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Mead, J

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Medievalism and Memory Work: Archer's Folly and the Gothic Revival Pile

JENNA MEAD

As the essays in this volume show, medievalism is diffused broadly across mainstream Australian culture, in a range of forms; from early public and domestic architecture, literary and non-literary texts, and right through to contemporary practices in media as diverse as film and computer software. Mainstream Australian culture shares this phenomenon with other post-industrial Western cultures and particularly those with a colonial past that provides a sub-structural link to Britain. As in other postcolonial cultures — India, Canada, New Zealand — medievalism in Australia is an 'effect': the medievalism of Britain, with its tracery of links to similar European cultural forms, appears not as an authentic origin or proof of an immemorial past but rather as a distinctive kind of memory.

This chapter draws medievalism into a purposive and analytical relationship with memory. This is a potentially complex argument and I present it here in a necessarily simplified form. It is potentially complex because of the variety of cultural forms in which medievalism and its sometimes stylish partner, Gothic, are manifested; and it is simplified here in that I focus on only two such manifestations: an architectural feature in the Tasmanian Midlands and an academic discipline practised in some Australian universities. They represent two distinct and circumscribed but, as I will argue, adjacent aspects in mainstream Australian culture; neither makes any claim to speak for 'ordinary Australians' or even 'all Australians', as a popular political shibboleth has it. The claim I make on their behalf is that they are aspects of public culture in

¹ I am grateful to Tony Stagg for research on this essay, to Julia Davis for expert legal advice, and to Mrs Maree Mills of 'Panshangar' who gave me permission to visit the property and was generous in sharing her knowledge with me. My thanks to Ken Ruthven who read an earlier draft; Stephanie Trigg, and the anonymous reader for this volume who also read earlier drafts. My argument here had its beginning in a casual remark in an essay by John Frow for which I am also grateful.

Australia and, as such, each is open to public scrutiny and evaluation; as a corollary, each carries a kind of meaning or value that is publicly conferred. The colonial architecture of the Tasmanian Midlands and the discipline of medieval literary studies practised in Australian universities (usually, the more established ones) both have some valency within what has been called the public imaginary.

A further methodological complexity to any argument about medievalism in Australia is that the specificity of any local manifestation is blurred by the simple fact of medievalism's global economic, historical and cultural range, and the competing specificities of other local medievalisms, in India, New Zealand, or Tasmania, for example. There is a kind of triangulation in play here between the global and the different versions of the local. Or, as Umberto Eco puts it, '[s]ince the Middle Ages have always been messed up in order to meet the vital requirements of different periods, it was impossible for them to be always messed up in the same way'.² These different pressures are apt to strain in contrary directions: while the global necessarily reaches for the summary statement developed out of macro-analysis, the local, also necessarily, conducts a different kind of analysis on a small, precise scale. The methodological ideal of a general principle adduced from the data, an exemplary instance and a reliable set of proscriptive rules is unequal to the particular cultural terms and phenomena under scrutiny; medievalism has no single, unified, methodological core.³ Hence — as these essays demonstrate — the need for critical discourses that make visible the micro-narratives analyzing medievalisms in Australia while also acknowledging the pervasiveness of medievalism's global reach.

In responding to this need, I will use the term 'afterlife' to describe medievalism's circulation in a small part of Australia's public imaginary.⁴ I want to draw attention to the ways in which the (re)use of aspects, fragments, and discourses of medieval culture in a post-medieval present produces an afterlife for that particular medievalism, asserting and breaking a link between medieval past and contemporaneous present. It is this afterlife that asserts the importance of 'the medieval' in mainstream Australian culture despite geographical distance, temporal discontinuity, and historical alienation. Two consequences follow logically: 'medievalism has to do with the *use* of the Middle Ages'; it is instrumental, selective, political; never quite suppressing the untidy politics of its use (emphasis added).⁵ Furthermore, medievalism initiates a reciprocal

² 'Dreaming of the Middle Ages', *Travels in Hyperreality. Essays*, trans. by William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1986), p. 68.

³ Richard Utz, 'Resistance to (The New) Medievalism? Comparative Deliberations on (National) Philology', *Mediävalismus, Mittelalter-Rezeption in Germany and North America*, in *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Roger Dahood (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988), pp. 151–70.

⁴ *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by John Kucich and Dianne F Sadoff (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

⁵ Britton J. Harwood, 'The Political Use of Chaucer in Twentieth-Century America', in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie J. Workman*, ed. by Richard Utz and Tom Shippey (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), p. 391.

process: it 'is the process of *creating* the Middle Ages' (emphasis added); on this count too medievalism is partial, heterogeneous, inconsistent.⁶ My argument here is both interpretively and ideologically charged because it challenges the certainty of received historical opinion, on the one hand, and the supposed neutrality of academic inquiry, on the other. A further challenge is that this kind of argument deliberately eschews the boundary between history and literary studies by drawing attention to the historicity of literary studies and the literariness of historical documents. My argument assumes that what is lodged in the memory of a culture — what I have called its public imaginary — is what is regarded as valuable by that culture and thus, properly, open to challenge and revaluation. Memory is not only part of history but has its own history.

But let me be clear that what follows is simply a reading; in order to draw medievalism and memory together into an argument I offer a reading of two of medievalism's afterlives. My first sifts together two medieval towers and the sparse and ephemeral historical documents pertaining to one moment in the history of those towers; my second reads three documents in what might be called the history of literary studies in Australia and, more narrowly, that history as it focuses on medieval literary studies. For all that readers might want robust argument, solid proof and sensible conclusion, texts, I think, 'are rarely candid'; they are 'unable to tell us all they know — everything about their antecedence, their suppression and evasions, the uses and appropriations to which are, or will be, exposed'.⁷ The question my argument frames is this: what are the meanings exposed by these two afterlives of medievalism?

In 1880, Joseph Archer Esq. instructed W. T. Bell to prepare a public auction of his property 'Panshanger' to be held in Charles Street, Launceston, Tasmania, on Wednesday 1 December. The pamphlet, published and distributed prior to the sale, was printed at the Launceston *Examiner* office and contained descriptions of the house, properties and effects; it also quoted two earlier newspaper features on Archer's properties, 'Panshanger', Burlington and Fairfield:

This delightful residence, the property of MR. JOSEPH ARCHER, is situated to the south-east of the town of Longford, and about eight miles distant. It is surrounded by park-like scenery, and presents a strikingly English and finished appearance [...] while in places the ground is carpeted with sweet violets, which, when in flower in the spring time, form, with lilies of the valley, honeysuckle, lilacs, laburnums, hawthorns, sloes, and other flowering shrubs, such a combination of beauty and fragrance as would be difficult to find elsewhere out of old England [...] Water is raised from the river by a pump, worked by horse-power, to the top of an ornamental tower, from whence an extensive view is obtained, and which can be seen from a great distance rising above the green foliage of the trees [...].

