empire in Victorian Britain: A Reader*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- . *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories." *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005. 1-24.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.
- . *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- . "Afterword: After Loss, What Then?" *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazajian. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. 467-473.
- Buzard, James. *Disorientating Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Byatt, A.S. *Possession: A Romance*. London: Vintage, 1991 [1990].
- . *Angels and Insects: Two Novellas*. London: Vintage, 1994.
- . *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays*. London: Chatto and Windus, 2000.
- . *The Biographer's Tale*. London: Chatto and Windus, 2000.
- Byrne, Denis. "Nervous Landscapes: Race and Space in Australia." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds. Tracey Banivnuva Mar and Penelope Edmonds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 103-128.
- Carey, Peter. Bold Type: Interview with Peter Carey. [Online] Available at: <http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/o399/carey/interview.html>. [Retrieved: 2007/11/12].
- . Powells Author Interviews. [Online] Available at: <http://www.powells.com/authors/carey.html>. [Retrieved: 2008/04/23].
- Carter, Angela. *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writings*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1997.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Castricano, Jodey. *Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*. Trans. Paul A. Kottman. London and New York: Routledge, 2000 [1997].

- . *Stately Bodies: Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of Gender*. Trans. Robert de Lucca and Deanna Shemek. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002 [1995].
- . *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Trans. William McCuaig. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009 [2007].
- Christiansë, Yvette. *Castaway*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999.
- . “Passing Away: The Unspeakable (Losses) of Postapartheid South Africa.” *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazajian. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. 372-395.
- . “Author’s Note. Other Press Online Reader’s Guide to *Unconfessed* by Yvette Christiansë.” [Online] Available at: <http://www.otherpress.com/readersguide.php?bkID=517>. [Retrieved: 2008/09/18].
- . *Imprendehora*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2009.
- . “‘Heartsore’: The Melancholy Archive of Cape Colony Slavery.” *The Scholar and Feminist Online*. Rewriting Dispersal: Africana Gender Studies. 7.2 (Spring 2009). [Online] Available at: [http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/Africana/print\\_christianse.htm](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/Africana/print_christianse.htm).
- Cixous, Hélène. “Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud’s *Das Unheimliche* (The ‘Uncanny’).” *New Literary History* 7.3 (Spring 1976): 525-548.
- . “The Laugh of the Medusa.” Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1.4 (Summer 1976): 875-893.
- Clendinnen, Inga. “The History Question: Who Owns the Past?” *Quarterly Essay* 23 (2006): 1-72.
- Clewell, Tammy. “Mourning Beyond Melancholia: Freud’s Psychoanalysis of Loss.” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association* 52.1 (2004): 43-67.
- Clingman, Stephen. *The Grammar of Identity: Transnational Fiction and the Nature of the Boundary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Coetzee, Carli. “Two Versions of a Journey into the Interior.” *Pretexts*, 5.1-2 (1995): 66-83.
- . “Krotoä Remembered: A Mother of Unity, a Mother of Sorrow.” *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, eds. Sarah Nuttal and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998. 112-119.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. New York: Penguin, 1980.
- . *White Writing: The Culture of Letters in South Africa*. Massachusetts: Yale University Press, 1989.
- . “Into the Dark Chamber: The Writer and the South African State.” *Doubling the Point: J. M. Coetzee – Essays and Interviews*, ed. David Atwell. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992. 361 –368.
- Collingwood-Whittick, Sheila, ed. *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australian Literature*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- . “Introduction.” *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australian Literature*, ed. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007. xii-xliii.
- Coombes, Annie E. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. London: Yale University Press, 1994.
- . “Gender, ‘Race’, Ethnicity in Art Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Anne E. Coombes and Penny Siopis in Conversation.” *Feminist Review* 55 (Spring 1997): 110-29.
- . “Introduction: Memory and History in Settler Colonialism.” *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and*

- South Africa*, ed. Annie E. Coombes. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006. 1-12.
- . ed. *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Cranny-Francis, Anne. *The Body in the Text*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995.
- Crous, Marius. “Anne en Antjie: Die wisselwerking tussen diskoerse in Antjie Krog’s *Lady Anne*.” *Stilet*, 15.2 (2003): 149-171.
- Curti, Lidia. *Female Stories, Female Bodies: Narrative, Identity and Representation*. Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Defalco, Amelia. “Haunting Physicality: Corpses, Cannibalism, and Carnality in Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace*.” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75.2 (Spring 2006): 771-783.
