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Rita Wilson
Carlotta von Maltzan
(eds.)

Spaces and Crossings

**Essays on Literature and Culture
in Africa and Beyond**

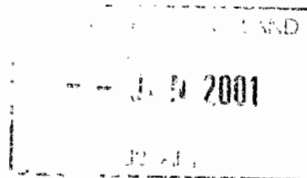


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Introduction

This volume of essays contains a selection of papers presented to an international, interdisciplinary conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in June 1998. The theme of the congress - A Sense of Space - has proved extraordinarily fruitful in all the fields of literary and cultural analysis represented here. Many of these essays aim to displace considerations of space from a temporal metaphor where history reigns and authority and control resides in whoever is writing the history, to a more spatial metaphor where local and more expanded territorial contexts may show cultures in simultaneity rather than in succession.

Recent years have seen a shift in focus from poetics oriented towards categories of time to approaches which tend to give precedence to categories of space. The concept developed in the Renaissance of a measurable, linear time which creates the possibility of causal connections has become obsolete. In its place modern physics has long since developed the concept of a fourth dimensional *Raumzeit* in which "each individual has his own personal measure of time, that depends on where he is and how he is moving" (Hawking, 1988: 33). Such an idea of space-time demands a (re-)examination of the terms in which time and space are distinguished. The ordering of the world in the twentieth century seems to be governed by topological rather than geometric spatiality and by geneological rather than causal-linear temporality. Accordingly, reference is made, for example, to Bakhtin's concept of the chronotopos, to Einstein's theory of relativity and to Foucaultian genealogies.

The interdisciplinary approach of many of the scholars whose work appears in this collection lends itself to the most divergent uses of the words *space*. In reading these contributions, we are constantly reminded of the relationship between imagination, memory and space/place:

If imagination projects us out *beyond* ourselves while memory takes us back *behind* ourselves, place subtends and enfolds us, lying perpetually *under* and *around* us (Casey, 1993: xvi-xvii).¹

Space is perceived from the body outward, and in that perception the physical and the mental are fused. Vincent Hope's essay supports physicalism: perceiving an

object is having a bodily power, not a disposition. The power is *being able to be able* to control bodily position by that of an external object. He gives two illustrations: seeing something and hearing something. One knows one sees something by knowing one can look at it, and one knows one hears something by knowing one can listen to it. Looking is controlling eye-position by the place of a colour: it implies seeing. Listening to a sound is hearing its place and so being able to control orientation to it. Hope considers two objections: that one can perceive without being able to move; and that one can perceive without perceiving an object's place or position.

These complexities are reflected in the spatial indications built into language, where not only the physical and the mental, but also the natural and the cultural are fused. The bodily grounding of reference does not really fix the centre. In certain languages there are "two patterns of use, an action-relative one in which the cardinal terms designate directions relative to a speaker-addressee ground, and an absolute usage in which they designate fixed cosmological places" (Hanks, 1990: 14). In his essay Bill Engel implicitly addresses some of these questions as he explores just how real and enduring are the repercussions of what is actuated through translation. While his study is grounded initially in texts and social practices of the so-called Golden Age of Translation during the time of Shakespeare, its concerns are more far-reaching, and speak to our own Age of Transformation. For Engel, Martin Heidegger's analysis of truth in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' provides a way of establishing valuable co-ordinates to investigate the implications of a translator having 'a poetic awareness of words.' Recourse to the techniques of the age-old 'Arts of Memory,' coupled with an awareness of, if not a recovery of, traces of cultural memory embedded within commonplace phrases and clusters of proverbial wisdom, can propel our ideas toward finding, toward bestowing, grounding, and beginning - the real work of truth.

Questions of truth, fiction and language permeate John Barth's writings. Barth is obsessed with the mechanics of fiction writing. It is thus not surprising that, in his fictions, language lends itself to an expansive investment of the chronotype, the literary space-time, in what could be termed an imagination of deep space. Loes Nas investigates the spatial imagination at work in some of Barth's later novels and short stories, and offers explorations of mirrors, doubles, labyrinths, arabesques and chaos theory as points of departure for understanding how the expansiveness of perceived space exercises Barth's cultural imagination.

Visual and verbal discursivity now constitute the world. Instead of tangible entities, texts furnish our realities. The digital world has become a new order of powerful persuasion by making itself convenient for our consumption; everything we can

think of has a designated place in the catalogue of textual items and what we can think of is not so much an expression of the power of subjective desire as a function of what is made available, what is on the shelf. People, too, are shelved (housed) in a digital way. There are no physical domestic or private spaces, there are only digital images which are designed to make the people/characters 'feel comfortable and warm'. But the digital mediation is hidden, and, though all-pervasive human consciousness is poorly equipped to register the concealed discourse of digital management. Digital data flow also produces a peculiar paradox when it becomes the sole mode of communication in a particular society. A remainder of the old humanist consciousness resurfaces through the flow of information in the guise of a catastrophe voyeurism: the incessant delivery of data not only results in the quantitative consumption of meaningless catalogues of items, but also in a qualitative alteration of our faculties of judgement.

Not unrelated to the textual nature of the new reality are such features as seriality, replaceability, and iterability. Gerhard van der Linde examines some of these aspects in his article on the ways in which two non-traditional literary detectives map the spaces through which their investigations move. The two characters base their investigations upon instinct and intuition, rather than logical reasoning, and they arrive at solutions through an existential immersion into the spaces of investigation.

Literature, generally, Mikhail Bakhtin asserts, is intrinsically chronotopic: it fuses space and time, with time predominant. And yet, the spatial does not recede in literature, first because its words, though inescapably time-sequenced, are laid out in a syntactic pattern that correlates to spatial organization and orients the words as the body orients space. Space thus retains its place in the chronotopic, and, by a kind of doubling motion, the literary work not only implies a space, tending towards the deep-imagining that Gaston Bachelard spells out for it. In other words, literature engages space not a-temporally, but with deep reference to the co-ordinates of its own time. Literature can in fact serve as an instrument to expand those co-ordinates. In this context, David Coughlan attempts to visualize how the space of intertextuality may be structured, how we might describe its contact with the non-textual, and what occurs when a space which embraces so many differing historical periods, cultures, and languages intersects with the world. Referring to the works of such authors as Umberto Eco and Paul Auster, Coughlan argues that placing textual space in the world creates tensions between the necessary limitations imposed by physical embodiment, and the space of textuality's natural tendency towards connection and inclusiveness. The nature of these limitations

becomes a matter of importance once we realize that textual space is also an extension of our social space, and that its ability to blur margins leads to a greater openness in the spaces of society.

