

Introducing Fictocriticism: Writing Reflexivities of History, Culture and Subjectivity

Tim Cross*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to introduce fictocritical writing to Japanese audiences. This paper commences by locating fictocritical writing at the critical end of Communication Studies. Rather than defining the formal characteristics of what fictocritical writing might be, more interest is given to the theoretical concerns of representing experience that have driven this development. Once these writing practices have been located in the field of Cultural Studies, a close reading of one example of fictocritical writing will hopefully offer some sense of how that range of theoretical concerns can be configured into one text. The article in question integrates a number of genres that span from the beginning of life until a critical moment of identity crisis. Although the expectations associated with some genres are subverted by the text in question, there are important meanings being created in the contrasts between certain sections by that article. The

* Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Fukuoka University
Associate Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)¹

intention of this close reading is to demonstrate the sorts of possibilities that fictocritical writing can perform.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The writing practices of Cultural Studies have drawn on a wide range of disciplines as practitioners perform new ways of representing experience.² The literary turn, the reflexive turn, and the sensory turn are some of these innovations that supplement the theoretical turn.³ Fictocritical writing has embraced these developments with such intensity that the distinctions between these four considered modes of writing are often deliberately collapsed.⁴ It is in the resulting collision between these literary, reflexive, sensory and theoretical writings that new forms of knowing and uncertainty emerge.⁵

Post-modernist, post-colonial and feminist perspectives were central to this exploration of the advantages of using narrative to explore the histories of how society makes us who we are culturally.⁶ Examples of the theoretical agenda driving the development of new forms of writing include the dissatisfaction of post-modern ethnographers with realist conventions,⁷ critiques of the positivist myth of the objective observer,⁸ the questioning by post-modern autoethnographers of the notion of an individual self characterized by internal coherence,⁹ and feminist questions about authorial voice, the body and the gendered politics of post-colonial representation.¹⁰

Amanda Nettelbeck offers a concise location of fictocritical writing that shows how previously un-imagined ways of knowing come to be comprehended. Fictocritical writing is a mash-up adventure that goes

beyond interpretation and explanation:

Fictocriticism might be most usefully defined as hybridised writing that moves between the poles of fiction ('invention'/'speculation') and criticism ('deduction'/'explication'), of subjectivity ('interiority') and objectivity ('exteriority'). It is writing that brings the 'creative' and the 'critical' together—not simply in the sense of placing them side by side, but in the sense of mutating both, of bringing a spotlight to bear upon the known forms in order to make them 'say' something else. ... The effect of the fictocritical (or, in Krauss's terms, the paraliterary) text is twofold: it creates the critical text *as* something other than a hermeneutical exercise (spilling as it does continually into the features of fiction), and it suggests that the critical text can be used to *do* something other than explication (since, rather than being the filter through which the 'primary' text is read, both become part of a single device for the generation of a new kind of text).¹¹

The work of Michael Taussig is important for clarifying the nature of a fictocritical reflexivity that drives these new writing strategies to do more than make learned pronouncements on possible interpretations. In some versions of fictocritical writing, the reflexive turn continues to be regarded as a gesture that folds back on the subjectivity of the researcher: 'Fictocriticism is a style of writing that explores and presents positionality. That is, it is a style of writing that is about the self, but it problematises the self as a subject at the same time as it speaks the self.'¹² However, Taussig extends the politics of textual representation to offer another possibility beyond the contested turf of position:

I had wanted to write from within instead of standing outside

pointing. This is not such autobiography or what is sometimes called 'self-reflexiveness,' though there is plenty of that and necessarily so because the anthropologist is inevitably a part of the reality analyzed. It is more like having the reality depicted turn back on the writing, rather than on the writer, and ask for a fair shake. 'What have you learned?' the reality asks of the writing. 'What remains as an excess than can't be assimilated and what are you going to do with the gift I bestow, I who am such strange stuff?'¹³

Turning the reality depicted to face its own writing is a key fictocritical move.¹⁴ In an account of a Melbourne tram ride, Stephen Muecke advocates letting the tram speak.¹⁵ In introducing *Bluff Rock: Autobiography of a Massacre*, Katrina Schlunke explains:

this is not an autobiography of a self. It is an autobiography of a past, placed, event. It is an impossibility. A rock, an event, a past, cannot write itself ... and yet it does. To claim such writing as autobiographical shows the ways in which the past is always emerging via someone in particular, writing a particular past, and someone else in particular creates pasts from that writing. ... Autobiographies of events create the possibility of an ethical, embodied relationship with the past, not a final story. It is in displaying the relationship between 'selves', time and writer/reader that we assemble the possibilities of the past in present, and make a space where the past is becoming now.¹⁶

Fictocriticism can be interested in an 'autobiographical now', those composite histories that are necessary to make a certain experience of subjectivity possible.¹⁷ The 'I' presented in such autobiographical moments

can be a performance, a composite rendering of selves in stories that cross lines of history, culture, gender and language.¹⁸

Fictocritical writing can offer a representation of subjectivity as a conversation between the outside of theory and the inside of experience: the vested interests of certain forms of theory that may aspire to objectivity are internalised, resisted and/or appropriated by experience. This paper attempts to explore what happens when the distinction separating social theory and analysis dissolves and that blend becomes a mode of individual consciousness, the linked basis for experience and action in a local situation that is magnified by the media to a global world.

Mapping tensions around the sorts of binary distinctions outlined earlier by Nettelbeck can be *that something else*, that new form of uncertainty created by these narrative frictions. One fictocritical strategy is to sidestep the predictably neat and repetitive lines of the introduction-main body-conclusion structure. Instead of the 'I' rendered invisible by the pursuit of objectivity, a more fluid sense of self emerges from an abundance of stories: 'Narratives of narratives, narratives on narratives and narrator and narrative co-mingling so that there is no single home for the writing self.'¹⁹

Fictocriticism can take that performative sense of multiple selves and fold them against the territory conjured by the dialogue between the rendered reality and the writing that invokes those worlds. It is because of these movements that the rhythms of fictocritical writing make different sets of demands upon readers.

The absence of literary, reflexive and sensory elements from what I have written in this section and the contrast between that disembodied

voice and the more lively extracts from various fictocritical writings should make it clear that this paper does not perform fictocriticism. The following section, entitled Reading 'Slight Anthropologies' as Fictocritical Writing, also proceeds in the conventional manner of a literature survey.

In a 2007 fictocritical article on the Yamakasa festival of Hakata, written for a Cultural Studies audience, I used an alternating structure to give readers a sense of the dialogue between festival experience and how men are shaped by Yamakasa codes, regulations and rules of conduct.²⁰ Following the diary format,²¹ that longer article used the experience of Yamakasa participation to explore the persistence of a pre-modern festival in post-industrial Fukuoka.²² The opening section of 'Fictocritical Hakata' took the form of an essay question with written feedback between a student and the examiner. This ivory tower genre identified my professional location while introducing the key tensions that structure Hakata identity: the convulsive communication of Yamakasa primitivity, with its sacred rituals, history and magic that clash with rationality, the nation state and the category of the modern. In the same manner as the article which is closely read in the following section, 'Fictocritical Hakata' employed a range of genres that made implicit comments about the specific history being addressed.²³ As the following analysis will hopefully demonstrate, the structure of fictocritical writing is an additional layer of meaning that often reinforces the thematic concerns of the various genres employed.

READING 'SLIGHT ANTHROPOLOGIES' AS FICTOCRITICAL WRITING

It is my experience that many Japanese readers are puzzled by their first encounters with fictocritical writing. Fictocritical writing makes its own

set of demands upon readers. For audiences unfamiliar with debates about the possibilities of representing subjectivity at the critical end of communication studies, or for those readers more accustomed to the clear certainties of the introduction-main body-conclusion mode of disembodied writing, fictocritical writing often appears to make little sense. How can narrative devices advance an argument?

The purpose of this close reading of one article from 2007 is to demonstrate some of the different literacies that need to be added to one's critical repertoire if fictocritical writing is to be read meaningfully. It is hoped that with these additional strategies, fictocritical writing will be more comprehensive to non-specialist audiences.

The 'Slight Anthropologies' article consists of twelve numbered-but-untitled sections that address the history of how Aborigines have been represented by white Australian historians. Gabrielle Lorraine Fletcher, a *gungungurra* woman from the Blue Mountains country of eastern Australia, contrasts an ironically detached history with more personal accounts. Three dialogues between She, Creation and Elders counterpoint one conversation between two rather prejudiced, archetypal (white) women, One and Two. Other genres, including legend, poetry, a recipe and a letter from a Christian missionary pining not for his absent sweetheart but the comforts of life in the Old Country, bring the multiple perspectives of these particular pasts into a matrix that suggests to readers how these histories have shaped one critical incident about identity. This Fletcher article critiques the received narrative of contact relations between Aborigines and Europeans by addressing one important paradox of identity politics in contemporary Australia: how does it feel to look white

and have an aboriginal heart?

The following pages introduce each of the twelve sections by commenting on their genre and contents. Given that Japanese readers may not be familiar with the historical details and other references, where essential to a nuanced understanding of the Fletcher article, relevant background information will be included in the body of this paper. This unfortunately adds to the length of the paper but allows Japanese audiences to interpret the work at a deeper level. In addition, the endnotes will be used to provide more expansive explanations and references. Although paraphrase will be the dominant mode of proceeding across the surface of the Fletcher article, shorter sections will be reproduced in full as indented quotations. The presentation of these extracts is necessary to demonstrate the range of writing integrated into one article. The extracts could also be read as how successful fictocritical writing is at advancing an argument while relying on narrative devices. While all twelve sections are being individually surveyed, the connections between sections will be highlighted.

