Hannah's Place: a neo historical fiction

Exegesis component of a creative doctoral thesis in Communication

by

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ABSTRACT

The creative component of my doctoral thesis articulates narratives of female experience in Colonial Australia. The work re-contextualises and re-narrativises accounts of events which occurred in particular women's lives, and which were reported in nineteenth century newspapers. The female characters within my novel are illiterate and from the lower classes. Unlike middle-class women who wrote letters and kept journals, women such as these did not and could not leave us their stories. The newspaper accounts in which their stories initially appeared reflected patriarchal (and) class ideologies, and represented the women as the 'other'. However, it is by these same textual artefacts that we come to know of their existence.

The multi-layered novel I have written juxtaposes archival pre-texts (or intertexts) against fictional re-narrativisations of the same events. One reason for the use of this style is in order to challenge the past positioning of silenced women. My female characters' first textual iterations, those documents which now form our archival records, were written from a position of hegemonic patriarchy. Their first textual iteration were the record of female existence recorded by others. The original voices of the fictionalised female characters of my novel are heard as an absence and the intertext, as well as the fiction, now stands as a trace of what once existed as women's lived, performative experience.

My contention is that by making use of concepts such as historiographic metafiction, transworld identities, and sideshadowing; along with narrative structures such as juxtaposition, collage and the use of intertext and footnotes, a richer, multi-dimensional and non-linear view of female colonial experience can be achieved. And it will be one which departs from that hegemonically imposed by patriarchy. It is the reader who becomes the meaning maker of 'truth' within historical narration.

My novel sits within the theoretical framework of postmodern literature as a variant on a new form of the genre that has been termed 'historical fiction'. However, it departs from traditional historical fiction in that it foregrounds not only an imagined fictional past world created when the novel is read, but also the actual archival

documents, the pieces *of* text from the past which in other instances and perhaps put together to form a larger whole, might be used to make traditional history. These pieces of text were the initial finds from the historical research undertaken for my novel. These fragments of text are used within the work as intertextual elements which frame, narratively interrupt, add to or act as footnotes and in turn, are themselves framed by my female characters' self narrated stories. These introduced textual elements, here foregrounded, are those things most often hidden from view within the mimetic and hermeneutic worlds of traditional historical fiction. It is also with these intertextual elements that the fictional women engage in dialogue. At the same time, my transworld characters' existence as fiction are reinforced by their existence as 'objects' (of narration) within the archival texts. *Both* the archival texts *and* the fiction are now seen as having the potential to be unreliable.

My thesis suggests that in seeking to gain a clearer understanding of these events and the narrative of these particular marginalised colonial women's lives, a new way of engaging with history and writing historical fiction is called for. I have undertaken this through creative fiction which makes use of concepts such as transworld identity, as defined by Umberto Eco and also by Brian McHale, historiographic metafiction, as defined by Linda Hutcheon and the concept of sideshadowing which, as suggested by Gary Saul Morson and Michael André Bernstein, opens a space for multiple historical narratives.

The novel plays with the idea of both historical facts and historical fiction. By giving textual equality to the two the border between what can be considered as historical fact and historical fiction becomes blurred. This is one way in which a type of textual agency can be brought to those silenced groups from Australia's past. By juxtaposing parts of the initial textual account of these events alongside, or footnoted below, the fiction which originated from them, I create a female narrative of 'new writing' through which parts of the old texts, voiced from a male perspective, can still be read. The resulting, multi-layered narrative becomes a collage of text, voice and meaning thus enacting Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia.

A reading of my novel insists upon questioning the truthfulness or degree of reliability of past textual facts as accurate historic records of real women’s life events.

It is this which is at the core of my novel—an historiographic metafictional challenging by the fictional voices of female transworld identities of what had been written as an historical, legitimate account of the past. This self-reflexive style of historical fiction makes for a better construct of a multi-dimensional, non-linear view of female colonial experience.