The relationship between social and literary spaces is the subject of much of the work of Pier Paolo Pasolini, the Italian film-maker and writer, who is often regarded as one of the twentieth century's most outspoken and politically radical homosexual figures. The aim of Derek Duncan's essay is to examine the body of writing Pasolini produced while living in the region of Friuli in the 1940s before the public revelation of his homosexuality forced him to flee to Rome. Duncan argues that Pasolini's work constitutes a complex expression of homosexuality through the construction of Friuli as a queer space that makes homosexual desire possible. Pasolini uses a variety of prisms (literary, political, familial) to render the landscape of Friuli expressive of a desire which at that historical moment had no alternative (less indirect) means of expression.

Another author for whom spatial conditions are intimately bound to political conditions that govern the conditions of discourse and narrative is J.M. Coetzee. In his novels, space and the portrayal of women are intimately connected. James McCorkle outlines how space, narrative and identity are constructed. As Magda writes in *In the Heart of the Country*, "Does a woman looking through the window into the dark mean anything?... I live inside a skin inside a house. There is no act I know that will liberate me into the world" (Coetzee, 1982:9-10). To teach Friday 'h-o-u-s-e' is to teach him the prison of language, the prisoning of space. To leave the house - of language and state - is an emancipating act. Coetzee's use of textual forms - diaries, letters, and accounts - demonstrates how, in contrast to expansive perspectives of space, spatial relations may be expressed as forms of confinement, imprisonment, marginalization, erasure or silencing.

Visually, the inextricable, socially constructed space occupied by women is critically reviewed in the work of contemporary American sculptor George Segal. Traditional representations of women in outdoor settings have tended to identify the female with the idyllic locale in which she is located, and evocations of an elemental condition of bliss have been effected through suggestions that woman is herself a sensuous or primordial terrain. But, Brenda Schmahmann argues that Segal's works upset this tradition by representing environments that are only ambiguously idyllic or 'natural', and female nudes who merely refer to, but do not actually embrace, the identities which would be usual in representations of an Arcadian milieu (such as goddess or nymph). Segal's images offer an ironical engagement with a traditional theme, and their similarities to works from the past serve to make their differences from those works especially conspicuous.

Referring to recent theorizing about space, place and landscape, many of the novels discussed in this section relate to Carter's notion of 'spatial history' which acknowledges the role of space in shaping history in contrast with 'imperial history' that privileges time above space, reducing space to a stage and paying attention to events unfolding in time alone. Yet, space and time are intimately joined, especially in the wake of Einsteinian physics. 'Before' and 'behind' transpose easily from space to time; the past is behind, the future before. 'Before' and 'behind', through their relation to time, can shift their reference from static direction points to engaged activity. This is powerfully demonstrated in Alexander's Moore's chapter on the functions and transformations of the 'mapping metaphor'. Moore reaches the conclusion that the mapping metaphor is a demand for the reduction of a text to a small number of basic elements which can serve as an uncontested foundation for future debate. However, these scenes of 'argumentative stabilization' can also provide the space for historiographical openings, as is eloquently shown in Moore's discussion of South African imperial space.

Louise Viljoen's article argues that the a-chronological structure of Wilma Stockenström's novel *The Expedition to the Baobab Tree* displaces the focus from time to space. The story is narrated by a slave woman in early colonial times. She spends most of her life as a slave in a city on the East Coast of Africa, but after the death of her master she accompanies his eldest son and friend, 'the stranger', on an expedition into the interior of the continent. The expedition ends in disaster and she is finally on her own, finding a home in the trunk of a Baobab tree. Viljoen concludes that, in the representation of the different phases of the slave's life, space is transformed into place. The relation between domestic space, African landscape and women's autobiographical writing is the subject of Elsie Cloete's contribution, which examines women's autobiographies from two ethnic areas in Kenya. Cloete notes that Kenya is one of the most written about and filmed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and that while the singular lack of critical material on its autobiographers is ironic, it may also be a reflection of the space Kenya inhabits in the rest of the world's imagination. It is almost as if there is the desire to persist in believing popular settler perceptions of Kenya as a 'kind of African Eden' or as the land of 'perpetual European summers' (Huxley 1957: 7). Cloete, thus attempts to redress the non-space indigenous women autobiographers inhabit.

Johan Jacobs' essay considers debates about 'national allegory' being the appropriate mode for postcolonial fiction. It asks whether such novels about transparently fictional new nations as Shiva Naipaul's *A Hot Country*, Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Timothy Mo's *The Redundancy of Courage* and Yasmine Gooneratne's *The Pleasure of Conquest*, contribute to the general project

of transforming our inherited notions of history, or whether they do not instead collude individually with what Said has called a regime of essentializations and thereby collectively with a critical and theoretical Third Worldism. Are these allegorically mapped and named fictional countries simply versions of the same, essential *terra postcolonialis*? A question which is implicit in Lucy Frost's chapter in which she describes how, long after colonial occupation has passed, a colonial residue may remain hidden, veiled. In Australia, an historical amnesia which began with Federation (1901) and continued into the 1960s attempted to write the Aborigines out of the text of nation, thus reinscribing textually the vanishing of bodies which the nineteenth-century colonists believed would literally, physically, disappear. In her essay Frost examines the colonial expectations of vanishing, and then argues for a cultural pre-occupation with vanishing white bodies in narratives written by non-indigenous Australians since the 1960s. It considers Australia as an instance of a nation's inhabiting a post-colonial or post-communist space where there is a strong desire to break radically with the past, and yet an awareness that it is the past with which one must begin.

As W.J.T. Mitchell puts it, 'the representation of landscape is not only a matter of internal politics and national and class ideology but also an international, global phenomenon, intimately bound up with the discourses of imperialism' (1994: 9). By using the 1906 expedition to the Ruwenzori Mountains in East Africa as a case study, Hermann Wittenberg demonstrates how the African interior, and in particular mountain landscapes, can be understood as a seam against which emergent imperial cultural values could be constituted. In examining the significance of an obscure and remote mountain range in the African interior for metropolitan European audiences at a period when the British Empire was at the pinnacle of its power, Wittenberg stresses that mountains and mountaineering played a not insignificant role in contemporary politics and culture. The way mountains were imagined, written about, mapped, photographed and climbed provides an insight into the contours of late Victorian and Edwardian imperial ideologies.