⁶ Leslie J. Workman, quoted by Richard Utz and Tom Shippey, 'Medievalism in the Modern World: Introductory Perspectives', in *Medievalism in the Modern World*, p. 5.

⁷ Paul Strohm, 'Introduction', *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. xii.

The Archers, being originally from Hertfordshire, have given names of various residences in that county, such as Panshanger (the seat of Earl Cowper), to the estates of which they have become possessed in the new country of their adoption, thus affording evidence that the love of home never departs from the heart of the true Briton.⁸

Joseph Archer had inherited the properties from an uncle of the same name who had established himself on two thousand acres in the Longford-Cressy area in the early 1820s. The first Joseph Archer and his brothers had become wealthy squatters: by 1831 Joseph alone valued his estates and stock at over thirty-two thousand pounds, with large property holdings in the Tasmanian Midlands and significant political influence through holding public office.⁹ Archer built a mansion on his property, before 1835, in what is usually described as a classical style that was ‘the epitome of Georgian architecture (derived from early Greek and Roman forms)’.¹⁰ There is some uncertainty as to who designed the house and its associated buildings — Archer himself or his architect, John Alexander Jackson; or whether, perhaps, he ‘procured the plans during a visit to Europe in 1829’.¹¹ An account of ‘Panshanger’ published in the *Mercury*, 20 October 1883, describes the house as ‘the simplest Grecian style’; the front ‘is rigidly classical’ and ‘in the middle of the upper part of the lawn is a fountain supplied from tanks in the top of the square battlemented tower’.¹² Elsewhere the water tower is described as having a ‘castellated parapet’.¹³ The tower with its medieval aspect, provided by its shape and precise crenellation, rises above dense, leafy foliage and a meandering river in Emily Bowring’s 1859 sketch ‘Willows at Panshanger’ now held in the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts.¹⁴

The later Archer found himself in financial difficulties and, while the properties were not sold at this auction, they passed out of the Archer family in

⁸ *Particulars and Description of the Valuable and Desirable Estates of Panshanger, Burlington and Fairfield*, n.p., Launceston, [1880], pp. 7–8, quoting ‘Panshanger’ and ‘Horticulture in Tasmania’, two features by ‘our special reporter’, *The Leader*, 27 March 1875.

⁹ ‘Archer, Joseph’, by G. T. Stilwell, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, gen. ed. Douglas Pike, vol. 1, 17881850, section editors A. G. L. Shaw and C. M. H. Clark (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966; London: Cambridge University Press), p. 24. See also Neil Chick, *The Archers of Van Diemen’s Land: A History of Pioneer Pastoral Families*, artwork Miriam Chick, cadastral data David Archer (Lenah Valley: Pedigree Press, 1991), pp. 110–116.

¹⁰ E. Graeme Robertson and Edith N. Craig, *Early Houses of Northern Tasmania. An Historical and Architectural Survey*, vol. 1 (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1964), p. 156.

¹¹ Chick, *The Archers*, p. 112; cf. Robertson and Craig, *Early Houses*, p. 156.

¹² Quoted in Robertson and Craig, *Early Houses*, p. 156.

¹³ *The Heritage of Tasmania: The Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1983), p. 132.

¹⁴ Image available at State Library of Tasmania <<http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au>>.

1908.¹⁵ Bell's pamphlet includes another item reprinted from a contemporary newspaper, *The Tribune*, 1877.

Of all Anglo-Colonial estates I have visited in Tasmania Panshanger is the most English. The scenery is made up of wood, water, and mountains, green paddocks, cultivated cornfields, lovely gardens, and gravelled walks; also weeping willows bending gracefully over the stream, which murmurs –

Men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.[sic]

This thin little pamphlet, now discoloured and frail in texture, combines the genres of real estate catalogue and newspaper feature. It is a suggestive set of texts that articulates not simply a descriptive account of the properties for sale but also some indication of its meanings and associations for Archer's contemporaries. The language of the description recalls the pastoral diction of early Romantic nature poetry with the rhetorical figure of the onomasticon detailing the horticulture of the country garden. The tower is 'ornamental' pointing to the guiding hand of cultivation shaping both the natural ('water') and the utilitarian ('horse-power') to pleasing and polite effect. The elemental 'wood, water, and mountains' combine with the cultivated 'green paddocks, lovely gardens, and gravelled walks' in a scene almost unique to England ('difficult to find' elsewhere). The flowers and bushes 'carpet' the ground in springtime. The 'extensive view' and 'great distance' suggest a painterly perspective that arranges the 'park-like scenery' into the pleasant prospect reproduced in both William Thomas Lyttleton's coloured lithograph (1835) and another of Emily Bowring's sketches (also 1859).

¹⁵ "'Panshanger" was bought by The Honourable Edward David Mills, of Brisbane for Col. Charles Mills, ancestor of the present owner.' Chick, *The Archers*, p. 196.