I.

Inside the metaphor of nothing, something struggles to get out.

The Dreaming made it so.²⁴

The Fletcher article begins at the beginning, at the beginning of time with a creation myth. The Dreaming refers to the Aboriginal cosmology that links the sacred landscape of Australia and all living entities into an eternity. Thematically, this section introduces the tension between being nothing and the struggle to become something.

II.

On the eleventh of November 1614, a cartographer clambered aboard the *Eendracht*, bound for Batavia by way of the Great South Land. When he unpacked his belongings, he realised he'd forgotten something. Unable to ring home, he wrote to his wife in Dutch.

'Take care of my skis, darling.'

On the first of April 1789, a man who stole a lump of bread shuffled aboard the *Kitty* bound for a less than hospitable penal colony. His hands were shackled and he felt the shipboard rats eating his toes. Unable to write, he spoke to the man beside him.

'Maybe it's me, but I don't have a good feeling about this.'

On the twenty-ninth of July 1803, a botanist's assistant sat below the deck of *The Investigator* whilst on a circumnavigation of a former nothing place. He had a skin rash from the queer vegetation and thought he might be dying. Unable to talk, his fever sent a message to his mother as he lay wilting.

'You were right. I'm really sorry I came here now.'²⁵

Fletcher's rewriting of the history of the white invasion of Australia foregrounds a gendered subtext of a European inability to communicate. Instead of the Darwinian ranking of cultures with values embodied by European men representing the supreme attainments of civilization, Fletcher reduces these three dead white men to ironically ineffective individuals. This representation of Western weakness is the revenge of the colonized: after two centuries of negative stereotypes inflicted on the indigenous people of Australia by whites armed with the evolved rationality of their grand narratives of the Enlightenment and Christianity, the

colonizers are shown to be fallible, helpless, and pathetic.

There is a wry smirk at not being able to use the telephone in 1614, a neat anachronism that winks at readers, steering them in the general direction of meta-historical sensibilities. Underlying these humorous vignettes-as-historiography is a rigorous sequencing that links the three paragraphs and the 189 years of white ineptitude between 1614 and 1803. The repetition of the 'unable to' phrase is counterpointed by the two shadowing pairs of wrote and write, and spoke and talk:

Unable to ring home, he *wrote*

Unable to *write*, he *spoke*

Unable to *talk*, his fever sent a message to his mother

With these three paragraphs, Fletcher rewrites the white history of Australia by emphasizing the theme of European incompetence and introducing their inability to read Australian nature.

Cartography is the business of making maps, of transforming the savage unknown into something knowable that can then be subjugated for the political, economic and sexual benefit of the invaders armed with their civilized taxonomies of writing, recording and tabulating. In 1614, Europeans knew little of Australia's coastline and nothing of its desert interior. The image of a Dutch map-maker forgetting to pack his skis for a journey bound for the tropical Batavia (now Jakarta) is an amusing comment on the limits of what was understood by the Dutch colonial impulse of the seventeenth century.²⁶

This ignorance of that profession whose duty it is to chart what is known is further compounded by the fact of the *accidental* arrival of the Dutch on the western coast of the Great South Land. According to the

National Library of Australia exhibition entitled 'South Land to New Holland: Dutch Charting of Australia 1606-1756', strong storms contributed to a Dutch landing:

Dirk Hartog, in the *Eendracht*, made the first of these unintended landfalls in 1616. Following the route prescribed by the *Seynbrief*, Hartog turned north too late and instead of reaching the East Indies sighted "different islands, but uninhabited" off the coast of Western Australia, near Shark Bay. Hartog stepped ashore on 25 October 1616, the first authenticated landing by a European on Australian soil. Before resuming his voyage to Bantam, he left behind a pewter plate bearing the details of his ship and crew.²⁷

Western rationality is gently ridiculed by the impossibility of tropical skiing and the off-course arrival of slightly lost Dutch sailors on the Australian continent. However, it is not only the literate elite that are subject to the ironic historical re-framing of Fletcher.

At Ballina High School in 1978, I learnt that one consequence of the American War of Independence (1775-1783) was that Great Britain was no longer able to use its American colonies as penal destinations. Bill Watson, my history teacher, told us that changing public attitudes to the death penalty resulted in the system of transportation functioning as a humane means of mitigating capital punishment. The second paragraph of Section II positions Australia as an overflow prison for petty thieves.

Against this background of the decline of the British Empire, Fletcher makes a comment on class: although the man convicted of the petty theft of bread has his hands shackled and therefore cannot write, he may, like the white employer of Jimmie Blacksmith who refuses to provide him a letter

of reference, also simply lack the necessary education and be incapable of writing. In addition to compounding this ambiguity of being unable to write, the image of a shackled convict as rat food undercuts the self-serving narrative of the so-called settlement of Australia. As convicts served out their sentences, they became invaders who seized Aboriginal land as the dispersing white population advanced into the hinterland. The image of a lonely white 'settler' struggling against the hostile climate of Australia became part of a popular Australian mythology from the nineteenth century onwards *after* the convicts had pleased their rodent shipmates deep in the hold of the *Kitty*.

Cartographers are made to squirm by Fletcher more than once in Section II. Mapping the 'former nothing place' of Australia is an expression that gestures towards the empty land doctrine of *terra nullius* which had been used to legally justify, after the fact, the British possession of Australia since 1770. On June 3rd 1992 the High Court of Australia ruled in favour of Eddie Mabo, concluding that native title existed.²⁸ The process of map-making aided and abetted in the white assumption of Aboriginal territory.

Cartography is not the only profession to be subject to postcolonial scrutiny. The third paragraph of Section II presents the spectacle of a botanist's assistant being overwhelmed by hostile Australian vegetation. The British project of colonizing Australia was accompanied by the imposition of Western taxonomies and nomenclature on native species:

Mastery and possession: the master concepts announced by Descartes at the birth of the scientific and technological age when our Occidental reason went in conquest of the universe. We dominate and

appropriate: this is the underlying philosophy common both to industrial enterprise and to the science said to be impartial—in this sense the two are un-differentiable. Cartesian mastery redresses the objective violence of science in a well-ordered strategy. Our fundamental relationship with objects is summed up by war and property.²⁹

Instead of the submission of plant life to the all-conquering will of Western rationality, Fletcher presents readers with the spectacle of the botanist's assistant wilting like a tired leaf of salad vegetable. Against this diminished figure of European masculinity that has succumbed to the untamed greenery of the Antipodes, the 'thought he might be dying' because of a feverish skin rash carries a whiff of hyperchondria. This feeble white impotence, and a searing message to his mother, suggest unresolved Oedipal issues.

A knowledge of Australian current affairs suggests there is an even deeper level of irony at play in the third paragraph of Section II. The Australian meaning of the word sorry is no longer limited to being an expression of regret or a casual apology. Compounding this three paragraph history of white inability was the refusal of conservative Liberal Party Prime Minister John Howard to apologise to the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children, abducted from their families between 1883 and 1969.³⁰

This Australian inflection of the word sorry became part of international sporting discourse in 2000. Lead singer of the Australian band Midnight Oil, Peter Garrett, explains why the band performed in black outfits with the word 'sorry' in white in front of Prime Minister Howard and a live

television audience of millions:

When Midnight Oil took to the stage in our "sorry suits" at the closing ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, we felt that saying sorry was so important it transcended the sporting moment. We believed that we needed to square up to our past, that the lack of an apology to Aboriginal Australians was a broken link in the chain to a joined future.³¹

Although Howard was Prime Minister in 1999 when the Australian Parliament passed a Motion of Reconciliation that acknowledged the appalling situation challenging indigenous communities, he would not apologize for past government policies:

John Ah Kit, the Northern Territory indigenous leader and a former local government minister, said that if Mr Howard truly wanted to reconcile he must apologise. "He's got a problem with that five-letter word called 'sorry' and he really needs to come out and make a proper apology to indigenous people in this country," he said.³²

It is this history of denial that made the repetition of sorry in the thirteenth of February 2008 apology made by Labor Party Prime Minister Kevin Rudd necessary:

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture we say sorry.³³

This analysis has outlined the sorts of resonances that can be organized

around a current Australian interpretation of the word that appears in the third paragraph of Section II, sorry.

III.

Section III is divided into two parts that deal with the gendered relations endured by 'She.' Part a) gives the specifics of a thirty year old woman who has been caught in a sexual relationship with her stepfather. Part b) occurs six months after She walks out of that house. This section is a psychological snapshot of why She lacks confidence, and extends the Section I concern with the themes of being nothing and becoming something. Part a) starts with her not knowing much, She reads about the condition of not being one thing or the other, and her blood tells her to do something. At the end of Part a) She can write 'I am something' but at the end of Part b) She is silent.

With these developments, Section III also resonates Section II. The ironic tinges of European inabilities to ring home, write and speak of Section II become something more terrifying in Section III:

Her father said 'Don't tell anyone,' as he rolled off and buckled up his belt. She didn't say a word. ... As she got older, her stepfather's insistence that she keep her secret became louder. 'For Christ's sake, don't tell anyone,' he said, as he wiped himself upon her as if she was an oily rag. She didn't.