The reverse journey, from Africans northwards, away from the desert and into the green heart of old Europe, is the topic of Alida Poeti's essay. For many of the 'new immigrants' described in this chapter the journey north leads further and further 'into one's personal South'. With the journey comes the slow realization that all those who come from the South of the world remain, in one way or another, clandestine. The 'South' is a state of mind, a physical and moral condition that must be overcome if one is to find one's place in the 'happy enchanted land', i.e., Italy. This land, perceived by the African immigrants as a mythical place of freedom, prosperity and easy living, all too often turns out to be 'a hive of iniquity,

moral turpitude, corruption, degradation, violence and waste' for those who cannot rise above the obstacles of immigration into a foreign, alien culture. Those who succeed in claiming a space in this hostile environment still face the danger of losing their own cultural identity; therefore, the ultimate challenge is to redefine an inner and outer space where they can be uniquely African and European at the same time.

Lekan Oyegoke's essay broadens the discussion around the role of spatiality, temporality and postcoloniality, and considers their import in such constructs as 'African writing', 'African literature' and their regional and national manifestations: for example, 'East African writing', 'South African literature'. The play of signifiers in literature and modern literary studies seems comparable to juggling. The essay notes the essential binarism of Michel Foucault's heterotopology and theory of space. It tries to show how both the African space and its cultures are sites of territorial contest, and how in literature a house becomes a sign and a formula for self-retrieval and sociopolitical harmony.

'The days when I was young ...', '...the things you remember from childhood'-these phrases written in relation to the childhood conditions of the protagonists of the two novels, *Nervous Conditions* and *The Smell of Apples*, draw our attention both to childhood itself and to the contribution of memory to constructing a cultural space of childhood/adolescence. In this chapter Ann Smith and Claudia Mitchell explore the ways in which childhood occupies a 'space' - indeed, 'spaces' - in some Southern African fiction in relation to possibilities for personal and social change. The idea that childhood occupies a special social space in the fictional practices of African literature is, of course, not new. As Florence Stratton points out, writers (male), such as Camara Laye in *The African Child* and Ngugi in *Weep Not, Child*, explore the colonized child as emblematic of the process of acculturation. More recently the state of childhood in Africa has been described as emblematic of misery, although as is often pointed out, the material and social conditions of South Africa since 1976 have meant that childhood has also come to be linked more directly to political activism and social change. Women writing of the development of girls, as in the case of Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta and Tsitsi Dangarembga have, in a sense, expanded the possibilities of what the child space might mean, to include it as one that is also gendered.

Can a perspective be articulated in terms of the discursive structuring of personal space, that is, of the way in which it is structured by the warring forces of countervailing (and seldom symmetrical) discourses? Bert Olivier argues that this would imply that, following Foucault, one could speak of the epistemic-cratalogical structure of social space, which would enable one to grasp the constitution and

interpellation of the subject as a body in space by means of the 'marks' left on the body by its specific mode of inhabiting or traversing this space - which ineluctably involves inter-discursive tensions, conflicts, struggles or other relations. This seems to be suggested by various considerations including Foucault's notions of 'genealogy', 'discourse' and of the 'subject' in terms of power-knowledge and of the effects of history on the body.

Once the South African colonial state's site of exile, Robben Island now fills an equivalent function for the postcolonial nation as a site of displaced memory. The desire to place the island's past at a remove from the mainland's present, revisits the Foucauldian notion of displacement and containment as a question of displacing and containing apartheid history. No longer does the risk of contagion come from a leprous touch or a prisoner's agitation, but from a past that needs to be physically relocated in order to be psychologically finished. Helen Kapstein's essay looks at the imbrication of specifically South African concerns in a global tourist economy - an economy in which local sites take on enormous national and global meaning. More generally, the essay addresses the construction of geographic and national spaces, mobility between spaces, and the concept of site-specificity. It also raises questions about memory and forgetting in the process of nation-building, and the making of history through the identification of historically-laden sites.

Ileana Dimitriu hypothesizes that Nadine Gordimer's 1982 lecture, 'Living in the Interregnum' reflects not only her practice in the years of the struggle, but also suggests a yearning for the freer social space beyond the struggle, when the civil imaginary would again become a major subject. In arguing for a modification of what has almost become the standard political evaluation of Gordimer, Dimitriu's study returns the emphasis to a revindicated humanism, a critical approach that, by implication, questions the continuing appropriateness of anti-humanist ideology critique at a time in South Africa that requires reconstitution of people's lives. The shift in reading for which Dimitriu argues is based on the philosophical concept of the civil imaginary and on the main tenets of social psychology, and focuses attention on a contemplative field of human process and choice that has remained a constant in Gordimer's achievement.

Many aspects of Jane Taylor's text *Ubu & the Truth Commission* and the multimedia production of the play by William Kentridge and the Handspring Puppet Company in 1997 are already present or suggested in Jarry's text and *mise en scène* of 1896. Noting that the South African *Ubu* is an adaptation, not a translation of *Ubu Roi*, Jill Daugherty describes Jarry's revolutionary use of stage space. She goes on to discuss how Kentridge has developed some of his ideas and introduced others made possible by modern theatre and cinematographic

techniques. Authentic texts from TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) hearings are skillfully blended with the text adapted from Jarry. Puppets are used for all but the two main characters, but Jarry's theatre was closely allied to puppet theatre. Finally, Daugherty concludes that all the innovations are therefore in line with the French playwright's conception of theatre.

The collection of essays included in this volume present a large variety of approaches to the representation of 'space' and its role in cultural practices. Whilst some essays deal with aspects of (post) colonialism, mapping and identity formation, others grapple with the positionality of 'in-between', as well as with the complex issues of multiculturalism and intertextuality. The spaces of art, beliefs and institutions are examined, as are the intellectual and artistic activities involved in articulating and defining 'a sense of space'. It is not a book of theoretical positions, nor can it be defined according to any one particular or cultural ideology. We would prefer to describe it as a book of tendencies, broaching the fantastic and sexual dimensions of cultural spaces and cultural production, issues of marginality and power, hybridity, gender, identity, ideology, technology.