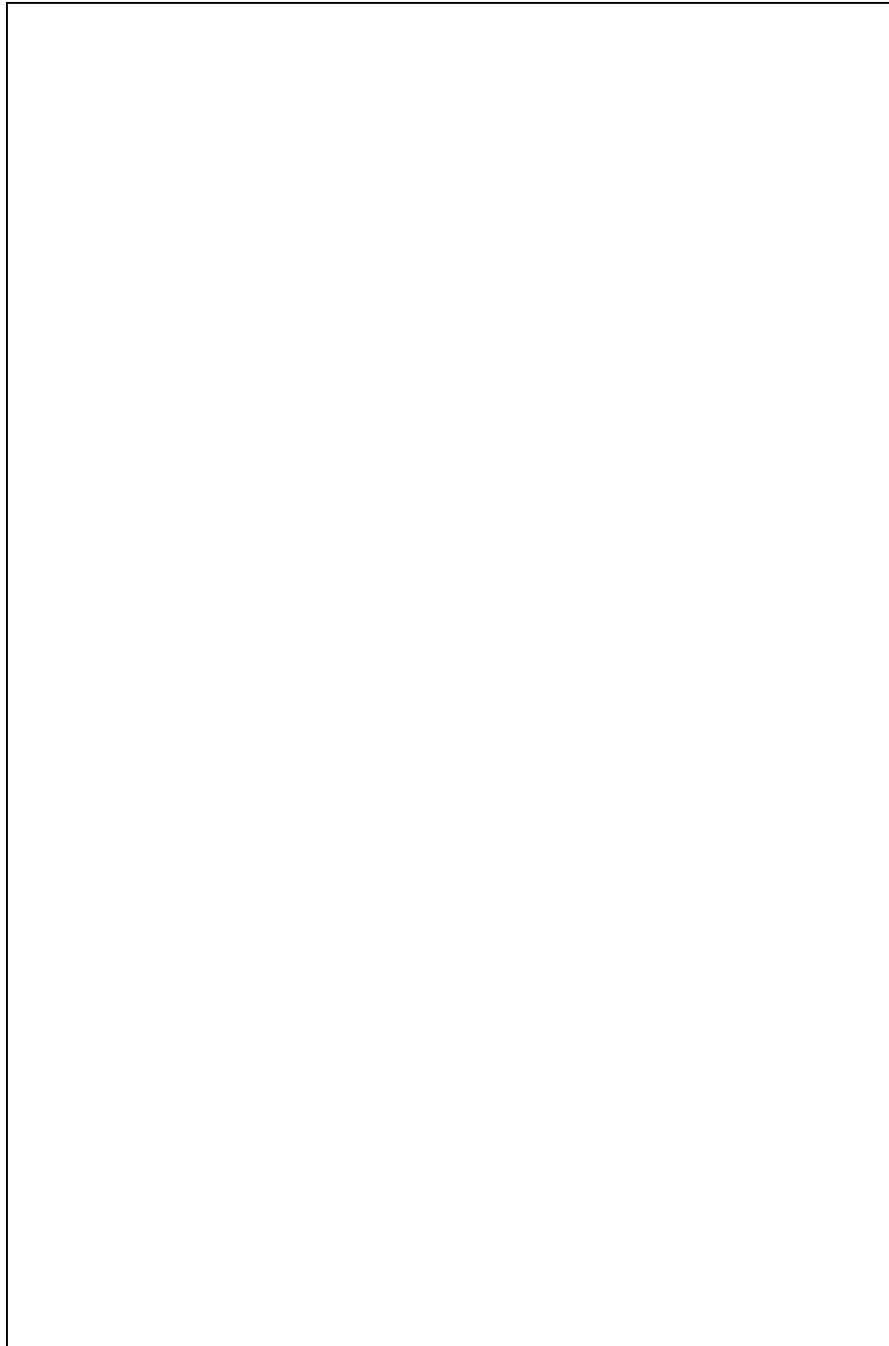


Fig. 1 Emily Bowring, 'Panshanger', *Sketchbook of Tasmanian Scenes*, c. 1859.

'Panshanger' is 'delightful' precisely because of its 'strikingly English and finished appearance'; it is superlative, 'the most English' 'of all Anglo-Colonial estates' the writer has visited — manifesting the civility and gentility of the Archer family's social aspirations, the underpinning of their economic success,

and their national character. There is an Englishness twice removed here: 'Anglo' is the term for English used usually in imperial contexts; 'colonial' underlines the remoteness from the imperial centre. A sense of duty — that quintessential colonial and English quality — prevails here: the property has a 'finished appearance': a 'consummate, perfect, accomplished' (OED) effect that implies devotion to a nostalgic vision, the application of muscular labour, and no want of liberal expenditure. In the person of the Archers, the pamphlet asserts, the reader can be reassured that the inheritors of Hertfordshire have recognized the need for continuity 'in the new country of their adoption' and, thus, have marked the landscape with the place names of their original home. In the Archer family, as demonstrated by their property and wealth, readers have the 'evidence' of a single trait that guarantees 'the heart of the true Briton': 'love of home'.

'Panshanger' is a synecdoche for Englishness — suasive by means of its allusion to Romantic nature poetry but also powerful through its element of surprise: it has a 'strikingly English appearance' that evokes the memory of familiar scenes 'at home'. There is a familiarity and timelessness here too for the scene presented by 'Panshanger' recalls 'old England' though located in a new and strange setting. The couplet from Tennyson's 'The Brook' coalesces these connotations of continuity, duty, home, and national character by invoking the figure of England's poet laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson, the Prince Consort's favourite and the mythologist of English imperial prowess (an ode on the death of Wellington appeared in 1852 and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' in 1854). Tennyson's couplet works as a tagline: the 'weeping willows' manifesting a trace of melancholy, at the loss of home, to strengthen the conviction that 'I', the personification of Englishness, 'go on forever'.

This is language that reveals much: it is the diction of the popular press and commercial enterprise, an admixture of sensational appeal with a keen sense of offering an exciting business opportunity. Similar expressions of popular taste appear in other Tasmanian country houses, public buildings and architectural decoration, as they do elsewhere in Australia. To a large extent, this is generic diction in that it is the conventional language of the medium: note the appeal to class markers in the allusion to 'the seat of Earl Cowper' in Hertfordshire where Joseph Archer's father owned and operated a mill.¹⁶ But that same conventionality should not blind us to the layering of affect and acumen that prevents the language becoming flaccid or effete. For the lasting impression here is that of mastery: this is the language of the successful colonial enterprise that has tamed the native soil, reduced indigenous barbarities and (re)produced a convincing version of England. The measure of this success is the complete absence of any alternative discourse: neither gum tree nor hot sun, brutal landform nor cacophonous birdsong, strange flora nor outlandish fauna appears here. These are the 'other' tropes of colonial Tasmania familiar from, for example, popular sensational novels of the mid- to late nineteenth-century such as 'Oliné Keese's' *The Broad Arrow; or, Passages from the Life of Maida Gwynnham, a Lifer* (London 1859, Hobart 1860) or Marcus Clarke's *His*

¹⁶ Chick, *The Archers*, p. 113.

Natural Life (serialized 1870–72). Instead, time-honoured Englishness displaces newly-found exotica. ‘Panshanger’ with its parapet tower is both a memorial to ‘old England’ — hence the melancholy of remembrance (as a memoration¹⁷) — and the interlocking of loss and desire, ‘the love of home [that] never departs from the heart of the true Briton’.