- Dagut, Simon. “Gender, Colonial ‘Women’s History’ and the Construction of Social Distance: Middle-class British Women in Later Nineteenth-Century South Africa.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26.3 (2000): 555-572.
- Dames, Nicholas. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Darian-Smith, Kate, Gunner, Liz and Nuttal, Sarah. *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Darroch, Heidi. “Hysteria and Traumatic Testimony: Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace*.” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 81 (Winter 2004): 103-121.
- Davenport, T.R.H. *South Africa: A Modern History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1977.
- Deacon, Harriet (Ed.) *The Island: A History of Robben Island, 1488-1990*. Cape Town: David Phillip and Mayibuye Books, 1996.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud’s Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. “*Fors*: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.” Foreword, trans. Barbara Johnson, to *The Wolfman’s Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*. Trans. Nicholas T. Rand. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986. xi-xlviii.
- D’haen, Theo. “‘History’, (Counter-)Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism.” *European Journal of English Studies* 1.2 (1997): 205-216.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. New York and London: Norton, 1999 [1861-2].
- . *Oliver Twist*. New York and London: Norton, 1993 [1837]
- . *Bleak House*. London: Penguin, 1996 [1853].
- Dillon, Sarah. “Reinscribing De Quincey’s Palimpsest: The Significance of the Palimpsest in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Studies.” *Textual Practice* 19.3 (2005): 243–263.
- Dovey, Theresa. “*Waiting for the Barbarians*: Allegory of Allegories.” *Critical Perspectives on J. M. Coetzee*, eds. G. Huggan and S. Watson. London: Macmillan, 1996. 138 – 151.
- Doyle, Laura. *Freedom’s Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Drichel, Simone. “The Time of Hybridity.” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 34.6 (2008): 587-615
- Driver, Dorothy. “Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Journals and the Concept of Self-Othering.” *Pretexts*, 5.1-2 (1995): 46-65.
- Drury, David. Dir. *Rhodes*. British Broadcasting Corporation. 1996.
- Duiker, K. Sello. *Thirteen Cents*. Cape Town: David Phillip, 2005.

- Duvall, John N. "Troping History: Modernist Residue in Frederic Jameson's Pastiche and Linda Hutcheon's Parody." *Style*, 33.3 (1999): 372-390.
- Eagleton, Mary. "Adrienne Rich, Location and the Body." *Journal of Gender Studies* 9.3 (2000): 299-312.
- Easthope, Antony. "Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity." *Textual Practice* 12.2 (1998): 341-348.
- Edmonds, Penelope. "The Intimate, Urbanising Frontier: Native Camps and Settler Colonialism's Violent Array of Spaces around Early Melbourne." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds. Tracey Banivnua Mar and Penelope Edmonds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 129-154.
- Edwards, Justin D. *Gothic Canada: Reading the Spectre of a National Literature*. Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2005.
- Elias, Amy J. *Sublime Desire: History and Post-1960s Fiction*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Ellis, Jeanne. "A Bodily Metaphorics of Unsettling: Leora Farber's Dis-Location / Re-Location as Neo-Victorian Gothic." *Neo-Victorian Gothic: Horror, Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth Century*. Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, eds. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2012.
- Ennew, Judith and Jill Swart-Kruger. "Introduction: Homes, Places and Spaces in the Construction of Street Children and Street Youth." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13.1 (Spring 2003). Available at: <http://colorado.edu/journals/cye>. [Retrieved: 2012/06/23].
- Eng, David L. and David Kazanjian. "Introduction: Mourning Remains." *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. 1-28.
- Errington, Susan. "Interview with Kate Grenville." *Wet Ink, the Magazine of New Writing*. 2008. Online: <http://kategrenville.com/node/71>. [Retrieved: 2014/01/14].
- Esty, Jed. *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Farber, Leora. "Dis-Location/Re-Location: 'Aloerosa'." *Cultural Politics* 1.3 (2005): 317-328.
- . "Making Room for a Post-colonial Identity." *FADA Research Newsletter* 7 (2006): 5.
- Farmer, Don. "Film-maker Ward Honoured." *The New Zealand Herald* Feb 18, 2014. Available at: <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/news/print.cfm?objectid+11204585>. [Retrieved: 2014/03/22].
- Felman, Shoshana and Laub, Dori. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.
- Flanders, Judith. *The Victorian House: The Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004.
- Fletcher, Lisa and Mead, Elizabeth. "Inheriting the Past: Peter Coriss's *The Journal of Fletcher Christian* and Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 45.2 (2010): 189-206.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Reader*, ed. P. Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- . "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 76-100.