Rita Wilson/Carlotta von Maltzan

Notes

¹ He goes on to say: "Just as imagination takes us forward into the realm of the purely possible - into what *might be* - so memory brings us back into the domain of the actual and the already elapsed: to what *has been*. Place ushers us into what *already is*: namely, the environing subsoil of our embodiment, the bedrock of our being - in - the - world. In imagining and remembering, we go into the ethereal and the thick respectively. By being in place, we find ourselves in what is subsistent and enveloping".

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Terra Nullius and Australia's Vanishing Bodies

Lucy Frost
University of Tasmania

'In the political life of our time', as Benedict Anderson famously puts it, 'nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value'; it is the cultural artefact to which people become deeply attached as members of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991: 3). Within the territorial and social space delimiting the boundaries of a nation, imagining is necessary to nation-ness because 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson, 1991: 6). One of the distinguishing features of nation-ness, whatever the nation, is a narrative of originary moment, a narrative encompassing a range of stories about 'how it all began'. In 'settler' societies, the narrative gathers together stories of how our ancestors arrived and acquired the land we have since made our own. The British were well-practiced before they sent their first convicts to Botany Bay in 1788, and in spite of initial disasters and the frequent pain and absurdity consequent upon ignorance and poor planning, in spite of the prolonged turnaround time for reports and messages moving to and from the centre, in spite of the insalubrious character of many colonial officers, the success in rapidly translating British culture to the Australian continent was little short of phenomenal. Of course there was physical resistance from the Aboriginal people who fought against their dispossession (Reynolds, 1982, 1995). There has been as well a textual resistance within the process of translating into Australian circumstances a paradigm of colonial arrival and settlement. To acquire the land for settlement, something had to be done about the Aborigines. The dilemma's logic was clear: land belonging to the Aborigines could not belong simultaneously to the British. The textual solution was to impose the powerful language of law, not in the vernacular but with the full majesty of Latin, and to declare the land *terra nullius*, belonging to no one, to no body. And what about the people already living there, the Aborigines? Again, an abstracting intellectual solution – the Aboriginal people could be imagined collectively as a vanishing race.

If the colonial narrative had followed the trajectory of the paradigm and had closed as expected, the Latin *terra nullius* should have turned into an English 'our place'

as the space delimiting Australia's imagined community. Instead, a trope of vanishing situated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within a confident narrative of empire is now being deployed to express anxiety among the heirs of empire. Uneasily rises the thought: perhaps Australia remains *terra nullius* — perhaps the act of conquest and the laws of possession have not bestowed upon the settler body a final possession of 'our' place.

A vanishing Race

It was as a vanishing race that nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century settlers often imagined the Aboriginal bodies who inhabited the desired land. Many of their texts, from the privacy of diaries and family letters to the bureaucratic language of administration, are saturated with assumptions about the indigenous people as subject to fate, members of a race who during the process of colonization must inevitably die out, disappear. What settlers saw in their everyday lives appeared to support these assumptions: during the first fifty years of settlement in New South Wales (including the present state of Victoria) and Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), the numbers of indigenous people seemed in radical decline. Little is known, however, about Aboriginal population levels at the moment of colonial encounter. For the present state of Victoria, pre-contact figures were accepted at cautiously low levels of 11,500 to 15,000 until 1983 when the economic historian N. G. Butlin used fragmentary evidence and demographic simulations to model an estimate of at least 50,000 and possibly 100,000 (Broome, 1983; Butlin 1983, Critchett 1990). The language for imagining the indigenous people as a vanishing race was inflected from the 1840s on by new scientific theories of race which constructed an essentialising model of polygenesis wherein racial differences are absolute. Polygenesists argued that a plurality of races should be understood as a plurality of species. 'Debates about race' says Robert J. C. Young, 'revolved around whether or not the different races were in fact polygenetic, that is species as different as men and monkeys' (Young, 1995: 101). When polygenesis was allied with the evolutionary theories expounded during this same period, each species could be allocated its own, distinctive historical trajectory, including its own fate. This alliance was not inevitable nor was it universal among the racial theorists of the second half of the nineteenth century, but in Australia it played a reassuring role for the settler population. They could see themselves as essentially *different* from the Aborigines, and could imagine for the indigenous people a destiny of doom consequent upon *that* difference of race (species), rather than a destiny meted out by colonization (British history). Nothing could be done for Australia's Aborigines, whose vanishing was as inevitable as that of Stone Age man. As late as 1927, Walter Baldwin Spencer, who held the

foundation chair of Biology at the University of Melbourne (1887-1920) and was Australia's first anthropologist of major international stature, maintained this evolutionist stance: 'Australia is the present home and refuge of creatures, often crude and quaint, that have elsewhere passed away and given place to higher forms. This applies equally to the aboriginal as to the platypus and kangaroo' (Spence and Gillen: vii). What Russell McGregor calls 'the doomed race theory' permeated the writings and practices of scientists, public policymakers and administrators, clergyman and missionaries, educators, humanitarian reformers, and the general public:

For the greater part of the past two hundred years, white Australians believed the indigenous inhabitants doomed to extinction. It was not that extinction was considered possible, or probable, or contingent upon certain courses of action; nor was it merely that Aboriginal numbers were observed to be declining. Extinction was regarded as the Aborigines' inescapable destiny, decreed by God or by nature (1997: ix).

For those settlers distressed by the prognosis of doom, 'what was needed from governments and missionaries was to "smooth the dying pillow"' (*Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* 1997: 28).

Pervasive though this ideological position, it never held exclusive sway. From early in the nineteenth century there were people quite aware that the real force threatening to extinguish an Aboriginal future was not God or nature, but the British colonial enterprise. In 1828 the Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land, George Arthur, ensured that the proclamation declaring martial law be sent to magistrates accompanied by a letter which insisted:

the Government puts forth its strength on this occasion by no means whatever with a view of seeking the destruction of the Aborigines; on the contrary, it is hoped, by energetic and decisive measures, and by punishing the leaders in the atrocities which have been perpetrated, that an end will be put to the lawless and cruel warfare which is now carrying on, and which must terminate in the annihilation of the Natives (in Reynolds 1995: 109).