But the afterlife of Archer’s battlemented tower does not end with Bell’s catalogue, for Archer had not been content with just one ‘tower glimpsed through the trees’¹⁸ and on an adjoining property called Burlington he had commissioned a truly remarkable structure. In 1957, Michael Sharland, the early and influential cultural historian of Tasmanian landscapes, visited Burlington to see ‘Archer’s Folly’, a dovecot, now known as a pigeon tower,¹⁹

which takes the form of a tower some 60’ high, adorned with battlemented crest and a curious inverted roof that matches its ancient architecture. It is, one could say, a veritable fowl castle, very definitely elevated from the status of an ordinary fowlhouse, and the way it was fitted out showed that the owner not only made a feature of his poultry but also took considerable pride in accommodating them adequately.²⁰

In Sharland’s vision of the Tasmanian Midlands, Archer’s ‘medieval tower’,²¹ situated on the south bank of the picturesque Macquarie River, has an historical valency but he can also appreciate the possibly parodic ripple produced by the conjunction of its elements:

One would never find so dignified a ‘fowlhouse’ now. Its mellow colours — brown and red and rain-stained grey — are typical of age, and this is emphasised by the prolific growth of ancient lichen on the walls. Disused and empty and scarred by decay, it nevertheless forms a striking feature in the lush meadows along the river that mirrors its weathered masonry and the blue range of the Western Tiers behind. There are buildings as old as this, but few have remained for more than a century free from the devastating touch of those who would convert them to the requirements of modern times.²²

In the absence of surviving architectural plans or a diary with entries recording his hopes and plans, it is difficult to know what Archer thought he was doing with his two towers on either side of the river. Does a ‘fowlhouse’ dressed up as a medieval castle suggest some ancestral sense of humour, or is this Gothic such

¹⁷ John Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 229.

¹⁸ Stilwell ‘Joseph Archer’, p. 24.

¹⁹ See, for example, *Heritage of Tasmania*, p. 131.

²⁰ Michael Sharland, *Stones of a Century* (Hobart: Oldham, Beddome & Meredith, 1957), p. 45.

²¹ Michael Sharland, *Oddity and Elegance* (Hobart: Fullers Bookshop, 1966), p. 76. See, for example, Joan Kerr and James Broadbent, *Gothick Taste in the Colony of New South Wales* (Sydney: The David Ells Press in association with the Elizabeth Bay House Trust, 1980).

²² Sharland, *Stones of a Century*, p. 45.

as we might see almost anywhere in Australia? This second medieval tower — referred to simply as ‘an ornamental tower’ that is part of Lot 2 in Bell’s catalogue,²³ absent from some pictures of the property such as Bowring’s ‘Willows’ sketch, while displacing the water tower in others such as Lyttleton’s coloured lithograph — complicates Archer’s medievalism. Sharland’s perhaps droll account nevertheless retains the intimate connection between property and person, evidenced in Bell’s catalogue, whereby the fowl house shows us the man: demonstrating ‘that the owner not only made a feature of his poultry but also took considerable pride in accommodating them adequately’. This tower is unambiguously medieval: ‘a veritable fowl castle’ with ‘ancient architecture’ and ‘battlemented crest’; its ‘weathered masonry and the blue range of the Great Western Tiers behind’ suggesting the ruin that is a typical detail of the Gothic.

For Sharland there is not only a sense of pastness preserved in Archer’s Folly but also of modernity resisted: the tower survives despite ‘the devastating touch’ and ‘requirements of modern times’. Sharland’s tone is delicate here — ironic, nostalgic, pragmatic. There is a genuine affection for the ‘fowl castle’ and a sense of relief at finding something ‘[d]isused and empty and scarred by decay’ whose ‘mellow colours’ are ‘typical of age’. That relief derives, in part, from Sharland’s having found what he has been searching for: not only does the Midlands ‘hold more objects of historical and romantic interest’ than elsewhere in Tasmania but, more importantly, ‘the Midlands are yielding these links with old times, with our domestic history, our folk lore and legend’.²⁴ Age, ruin, lichen-covered stonework — these are all palpable traces of continuity. ‘[O]ur links with old times’ are tangible; ‘our folk lore and legend’ are not new; they are ‘old’. Archer’s medievalism shifts from being a metaphor for Englishness transported to ‘the new country of [his] adoption’ to an historical one standing for ‘our folk lore and legend’. In Sharland’s medievalism, the afterlife of Archer’s Folly provides the conditions for a cultural history that shares the desire for Englishness evident in Bell’s catalogue. But it does so with a self-consciousness typical of 1950s Anglophile Australia — basking in the afterglow of the newly-crowned Queen Elizabeth’s Royal Visit in 1954, vehemently debating the existence of a national literature and caught up in what would later be called ‘the cultural cringe’ that denigrated anything ‘Australian’. The sign of this conflicted relationship between identity and Englishness for Sharland is that in his medievalism the event of colonial transposition is occluded: the medieval tower stands for ‘*our* domestic history, *our* folk lore and legend’ (emphasis added). If, in the afterlife documented by Bell’s catalogue, Panshanger and its towers ‘remember’ an English cultural genealogy by memorializing the desire for that genealogy, then for Sharland that same afterlife makes possible the act of forgetting the intervening act of severance separating Tasmania from that originary Englishness.

Thirty years later, the afterlife of medievalism in Tasmania still intrigued Australian cultural analysts. Gathering together traces of medievalism, extremity

²³ Bell, *Particulars and Description*, pp. 12–13.

²⁴ Sharland, *Oddity and Elegance*, p. 76.

and intensity, and inflecting them with a sense of insouciant parody, Jim Davidson characterized Tasmania — ‘an island of high latitude, of mountains, lakes, mists, clouds and rain; of wastes of awesome scenery, tempestuously mocking the homely allusions made by the early settlers’ — as ‘our own little gothic repository’.²⁵ Davidson’s Gothicism, spotted with references to ‘feudalism’, ‘Merrie England’ (p. 307), and ‘the Old Country’ (p. 311), foregrounds what Sharland’s medievalism had sought to deny, namely, the rupture between past and present, colony and centre, communal tradition and fragmentary modernity. Tasmanian Gothic:

proves to be a synthesising vision, since it can accommodate disjunctions between past and present, even thriving on them, settling them down in a common landscape [...] the slaughtered Aborigines, the downtrodden convicts, and hunted species like the diminutive Tasmanian Emu and the gothically named Tasmanian Tiger. The colony was cradled in excess, grew up with the constraints of intricacy in landscape and social arrangements, and today delights in odd juxtapositions. Thus, while it may sometimes seem to sustain neo-Georgian notions of gentility, it also has a wonderful way of sabotaging them. (p. 310)

Here this afterlife of medievalism moves into another register. In Davidson’s backward glance from late twentieth-century cultural commentary to eighteenth-century Gothic, it is a literary trope that provides the ‘synthesising vision’ he wants to see; that same trope provides Davidson with both a metaphysical and affective discourse for Tasmania. The generic Gothic’s over-investment in sublime landscape, hyperbolic sensation and, thus, a subject’s emotional equanimity gives Davidson a way of mapping the atmospherics of the Apple Isle and the people who call it home. It is the extremity of Tasmania that calls for ‘gothic intensity’ (p. 311); ‘it is the low-keyed gothic of the grotesque that remains in evidence today’ (p. 318); ‘Tasmanian gothic does not mean merely picturesqueness, or a pleasing aesthetic treatment of past sorrows, but also a great deal of continuing pain, muddle, and a sense of defeat’ (p. 312).