Shame likes quiet. She was still and it became her. She studied hard and loitered with difficult concepts, lacking the body of confidence to toy with their form.³⁴

An oblique comment made by her stepfather about her skin colour becomes

an obsession that leads her to shower four times a day, and check her reflection in shop windows. She even befriended a photographer, hoping that the invisible something might make an appearance in the darkroom light.

When she was three her stepfather told her she had a lick of something on her skin, so she spent the next twenty-seven years trying to find out where. ... All this, and still she couldn't see.³⁵

This concern with her appearance and mixed-descent identity becomes part of her intellectual development and an emotional framework structured by the gap between being nothing and becoming something. Although the book title is not explicitly mentioned, She reads *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.³⁶

One day in the library she found a book that played on her mind. It was about a boy who was not one thing or the other. The breeds of polarity exiled him to a middle earth of deference. Here he went mad and grabbed an axe to cut himself a place to fit. Directly on the bones and flesh of these sharp and absolute meridians. Chanting while he chopped. She read it over and over, wanting to understand exactly how anger floats its charge.³⁷

The Section III Part a) narrative of Fletcher makes an intervention upon the gendered and racist assumptions that structure the set of four texts directly related to *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*. Terry Threadgold examines the ideological foundations of newspaper reports from 1900-1901 that details the attacks committed by the red-haired Jimmy Governor, the 1959 Frank Clune novel *Jimmy Governor*, the 1972 Keneally novel *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, and the 1978 Fred Schepisi film of the

Keneally novel.³⁸ Threadgold extends the Robert Drewe idea of the Schepisi film as a thrice-told tale by examining how Aborigines are excluded from the white world of 1900 by a system of prohibitions while they are also positioned as being in need of white support. Although Threadgold makes nine examinations of the values attributed to Aborigines in these texts by white masculine assumptions, for reasons of brevity only the first three sections are quoted here as background information for Japanese audiences:

1 (All four texts)

An aboriginal had no vote

He was not allowed to own land

Aboriginal reservations were under the control of missionaries

They were a dying race³⁹

Half-whites were classified as black

Blacks were alcoholic and unreliable

The best of them are likely to vanish at any time

yer just git one them into shape and they go off on bloody walkabout
shots of two figures, dwarfed by landscape, running along ledge
lined with dead trees

2 (Clune, Keneally, Schepisi)

It was an offence to supply him with liquor

They lived partly on rations supplied by the police

shots of blacks' camps, drunkenness, whoring in film

3 (Keneally, Schepisi)

He could be punished by laws which he had no hand in making
One should make them Christians and leave them alone and let them
die⁴⁰

What is important in the extended analysis of *Threadgold* is her attention to the silencing of female voices. Aboriginality is consistently he, not She. This is one significant advance made by the narrative argument of Fletcher: instead of focusing on 'the way he constructs Jimmie Blacksmith as miscegenation of black and white, at home in neither space, and on the way the narrative voice of the novel colonises black minds and bodies,'⁴¹ 'Slight Anthropologies' presents a corporeal history of the identity confusions that accompany indigenous experience in contemporary Australia from a range of indigenous and white perspectives.

The ironic shortcomings of Europeans from Section II change into a gendered set of rules in Section III that are organised by her identity as a young Aboriginal woman. These are the limits She has learnt to internalise from the men around her. She doesn't know much, She could not see herself, and She learns to remain silent:

Her brother said 'Don't read what you can't read. 'Just read what you can.' She asked him what he meant.

Look,' he said. 'Only learn what you know.'

She was silent after that. She collected some of the blood from the pages of the book about the boy and filled a vial, storing it in the back of her troubled head. Then cutting open her mattress, she inserted the story deep inside the springs. After this, she stopped reading.⁴²

In the Keneally novel, much is made of blood. In contrast to the 1900

Jimmy Governor attacks on the Newby women and Miss Graf, the blood of those axed, shot and hung in *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* is quietly stored in the Fletcher narrative. Fletcher does not violently spill blood as revenge against a historic series of false promises and deliberate economic exploitation in the manner of Keneally. In Part a) of Section III, blood flows as a result of intolerable sexual violence from her stepfather and against a gendered set of prohibitions, inspiring action that leads towards becoming something other than nothing:

One night when her mother was at bingo, he rocked the bed so much that the vial inside her troubled head broke open. The blood from the pages floated into her veins, and began to mix itself a living pulse within the split of a steamy second. She lay there feeling it lick at the sides of herself. Gliding down her ribcage, rung by rung. Drenching her uterus and claiming her tubing. Finally it found her feet, shy but surprisingly ready. 'Do something', it said. So she did.⁴³

Being able to do something presumes being someone. The action performed by She at the end of Part a) involves bloodletting. Unlike the rampant gore of the Keneally texts, this act is not one of violent death but is a crucial moment of self-assertion:

She walked from the house. Moved under the stars and crouched in triumph. ... Finding a small piece of glass, she cut a line down her calf. She daubed her fingertips in the trickle and wrote in the earth: 'I am something.'⁴⁴

It would be a mistake to reduce that defiant statement of being something by interpreting it as an act of self-mutilation performed in response to the trauma of incest. There is a considerable body of literature

addressing the place of blood in indigenous rituals. However, given that these rituals are segregated by gender, with the penalty of death emphasising the importance of not witnessing what one is not entitled to witness, and given that most of the twentieth century anthropological accounts are written by white men empowered by the academy, the following account of the significance of blood in certain male rites of initiation is conditionally advanced. The intention is to clarify how the blood of Part a) should be differentiated from the mayhem represented in Keneally's novel:

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, the novices represent the Wawalag sisters who are swallowed by the Julunggul: the blood on their bodies is symbolically menstrual and/or afterbirth blood. Blood, in virtually all instances, signifies 'life'. Stanner makes the point that the blood smeared over the novice is that of the Mother — it is life-sustaining: and in some cases, blood is drunk (or sipped) to co-join the novice's life with that of the mythic beings and participants.⁴⁵

In the context of such traditional rites, blood is not a marker of a fading mortality, nor is it caused by a massacre. Blood is a sacrament expressing the presence of life, linking now with the time of myths. In this sense, the presence of ritualised blood in Part a) of Section parallels the dialogues between She, Creation and Elders in Sections IV, VIII and XII: being something means being connected to the Dreaming and being recognised as a member of a community, with all the rights and duties these two privileges imply.

Being aligned with mythic time might mean living a life that connects

the past with the present, and the present with the future. As the following extract illuminates how blood is equated with life. This white anthropologist account shows that myths can span time, commencing in the time of the Dreaming, engaging the seasonal rhythms of nature before exiting via the cultural artefact that is used in the rites of a living tradition:

Briefly, two sisters came northward to the coast from their home in the so-called Wawalag country, somewhere in the direction of the Roper River. They did not create plants, birds and animals, or places, but were responsible for naming many of them. The last site where they camped on their journey was the sacred waterhole of Muruwul, or Miraraminar. But within this lay hidden the great Rock Python, Julunggul (Yulunggul), sometimes identified with the Rainbow Snake. The two sisters tried to cook various creatures and plants they had collected on the way: but all of these got up from the coals and ran into the waterhole: in doing so they became sacred (*mareiin*) or 'totemic'—or, their sacredness became evident. The elder sister was pregnant, and gave birth to a child: afterbirth blood fell into the waterhole. (Warner notes menstrual blood; C. Berndt, either afterbirth blood from the elder sister or menstrual blood from the younger, or both.) Julunggul emerged in a great storm, with thunder and lightning. The Wawalag tried various ruses to restrain him, but he swallowed them, regurgitated them, and swallowed them again. While this was happening, the first rains of the north-west monsoon were falling and beginning to flood the land. In the final sequence, Julunggul (or a pair of Julunggul, as husband and wife) stood erect and spoke with other Rock Pythons in other parts of

eastern Arnhem Land. He admitted having swallowed the Wawalag, and at the same time uttered a loud noise which is now the sound of the bullroarer.⁴⁶

Having given an account of how Section III Part a) commences with sexual abuse before finishing with an empowering return to traditions, Part b) will be examined to show how this tradition could be subverted to become a tool of seduction. Although Part a) addressed sexism and racism as a series of colonising controls, Part b) is concerned with showing how the business of protecting indigenous traditions is no guarantee of protection from unwanted sexual advances. The cumulative effect of Parts a) and b) is to document how sexism and racism intersect in and around indigenous communities.

At the beginning of Part b), She now has a desk job and the words she had written have disappeared. Instead of the meat trays her mother wins at bingo in Part a), her desk has an outgoing tray. The stars of the sky in Part a) have been replaced by people, luminaries of various intensities. This second part introduces her relationship with a powerful Aboriginal man who knew how to spin a yarn:

There was one particularly large star who talked incessantly. The other stars told her he was just a man who refused to wear under-pants. ...