At the end of Arthur's punitive expedition known as the Black Wars, the Aborigines remaining from the tribes of what was now Van Diemen's Land were taken to another, small, island in Bass Strait, and 'Arthur constantly expressed his expectation that the exiled Aborigines would be well fed and cared for, telling the Colonial Office that he was "willing to make almost any prudent sacrifice that may

tend to compensate for the injuries" inflicted upon them' (Reynolds 1995: 175). By delimiting the space for Aboriginal bodies within the larger territorial space of the settlers, the Aborigines would have a future. Containment became widely accepted as a government policy to ensure Aboriginal survival, even though Arthur's pioneering effort had turned into disaster for the Aboriginal exiles, and might have been a warning. A century after Arthur's project, a clergyman who had for thirty-two years held the post of Protector of Aborigines, first in Queensland and then in Western Australia, could write in his book, *A Despised Race: the Vanishing Aborigines of Australia*, of a 'child race', and propose segregation as 'the only hope for the remnant of the race' (Gribble 1933: 19).

However self-serving the concerns expressed by Arthur and Gribble may appear in hindsight, their hypocrisy is mixed with what I read as heartfelt pain. These were men who knew what colonization was doing to the displaced people, and were troubled by a sense of responsibility and guilt. They acknowledged that a political agenda – not God or nature – was threatening the indigenous peoples with extinction. Among the settlers from earliest times were those deeply troubled by conscience, by a 'whispering in our hearts' (Reynolds 1998). Courageous, and largely forgotten, men and women at great personal cost spoke out, refusing the quiescence of the doomed race theory and attempting to include a future for Aborigines in a community imagining itself in the space which came to be marked not 'British colonies' but 'Australia'. In the constitution which constructed nation in 1901, provision was made for a regular and systematic accounting of 'Australians' through the taking of a national census. From this census, Aborigines were excluded. This exclusion powerfully underscored assumptions about a vanishing race. Settlers who had by now been for generations in physical possession of the land continued the discursive project of displacement. There seems an extravagance of colonisation in this effort, an excessive need to get rid of the bodies of a foe already quelled.

By the 1930s, however, questions were being asked about the rationale for deleting the present Aboriginal population from Australia's text of nation. Scientific rationale underpinning the doomed race theory had shifted noticeably, and the signals given out to the public began to change. In 1934, Frederick Wood Jones, professor of anatomy at the University of Melbourne, broadcast on ABC radio a series of talks offering a taxonomic account of scientific research into Aboriginal bodies. The talks were subsequently published as *Australia's Vanishing Race*. Both the methodology and the book's title echo nineteenth-century versions of race, but Jones has broken the nexus between race and evolution. Jones introduces his book by situating as outmoded a position which he first describes as 'customary attitude' rather than scientific theory, and which he then castigates

morally: 'Not so long ago the customary attitude was that nothing could be done for the aborigines. It were best that they should die out and with their death we should forget the wrongs done to them' (1934: 6). Woods then dons the mantle of scientific researcher who as a public intellectual can conclude by asking for social change. With rhetorical flourish the scientist expresses in language inflected with a Christian narrative of a sin and redemption his hope that 'before it is too late a more enlightened policy will prevail and that Australia's Vanishing Race will cease to vanish and, at long last, redeem Australia's reputation in this matter of dealing with the people upon whose ancestral hunting-grounds she grows her wheat and her wool' (1934: 40).

Although the evolutionary underpinning of the doomed race theories was less persuasive in the 1930s than it had been fifty years before, government policy makers did not agree that Australian Aborigines would 'cease to vanish'. It was already clear that the population of Aborigines of full descent was declining rapidly as tribal ways were lost with tribal lands. Aborigines of mixed descent were another matter. In 1937 at the first Commonwealth-State Native Welfare Conference, it was resolved that: 'efforts of all State authorities should be directed towards the education of children of mixed aboriginal blood at white standards, and their subsequent employment under the same conditions as whites with a view to their taking their place in the white community on an equal footing with the whites' (*Report of the National Inquiry ...1997*: 32). Aborigines who had not vanished from the land would vanish into the settler population. They would be 'assimilated'. Aboriginal children removed when very young from their parents could play out the colonial narrative of vanishing on their own bodies. Separated from the discourses and everyday practices of their inheritance, with their memories of family and their consciousness of culture erased, their bodies would become the possession of settlers who already possessed their homelands.

Whether deployed within a predominantly biological or socio-cultural model, the destiny imagined for Aboriginal Australians from the beginnings of settlement until the 1960s continued to fit within a paradigmatic narrative of vanishing. In the space marked 'Australia' the indigenous people must always lose. The order of things seemed immutable.² And not only to the settlers. In the first volume of poetry by an Aborigine published in Australia, *We are Going*, Kath Walker in her title poem laments a culture destroyed and a people pushed towards extinction:

They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent,
All that remained of their tribe.

The poem, though bitter in its evocation of loss, accepts as fate the narrative of vanishing:

We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered.
The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going.

The poem struck a chord among white readers, appeared in anthology after anthology until the poet stepped in and said, no more. "We aren't going," Kath Walker declared defiantly, and as an act refusing an immutable order of vanishing she made her Aboriginality visible during the bicentennial celebration of European settlement by stripping off her name of assimilation, and becoming Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal.

The poet's life itself is a story of becoming visible. Born in 1920 and educated only to primary school level, she went into domestic service when she was thirteen. Three years later she tried to become a nurse but was rejected because of her Aboriginality. Instead of shrinking back into the socially invisible role of the lifelong domestic servant, the young woman was politically radicalized by her circumstances. When Aboriginal activism offered her an opportunity to become politically engaged, she took it and by 1961 was state secretary for the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Until her death in 1993 she was a very public, very visible crusader for Aboriginal rights. As the author of poetry, children's books (illustrated with her own art work), stories from Aboriginal folklore, essays, short stories, speeches, she 'constantly sought to generate cultural self-pride by emphasizing the value of her people's way of life' (Wilde, Hooton and Andrews 1994: 581). Formidable as Aboriginal writer and activist, she joined the others - the Aboriginal artists, business men and women, musicians, story-tellers, writers, political activists, politicians, bureaucrats, academics, administrators - who succeeded in severing the word 'vanishing' from the word 'race' as a code for getting rid of a people and rendering the *terra* vacant space. And then, in a supreme irony, just as the colonial expectations of a vanishing race were finally disappearing altogether, the trope of vanishing resurfaced in narratives figuring the experience of white Australia.

Who's vanishing now?