The Gothic provides Davidson with a psychopathology that he uses to read a series of literary works (chiefly novels and a biography) and a recent film that chronicle Tasmanian life. Commenting on Peter Conrad’s memoir *Down Home: Revisiting Tasmania* (1988), Davidson argues that ‘part of the island’s gothic character [...] arises from the fact that the past, whether acknowledged or not, is constantly intercessed with the present’ (p. 318). In the afterlife that is Davidson’s Gothic, with its recurrent medieval details such as David Herbert’s ‘late flowering of medieval sculpture’ in the social grotesques on the Ross bridge, the past insists on being remembered: the repressed insists on returning. The work of memory is distorted by the past’s refusal to remain past and thus, in some way, manageable, however disturbing the memory. It is this distortion that is rendered in Davidson’s Gothic as the past — the cruelties of the convict

²⁵ Jim Davidson, ‘Tasmanian Gothic’, *Meanjin*, 48 (1989), 307–24, p. 310. For a critique of Davidson’s underpinning of Romanticism, see Amanda Lohrey, ‘The Greens: A New Perspective’, in *The Rest of the World is Watching*, ed. by Cassandra Pybus and Richard Flanagan (Chippendale: Pan, 1990), pp. 89–100.

system, the genocide of indigenous peoples, the extinction of native animals, the enervating depression of economic decline, the poisonous parochialism — erupting into and juxtaposing itself with an ongoing present trying to imagine a future.

Whilst, in the case of *Down Home*, the specific point of opposition to Tasmania is the metropolitan centre of Oxford, it is Conrad's identity as Tasmanian, rather than a putative Englishness, that is at stake. In this afterlife, Davidson's Gothic medievalism is a therapeutic discourse: like the 'synthesising vision' into which he sees the Tasmanian cultural landscape resolve its extremities of climate, topography, and history, Conrad is finally 'cured' of his 'adolescent rage to invent myself' (p. 319). Mimicking the gestures of his parents, unconsciously as he realizes, and seated between them like some medieval grotesquery, Conrad resigns himself to remembering what he used to be and discovers, on his return to England, that 'Tasmania had even infiltrated the literary scenery of England: "from where else had I derived my liking for Celtic faerylands and Gothic bogs?"' (p. 319). At this moment, Conrad's memory of Tasmania and his recognition of it in the English landscape deconstructs the binary opposition between Englishness and Tasmanian identity that has been played out in the (re)use of aspects, fragments and discourses of medievalism's afterlife I have been reading. Tasmania has moved from the rude colonial periphery to appropriate the centre of the familial heartland that Bell's sale catalogue had called 'home'; 'another England'²⁶ has come to displace the original England, reconstructing that original in the image of Conrad's own home.

Writing about memory, Freud comments that:

our memories — not excepting those which are most deeply stamped on our minds — are in themselves unconscious. They can be made conscious; but there can be no doubt that they can produce all their effects while in an unconscious condition. What we describe as our 'character' is based on the memory-traces of our impression; and, moreover, the impressions which have had the greatest effect on us — those of our earliest youth — are precisely the ones which scarcely ever become conscious.²⁷

This is suggestive at the rhetorical rather than the scientific level: it's not, I think, that the afterlife of medievalism I have been tracing may be subject to the empirical stages of dreaming that Freud is hypothesizing. Rather, this afterlife, in its producing of medieval effects, its reuse of fragments or traces of the cultures of the Middle Ages, its 'messed up' quality (as Eco called it), iterates, in different and heterogeneous ways, that passing from unconscious into conscious manifestation that Freud sees as the *point* of memory. How such memories enter the unconscious is a separate intriguing question but not the one I confront here. My focus is on that moment at which the various medievalisms at work here,

²⁶ Stilwell, 'Joseph Archer', p. 24.

²⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'Psychology of the Dream Processes', *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by James Strachey [*Standard Edition*, vols IV–V] (New York: Avon Books, 1965), p. 578.

from Archer's twin towers and Bell's catalogue, through Sharland's cultural history and Davidson's cultural generics, to Conrad's memoir, stage a series of anxieties about 'our "character" [that] is based on the memory-traces of our impression'. It is the afterlife of medievalism that provides the means – the discourses, images, concrete objects, the passing of time, the movement in place – for the dynamic negotiation of those anxieties about 'character' that change from, in Archer's towers, that 'form of melancholia caused by prolonged absence from one's country or home' (*OED*) we call 'nostalgia' to Conrad's witty and insightful realization that in travelling back to the Home country what he recognized was the meaningfulness of his own home country.

While Peter Conrad's memoir uses a strategy and achieves a realization that we have come to recognize through postcolonial theory – as the imperial relation of colony to centre is deconstructed to disclose new power relations – the language of *Down Home* owes nothing to this mode of analysis. For complex and half-submerged reasons, this is one of the suppressions or evasions, as Paul Strohm terms them, of Conrad's text; perhaps because, in Conrad's lexicon, the notion of irony – rather than ideology – helps nuance the intricacies of his relationship to Oxford and Englishness. Conrad's memoir is a personal document that enters the public domain through its genre and the act of publication whereby private work becomes public text. It aims to represent a private self to a public audience and it shares this permeable boundary between public and private with those other texts I have been reading. Similarly, Bell's sale catalogue is printed and distributed to advertise a public sale by invoking private witnesses; Sharland's cultural history is built incrementally out of his own personal experiences of the Tasmanian Midlands to form a public expression of community genealogy; Davidson's cultural generics is sifted together out of his own readings of novels, memoir and film to fill what he perceives is a gap in the public's perception of things Tasmanian. But the strategy of address in these texts – their use of an individual voice positioned as or close to a first-person speaker – makes it difficult for them to use what has become the powerful language of analysis for postcolonial questions of nation, identity, and memory. In Australian contexts, the language of postcolonial critique is usually, and rightly, reserved for indigenous black speakers; it is not available to white settler speakers.