- . "What Is an Author?" *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 101-120.
- Fowles, John. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. London: Panther, 1971.
- Francis, Martin. "The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth-Century British Masculinity." *The Historical Journal* 45.3 (2002): 637-652.



- Freccero, Carla. "Towards a Psychoanalytics of Historiography: Michel de Certeau's Early Modern Encounters." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 100.2 (2001): 47-61.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. XVII. London: Hogarth Press, 1986.
- . "The Uncanny." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. XVII. London: Hogarth Press, 1986.
- . "Mourning and Melancholia." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. XIV (1914-1916): *On the History of the Psychoanalytical Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. London: Hogarth Press, 1986. 237-258.
- . "Family Romances." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol IX (1906-1908): *Jensen's 'Gradiva' and Other Works*. London: Hogarth Press, 1986. 235-242.
- Furman, Jan. *Toni Morrison's Fiction*. Columbia: South Carolina Press, 1999.
- Fuss, Daina. *Dying Modern: A Meditation on Elegy*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Garman, Anthea. "The Mass Subject in Krog's *Country of My Skull*." "At the End of the Rainbow: Power, Politics and Identity in Post-Apartheid South African Media." Conference: Stellenbosch, 5-7 July 2006.
- Geustyn, Maria Elizabeth. "Representations of Slave Subjectivity in Post-Apartheid Fiction: The 'Sideways Glance'." Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Stellenbosch, 2013.
- Gibson, Ross. "Patyegarang and William Dawes: The Space of Imagination." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds. Tracey Banivnuva Mar and Penelope Edmonds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 242-254.
- Gilbert, Sandra. M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Gilmour, Robin. "Using the Victorians: The Victorian Age in Contemporary Fiction." *Rereading Victorian Fiction*, eds. A. Jenkins and J. John. Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 2000. 189-200.
- Greer, Germaine. "Preface." *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australian Literature*. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick, ed. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007. ix-xi.
- Grenville, Kate. *Sarah Thornhill*. Edinburgh and London: Canongate, 2012.
- . "Two Interviews." *Kate Grenville Official Web Site*. Online: <http://kategrenville.com/node71>. [Retrieved: 2014/01/14].
- . "The Secret River: Readers Notes." Online: [http://kategrenville.com/The\\_Secret\\_River\\_Readers\\_Notes](http://kategrenville.com/The_Secret_River_Readers_Notes). [Retrieved: 2014/01/14].
- Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- . *Space, Time, and Perversion*. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.
- Grosz, Elizabeth and Elspeth Probyn, eds. *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Gunew, Sneja. *Haunted Nations: The Colonial Dimensions of Multiculturalisms*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- . "Rethinking Whiteness: Introduction." *Feminist Theory* 8.2 (2007): 141-148.
- Habib, Adam. "Myth of the Rainbow Nation: Prospects for the Consolidation of Democracy in South Africa." *African Security Review* 5.6 (1996). <http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/5No6/Habib.html>.

- Hall, Catherine. *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- . “Playing in the Dark ... and Racing Englishness.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 18.1 (2011): 87-100.
- Hardy, Ann. “The Last Patriarch.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Harriet Margolis, ed.. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 59-85.
- Heidegger, Martin. “The Origin of the Work of Art.” *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper Perennial Classics, 2001.
- Heilman, Ann, and Mark Llewellyn. *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2009*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Hodges Holt, Shari. “‘Please Sir, I Want Some More’: Clive Donner’s Marxist Adaptation of *Oliver Twist*.” *Literature Film Quarterly* 254-268.
- Hogle, Jerrold E, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- . “Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Jerrold Hogle, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. 1-20.
- Holmes, Ricard. *Dr Johnson & Mr Savage*. London: Harper Perennial, 2005.
- Horner, Thomas M. and Elinor B. Rosenberg. “The Family Romance: A Developmental-Historical Perspective.” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 8.2 (1991): 131-148.
- Horrell, Georgina. “A Whiter Shade of Pale: White Femininity as Guilty Masquerade in ‘New’ (White) South African Women’s Writing.” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30.4 (2004): 765-776.
- Howells, Carol Ann, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Huggan, Graham. *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. New York and London: Methuen, 1984.
- . *The Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York and London: Routledge, 1988.
- . *Irony’s Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*. London & New York: Routledge, 1995.
- . “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern.” University of Toronto, 1998 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html>. [Retrieved: 2007/07/17].
- . *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York & London: Routledge, 2006.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985 [1977].