Such narratives were not new. During the colonial period, vanishing had been written along two narrative trajectories. One encompassed stories of those whose vanishings were deliberate and willed, convicts who escaped into the bush in a bid for freedom, rogues who attempted to rid themselves of a previous identity by changing names and histories, without leaving the settled areas. More often, the stories were seared by an anxious vulnerability and fuelled by an awareness that in a land imprecisely charted on public maps, much less on the cognitive maps of individuals, it was easy to vanish. Along this trajectory run stories of those who never intended to disappear entirely from the settled areas where individuals are visible and their presence accounted for. These are the stories of explorers who starve or die of thirst in inhospitable terrain, and never return; of cedar cutters lost in the vast forests they are cutting down; of men and women who become utterly disoriented while journeying on land or sea; of others who are returned to land (but not society) at some totally unfamiliar point after shipwreck. There are also, most poignantly, the children who stray into the bush and are lost.

In *The Country of Lost Children: An Australian Anxiety* (1999), Peter Pierce argues that the importance of the motif of the lost child is concentrated in two periods of Australian history, the second half of the nineteenth and of the twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth-century narratives, the lost child 'represents the anxieties of European settlers because of the ties with home which they have cut in coming to Australia, whether or not they journeyed here by choice. The figure of the child stands in part for the apprehensions of adults about having sought to settle in a place where they might never be at peace' (Pierce 1999: xii). 'European children were often taken by the land', and 'were saved by Aboriginal men who had been dispossessed of this same land' (xii). According to Pierce, the twentieth-century narratives share with their colonial counterparts 'an ambivalence about the future' but are radically different because 'the agency of loss of children was now the human rather than the natural world. That is, it was purposeful, rather than accidental' (xiv). These children are lost because they are abandoned, are the victims 'of terrible crimes against the young, whether these were committed by institutions charged with their welfare, or as the result of individual malevolence, or simply out of heedlessness as to the fate of children who were at risk' (xiv).

If one sets the late twentieth-century narrative of the lost child in the context of other narratives of vanishing from the same period, similarities to the colonial period appear for which Pierce's argument does not account. These narratives, I would argue, carry with them the residue of the colonial past, and are evidence that Kay Schaffer is right in her contention that 'dominant understandings of national

identity are never secure: 'sureties' require constant textual attention and productive buttressing' (1995: 64). In the case of Australia, the dominant coding of nation-ness grounded in successful imperial incursion has not left the heirs of empire 'at home' on the land and in the company of the not-vanished Aborigines. Almost a century after Federation, narratives of vanishing signal a residue of unfinished business. Conquest over the land is not complete if settlers continue to vanish into its spaces. In the section which follows, I canvass evidence to support my contention that the trope of vanishing, which had not played a significant role in Australian literature since colonial times, has re-appeared as a cultural preoccupation troubling some of the nation's best-known writers during the final decades of the century and figuring in some of their most highly acclaimed books, several of which make the transition into popular culture when they become films.

In 1967 the paradigmatic twentieth-century Australian narrative re-figuring lost children was published, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, by Joan Lindsay (1896-1976). The author herself seems strikingly appropriate for re-introducing the trope. A white woman born late in the nineteenth-century into one prominent family of artists and writers, and subsequently married into another, she belonged to the Boyd family whose members include the novelist Martin Boyd and the painter Arthur Boyd; her husband, Sir Daryl Lindsay, a painter and director of the National Gallery of Victoria, was the brother of other well-known artists, most famously, Norman Lindsay. By a quirk of historical appropriateness, the date of the novel's publication, 1967, was also the year when the Australian Constitution was amended by public referendum to include Aboriginal people in the national census, acknowledgement that they would not vanish, that they would continue to share the nation's space. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is set on the cusp of the colonial era, St Valentine's Day 1900. Teachers from a fashionable boarding school organize a picnic in the bush for teenage girls who as daughters embody the success of British settlement and as soon-to-be wives and mothers figure its future. After lunch, three of the girls and a teacher climb into the fissured volcanic mass of Hanging Rock, and disappear.³ Although one girl is later found, the others vanish forever, as if they had simply dissolved into the landscape. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* became one of the most widely read of late twentieth-century Australian novels, and in 1975 was made by Peter Weir into an internationally successful film in which the central character, Miranda, epitome of the alluring English girl, cannot keep away from the seductive land. Her settler whiteness accentuated by an elaborate white dress, she confidently leads the way into the rocky outcrop. The narrative trajectory is redolent with religious overtones of transfiguration.⁴ No Aboriginal presence is registered.⁵

Although Joan Lindsay teased her readers with the suggestion that her novel might have been based on an actual occurrence - 'Whether *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is fact or fiction, my readers must decide for themselves' - and although even in 1999, I have university students firmly committed to the belief that the novel is based on 'true' events, this narrative bears the imprint of fantasy. Not so the era's most famous vanishing. On the night of 17 August 1980, nine-week-old Azaria Chamberlain did vanish. Azaria, like Miranda in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, was a girl child on an excursion into the bush, this time a family camping trip, and she disappeared near and perhaps into another ancient massive rock formation, known both as Ayer's Rock and Uluru, icon simultaneously (and sometimes therefore contestedly) of national and Aboriginal identity. Unlike Miranda, however, Azaria was a baby. She did not lead the way into the landscape, she was not seduced; she was taken and she died. Because Azaria was flesh rather than fiction, she entered a narrative of law, and in the years to follow, the vanished child took over the courts, the newspapers, and the dinner conversation of Australia. A dingo took my baby, cried Azaria's mother, Lindy Chamberlain. No, said the countering voices, you're blaming a native creature of the land for your own evil, you killed your baby, you cut her throat. After two years of investigation and expert evidence and legal argument, a jury found Azaria's parents guilty, although there was no body, no weapon, no plausible motive, no eyewitness, and no confession.⁶

John Bryson (1935-) sat through the hearings and the trials and appeals, and then wrote his hauntingly powerful non-fiction narrative, *Evil Angels*, published overseas as *A Cry in the Dark*. *Evil Angels* won the Victorian Premier's Award for non-fiction, and the British Crime Writer's Golden Dagger, and in 1989 was made into a film directed by Fred Schepisi and starring Meryl Streep. In the book, Bryson, trained as a barrister, meticulously marshals the evidence for his case that the Chamberlains were shamefully treated by an hysterical public and press, and wrongfully convicted in law, but what he believes happened to Azaria, he does not say. The child remains vanished. The Aborigines who know that territory cannot find her. Fleeting but only fleetingly, they are suspects. The contest for villainy is between the baby's mother and a dingo emblematic of a land often figured in Australia as 'mother earth' in the guise of the 'bad mother' who menaces where she should nurture. *Australia Felix* (1917), the first volume in Henry Handel Richardson's classic novel trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* (1930), opens with an image of the revenge taken upon gold miners by 'the ancient barbaric country they had so lightly invaded'; 'she held them captive - without chains; ensorcelled - without witchcraft; and, lying stretched like some primeval monster in the sun, her breasts freely bared, she watched, with a malignant eye, the efforts made by these puny mortals to tear their lips away' (1992: 9).