Where public institutions are under scrutiny, however, the situation changes. I want to turn now to another afterlife of medievalism to offer a reading of its relationship to memory that discloses a different set of meanings. In 1960, in an essay called 'Medievalism and Australian Culture',²⁸ John Gilchrist, a historian, articulated an attitude that had circulated as axiomatic in mainstream Australian culture and its public institutions. Gilchrist's polemical claims for medievalism may produce something of a shock some forty-five years later and I am quoting his essay here not to suggest that his view was universal but rather that its articulation is typical. This is the language of a particular aspect of educated, middle-to-upper class Australian culture during the period after Australia's

²⁸ John Gilchrist, 'Medievalism and Australian Culture', *Twentieth Century*, 14 (1960), 293–301.

participation in the Korean War (1950–53) and before its collaboration with the US in the Vietnam War (1962–71). The essay is shadowed too by the Cold War in which Australia is co-opted by means of its Anglo-American and Anglo-European affiliations. It comes from a period marked by post-Second World War migration, which was mainly British and European, and prior to the migration from Asia and the Middle East that began in the 1970s. The particular version of the Middle Ages it constructs — a conservative Catholic Middle Ages given the hegemonic dominance by the Church as the primary socio-economic, political and cultural force — coincides with a sectarian politics in which the muscular White Anglo-Saxon Protestant mainstream was played off against a vehement Catholic (mainly Irish-Catholic) minority in public and private sectors of Australian cultural and political life.

Gilchrist aims to intervene in a cultural debate underway during the late 1950s about the relevance of medieval history (his own discipline), the dominance of modern history (posited as the opposing discipline of history available to be taught but actually a figure for modernity) and a recent ‘complaint’ about ‘the “invasion” of Australia with American culture on the one hand and the continued reliance of this country on the conservative British culture on the other’ (p. 295):

In a country located geographically in Asia but whose culture is European-based, it is equally necessary to possess a knowledge of European history as of Far Eastern [...] Asiatic studies have a place in Australian universities and, by implication, in its culture, but to argue that because Australia’s nearest neighbour is Indonesia, therefore the schools ought to teach Indonesian and drop French and German shows little knowledge of the historical and psychological bases of the Australian education system.

Thus medieval studies in this country could have a different value and effect from that which would generally be imagined, not necessarily from their subject matter but because their presence indicates a change in attitude, almost an intellectual revolution among those responsible for planning the education of the nation. It would indicate a desire to deal with the feeling of rootlessness that characterizes Australian society, and would mark a change among those who believe that intellectual humanism, and liberalism, is the only habit of thought worth cultivating. (p. 296)

This essay only barely conceals its anxiety about race by conceding Australia’s geographical location before hastening to invoke a hierarchy whereby ‘Asiatic studies’ ‘have a place in Australian universities’ but are a distant second to European languages because of ‘the historical and psychological bases of the Australian education system’. This is an argument about origin that draws on the historical facts of white settlement that are (apparently) beyond contention combined with a sense of conviction and rightness — ‘psychological bases’ — that shape the education system forming the nation’s citizens. Nominating Australia as a ‘European’ culture, Gilchrist claims a genealogical descent from that source and its cultural heritage that not only *is* right but *feels* right. ‘It must also be remembered that Australia is essentially European in origin and therefore

has its roots in the Middle Ages as much as, say England, France, or Germany' (p. 293). Australians, Gilchrist argues, need to remember who they really are. Further, since medieval studies are the guarantee of Australia's 'European-based' culture, medievalism is a purposive and instrumental, rather than abstract, knowledge that has political and cultural agendas. It is used to teach what Gilchrist calls 'the Australian' (p. 296) to think and feel — to remember — 'his' heritage, his identity, and his Europeanness. Medievalism, then, identifies 'the Australian' as European, white and male and it is with the appearance here of the gendered subject that medievalism is drawn into a (now familiar) struggle that threatens to ambush the main argument. The strategic move to assert genealogy and heritage implies the corresponding need for the policing of those racial boundaries and the preservation of those bloodlines. There is, as Australian readers will recognize, a covert threat of miscegenation for which the essay is unable to find a discourse and reaches, instead, for the language traditionally associated with genealogy — that of 'roots' and family trees. Thus the malaise of 'rootlessness' that an education system based on the heritage of Catholic Europe and Reformation England will cure by preventing Australia from taking root in and engendering close ties with non-Christian (i.e. non-white) Asia. In this afterlife, medievalism is deployed as overtly political in its use and essentially definitive of Australian culture; it is a medievalism that depends upon and mobilizes (race) memory.

While Gilchrist's argument urges Australians to remember their European heritage and consequent identity, it depends upon an act of forgetting that, until 1993, underpinned Australia's formation as a nation state and, very precisely, the question of what the nation's heritage might be. The events of British/European invasion and colonization do not trouble Gilchrist's account of Australia's history nor, at least in this essay, its education system. But there is a trace of anxiety produced by this act of forgetting or repression which, in the intervening years between Gilchrist's essay and the three relevant legal decisions (*Mabo v Queensland* 1986, *Mabo v Queensland 2* 1993, and *Native Title Act* 1993), became a defining aspect of Australia's national identity and brought the easy assumption of Australia's European heritage into question. In establishing the circumstances for his polemic, Gilchrist refers to his hearing of the 'complaint' that Australia has recently experienced an 'invasion' of American culture. It is this word 'invasion' with its sense of 'infringement by intrusion', 'encroachment upon the property, rights, privacy', and 'incursion with armed force' (*OED*) that recalls the legal fiction of *terra nullius* — the eighteenth-century presumption, following Roman law, of Australia's being an unoccupied land, that the acquisition of sovereignty over the country was legitimate and thus the rights of any traditional owners were extinguished²⁹ — that enabled the other, far more significant, invasion of Australia by British forces to the lasting detriment of its indigenous peoples. The point is not to castigate Gilchrist's essay for its ignorance of legal argument that had not yet

²⁹ See entry under 'Mabo', Garth Netheim, *Oxford Companion to the High Court of Australia*, ed. by Tony Blackshield, Michael Coper, and George Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 446–48.

occurred but rather to draw attention to the unselfconscious and naturalized way in which his claims on memory are made and to understand that Gilchrist's medievalism is not, as he feared, irrelevant to the work of Australian universities in forming the nation's cultural heritage. Instead, this same medievalism, with its recall of European heritage and its idealization of that historical period as exemplary in 'teaching' the lessons of the past occupies a privileged position in terms of cultural and national formation by forgetting — repressing — the 'facts' of Australia's national history. In this afterlife, medievalism, practised as an academic discipline but also shaping the education system, becomes a powerful conservative, anti-modernist and anti-liberal force that does not operate serendipitously but rather, as Gilchrist's argument makes clear, as a purposive, deliberate and cogent program. It performs what we might call, by analogy with Freud's account of the processes by which dream thoughts are censored and manifested in dream content, memory work³⁰ and aims to manage national anxiety and psychic conflict.