She listened to his story. He had actually sat in the hearth as the Universe invented fire, belching volcanoes to relieve the strange sensations of his gut. He was the first to have ever taken a piss in the whole of the fresh and mammoth dawn. Could talk about it so many dreams later, with an implacable confidence of accuracy earthed

under the most profound imperative. He had lived as clay, grown like yam and been the cells of a woman's nipple. All within the space of a quick epoch. Licked by ochre, enveloped by the rhythms of entity, she was inspired to say nothing. Too busy being seduced by this cult of memory, as virgin tongues often are.⁴⁷

Her relationship with this superstar appears again in the poem of Section VII. 'Swollen stars' appear in the dialogue of VIII. Stars appear above riverbanks in Aunty's story of Section IX where Aunty criticises the superstar. Although these various permutations of the star motif appear initially appear benign, Threadgold reminds us that stars are configured in a different constellation in *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*:

The murders of the Newby women are represented explicitly and erotically, but also exotically, as an attempt on Jimmie's part to win back the manhood that has been denied him by white society: 'Jimmie admitted to his body a drunken judgemental majesty, a sense that the sharp-edged stars impelled him. He felt large with a royal fever, with rebirth. He was in the lizard's gut once more' (Keneally 1972/1978: 78).⁴⁸

After writing 'I am something' at the end of Part a), there may have been an expectation of a more assertive presence. However, even as She cautiously enters into a sexual relationship with an indigenous superstar, She was still heavily constrained:

She closed her eyes for six months. ... She boxed up her larynx so he could speak her. Gave him a direct line without the distraction of undertone to do his work, which was preserving what little was left of things. Shoving it in small holes, forcing something bigger. And

promising to save her.

From the inside, she watched. She had allowed him to rehearse the truth on her. Hardly noticed the lack of charisma or the saliva that dotted her face. The spray of passion has a permanent wetness about it, so she paid the droplets no mind, presuming evaporation would claim the marks. She had never had to think about superstars before. She wasn't sure if it just happened or they were born that way. She wondered how it would be to shine through life with such an overwhelming knowing. ... She barely knew what time it was.⁴⁹

The passive acceptance of She cannot continue indefinitely. In the poem of Section VII, her emotional discontent eclipses the superstar and is noted in a manner that connects with the earlier references to *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*.

IV.

She: What time is it?

Creation: What time would you like it to be?

Elders: About bloody time.⁵⁰

This is the first of three dialogues between She, Creation, and Elders. In the same manner as Section II, there is a pattern which is repeated in Sections VIII and XII. In each of the three dialogues She asks Creation for something. Creation responds with a question, willing to give She whatever will make her happy. The Elders have the last word. In Section IV, instead of Elders being the embodiment of the wisdom of their tradition, they are apparently irritated and fed up with waiting. The source of their irritation is not explicitly stated.

V.

Section V is a letter written by a Christian missionary posted to Australia to his absent spouse. The formality of the language suggests it should be dated in the nineteenth century. There is no declaration of undying love or expression of affection after the first word of the letter. Instead, the letter is a desperate whine about the white man's burden:

Dearest,

Time is as wretched as all else in this bleakest of camps, and we can only dream of it passing quickly, hastening the glad day of our return home. The conditions of these last months have been a trial not to be endured or imagined by those who lack the purpose and grace of God's calling. The natives we were sent to teach accept the most utmost squalor readily: indeed they seem blind to our efforts to improve their lot and are, although it pains me to say it, largely ungrateful for all our offices on their behalf. We, on the other hand, must struggle to maintain our spirits, and to provide ourselves with even the basic rudiments of civilised living. Mr Rutherford had warned of the conditions here, but to work amongst these people has been a wearying blight, diminishing any hope we harboured of rectifying the utter uselessness of their lives.⁵¹

Clearly the mission of spreading the good word in Australia induces situational depression among the fervent Christian class. The apparent benefits of an uplifting Christian faith are undermined by a condescending incomprehension of the inner lives of Aborigines. The patronising ignorance of the civilized paralyses their power of observation to the extent that only the most rudimentary patterns of behaviour can be explained by their

Eurocentric paradigm:

So much is unfathomable. All that can be predicted with any certainty is that they will rise at dawn and retire with the sun. What happens in the intervening hours is a vast mystery wholly to be discouraged. The challenge for the enlightened mind is to find any semblance of meaning in their brutal and disturbing exhibitions. ... Only the very brightest are able to grasp the basics of the English language, and even these few cling to their own tongue. ... Disciplining the savage mind is a trial, but we are determined to find a way.⁵²

The letter contains an observation that death is one chronological marker that unites that camp. As a woman enters from the main camp and approaches the group of missionaries, they are puzzled by her action of throwing earth on herself before scratching her chest and abdomen with that dirt so intently that the skin breaks. The missionaries are frightened and prepare to protect themselves with their croquet mallets. In contrast to the unknowing whites, the grieving woman, even in the midst of her loss, was sensitive enough to realize that the missionaries were feeling uncomfortable so she turned and walked back towards the main camp. None of the missionaries understood that the woman was grieving until they were explicitly told. The missionaries, however, do not trust their native informants. When they checked the burial ground and saw the area surrounding it had been swept clean, it confirmed the information that there had in fact been a death.

The challenges of giving Aborigines the benefits of Christianity are such that the only positive emotion in the letter is the distant prospect of a speedy return to the home country. After Section II introduces European

inabilities to communicate through telephones, writing and speech, Section V deals with the ethical relationship of European Christians to their extremely unhappy selves. The lexical items denoting Australia constitute a taxonomy of negativity: bleakest, blight, blind, brutal, disturbing, discouraged, exasperating, fearful, frightful, interruption, mad, pitiful, primitive, savage, squalor, struggle, trial, trying, uncomfortable, unfathomable, ungrateful, violently, wearying, wretched. Despite the grandeur of their intentions, these proselytizers could not understand what they saw before themselves, nor could they enjoy life under the Australian sun. At the very least, the writer of this letter is truly *sorry* to be in Australia.

One silence in the letter is the role of religion in the 'settlement' of Australia. Reference was made in the discussion of Section II to the donations made by convicts to ship-bound rodents. Once convicts had served out their sentences, they were granted their liberty. Those prisoner feet which had been rat food aboard the *Kitty* were now permitted to participate in the 'development' of Australia. As these free settlers walked on Aboriginal lands, they also had the authority to employ their own convict servants. Katrina Schlunke locates the tales of Christianity as an integral part of the 'settler' narrative:

Did the logic of colonial reasoning also require the 'inferior' who are deserving of annihilation? The colonial allegory provides one sort of translation. What is a 'settler' but a figure possessed of the cultural 'madness' of another civilisation? Trapped in another land, weren't his guns and sheep on stations the unfettered displays of one utterly untranslatable; possessed, perhaps? His obvious, frightening strength insisted that he was given a place through his violent

taking of place, and yet he was tormented. Where was this torment finally cast? Into the bodies of the Indigenous. They had to be 'sacrificed' so that the colonial man could 'go'/make home. For this is how the parable ends; after being cured, the man begged to stay with Jesus but Jesus said, 'Go home to your people and tell them all what the Lord in his mercy has done for you.' And so the man, the colonial returns—or metaphorically 'makes' a home.⁵³

History now tells us that the emotional misery endured by our well-intentioned correspondent as he ached for his homeland was internalized by government policy as Christian compassion for the children of a so-called dying race. The initial suffering of European missionaries was magnified as it was later inflicted upon several generations of children by the Australian institution of law. The application of the highest values of the Western intellectual tradition resulted in a systematic campaign of cultural genocide:

In May 1998, a "National Sorry Day" was held to atone for the nation's treatment of the Stolen Generation. The day was organized after a federal inquiry, published in a volume titled *Bringing Them Home* shocked the nation with graphic details of the liberal state's inhuman treatment of generations of indigenous families. Believing they were acting for the good of both indigenous people and the nation, Anglo-Australian government officials tore Aboriginal families apart between 1910 and the late 1960s and interned thousands of Aboriginal children in horse paddocks, abandoned army barracks, and worse. State and territory officials were intent on severing the generational transmission of Aboriginal traditions and, thereby,

speed up the process of cultural assimilation. In the process many children were psychologically, physically, or sexually abused.⁵⁴

Social Darwinists interpreted the notion of survival of the fittest, not as the survival of the plant or animal species that best fit that particular microenvironment, but as the survival of the universally strongest. This nineteenth century idea that it was natural for strong nations to dominate indigenous cultures was the rationalization that then used to justify the imperial agenda. Wherever the national flag went, men of the cloth followed to capitalize on the opportunities for religious expansion. Indigenous community leaders have identified how Christianity was implicated in attempts to devalue Aboriginal spiritualities:

This pressure to assimilate from the churches has rarely been acknowledged, nor have the churches' own particular and historical forms of prejudice about Aboriginal culture and traditional beliefs been much explored. Not only did most missionaries work closely with the Government and accept its policies, but they accepted their own assumptions that Christian faith was superior to Aboriginal belief. Aboriginal culture, as also its belief about the sacred and spiritual, was considered to be lacking and deficient. In popular and scientific belief, Aboriginal culture was considered to be in a process of dying out; the best Christians could do was to "smooth the dying pillow". Christianity not only promised a home beyond this earthly life, but it also offered, in this life, the fruits and benefits of belonging to a church that was strongly aligned with a western culture and its understandings about being "civilised".⁵⁵

Pat Dodson was a Catholic priest and affiliated with the Missionaries

of the Sacred Heart. Pat is a Yawuru man from Broome, he is of Aboriginal and Irish descent, and is well qualified to comment on how twentieth century Christianity could have been more compassionate in accommodating indigenous spirituality:

The churches should have an insight into the absolute significance of a community of believers. The communal aspect that underpins Aboriginal society should be something that resonates quite readily with them. Most of the talk in the church is about community, creating community, being in community, a community of faith, whatever. However, the churches just don't use their data-base, their learning, their information base, to help them understand another culture. They forget that what is essential to community is action, not just intellectual assent to faith. ... The church could help the nation understand the centrality of community to Aboriginal culture.⁵⁶

The contradictions and frustrations caused by racism and identity politics is something that must be faced by members of indigenous communities, even as they attend weekend worship with fellow believers. Christian assumptions of the inherent superiority of white beliefs were serious obstacles that prevented many Aborigines from feeling that they were something more than nothing.