In *The Well* (1986), published the year after *Evil Angels* appeared, it is a surrogate mother whose nurturing proves problematic. This novel by Elizabeth Jolley (1923–) won Australia's most coveted literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award, and later became a film. Hester Harper inherits from her father a large family property in the wheat belt of Western Australia. The middle-aged Hester, lame and sexually repressed, has brought into her home an orphan, Katherine, with whom she has a highly ambiguous relationship. One dark night Hester attempts a vanishing as she heaves a body into a well connected to subterranean channels with passages invisible to the eyes of the settler farmers, and hence beyond their control. Hester imagines the well as entrance into the world 'of secret streams and caves beneath the ordinary world of wheat paddocks, roads and towns', and it is into this secret world that the body vanishes before the reader can see what it is, whether the animal killed by unlicensed Katherine as she speeds down the track in a four-wheel drive (this is the version Hester wants the hysterical girl to believe), or the man Katherine fantasizes into a reality:

The body disappeared, without protest, off the edge of the low wall scraping and breaking more off the rotting cover. There was no other sound at all. He did not even seem to hit the sides as he went down.

Hester stared into the widened black hole. The horror of what she was doing only came over her when it was done.

The body disappearing into the land wrecks the world the women had shared. Hester had tried to make the land her own, had moved from the family homestead she had inherited into a shepherd's hut where she could create an enclosed space separate from the surrounding forces of patriarchy, but when the land accepts the body her idyll is destroyed.

The possibility that the land might actively strike back at the heirs of empire is canvassed in Thea Astley's 'Inventing the Weather', the second of the novellas in *Vanishing Points* (1992). Astley (1925–) has been publishing steadily to wide acclaim since 1958; an author with a sharp eye for the absurd, and a strong sense of history, she is particularly well known for her powerful portrayals of north Queensland. In *Vanishing Points* Clifford Truscott, an incorrigibly insensitive real estate developer, shows up at the little mission at Bukki, where a maverick cohort of nuns shelter Aborigines shoved out of towns along the Queensland coast. Clifford arrives with architect, planning permits, and a determination to build yet another of the 'joy stalags' called resorts. After laying down the law to Sister Tancred (who has had the temerity to mention trespass), the concrete-obsessed entrepreneur strides inland into the vines and 'gluttonous thickets' of the rainforest, 'stumping stolidly, his gut straining against his shirt'. That is the last

anyone sees of him: 'Clifford was never found. He had joined that long roll call of trackers who had challenged jungle'. In Astley's fiction the land seems to take revenge on those Australians who have dispossessed the Aborigines and believe the land is theirs to exploit as they desire. Alternatively (and unfortunately for the reader who wishes Clifford Truscott all manner of ill), Astley also raises the possibility that her rapacious developer may have exploited these very fantasies of a vengeful land to make his escape to South America and a new lease of brutal self-indulgence.

While Astley warns of the future, David Malouf in *Remembering Babylon* returns to 'the middle of the nineteenth century, when settlement in Queensland had advanced little more than halfway up the coast'. One day the McIvor children are astonished by a scarecrow figure perched on their railing fence: 'Do not shoot . . . I am a B-b-british object', he squawks like one to whom English is foreign, as it is to Gemmy Fairley, shipwrecked when a boy of thirteen, then companion for sixteen years of Aborigines, and now a figure of transgression, a white black man. He has come to the settlers as if to kin, but they are suspicious of anyone who has lived with the enemy, the Aborigines. Though the McIvors are kind and try to help Gemmy, they only draw hostility upon themselves. Everything begins to go wrong, the threats are palpable, the children find three of their pet geese with throats cut, excrement is smeared across a new farm shed. 'As for Gemmy', writes Malouf, 'he simply vanished; not into the bush, as one or two fellows predicted, but into his own skin, behind his own dim but startled eyes'. One night Gemmy is set upon in the dark, a sack is forced over his head and tied at his feet before he is dragged to the water where but for the intervention of McIvor's nephew he would have drowned. After this, Gemmy does vanish – into the bush and out of the text. Where does he go? the other characters wonder years later, what happened to him? There is speculation but no answer.

David Malouf (1934–) is one of Australia's most admired writers, acclaimed as a poet as well as a writer of short stories, novels, and autobiography, and *Remembering Babylon* brought him attention internationally when it won the inaugural Dublin Impac prize, the world's richest award for fiction in English. In 1994, the year after publication of Malouf's novel, a lesser known and younger writer, Liam Davison (1957–), published fiction which yet again figures the fragility of a settler presence as an unsolved riddle of vanishing. In *The White Woman* Davison draws upon documented accounts of expeditions sent out from Melbourne during the 1840s to find and recover another transgressive figure, this time a white woman said to be living among the Aborigines of Gippsland, east of Melbourne. Written as the recollection of an old man, its story is driven by the romantic fantasy of saving a woman imperilled first by shipwreck, and then by

captivity. Inevitably implicated in the quest is a pursuit, a hunting-down, of the Aboriginal people in the area, whether they have anything to do with the woman or not. As for the woman, she hovers as a figure marked by ambivalence, desirable object of erotic fantasies, and yet a dreaded reminder of how easily the female body is defiled, for the expedition is shown the dark disturbing place where reputedly she gave birth. The men hear rumours of children whose fathers were not white. And in the end, these men who have penetrated the inaccessible landscape stretching 'in endless folds of dark green away from us like another sea, though without the clear line of a shore for us to cling to', find nothing but story. Is the woman there? was she? does she choose her own vanishing? The disappointed men will never know.