- . *The Irigaray Reader*. Ed. Margaret Whitford. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Jacobs, Rayda. *The Slave Book*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 1998.
- James, Caryn. “Great Extrapolations.” *The New York Times*, 8 February 1998 [Online]. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/08/reviews/980208.08james.html>. [Retrieved: 2007/11/12].
- . “A Distinctive Shade of Dark.” *Jane Campion’s The Piano*. Harriet Margolis, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 174-176.
- Jameson, Frederic. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- . *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.



- Jenkins, Alice and Juliet John, Juliet, eds. *Rereading Victorian Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 2000.
- Johnson, Brian. "Viking Graves Revisited: Pre-Colonial Primitivism in Farley Mowat's Northern Gothic." *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*. Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte, eds. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009. 23-50.
- Johnson, David. *Imagining the Cape Colony: History, Literature, and the South African Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- Johnston, Susan. "Reconstructing the Wilderness: Margaret Atwood's Reading of Susanna Moodie." Available at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/canadianpoetry/cpjr/vol31/johnston.htm>. [Retrieved: 2008/04/29].
- Jones, Amelia. *Body Art/Performing the Subject*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- . "The 'Eternal Return': Self-Portrait Photography as a Technology of Embodiment." *Signs* 27.4 (Summer 2002): 947-978.
- Jones, Lloyd. *Mister Pip*. London: John Murray, 2006.
- Joyce, Simon. *The Victorians in the Rearview Mirror*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007.
- Kaplan, Cora. *Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
- Kaufmann, Eric. "'Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada." *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*. (1998) 666-695.
- Keller, Mary. *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power and Spirit Possession*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Kelly, Frances. "Antipodean Victoriana: History and Fiction in Annamarie Jagose's *Slow Water*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 46.1(2011): 45-61.
- Kendall, Kathleen. "Beyond Grace: Criminal Lunatic Women in Victorian Canada." *Canadian Women's Studies* 19.1-2 (Spring – Summer 1999): 110-115.
- Keneally, Tom. *The Commonwealth of Thieves: The Story of the Founding of Australia*. London: Chatto and Windus, 2006.
- Keown, Michelle, David Murphy and James Procter. "Introduction" *Theorizing Postcolonial Diasporas*. Michelle Keown, David Murphy and James Procter, eds.. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 1-18.
- Khair, Tabish. *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Kiely, Robert. *Reverse Tradition: Postmodern Fictions and the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- King, Jeannette. In *The Victorian Woman Question in Contemporary Feminist Fiction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Klopper, Sandra. "Bertha Marks Reborn: Leora Farber in Conversation with Sandra Klopper." *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*. Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, ed. Johannesburg: David Krut and The University of Johannesburg Research Centre, 2008. 11-25.
- Knoepflmacher, U.C. and Logan D. Browning, eds. *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.
- Knoepflmacher, U.C. "Introduction: Hybrid Forms and Cultural Anxiety." *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*. U.C. Knoepflmacher and Logan D. Browning, eds. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. 1-10.

- . “Boy-Orphans, Mesmeric Villains, and Film Stars: Inscribing *Oliver Twist* into *Treasure Island*.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011): 1-25.
- Kohlke, Marie-Luise and Christian Gutleben. “Introduction: Bearing After-Witness to the Nineteenth Century.” *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. 1-36.
- . eds. *Neo-Victorian Gothic: Horror, Violence and Degeneration in the Re-Imagined Nineteenth Century*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2012.
- Kossew, Sue. *Writing Women, Writing Place: Contemporary Australian and South African Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Koval, Ramona. “Kate Grenville Interview.” Books and Writing. ABC Radio National, 17 July 2005. Online: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksandwriting/kategrenville>. [Retrieved: 2014/01/14].
- Kristeva, Julia. *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Kröller, Eva Marie, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Krzychylkiewicz, Agata. “Towards the Understanding of the Modern Grotesque.” *JLS/TLW* 19.2 (June 2003): 205-228.
- Kucich, John and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Langbauer, Laurie. “Queen Victoria and Me.” *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 211-233.
- Law-Viljoen, Bronwyn, ed. *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*. Johannesburg: David Krut and The University of Johannesburg Research Centre, 2008.
- . “Introduction.” *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*. Bronwen Law-Viljoen, ed. Johannesburg: David Krut and The University of Johannesburg Research Centre, 2008. 4-10.
- Lazarus, Neil. *The Postcolonial Unconscious*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- LeBlanc, John Randolph. “Camus, Said, and the Dilemma of Home: Space, Identity, and the Limits of Postcolonial Political Theory.” *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture & Politics* 15.2 (2002): 239-258.