Jacinta Elston, Assistant Dean Indigenous Health within the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences at James Cook University, has Kalkadoon and South Sea Islander ancestry. Her family has attended the Assembly of God church. From this perspective she addresses the complex issue of how to nurture multiple identities:

The big challenge is for those who have been separated from a lot of the tangible bits of culture, no ceremony, no country. How do the churches support the spirituality of those individuals who have lost, or have had stolen from them, their confidence and capability to engage in a spiritual life? How do the churches support our mob to develop and retain their spiritual strengths? And, how do they do it in a way that doesn't mean that people feel they have to choose between being Aboriginal and being a Christian?⁵⁷

As Michel Serres pointed out earlier, domination and appropriation are the preferred modes of advance for the Western presence. Brute military force made the forceful acquisition of property possible and the churches aspired to a monologue that would appropriate the spirituality of Aborigines into a Christian narrative. Despite the appeal to 'the purpose and grace of God's calling' made by our diligently suffering correspondent in Section V, the missionary project in Australia did not perform the ideals it espoused. Pat Dodson, speaking as a Christian Aborigine, criticizes the churches for not believing the transformative power of their own faith:

It was a God who seemed to belong to the social and ethical and moral teachings that the white folks had. There was no dialogue, never any real consideration of Aboriginal people. It was as if we were deficient. There was a sense of deficiency, in whom we were as human beings and as if the concept of baptism wasn't sufficient to transform Aboriginal people. There was deemed to be some kind of flaw that hadn't been healed by any of the things that Christ's life has done. We really needed to be guided and corrected and shown at every point and every facet of our life how to go forward. There was

*no dialogue, never any real consideration of being Aboriginal people. There was a remaking and remoulding and a restructuring and a reorienting of our society without any negotiation with us. It was as if baptism and the sacramental life were not powerful in their own right to effect what they were meant to signify.*⁵⁸

VI.

The Way We Make Johnny Cakes

What you will need to do them is

stick

hands

mouth

egg flipper

flour

water

salt

and for the topping to be put on them is

syrup

honey

You have to put flour and salt in a large bowl.

Then mix the flour, salt and water with your stick.

When all of this is mixed together you put it on a board that has flour on it as well.

Roll and shape by using your hands to pat it.

Cook Johnny Cakes on hotplates or a bit of a car door over a fire if have it, flip now and then.

When hard put aside to cool a little.

Then you eat them.

It is good to ask the boss or his visitors if they want any if you would like to get all the things to make them again another time when you are hungry and tired.⁵⁹

Section VI is the only one of the twelve sections with the clue of a title provided to help readers. The title is therefore of considerable interest and suggests that this text is more than a recipe. As you can see, recipes list ingredients and sequentially order the performance of required steps. Section VI does all of that. The final three lines demonstrate that Aborigines have learnt the etiquette protocols of white culture. This is a marked contrast with the representations of European incomprehension in Sections II and V.

Given that Aborigines constituted the majority of pastoral workers in northern Australia until the 1960s,⁶⁰ the presence of the car door as the preferred griddle of choice suggests that Section VI is set sometime in the twentieth century. Note also the possible nuance that an open fire is perhaps becoming a rarity in an age when hotplates were presumably electric or gas. Even in an age of hotplate cooking that requires an egg flipper, the stick and not the spoon is the preferred tool for mixing.

Section VI initially appears to be a recipe, but on closer reading, it should more accurately be described as textual rendition of an oral account of how to prepare Johnny cakes. As the directions include obvious elements, like 'hands' and 'mouth', there is a painstaking attention to detail. These clues, along with the *We* of the title, suggests that an expert from an Aboriginal community is explaining how to proceed to an outsider-

someone who knows nothing. Given that the cumulative focus of the Fletcher article is a history of contact relations, Section VI reads like a text written by an Aborigine for a researcher. We have read an extract from the field notes of a white anthropologist. That someone who knows nothing is an educated white expert.

VII.

The seventh section of 'Slight Anthropologies' is a poem largely composed of sentences beginning 'If she' and 'If he' and this poem brings the narrative back to the relationship between She and the superstar that was introduced in Part III Section b). She is sick of being innocent and bored with people parading as stars. The superstar is not a generous man when it comes to money but his refusal to wear underpants suggests a certain looseness in other aspects of giving. The superstar has become obese on taxpayer-funded social security, what is sometimes called sit-down money, and he takes the landmark Mabo victory in native title rights far too casually. The negative European emotions caused by the exile from Christian civilization in Section V have metamorphosed into a disappointing set of 'if only ...' hopes for this young Aborigine woman:

If he returned her voice
and would let her speak
her modulated mind.
If she didn't have to argue
with his methods
he would never call her white.
If people weren't offended

by offensive ways
 then frankly she could stand it.

Instead she sleeps inside the bedsprings of her mattress. Floating anger and avoiding swollen stars.⁶¹

Her relationship with the superstar is so unsatisfactory that She defensively retreats into literature. In Section III Part a), She re-read *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* many times to understand how anger becomes power. After being told to be silent and to stop reading what She did not understand, She cuts her bedding open and hid the Jimmie Blacksmith story deep inside the mattress springs. Again, here in Section VII, She cannot speak freely. When She does disagree with the direction assumed by the superstar, he accuses her of not being an Aborigine. She remains in limbo, emotionally stalled between being nothing and becoming something, using her anger keeping the superstar out of her orbit. Like the novel hidden inside her mattress in Section III Part a), in Section VII She sleeps inside the springs of her mattress. In Section VII there is no re-appearance of the vial of blood harvested from the pages of the Keneally novel, the container that broke and spilled the blood that propelled her into action in Section II.

VIII.

She: Why did you make swollen stars?

Creation: What other stars would you like there to be?

Elders: Stars that speak the truth.⁶²

Although the poem of Section VII did not spill any blood, the opening question of Section VIII suggests that She is clearly at the limits of

patience. The statement of the Elders is a neat criticism of how the superstar has advanced. This dissatisfaction is continued in Aunty's story in Section IX. The generalised frustration of Section VIII is expressed in an individual voice that embodies a generation of suffering. Transmitted through the writing of Fletcher, we hear the corporeal voice of Aunty. The Aunty recollection is at once a record of private suffering at the hands of government policies and representative of the indigenous experience of being institutionalized. As a consequence of being institutionalized, Stolen Generation Aborigines were deprived not only of their language and spiritual culture, but lost the opportunity to learn how to be Aboriginal parents because they had no role models.

IX.

Aunty's story of being one of the Stolen Generation is told within the safety of her ancestral Country. Aunty is more than 68 years old and has survived feeling all of those emotions that come from being taken away from her family, language and culture at the age of four. The superstar has made Aunty angry because his actions create a negative image of all Aborigines:

'He don't know nothin', Aunty says, speaking of the star who has a cause inside his pants.

'He got no shame. Treats us like cows, he does. True! Waitin' aroun' so he can suck our titties dry. Takin' everythin' like only he got the rights. If them *gubbas* [whites] want to give us stuff to shut us up, then pretend we been healed like nothing happened, it should be us that gets it. The ones they done it to. Not ones like him that only

hears the yarns. He don't know nothing', bubba. 'Cause if he do, he knows we ain't for sale.'

Then Aunty rolls a cigarette, even though she shouldn't. And bleeds a tear that collides against the air. It trickles down the drip lines of her face, in an unforgiving magnitude of silence. Her muddy, blistered eyes look up.

'Arks him why he makes us mob look bad.'⁶³

Aunty's story raises the issue of who is entitled for Stolen Generation compensation. The question then becomes how to authentically define indigeneity when the dominant experience of Aborigines is being selectively excluded from white areas of influence and power. Even sites of worship, venues where prejudice should be least evident, admitted Aborigines as temporary members of Anglo-Australian society:

One of the changes that was introduced within the Catholic church, and which had the potential to resonate with Aboriginal communities, was a renewed emphasis on the local church being a "community of believers". Arising from the Second Vatican Council, Catholic church communities were encouraged to understand the presence of divine grace within their communal history and experience. This offered local church communities the possibility, but also the challenge, to be more sensitive to Christian communities arising from within other cultures. At the same time, emphasis on the Eucharistic meal offered Aboriginal people the opportunity to share a "meal" with those whom they could rarely share "communion" with outside the church, such as the local policeman, magistrate, teacher or shopkeeper. However, once the church eucharist concluded,

non-Aboriginal people reverted to the social order of separation between themselves and Aboriginal people.⁶⁴

The matrix of such temporary memberships is one part of the complex reality of identity politics for indigenous communities in contemporary Australia, as many Aborigines are stranded between being nothing and trying to become something.