Imagining a Space for all Bodies

In the preceding section I have by no means covered all the narratives of vanishing published since *Picnic at Hanging Rock* appeared in 1967, and still they come from well-established writers like Janette Turner Hospital (1942-) whose *Oyster* (1996) was published simultaneously in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and from first-time novelists like James Bradley (1967-) whose *Wrack* (1997) was reviewed as evidence of a promising new voice. Within the social and territorial space delimiting the boundaries of Australia as a nation are generated again and again narratives in which white Australians have disappeared into the land - and in all these narratives those who vanish *are* white, although in Australian society the non-indigenous population is visibly more than white. The whiteness of those vanished operates as a strategic essentialism through which settler history can be immediately re-called. Read inter-textually with the meta-narrative of colonial settlement in which the settlers acquire the land they then make their own as a prelude to nation, these recent narratives of vanishing dispute the promised closure in which settlement creates the sense of being 'at home' in a space now marked 'nation' - as distinct from a colonial settler's attribution of 'home' to an originary elsewhere.

A fear of vanishing is symptomatic of an anxiety about space, and there are late twentieth-century reasons for this anxiety to erupt. In *Why Weren't We Told? A personal search for the truth about our history*, the distinguished historian Professor Henry Reynolds writes of his own experience of researching colonial encounter in Australia: 'The more I read, the clearer it became that between 1900 and the 1960s the Aborigines were virtually written out of Australian history' (1999: 94). As evidence that this writing out of Aborigines and the story of violent frontier conflict was knowing and deliberate, Reynolds quotes late nineteenth and

early twentieth-century historians and ethnographers who use an image of drawing a veil over a dark past. In the 1960s, affected by the Civil Rights movement in the United States and its counterparts internationally, those black Australians like Oodgeroo Noonuccal who became activists, together with young non-indigenous Australians like Reynolds who raised questions about racial inequality, began to look behind the veil. During the 1990s, in public hearings similar to those held by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Aboriginal Australians have borne witness to a brutal history of public administrative practice shaped by colonial attitudes well into the 1970s, when Aboriginal children were still being forcibly removed from their mothers, and then compelled to sever their ties with their families and their cultural heritage (*Report of the National Inquiry . . .* 1997). And once the veil was withdrawn from the history of land acquisition, the legal principles underlying present land practices were re-visited. The doctrine of *terra nullius* was in 1992 declared invalid by the High Court of Australia. In *Mabo v. the State of Queensland (No 2)* the Court held that Australian sovereignty is derivative, having changed from prior Aboriginal sovereignty in 1788, and that British common law, introduced with settlement, coexisted with prior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander laws of land ownership which, until extinguished, survived the change in sovereignty. The implications of what has become known as the Mabo decision are still being played out in the courts. Land disputes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians are more fraught today than they have been at any time since the colonial period.

Australia has now been a space imagined as 'nation' rather than a collection of colonies for almost a century, and yet the colonial residue remains powerfully present. On 6 November 1999, a referendum proposing that Australia become a republic with its own Head of State (instead of the British monarch as Head of State) was defeated, even though many commentators blamed the alternative model for the defeat, rather than a lack of republican sentiment. At the same time and more decisively, the proposed addition of a preamble to the Constitution was defeated, a preamble which among other aims and in however flawed a manner, would recognize a prior Aboriginal presence in the territorial space taken by the settlers, 'honouring Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the nation's first people, for their deep kinship with their lands and for their ancient and continuing cultures which enrich the life of our country'. The problems of how to imagine a genuinely post-colonial nation in spite of the often ferociously, indeed violently, competing economic and ideological interests in Australia remain unsolved.

It is, I would argue, no coincidence that the trope of vanishing should fuel narratives from some of the nation's best writers during precisely the period when within the culture more generally the veil over the dark side of the colonial past

has gradually been withdrawn to reveal stories untold. In psychological terms, the experience repressed has now returned, and unresolved conflicts have come to the surface, bringing with them the danger of repeating the past without surpassing it. For writers, this volatile residue of the colonial past has proved a rich source of story, saturated with contestation, violence, and ambiguity. These writers are engaged in exploring meanings and consequences of colonial encounter long after the end of colonial occupation. Whether the writers, together those other Australians who have withdrawn the veil facilitating historical amnesia, can create more inclusive ways of imagining their community of nation than the ways they have inherited remains to be seen, as it does for those inhabiting other post-colonial and post-communist spaces where there is a strong desire to break radically with the past, and yet an awareness that it is the past with which we must always begin, because that is what we have.

Notes

¹ In this essay, 'settler' is used to refer collectively to non-indigenous Australians. 'White' would be incorrect in the context of Australia, erasing again the non-British members of the nation, and in particular the considerable Asian population, who have been a significant presence since the goldrushes of the 1850s despite attempts to exclude them through what was specifically designated 'the white Australia policy'. Alert to the highly contested terminology and continuing semantic debates within postcolonial theory, I also use 'settler' in the context of today's non-indigenous population in order to acknowledge a significant residue of colonialism within a nation no longer occupied by an external colonial power.

² Michel de Certeau, pondering the situation of peasants at the mercy of landowners in northeast Brazil, wrote: 'In this space, the strong always win and words always deceive.... a lucid discourse cunningly turned up fake words and prohibitions on speaking in order to reveal an ubiquitous injustice - not simply the injustice of the established powers, but, more profoundly, that of history. It recognized in that injustice an order of things that seemed immutable...' (1984: 16).

³ Joan Kirkby notes similarities with *The Scarlet Letter* and *Passage to India*: 'Each land is forced into relation with an external and alien ideal of order, and in each instance, the result of British intrusion into an unfamiliar land... is an outbreak of inexplicable phenomena and preternatural experiences' (1978: 255). These similarities suggest possibilities for pursuing the trope of vanishing in other settler literatures.

⁴ David Tacey argues that the geographical displacement of a European social structure upon Aboriginal earth has produced a weak, immature spirit. He reads *Picnic at Hanging Rock* as 'an uncanny and awful earth-sacrifice of beautiful young women at the archaic and craggy monument' (1978: 47).

⁵ Peter Pierce suggests that 'Lindsay and then Weir have perhaps returned the story of lost children that they tell and retell to its symbolic origins: to the anxious suspicion that Europeans do not belong in this country; that therefore they should go back to England, or escape into another time, or simply vanish. And in vanishing... these lost children have forever escaped from childhood' (1999: 164).

⁶ Michael Chamberlain, appealing against his sentencing, was placed on a good behaviour bond; Lindy Chamberlain, after three years in prison, was released on 7 February 1986; after two appeals and a public inquiry, the convictions against the Chamberlains were quashed on 15 September 1988; in 1994, the coroner closed the inquest file with an open verdict.

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