- Lee, Hermione. “Great Extrapolations.” *The Observer*, 28 September 1997 [Online]. Available at: <http://books.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,3921662-99930,00.html>. [Retrieved: 2007/11/12].
- Lenta, Margaret. “Degrees of Freedom: Lady Anne Barnard’s Cape Diaries.” *English in Africa* 19.2 (1992): 55-68.
- . “The Shape of a Woman’s Life: Lady Anne Barnard’s Memoir.” *Literator* 14.2 (1993): 101-115.
- . “The Art of the Possible: Lady Anne Barnard’s ‘Cape’ Writings and Their Survival.” *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism, 1990-1994*. M.J. Daymond, ed. New York and London: Garland, 1996. 169-183.
- . “Sentencing Slaves: Verdicts of the Cape Courts, 1705-1794.” *English in Africa* 35.2 (October 2008): 34-51.
- . “A Chain of Voices and Unconfessed: Novels of Slavery in the 1980s and in the Present Day.” *JLS/TLW* 26.1 (March 2010): 95-110.

- Le Roux, Johann and Cheryl Sylvia Smith. "Public Perceptions of, and Reactions to, Street Children." *Adolescence* 33.132 (Winter 1998): 901-914.
- Llewellyn, Mark. "What is Neo-Victorian Studies?" *Neo-Victorian Studies* 1.1 (Autumn 2008): 164-185.
- Malan, Rian. "On the Brink of Déjà Vu: Rian Malan Reviews *Philida* by Andre Brink." Books Live. Available at <http://bookslive.co.za/blog/2012/09/10/on-the-brink-of-deja-vu-rian-malan-reviews-philida-by-andre-brink/>. [Retrieved: 2012/10.12].
- Mamdani, Mahmood. "When Does a Settler Become a Native? The Colonial Roots of Citizenship." *Pretexts* 7.2 (1998): 249-258.
- . "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43.4 (Oct. 2001): 651-664.
- Malouf, David. *Remembering Babylon*. London: Vintage, 1994.
- Mar, Tracey Banivanua. "Carving Wilderness: Queensland's National Parks and the Unsettling of Emptied Lands, 1890-1910." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*. Tracey Banivnua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 73-94.
- Mar, Tracey Banivanua and Edmonds, Penelope. "Introduction: Making Space in Settler Colonies." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*. Tracey Banivnua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 1-24.
- Margolis, Harriet, ed. *Jane Campion's The Piano*. Cambridge Film Handbooks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . "'A Strange Heritage': From Colonization to Transformation?" *Jane Campion's The Piano*. Harriet Margolis, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 1-41.
- Marshall, Christine. "A Change of Tongue: Antjie Krog's Poetry in English." *Scrutiny* 2.12 (2007): 77-92.
- Marx, Lesley. "At the End of the Rainbow: *Jerusalem* and the South African Gangster Film." *Safundi* 11.3 (2010): 261-278.
- Masschelein, Anneleen. *The Unconcept: The Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century Theory*. New York: SUNY Press, 2011.
- Maxwell-Stewart, Hamish. "Convict Transportation from Britain and Ireland 1615-1870." *History Compass* 8.11 (2010): 1221-1242.
- Mbeki, Thabo. "Statement of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki at the Opening of the Debate in the National Assembly, on 'Reconciliation and Nation Building, National Assembly Cape Town, 29 May 1998.'" <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/1998/mbek0529.htm>. [Retrieved: 2012/06/30].
- Mbembe, Achille. "Rule of property versus rule of the Poor." In *Mail and Guardian*, 15-21/06/2012, 34-35.
- McAfee, Noëlle. *Julia Kristeva. Routledge Critical Thinkers*. New York and London: Routledge, 2004.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- McGowan, John. "Modernity and Culture, the Victorians and Cultural Studies." *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. John Kuchich and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 3-28.
- McCuiag, William. "Translator's Note." *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Adriana Cavarero. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009 [2007]. vii-viii.

- McWilliam, Rohan. "Victorian Sensations, Neo-Victorian Romances: Response." *Victorian Studies* 52.1 (2009): 106-113.
- Meindl, Dieter. *American Fiction and the Metaphysics of the Grotesque*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1996.
- Mendelsohn, Richard. "The Gilded Cage: Bertha Marks at Zwartkoppies." *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*. Bronwen Law-Viljoen, ed. Johannesburg: David Krut and The University of Johannesburg Research Centre, 2008. 27-39.