X.

Two women, One and Two, are watching a third woman from the safety of a vantage point high above the street. The third woman down on the street is criticized for being fat, for having the wrong coloured shoes, and for the hopelessness of swinging her big arse because no man with any decency would want her. As the dialogue between these archetypical white women speaking a non-standard lower-middle class version of Australian English continues, we see that their condescending attitude to this woman of mixed descent is relentless:

One : She's in trouble with the cops, you know.

Two : Well that's hardly surprising.

One : Got done drink driving.

Two : If it wasn't the drink, it would be the drugs.

One : Went on a grog crawl trying to find herself.

Two : All she lost was good taxpayer's money.

One : Our money.

Two : Yeah, our money.

One : She'll get away with it.

Two : They always do.

One : I never would.

Two : No. Me neither.

One : They get everythink for free.

Two : Bloody oaf they do.

One : And then it ain't enough.

Two : She don't even look it.

One : No. She don't.

Two : She could be anythink.

One : From anywhere.

Two : Hangin' around with them don't make you one.

One : Nobody checks, I reckon.

Two : That'd be right.

One : You know what they say, If you lay down with dogs.

Two : You wake up with fleas. That's what they say.

One : She could be a nice girl.

Two : Yeah. But you can't save them from themselves.

One : No. You can't.

Two : It's not our fault she wants to lie in the gutter.⁶⁵

It is clear from this extract that some Australians of a certain class hold Aborigines in contempt. Section IX lists the benefits of looking down on indigenous people: it allows Anglo-Australians to assume the superior position of arbiter of taste, the high ground of moral decency, and the security of being a law-abiding citizen. However, late twentieth century analysis of conversations about Australian race relations reveals a general shift away from such blatant displays of outright prejudice. Instead, there are more nuanced expressions of white superiority which are still,

nevertheless, built on social Darwinist foundations. This posture of compassionately understanding the socio-economic disadvantages experienced by Aborigines may salve Christian consciences in Anglo-Australia, but it does not necessarily lead to a dialogue based on the assumption of being equal-but-different:

One such discursive repertoire drawn upon by participants to account for the contemporary social problems faced by Indigenous people was an imperialist narrative of Australia's colonial past. Participants organized their talk in terms of a *cultural* hierarchy. Aboriginal problems were represented largely in Social-Darwinist terms as problems of 'fit' and 'adaptation' to a superior culture that was introduced by the British in the course of 'settlement'. Aboriginal people's failure to fit into, or 'gel' with, the dominant culture was viewed in preventing them from improving their status through upward mobility. In this way, Aboriginal people were constructed as culturally inferior, as failing to survive in a superior culture and, thus, as being accountable for their own social and economic disadvantage.⁶⁶

Aboriginal people have developed strategies for dealing with these assumptions of cultural inadequacy. These strategies are individually employed on a case-by-case basis:

I see my options as including:

Ignoring—to walk away

Confronting—to take up the question and challenging the questioner as to their agenda and assumptions

Humour/satire/critique—for example: Question So, you are

1/8 th Aboriginal? Answer: Yeah, my big toe.

Educating—to discuss the diversity of contemporary indigenous identity.

These are combined with varying levels of restraint or retaliation—from a 'fuck off!' to a more measured conversation in which I try to talk with them as another human being and hope that I will somehow change their opinion. ... What I find most offensive is the assumption of 'normality' on which these questions are based. Because I was seen as different to that norm, I felt like I was made to feel abnormal or 'something less than'.⁶⁷

Clearly, there is need for a dialogue between equals, a two-way education of the kind advanced by Mititjulu advocate Bob Randall in the 2006 Melanie Hogan documentary *Kanyini*.⁶⁸

XI.

Section XI is a first person narrative, an account of a critical incident, a report from that place of almost being nothing and not being something. 'I'm sitting in the gutter, taking advantage of the shade of a ghost gum tree as She brushes away flies and remembers her voice. There is a large sandstone rock with brass plaque recording the details of Aboriginal history of that location. There is a swimming pool close by, built on a site associated with burial. Anglo-Australians unknowingly swim here, blithely diving into bones after they pay the two dollar admission charge. A woman with blond hair stands at the monument:

A child scuttles up to her. 'Is this the Aboriginal place?'

'Yes', we think. Say. She and I. Me on my way to learning only

things I know. She having read from tarnished brass.

The child move closer to the rock. Swivels his body around. Turns a quizzical face to us.

'Why aren't they here?'

'We are', I think. Don't say. Looking more like a tourist than seems fair. I close my eyes in reflex. How can I tell this child what has happened? That the trees are more and I am less. I want to say there is nothing left but fragments, and I am one. How do I admit that I can only feel degrees, because my Scottish eyes and Irish legs conceal my Koorri heart?

I blink and find myself alone. The mother and the child do not wait for the answer I can't give. It's my fault, finally. I didn't speak. I slowly stand and move towards the ghost gum. My fingers reach to brush against its smoothly solid trunk. I feel a line of truth between us. These ghosts and part of me. The right part I assume. It's hard to tell. Genes that take live with genes that are. Inside me. Every day. I can't pretend that I'm not an anxious tenant. Landlord? I drop my fingers. They fall against my side. This is not surrender. I just want to find a metaphor that tells me I am something.⁶⁹

This moment of being incapable of articulating the complexities of indigenous identity is the instant that has been framed by the previous narratives of contact between Aborigines and their others. The others are not limited to Europeans and Anglo-Australians, but include internal others, such as the disreputable superstar who uses Aboriginality to seduce and silence others. The experience of being colonized territorially and spiritually is the beginning of an indigenous history of being devalued,

disenfranchised and disorientated as Aborigines sustained a historical struggle for the right to be treated as equals by law, religion, employers and other Australians. Moving on from being nothing, putting fragmentary pieces of indigeneity together, establishing and rebuilding communal ways of connecting to country. Acknowledging the contradictions of having 'settler' and invaded heritage, feeling the way forward to being something which satisfies the aspirations of the Elders in Section XII.

XII.

She: Tell me I am something.

Creation: What something would you like to be?

Elders: A something more than nothing.⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

The connections and contrasts in the twelve sections present a history of post-contact relations as an ongoing tale characterised by the sort of narrative density advanced by Katrina Schlunke: stories of other stories (Section II), stories on stories (the references to Jimmie Blacksmith sustained in Sections III and VII, the implicit comments made in the dialogues of Section IV, VIII and XII) and the story-teller and story blending in a manner that blurs the necessity a neat location for the author-narrator (the multiple appearances of *She* preceding the Section XI appearance of *I*). In a historical sequence of critical incidents in the European experience of Australia from 1614 until the eighteenth century, there is a wry subversion of the stereotypical representation of Aborigines as being somehow inadequate. Tales of Dutch and British shortcomings are

linked by their repetition of 'unable to' communicate: the irony of being unable to ring home (in 1614!), unable to write, and so on. Reinforcing this impression of European incompetence is evidence presented in the letter and recipe sections: although Aborigines were observant enough to be able to watch and learn the white Australian codes, Europeans found the cultural world of Aborigines annoyingly opaque. As Section XI illustrates, Anglo-Australia has no monopoly on being unable to speak.

In the same way that the documentary film *Kanyini* reminds Anglo-Australia that the facts of indigenous socio-economic disadvantage have their roots in white ways and institutions, 'Slight Anthropologies' shows an indigenous history of experience that must be acknowledged in a manner that accommodates difference as something other than less-than.

Endnotes

¹ The work of this paper was conducted during my 2006-2007 sabbatical at the Institute of International Studies, UTS. I would like to thank Dr Kate Barclay for administrative support and acknowledge the encouragement of Professor Stephen Muecke and Dr Katrina Schlunke. In a following paper, I intend to outline how the 'Slight Anthropologies' article employs certain fictocritical strategies in its rewriting of history.

² 'As an international project, Cultural Studies involves a lot of talk about racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, class, generational and national differences (roughly in that order), as these are produced and contested in history.' Meaghan Morris, *Ecstasy and Economics: American Essays for John Forbes* (Sydney: Empress 1992), p. 11.

³ For a comment on the literary turn in political analysis and the political turn in literary studies, see Simon Stow, *Republic of Readers: The Literary Turn in Political Thought and Analysis*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2007). For the reflexive turn, see Marc Bousquet, 'Academic Labor and the Reflexive Turn in Literature and Cultural Studies', *College Literature*, vol. 31 no. 4 (2004), pp. 172-180. On the sensory turn see Constance Classen (ed.), *The Book of Touch* (Oxford: Berg, 2005)

and David Howe (ed.) *Empire of the Senses* (Oxford: Berg, 2005). For a review of these two publications, see Peter Caldwell, 'Sensational studies', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2006), pp. 205-210. For a demonstration of how to write thinking as a corporeal experience, see Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley, trans.) (London: Continuum, 2010).