The urgent need to critique the ideological régime such as that discernible in Gilchrist's collaboration of the political conservatism of medievalism's afterlife and its colonial project guides the argument of Leigh Dale's study *The English Men: Professing Literature in Australian Universities*.³¹ I am less concerned with the detailed history Dale provides of the formation of the discipline of English in Australia — fascinating and compelling though that material is — than with the discursive possibilities initiated by Dale's study. *The English Men* is an account of disciplinary history but its terms are situated squarely by the acknowledgement that Australia is a postcolonial nation and its public institutions, in this case its universities, are formed by this historical datum. 'Poetry, politics and Englishness' is its opening phrase and the study aims 'to contextualize the well-documented interpellation of the colonial and postcolonial reader through and by literary texts, by describing and analyzing the protocols of the institutions in which those readings have been given a forceful and lasting legitimacy' (p. 5). Drawing on scholarly accounts of both the 'social mission' of English formalized by Matthew Arnold (Baldick) and postcolonial critics of the academy (Viswanathan and others) Dale seeks to write 'not a "history" in the conventional sense: the aim is not to reconstruct personality or event so much as it is to read critical and institutional texts within the *contexts and conditions of their own making*' (emphasis added) (p. 7). So, the postcolonial analytical frame is structural rather than superficial, axiomatic rather than optional: it is the condition of Australia's having been a colony and now confronting its own postcolonial cultural formation that shape Dale's terms of analysis. Thus, in the context of Australia's postcolonial status, Dale describes the 'long-held affiliation to cultural and intellectual regimes of

³⁰ Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Part IV, pp. 311–546 and Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, trans. by James Strachey, ed. by James Strachey and Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), especially Lecture 11 'The Dream-Work', pp. 204–18.

³¹ Leigh Dale, *The English Men: Professing English in Australian Universities* (Toowoomba, Qld: Association for the Study of Australian Literature, 1995).

Englishness' she sees as formative in the academic discipline of English in Australia, as hegemonic. At the same time — and here is the intelligent reach of Dale's analysis — 'hegemony involves the *minutiae* of daily life: our language and our bodies brought into conformity with institutional expectations' (p. 6). The result is a nuanced reading of the history of English in Australian universities, responsive to the Arnoldian project that saw English as a means of inculcating imperial values, colonial citizenship and class allegiance, the radical destabilizing of authority that was consequent on attempts to pursue that project in the Australian context, and the often conflicted subjectivities produced by the uncertain success of that same colonial project, as it was overtaken by Australia's often uncertain and fraught reformulation as a postcolonial nation.

If we accept Dale's argument for the foundational importance of postcolonial critique as a mode of historicizing the formation and practice of knowledge in Australia³² then the question arises as to what a postcolonial medievalism might look like? Bruce Holsinger, writing in the US journal *Speculum*, argues that '[p]ostcolonial studies has had an explicit and self-acknowledged presence in medieval studies for nearly a decade now'.³³ Holsinger deconstructs the apparent opposition between postcolonial theory (as a critique of modernity) and medieval studies (as the study of the premodern): a commonplace in arguments against the use of theory in a traditionally empirical discipline. He does this by uncovering the theoretical and methodological debt to medievalism owed by perhaps the most powerful of the anti-imperialist historians, the Subaltern Studies group. His argument uses an illuminating set of examples from both *Subaltern Studies*, the journal initiated in 1981 by the group around Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, and others, and the seminal critique of the group's work, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', published in *Subaltern Studies* by Gayatri Spivak in 1985. For Holsinger, this relationship between postcolonial theory and medieval studies is exemplary: 'the group's writings thus lay out a historiographical project which, if admittedly partial, remains nevertheless rich in comparativist heuristics for a postcolonial medievalism' (p. 1209). It is the Subaltern Studies group's engagement with medieval studies — their borrowing of theories, methodologies and arguments from medievalists, especially the *Annales* school — that enables them to identify 'the subaltern' that underpins their critique of coloniality. Far from medieval studies practising theory belatedly and 'from the margins', 'the work of the Subaltern Studies group [which] has engendered some of postcolonial theory's most urgent conflicts, keywords, and historical reclamations over the last twenty years' (p. 1209) has proceeded from the medievalism that lies deep at its centre.

Having mapped a genealogy of postcolonial medievalism Holsinger then turns his attention to the often highly trained and highly successful medievalists hidden in the careers of such theorists as Mikhail Bakhtin, Umberto Eco, Julia

³² For an alternative argument, see Louise D'Arcens, 'Europe in the Antipodes: Australian Medieval Studies', *Studies in Medievalism*, 10 (1998), 13–40.

³³ Bruce Holsinger, 'Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies and the Genealogies of Critique', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 1195–1227 (p. 1207). Holsinger also uses 'postcolonial medievalism', *passim*.

Kristeva, and Hans Robert Jauss, Hegel in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Max Weber's dissertation and first book, Martin Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift*, French avant-gardists before and after World War II such as Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan (*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lecture 7), later work by Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and so on. Holsinger's argument is that in 'forgetting' these intellectual genealogies, '[w]e risk forgetting the vital historical role that our methods and disciplines have played in the elaboration of the critical languages that have in turn transformed the human sciences over the last several decades. We forget these particular histories at our own, considerable cost' (p. 1225). This argument owes little to the strategy of identifying the subaltern but a great deal to another deconstructive move characteristic of the Subaltern Studies group, in particular, and postcolonial theory, in general: the decentring of the metropolitan, the marginalizing of the centre, the 'provincialising of Europe' or, in this case, the medievalizing of 'theory'. This is a radical defamiliarization of the history of theory — at least from the point of view of medievalists — that might enable a rethinking of disciplinary relations, if not disciplinary boundaries.

The point I want to draw attention to is that the afterlife of Holsinger's medievalism is mobilized by an act of memory: one that is supplementary to and thus destabilizes traditional histories of the human sciences by remembering that medievalism is central, not marginal, to the intellectual formation of some of its most powerful practitioners. This is a postcolonial medievalism that calls for another kind of disciplinary history — one that 'remembers' what has been forgotten and, on the basis of that memory, reshapes the traditional history from which medieval studies is a rigorously empirical and only belatedly theoretical discipline energized by "'modes of self-marginalisation" that [it] eternally enjoys perpetrating against itself" (p. 1198) into one that can imagine 'anti-imperialist historiographies' (p. 1227). Memory has a strategic role here; as does its reciprocal act of forgetting which operates less as omission ('to omit or neglect through inadvertence', *OED*) and more as 'determined by an unconscious purpose'.³⁴ Forgetting its implication in the development of postcolonial theory enables medieval studies to remain hermetically sealed in, for instance, an afterlife of anti-Modernist antiquarianism. Holsinger's argument puts pressure not only on the different taxonomies of memory and history but also on the relationship between memory and history; a relationship that has a history of antagonism but that has recently undergone significant change and from which memory has emerged as 'a subject in its own right [...] [raised] to the status of a historical agent'.³⁵

And it is an historical agent that I want to conclude by reading the work of memory in one final example of this second afterlife of medievalism in Australia — the 'Preface' to David Matthews's book *The Making of Middle English, 1765–1910*, published 1999.³⁶ Here the distinction between private and public

³⁴ Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 202.