- Michael, Magali Cornier. "Rethinking History as Patchwork: The Case of Atwood's *Alias Grace*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 47.2 (2001): 421-447.
- Miller, William Ian. "Darwin's Disgust." *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. David Howes, ed. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006. 335-356.
- Mills, Sara. *Gender and Colonial Space*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Mitchell, Kate. "Australia's 'Other' History Wars: Trauma and the Work of Cultural Memory in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*." *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, ed. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. 253-284.
- Moodie, Susanna. *Roughing it in the Bush, or, Life in Canada*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986 [1852].
- . *Life in the Clearings versus the Bush*. Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989 [1853].
- Morris, Jan. *Heaven's Command: An Imperial Progress*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Moussa, Hiba. "Mansfield Park and Film: An Interview with Patricia Rozema." *Film Quarterly* 32 (2004): 55-60.
- Munjal, Savi. "Imagined Geographies: Mapping the Oriental Habitus in Three Nineteenth-Century Novels." *Postcolonial Text*, 4.1 (2006): 1-14.
- Murray, Jessica. "When 'Good' Mothers Kill: A Representation of Infanticide." *Agenda* 22.76 (2008): 32-41.
- . "Gender and Violence in Cape Slave Narratives and Post-Narratives." *South African Historical Journal* 62.3 (2010): 444-462.
- Murray, Sally-Ann. "Awfully Pretty: Female Embodiment in *Dis-Location / Re-Location*." *Dis-location/Re-location: Exploring Alienation and Identity in South Africa*. Bronwen Law-Viljoen, ed. Johannesburg: David Krut and The University of Johannesburg Research Centre, 2008. 49-56.
- Myers, Janet C. *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination*. New York: State University of New York, 2011.
- . "'As These Fresh Lines Fade': Narratives of Containment and Escape in Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 46 (2011): 455-73.
- Ndebele, Njabulo. "Memory, Metaphor, and the Triumph of Narrative." *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee, eds. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998. 19-28.
- Newman, Karen. "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38.1 (1988): 19-33.
- Nicholson, Roger. "Romancing the Past: History, Love, and Genre in Vincent Ward's *River Queen*." *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* 2.1 (2011). Available at: <http://jprstudies.org/tag/river-queen>. [Retrieved: 2014.03/22].
- Nuttall, Sarah. "Subjectivities of Whiteness." *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*. Annie E.



- Coombes, ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006. 245-262.
- Oliver, Kelly. "Conflicted Love." *Hypatia* 15.3 (Summer 2000): 1-18.
- Palmer, Paulina. *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012.
- Peterson, Nancy J. *Against Amnesia: Contemporary Women Writers and the Crisis of Historical Memory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Pihama, Leonie. "Ebony and Ivory: Constructions of Maori in *The Piano*." *Jane Campion's The Piano*. Harriet Margolis, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 114-134.
- Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel*. London: Faber and Faber, 1983 [1965].
- Pratt, Marie Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.
- Radhakrishnan, R. *History, the Human, and the World Between*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Rand, Nicholas T. "Editor's Note." *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*. Abraham, Nicolas and Maria Torok. Trans. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994. 165-170.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1986.
- . *Later Poems: Selected and New 1971-2012*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976.
- Robinson, Alan. *Narrating the Past: Historiography, Memory and the Contemporary Novel*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Ronge, Barry. "Boy Called Twist." Rather Ronge.  
[http://www.ratherronge.co.za/html/sub\\_content.aspx?reviewid+225](http://www.ratherronge.co.za/html/sub_content.aspx?reviewid+225). [Retrieved: 21/01/13].
- Rose, Jacqueline. *States of Fantasy*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- . "Response to Edward Said." *Freud and the Non-European*, Edward W. Said. London: Verso, in association with the Freud Museum, 2003. 63-79.
- Royle, Nicholas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Rozema, Patricia. Dir. *Mansfield Park*. Arts Council England. 1999.
- Sadoff, Dianne. "The Neo-Victorian Nation at Home and Abroad: Charles Dickens and Traumatic Rewriting." *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, ed. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.
- Sadoff, Dianne F. and John Kucich. "Introduction: Histories of the Present." *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. ix-xxx.
- Saguaro, Shelley. *Garden Plots: The Politics and Poetics of Gardens*. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994.
- . *Freud and the Non-European*. London: Verso, in association with the Freud Museum, 2003.
- Salisbury, Tess and don Forster. "Rewriting WESSA Identity." *Under Construction: 'Race' and Identity in South Africa Today*. Natasha Distiller and Melissa Steyn, eds. Johannesburg: Heinemann, 2004. 93-109.