⁴ *Outskirts: Feminisms Along the Edge* surveys the current theory, practice and pedagogy of fictocriticism:

[http://www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/archive/volume 19/fictocritical_issue](http://www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/archive/volume%2019/fictocritical_issue)

⁵ For an account of the early development of fictocritical writing, see Stephen Muecke, (October - December 2002). 'The Fall: Fictocritical Writing', *Parallax*, no. 25 (2002). pp. 108-112. For an updated alternative of the Muecke account see Helen Flavell, 'Who Killed Jeanne Randolph? King, Muecke or "ficto-criticism" ', [http://www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/archive/volume 20/flavell](http://www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/archive/volume%2020/flavell)

⁶ Deborah E. Reed-Danahay (ed.), *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*, Oxford: Berg, 1997. On the use of narrative devices across a range of disciplines, see Christopher Nash (ed.), *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*, London: Routledge, 1990.

⁷ James Clifford and George Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1986.

⁸ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2 nd ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1983.

⁹ Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. Jan Campbell and Janet Harbord, *Temporalities, Autobiography and Everyday Life*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

¹⁰ Gary A. Olson and Elizabeth Hirsh, 'Starting from marginalized lives: a conversation with Sandra Harding', in Elizabeth Hirsh and Gary A. Olson, *Women Writing Culture*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 3-44.

¹¹ Amanda Nettelbeck, 'Notes towards an Introduction', in Heather Kerr and Amanda Nettelbeck (eds), *The space between: Australian women writing fictocriticism*, Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1998, pp. 3-4. Caroline Small recalls that 'In 1980, the ground-breaking art critic Rosalind Krauss was invited by the *Partisan Review* to respond to a panel called "The Effects of Critical Theories on Practical Criticism, Cultural Journalism, and Reviewing." In her response, Krauss posited that criticism is a species of the paraliterary, a species described as a "space

of debate, quotation, partisanship, betrayal, reconciliation, but not the space of unity, coherence, or resolution that we think of as constituting the work of literature."'

Caroline Small, 'Best American Comics Criticism Roundtable: Won't the Real Lit-Comics Critics Please Stand Up?', <http://www.tcj.com/>, accessed Oct. 23 2010. For her own explanation of the paraliterary, see Rosalind Krauss, 'Poststructuralism and the "Paraliterary"', *October*, vol. 13, (1980), pp. 36-40.

¹² Jenny Weight, 'The future of meaning', <http://mmp.adc.rmit.edu.au/?cat=29>

¹³ Michael Taussig, *Walter Benjamin's Grave*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006, pp. vii-viii.

¹⁴ For example, Michael Taussig, *The Magic of the State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

¹⁵ Stephen Muecke, 'Momentum', in *Joe in the Andamans and other fictocritical stories*, Sydney: Local Consumption Publications, 2008, pp. 106-115.

¹⁶ Katrina Schlunke, *Bluff Rock: Autobiography of a Massacre*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2005, pp. 14-15.

¹⁷ For example, Gabrielle Lorraine Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2007), pp. 11-19.

¹⁸ The 'Slight Anthropologies' article is examined at length in the following section.

¹⁹ Katrina Schlunke, *Bluff Rock: Autobiography of a Massacre*, Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2005, pp. 16.

²⁰ Tim Cross, 'Fictocritical Hakata: Yamakasa Ethos as Corporeal Tradition', *Fukuoka University Review of Literature and Humanities*, vol. 39, no. 3 (2007), pp. 581-629.

http://www.adm.fukuoka-u.ac.jp/fu_844/home_2/Ronso/Jinbun/L_39-3/L_3903_0581.pdf
This structure and range of genres was chosen to comment on theories of structure and agency. 'Fictocritical Hakata' swings from festival rules to experience, back to festival structure before returning to Yamakasa experience. This organization of that paper is intended as a comment on debates about how external structures are internalized to shape experience, at the same time as this socially-shaped experience is externalized in organizational patterns and hierarchies. The notions of habitus, field, and the social, economic and cultural permutations of capital from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) are important here. See, for example Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984). Also of interest is the structuration theory advanced by Anthony Giddens in *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

²¹ Michael Taussig, *Law in a Lawless Land: Diary of a Limpieza in Colombia*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

²² Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (trans. Catherine Porter), (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²³ Yamakasa appears as a motif in a wide range of pop culture texts: film, manga, advertising, rock music, photography, noh, cut paper *kiri-e* pictures. Film: 「陸軍」*Rikugun*, a 1944 production directed by Kinoshita Keisuke at the behest of the Ministry of War as a film commemorating the third year of the Dai Tōa War; 「憎いあんちくしょう」*Nikui anchikushō*, 1962; 「網走番外地/悪への挑戦」*Abashiri bangaichi/Aku e no chōsen*, 1967; 「博多っ子純情」*Hakata-ko Junjyō*, 1978. Manga: *Hakata-ko Junjyō*, 1976-1983. Print and TV advertisements include the appearance of Hosegawa Hosei, creator of *manga* series *Hakata-ko Junjyō*, endorsing Hakata Torimon sweets in Hakata-*ben* dialect. Rock music: Tulip were performing 'Hakata-ko Junjyō' in 1977. NHK serial TV drama: 『走らんか!』*Hashiranka*, 1994. Photography: Suga Hiroshi 1995, Shindō Yukō 2004. The *shinsaku* noh *Hakata Yamakasa* was performed in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2009 in four Fukuoka venues and on a Saga Prefecture stage in 2008. After the initial publication of *Hakata Gion Yamakasa Kirie* in 2004, cut paper *kiri-e* of Konishi Kazuyoshi, <http://www.kirikoboko.com/>, were exhibited in New York in 2007 and continue to feature Yamakasa images. Konishi *kiri-e* also appear on the packaging of *mentai nori* <http://mentai-nori.com/>

²⁴ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 11.

²⁵ Op. cit.

²⁶ According to the Gallery of Maps of the State Library of New South Wales, 'Hessel Gerritszoon was the chief cartographer of the United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, known as the VOC), from c.1617 until 1632. His map is early printed evidence of accidental encounters with Australia's west coast between 1616 and 1622. Dirk Hartog (1580-1621) arrived in the *Eendracht* at Shark Bay in October 1616 and left a pewter plate recording his visit. Willem Janszoon (c. 1570-1638), who first sailed on *Duyfken* down the west coast of Cape York as far as Cape Keerweer in March 1606, made another sighting of the Australian coast on Mauritius at Willems River in July 1618.'

http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/voyages/maps/gallery.html

²⁷ http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/southland/Exp-Accidental_Discoveries.html
Pedantic footnote: Although Fletcher cites the departure date as the eleventh of November 1614, 'In January 1616, Dirk Hartog and his crew of 200 left the Netherlands aboard the 200-tonne VOC (Dutch East India Company) ship *Eendracht*, bound for the East Indies.'

http://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/southland/voyages-1616_Eendracht.html

²⁸ Ronald Paul Hill, 'Blackfellas and whitefellas: Aboriginal land rights, the Mabo

Decision, and the meaning of land', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1995), pp. 303-322.

David Ritter, 'The "Rejection of Terra Nullius" in Mabo: A Critical Analysis', *Sydney Law Review*, vol. 18, no. 5 (1996), pp. 5-33. For an example of how *terra nullius* is being examined in secondary anti-racist education programmes in Australia, see <http://www.racismnoway.com.au/classroom/factsheets/10.html>

²⁹ Michel Serres, 'The Natural Contract' (trans. Felicia McCarren), *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19 (1992), pp. 5-6.

³⁰ Peter Read, *The removal of Aboriginal children in New South Wales 1883 to 1969* (Sydney: New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2006 [1981]). During his terms of office as the 25th Prime Minister of Australia from 11 March 1996 to 3 December 2007, John Howard avoided an explicit apology indigenous Australians. In contrast to Liberal Party member Howard, Labor Party member Prime Minister Paul Keating addressed this history of injustice. After the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1993 to be the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, Keating spoke to an Aboriginal audience at Redfern Park on December 10 1992, saying:

'It was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask —how would I feel if this were done to me?' Sixteen years after this 1992 admission of white injustices, Australian Aborigines received the apology of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

³¹ Activist and musician Peter Garrett is currently a Labor Party politician, serving as the Member for Kingsford Smith and the Minister for School Education Early Childhood and Youth in the Australian government.

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/its-time-to-acknowledge-the-past/2008/02/11/1202578691510.html>

³² http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article_2641366.ece

³³ For details of the National Sorry Day, the Bringing Them Home Report which documented the extent of suffering inflicted on Aboriginal communities by government policies, and the text of the Rudd speech, see <http://www.nsd.org.au/> For one version of the 1992 speech given in Redfern Park by Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating see <http://culturematters.wordpress.com/2008/02/18/paul-keating-on-reconciliation-1992/>

³⁴ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 12.

³⁵ Op. cit.

³⁶ Thomas Keneally's novel, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, published in April 1972, was remarkably timely. It was launched at a moment when the community was on the eve of significant political change, when Aboriginal issues were more prominent than ever before and when racism was a focus of both national and international attention. 1971 had been chosen as the United Nations International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. ... The front credits give audiences two vital pieces of information – that it is "from the novel by Thomas Keneally" and is "based on real events". What is not mentioned is that Keneally took much of his story from Frank Clune's 1959 book, *Jimmy Governor*, although he subsequently carried out research of his own. But what we have is, as writer and film critic Robert Drewe realises, "a thrice-told tale" – real events refracted through the visions of Clune, then Keneally, then Schepisi. It is a complex situation but one that has its foundation on the actual lives of the two brothers of mixed descent, Jimmy and Joe Governor, and their sudden violent emergence from obscurity in the second half of 1900 in central and northern New South Wales.' Henry Reynolds, *Australian Screen Classics: The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (Strawberry Hills: Currency Press, 2008), pp. 4, 5.