³⁵ Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69 (2000), 127–50 (p. 136).

³⁶ David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English, 1765–1910* (Minneapolis and

texts circulating in the public domain is, if not erased, then made faint since Matthews's 'Preface', while being written in the first person, precedes and thus frames his disciplinary history of Middle English as an academic discourse. A preface is the 'introduction to a literary work, usually explaining its subject, purpose, scope, and method' (*OED*) and thus has generic links to the medieval and scholastic form of the academic prologue or *accessus*³⁷ and here the 'Preface' takes over from the *accessus* the function of identifying the author. As Alistair Minnis understands the trope, naming the author of a work (the 'efficient cause') is of primary importance because 'authentic statements — statements which can be attributed to a named authority — are more worthy of diligent attention and to be committed to memory' (p. 9) and, in all three kinds of academic prologues or *accessus*, the *nominem auctoris* followed the introduction to the work's title and sometimes included a short *vita auctoris*. What is at stake here, in medieval literary theory, is the issue of the authority claimed by or attributed to an author — the measure of which is whether the author's text is sufficiently valuable to be repeated by being remembered. Identity, the authority to speak and memory are each played out in Matthews's 'Preface' but here the work of memory is not that of storage and retrieval by the systematic procedure of memory³⁸ that underpin medieval academic learning but instead another kind of memory work in which forgetting is 'an integral principal' and 'memory has the orderliness and the teleological drive of narrative. Its relation to the past is not that of truth but desire'.³⁹ Matthews's study of academic medievalism begins in this way:

Working through *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* some years ago as undergraduates at the University of Adelaide, South Australia, a fellow student and I came to the line 'Towres telded bytwene, trochet ful þik'. George Turner, leading the seminar, stopped us and asked us where the nearest example of such an architectural feature might be found. The question left us both perplexed. Not only did we not know the answer, the question itself seemed obscure. There are no medieval castles in Australia; the text was not about the things we knew, and its very otherness was the reason we had gone onto the advanced course in Middle English. What was the nearest bit of England, where such things are to be found? Was that what we were being asked? Altogether the question seemed to be one of those tricks in which the literature and history of the Old World abound. The answer to the question seemed to be sneakily unstraightforward, and the person who answered it likely to be caught, just like Gawain. We kept quiet.

London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

³⁷ A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984).

³⁸ See Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³⁹ Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture*, p. 229.

The answer was that the nearest *towre ful pik* was about two hundred yards away, on top of the Mitchell Building, a Gothic revival pile then serving as the university's main administration block (p. ix).

The language casts Matthews's memory of himself and his fellow student as two knights-errant confronting a riddle, posed by a sage, that impedes their progress but that, if solved, will take them one step forward toward whichever grail it is that they seek. Perplexity, obscurity, otherness, the 'sneakily unstraightforward' are the 'tricks [...] of the Old World' that serve as obstacles to these two students, trying hard not to be 'caught'/'kaʒt'⁴⁰ — like Gawain — as they search for the answer on their quest in the New World. If Gawain's dilemma is the conflict between his own desire, 'for gode of hymseluen',⁴¹ and the obligation to honour his 'trawpe'⁴² then what is being learned here in the architectural detail of a Gothic revival pile that is, surely, over-determined?⁴³

The narrative that memory work produces in Matthews's medievalism recalls a loss and mourning that are familiar: '[m]y education led me, as it happened at a very early age, to an appreciation of medieval literature, but even that deep appreciation could not smooth over the rift that seemed to divide me from this culture deriving from elsewhere' (p. x). This is the colonial melancholia inspired by Joseph Archer's two towers; just as it recalls the affective relationship between literature and 'the *minutiae* of daily life' to which the lives of *The English Men* drew our attention. Likewise, Matthews's claim that his book 'comes from the margins' where 'the story [of Middle English] becomes visible' (p. x) rehearses Bruce Holsinger's deconstructive reversal of margin and centre and the result is a coherent narrative to account for the history of a British Middle English being written by an Australian for a US publisher. But the desire which this text is unable to speak, the *telos* toward which this narrative moves exposes the question that is at stake here: not, where is the nearest *towre ful pik* but what 'trawpe' authorizes Matthews to speak at all? This anxiety is answered by the shortest and simplest sentence in the text. 'We kept quiet' (p. ix). This is a fraught moment marked by silence — unlike Peter Conrad's eloquent and enabling Tasmanian gothicism. Neither Matthews nor his companion remembers the neo-Gothic pile just two hundred yards away; each has forgotten that quintessential Englishness for which such architecture is iconic in the Australian imaginary and which Michael Sharland worked so assiduously to remember. The effect of memory work has been to bring to consciousness a rupture between the un-self-conscious certainty of John Gilchrist's traditional role for

⁴⁰ 'And syþen karp with my knyȝt þat I kaȝt haue', *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, 2nd edn rev. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, 1972), p. 34, l. 1225.

⁴¹ '□et laft he not þe lace, þe ladiez gifte,/ þat forgat not Gawayn for gode of hymseluen.' *Sir Gawain* ll. 2030–31.

⁴² 'For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start no more/Til þyn ax haue me hitte: haf here my trawpe'. *Sir Gawain* ll. 2286–87.

⁴³ For this particular use of 'over-determined' see Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 318.

medievalism in Australian culture and the now self-conscious contemporary meanings of such a medievalism. So Matthews's quest is to find an authorized speaking position since the substitution of medieval heritage for invasion history as the foundational narrative of national identity and subject formation is no longer tenable and the consequent need is for an anti-imperial historiography. The afterlife of medievalism, in other words, provides a discourse — albeit a conflicted discourse — which stages this negotiation between official history and collective memory, national identity and subject formation, public imaginary and private self, and here, between teacher and student. It is the persistence of this discourse, the manifest usefulness of medievalism, and the iteration of its afterlife that teaches us that such memory work speaks to questions of the meaningfulness in authority and identity that, for the historiographies of postcolonial Australia at least, remain both contested and urgent.