- Samuelson, Meg. *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition*. Scottsville: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2007.
- . “‘Lose Your Mother, Kill Your Child’: The Passage of Slavery and Its Afterlife in Narratives by Yvette Christiansë and Saidiya Hartman.” *English Studies in Africa* 51.2 (2008): 38-48.
- Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.
- Schildkrout, Enid. “Inscribing the Body.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 319-344.
- Schoeman, Karel. *Only an Anguish to Live Here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*. Cape Town and Johannesburg: Human and Rosseau, 1992.
- Schor, Hilary M. “Sorting, Morphing, and Mourning: A.S. Byatt Ghostwrites Victorian Fiction.” *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff, eds. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 234-251.
- Schwab, Gabriele. “Words and Moods: The Transference of Literary Knowledge.” *SubStance*, 26.3 (1997): 107-127.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Sharpe, Jenny. *Allegories of Empire: The Female Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Shastri, Sudha. *Intertextuality and Victorian Studies*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2001.
- Shemek, Deanne. “Introduction.” *Stately Bodies: Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of Gender*. Adriana Cavarero. Trans. Robert de Lucca and Deanna Shemek. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002 [1995]. 1-11.
- Shiller, Dana. “The Redemptive Past in the Neo-Victorian Novel.” *Studies in the Novel* 29.4 (1997): 538-560.
- Siddall, Gillian. “‘That is What I Told Dr. Jordan ...’: Public Constructions and Private Disruptions in Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace*.” *Essays in Canadian Writing* 81 (Winter 2004): 84-104.
- Silverman, Kaja. *Flesh of My Flesh*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Simmons, Dan. *Drood: A Novel*. New York: Little, Brown, 2009.
- Simon, David. “Introduction: Shedding the Past, Shaping the Future.” *South Africa: Reconfiguring the Region*. David Simon, ed. Cape Town: David Phillip, 1998. 1-16.
- Simons, Phillida Brooke and Alain Proust. *Groote Schuur: Great Granary to Stately Home*. Cape Town: Fernwood Press, 1996.
- Smith, Erin. “Gender and National Identity in ‘The Journals of Susanna Moodie’ and ‘Tamsen Donner: A Woman’s Journey’.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 13.2 (1993): 75-88.
- Smith, Sidonie. *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body: Women’s Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Snell, K.D.M. “Belonging and Community: Understanding of ‘Home’ and ‘Friends’ Among the English Poor, 1750-1850.” *The Economic History Review* 65.1 (2012): 1-25.
- Stace, Wesley. *Misfortune*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.
- Staels, Hilda. “Intertexts of Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace*.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 46.2 (2000): 427-50.
- Stafford, Jane. “Going Native: How the New Zealand Setter Became Indigenous.” *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 23, Part 1: Special Issue: From Maning to Mansfield: Writing New Zealand 1829-1920 (2005): 162-173.
- Staines, David. “Foreword.” Atwood, Margaret and Patcher, Charles. *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997 [1980].



- Stanley, Liz. "Encountering the Imperial and Colonial Past through Olive Schreiner's *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*." *Women Writing* 7.2 (2000): 197-219.
- Stasiulis, Daiva K. and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds. *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*. London: Sage, 1995.
- Stewart, Susan. *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Steyn, Melissa. *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be: White Identity in Changing South Africa*. New York: SUNY Press, 2001.
- Stone, Alan. A. "The Piano." *Jane Campion's The Piano*. Harriet Margolis, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 179-184.
- Suagaro, Shelley. *Garden Plots: The Politics and Poetics of Gardens*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Sugars, Cynthia. "The Impossible Afterlife of George Cartwright: Settler Melancholy and Postcolonial Desire." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75.2 (Spring 2006): 693-717.
- Sugars, Cynthia and Gerry Turcotte, eds. *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009.
- . "Introduction: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic." *Unsettled Remains: Canadian Literature and the Postcolonial Gothic*. Cynthia Sugars and Gerry Turcotte, eds. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009. vii-xxvi.
- Taylor, Beverly. "Discovering New Pasts: Victorian Legacies in the Postcolonial Worlds of *Jack Maggs* and *Mister Pip*." *Victorian Studies* 52.1 (Autumn 2009): 95-105.
- Tennenhouse, Leonard. *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Threadgold, Terry. *Feminist Poetics: Poiesis, Performance, Histories*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Tomalin, Claire. *Charles Dickens: A Life*. London: Viking, 2011.