³⁷ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 12.

The Trinie Dalton review outlines the plot of the 1978 movie adaptation of the 1972 Thomas Keneally novel: '*The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* is a chilling portrait of a young Australian boy struggling for acceptance in either of the two societies he half-belongs to, the Aborigines and the whites. Based on the life of Jimmy Governor, director Fred Schepisi (*Six Degrees of Separation*) transforms this turn of the century criminal drama into a tragic identity study, as Jimmy is a victim of sheer racism and nothing else. Jimmy, brilliantly portrayed by Tommy Lewis, is a hard-working and intelligent boy who understands two cultures but occasionally mistakenly assumes that they will overlap. His allies, full-blooded Aborigine brother Mort (Freddy Reynolds), and white wife Gilda (Angela Punch McGregor), are the only characters who treat him with the common decency that we take for granted today. Otherwise, we meet Mr. Newby (Don Crosby) and Mrs. Newby (Ruth Blacknell) among others who hire Jimmy for rural tasks and treat him unjustly from the start. By the time Jimmy seeks revenge by "declaring war" on his offenders, the viewer is apt to empathize with his plight even when he resorts to utter violence. The crux of the plot revolves around Jimmy's revenge, and the white society's way of punishing a monster that they, in essence, created.'

<http://www.amazon.com/Chant-Jimmie-Blacksmith-Tommy-Lewis/dp/B-001-EAWMP-6>

³⁸ His mother's father was an Irishman named Jack Fitzgerald, from whom Jimmy

[Governor] is supposed to have inherited his red hair.' Katherine Ellinghaus, *Taking Assimilation to Heart: Marriages of White Women and Indigenous Men in the United States and Australia, 1887-1937*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p. 276.

Katherine Ellinghaus deals with the broken promise of Aboriginal Education in Australia, examines how Aboriginal Marriages were regulated in Victoria, and surveys white Women Married to Aboriginal men, pp. 105-166. Ellinghaus then outlines responses to the 'Aboriginal Problem' in Australia, pp. 189-212.

In locating the marriage of Jimmy Governor in the context of other interracial marriages of the day, Ellinghaus, p. xiv, notes 'Australian white women who married Aboriginal men were usually working-class women who left behind few sources for the historian: Rebecca Forbes, for example, was a cook, married to a horse breaker; Catherine Sharp was a domestic servant; and Ethel Governor was a miner's daughter who was sixteen and pregnant when she married an Aboriginal laborer in 1898.'

For her earlier work on interracial marriage, see Katherine Ellinghaus, 'Margins of acceptability: class, education, and interracial marriage in Australia and North America', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2002), pp. 55-75.

³⁹ The phrase "smooth the dying pillow" was attributed to Daisy Bates who first came to Australia from Ireland in 1880. Over several decades she spent time with Aboriginal people across different parts of Western Australia and South Australia coming to believe they were a dying race.' Patrick L. Dodson, Jacinta K. Elston and Brian F. McCoy, 'Leaving culture at the door: Aboriginal perspectives on Christian belief and practice', *Pacifica*, vol. 19 (2006), p. 256

⁴⁰ Terry Threadgold, *Feminist Poetics: Poiesis, Performance, Histories* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 184. In contrast to Threadgold, the Robert Drewe idea of 'a thrice-told tale' does not examine the newspaper reports from 1900-1901. Chapter 8 of Threadgold analyses texts surrounding the representation of the life of Jimmy Governor. Threadgold proceeds by applying Halliday's work on theme and rheme to extracts from a range of texts and accounts. The work of Stephen Muecke on emerging rhetorical devices that might be better used to represent Aboriginality is mentioned in reference to the literature of Mudrooroo. In 1965 Mudrooroo published *Doin' Wildcat*, the first novel by an indigenous writer. White cynics attacked the work on a number of grounds. Beatrice Faust, co-founder of Women's Electoral Lobby and President of the Abortion Law Repeal Association of Victoria, later accused Mudrooroo of being a 'career aborigine' in 'Focus' of the *Weekend Australian*, 3-4 August 1996, p. 8. Writing in the 7 August 1996 edition of the *Australian*, in an article pointedly entitled 'Mudrooroo's Career', on page 12 Tom

Morton retorts by asking whether Ms Faust would now accuse Thomas Keneally of being a 'career Roman Catholic'?

⁴¹ Threadgold, *Feminist Poetics*, p. 171. With her integration of Critical Discourse Analysis and Cultural Studies, Threadgold demonstrates how ideologies of gender and race lurk in the assumptions that structure the Jimmy Governor-Jimmie Blacksmith texts: 'Keneally's is a crafted, overcoded text, a literary text, but there is little evidence in it that he was able, even as an educated, critical reader, to resist the structuring pressures of the newspaper texts he had been reading when he made the novel, or of the gendered white habitus which he embodied'. Threadgold, *Feminist Poetics*, p. 182. Although it is easy to criticize white authors for presuming to speak for Aborigines, the Keneally novel and Schepisi film generated widespread debates that were important increments in the development of an authentic indigenous discourse about Aborigines. It was obviously not an example of either Aborigines speaking about indigenous issues for homeland audiences or Aborigines speaking about indigenous issues to educate the multicultural audiences of wider Australia. However, having said that, it must be acknowledged that the influence of these two texts was eclipsed by the extremely danceable international hit single of Yothu Yindi, 'Treaty', that asserted indigenous land rights. In 1991 'Treaty' was awarded the Human Rights Commission award for song-writing. For more on the Arnhem Land-based band, including details of their 1988 32-date tour of North America with Midnight Oil, see <http://www.yothuyindi.com/>

⁴² Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 12.

⁴³ Op. cit.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

For an example of the males rites which contain bloodletting, see the three colour photographs of Yuendumu men's business taken by La Perouse community photographer Peter McKenzie in 1988 and 1989: Peter McKenzie, 'From Yuendumu to Paris', *Artlink*, vol. 10, nos 1 & 2 (1992), pp. 77-79.

⁴⁵ Ronald Murray Berndt, *Australian Aboriginal religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), Fascicle Two, p. 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Fascicle Two, p. 12.

The following bullroarer reference is included for Japanese audiences:

'The swinging of the bullroarer signified social recognition of manhood; but it was also swung during female puberty rites for "girls-who-have-reached-maturity". The significance of women in regard to male ritual found mythical expression in a Wik-Munkan belief connected with the Bonefish (boney bream cult): the bullroarer was said to have been found by a mature girl who hid it in a bloodwood tree for

men to swing (McConnel 1935: 67-71, plate I, A). In another myth, the same girl (or girls) said, in reference to this object, "It belongs to us women really, we have found it! But no matter! We leave it for the men! It is they who will always use it!" (*ibid.*: 68-9; 1957: 119-24). In the relevant rite, the "girl" was depicted swinging a bullroarer: this was part of the initiation, and there are other similar examples. In another rite, an actor representing Bonefish emerged from a bloodwood tree holding his large penis, accompanied by his "wife"; symbolically, this meant the "husband's" penis was fanned into creative activity to ensure a plentiful supply of boney bream (*ibid.* 1957: 41). Bullroarers were of four varieties, representing *i* a young girl at puberty; *ii* a more mature girl; *iii* and *iv* a husband and "wife"-one symbolizing a penis, the other a fully-grown woman. Regarding the last, two actors representing husband and "wife" acted out various ritual scenes: in one, the 'woman' lay down and had a wax image of a baby placed on 'her' belly. McConnel, describing this rite, says that it demonstrated the continuity of life through the sexual act and birth, and the bullroarers "reflect the various stages in the development of sex-relationship" (*ibid.*: 1935: 70; 1957: 131-3). Other examples emphasize the sexual nature of these objects.'

Berndt, *Australian Aboriginal religion*, Fascicle Two, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 13.

⁴⁸ Threadgold, *Feminist poetics*, p. 172.

⁴⁹ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 13.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁵³ Schlunke, *Bluff Rock*, p. 119.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The cunning of recognition: Indigenous alterities and the making of Australian multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 43.

⁵⁵ Dodson, et. al., 'Leaving culture', p. 254.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

⁵⁹ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 15.

⁶⁰ James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian people: an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 12.

⁶¹ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 15.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁴ Dodson, et.al., 'Leaving culture', p. 254.

⁶⁵ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', pp. 17-18.

⁶⁶ Amanda LeCouteur and Martha Augoustinos, 'The language of prejudice and racism', in Martha Augoustinos and Katherine J. Reynolds (eds), *Understanding prejudice, racism, and social conflict* (London: Sage: 2001), p. 224.

⁶⁷ Darren Garvey, 'Boongs, Bigots, and Bystanders: Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences of language of racism and prejudice and their implications for psychology in Australia,' in Martha Augoustinos and Katherine J. Reynolds (eds), *Understanding prejudice, racism, and social conflict* (London: Sage: 2001), p. 50.

⁶⁸ After receiving funding from the Japan Foundation, the Japanese premier of *Kanyini* was organized by Noko Film Circle on 2007/11/3. The programme included a discussion led by Bob Randall and an explanatory dance workshop led by Dorethea Randall.

⁶⁹ Fletcher, 'Slight Anthropologies', p. 19.

⁷⁰ Op. cit.