- Tosh, John. "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain." *History Workshop* 38 (1994): 179-202.
- . *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Toye, Margaret E. "Towards a Poethics of Love: Poststructuralist Feminist Ethics and Literary Creation." *Feminist Theory* 11.1 (2010): 39-55.
- Trotter, David. "Colonial Subjects." *Critical Quarterly*, 32.3 (2002): 3-20.
- Turcotte, Gerry. *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Urquhart, Jane. *Away: A Novel*. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- Van der Merwe, P.P. "A Poet's Commitment: Antjie Krog's *Lady Anne*." *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism*. M.J. Daymond, ed. New York and London: Garland, 1996. 159-279.
- Van Toorn, Penny. "Slave Brands or Cicatrices? Writing on Aboriginal Skin in *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland*." *Biography* 31.2 (Spring 2008): 223-244.
- Veracini, Lorenzo. "Historylessness: Australia as a Settler Colonial Collective." *Postcolonial Studies* 10.3 (2007): 271-285.
- . "Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29.4 (2008): 363-379.
- . "The Imagined Geographies of Settler Colonialism." *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*. Tracey Banivnua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 179-197.
- . *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

- . “Isopolitics, Deep Colonizing, Settler Colonialism.” *Interventions* 13.2 (2011): 171-189.
- Vevaina, Coomi S. “Margaret Atwood and History.” *The Cambridge Companion to Margaret Atwood*. Carol Ann Howells, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 86-99.
- Vickery, Amanda. “Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronologies of English Women’s History.” *The Historical Journal* 36.2 (1993): 383-414.
- Viljoen, Louise. “Lady Anne by Antjie Krog” [Online]. The Postcolonial Literature and Culture Web. Available at: <http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg/post/sa/viljoen/5.html>. [Retrieved: 2007/11/19].
- . “The Mother as Pre-text: (Auto)biographical Writing in Antjie Krog’s *A Change of Tongue*.” *Current Writing* 19.2. (2007): 187-209.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Warwick, Alexandra and Martin Willis, eds. *The Victorian Literature Handbook*. London: Continuum, 2008.
- Warner, Marina. *Six Myths of Our Time: Little Angels, Little Monsters, Beautiful Beasts, and More*. New York: Vintage, 1995. (Originally published in Great Britain by Vintage as *Managing Monsters: Six Myths of Our Time*, in 1994).
- Walters, Paul and Jeremy Fogg. “The Short Sorry Tale of Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland and its Frontispiece.” *English Studies in Africa* 53.2 (2010): 86-101.
- Waters, Sarah. *Affinity*. London: Virago, 2005 [1999].
- Weinroth, Michelle. “‘Morpho Eugenia’ and the Fictions of Victorian Englishness: A.S. Byatt’s Postcolonial Critique.” *English Studies in Canada* 31.2 (2005):187-222.
- White, Hayden. *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- . *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- Whitehead, Anne. *Memory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Whitford, Margaret. “Introduction”, “Introduction to Section I”, “Introduction to Section II”, “Introduction to Section III”. *The Irigaray Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. 1-15, 23-29, 71-78, 157-164.
- Whitford, Margaret. *Luce Irigaray. Philosophy in the Feminine*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Whitlock, Gillian. *The Intimate Empire: Reading Women’s Autobiography*. London: Cassell, 2000.
- Wilson, Janet. “Constructing the Metropolitan Homeland: The Literatures of the White Settler Societies of New Zealand and Australia.” *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*. Michelle Keown, David Murphy and James Procter eds. Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 125-148.
- Wolfreys, Julian. *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*. London: Palgrave, 2002.
- Woodcock, Bruce. *Peter Carey*. Contemporary World Writers. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas*. Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1992 [1929; 1938].
- . *Killing the Angel in the House: Seven Essays*. London: Penguin, 1995.
- Yaeger, Patricia. *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women’s Writing*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

- . *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Young, Robert J.C. *The Idea of English Ethnicity*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2008.
- Ziarek, Ewa Plonowska. "Towards a Radical Female Imaginary: Temporality and Embodiment in Irigaray's Ethics." *Diacritics* 28.1 (Spring 1998): 59-75.
- Ziarek, Krzysztof. "Proximities: Irigaray and Heidegger on Difference." *Continental Philosophy Review* 33 (2000): 133-158.
- "10 Years of Celebrations are Just Beginning." SA Film News and Resources for SA Film Makers. <http://www.safilm.org.za/news/article.php?uid=1247> [Retrieved: 2012/05/17].