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Chapter 1

We Begin Traditionally: an introduction positioned

Objectives of the study

My overall objectives in undertaking the writing of this creative thesis were twofold. My aim was to write an engaging piece of imaginative, historical fiction based on so called 'factual' archival evidence. I wanted to question the notion of the accepted story of the lives of free settlers, or their daughters, who migrated to colonial Australia during the 1800s. I wanted to allow an echo to be heard of the voices of women who have been left out of the traditional historical narrative of our pioneering mythology. My second aim was to write this imaginative fiction in a style which, I consider, best suits the scant reminders of marginalised women's lives—the style that is neo-historical or historiographic metafiction. In choosing this postmodern style of writing I also undertook to analyse, within an exegesis, this style of fiction, and to locate my own novel within the broader genre of historical fiction. This inevitably involved the very notion of history as a cultural construct.

Introduction: the novel

The creative component of my doctoral thesis, the novel *Hannah's Place*, re-contextualises and re-narrativises accounts of events which occurred in particular women's lives and which were reported in nineteenth century newspapers. The women who appear as characters within my novel were from the lower classes and were illiterate. Unlike middle-class women who wrote letters and kept journals, these women did not and could not tell us their own stories. The newspaper accounts in which their stories initially appeared reflected patriarchal (and) class ideologies, and represented the women as the 'other'. However, it is by these same textual artefacts that we come to know that they existed.

In the accompanying exegesis I examine the ways in which the multi-layered novel I have written, grounded in Linda Hutcheon's concept of 'historiographic metafiction' (Hutcheon, 1988)[1], juxtaposes archival pre-texts (or intertexts) against fictional re-narrativisations of the same events.

Historiographic metafiction has been defined by Linda Hutcheon as fiction which "keeps distinct its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematises the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here—just unresolved contradiction" (Hutcheon, 1988:106). Unresolved contradiction is one of the main structural elements within my novel and it occurs because of my use of the juxtaposition of archival documents (past text 'facts') alongside a fictional narrative. One reason for the use of this type of structure is to challenge the past positioning of these silenced women.

Alternative fictional narratives, such as those in my novel, also create a 'sideshadowing' of the past. This allows for a perspective on the 'histories' I wanted to write about which is free from teleological constraints. It opens a space for multiple historical narratives. Sideshadowing has been defined by Gary Saul Morson as "both an open sense of temporality and a set of devices used to convey that sense" (Morson, 1994:6). Its use as a literary device and as a concept applies to the way I have approached not only the structure of my novel, but also the way in which it, as text, challenges how we constitute history. However, I believe its most important aspect, for the stories within my novel, is that it allows for a history which is rich in multiple possibilities:

> Sideshadowing admits, in addition to actualities and impossibilities, a *middle realm* of real possibilities that could have happened even if they did not. Things could have been different from the way they were...sideshadowing deepens our sense of the openness of time. It has profound implications for our understanding of history and of our own lives (Morson, 1994:6).

The first textual embodiments of my female characters, documents which now make up our archival records, were written from a position of hegemonic patriarchy. Their original stories were the record of female existence recorded by others. Therefore, the

[1] Metafiction in general, and historiographic metafiction in particular, are discussed in detail in chapter nine.

original once real voices of the fictionalised female characters of my novel are heard as an absence and the intertext, as well as the fiction, stand as traces of what once existed as women's lived, performative experience.

My contention is that a richer, multi-dimensional and non-linear view of female colonial experience can be achieved by the use of a number of techniques. Along with the concept of sideshadowing and within a style of historiographic metafiction, this also includes the creation of 'transworld identities'. Umberto Eco has defined transworld identity as the:

> identity of a given individual through worlds (transworld identity)...where the possible world is a *possible state of affairs* expressed by a set of relevant propositions [either true or untrue which] outlines a set of possible *individuals* along with their *properties* (Eco, 1979:219).

Brian McHale, in *Postmodernist Fiction*, also puts forward a number of definitions for transworld identity. For my novel's purpose I take 'transworld identity' to mean both McHale's definition of a device of "borrowing a character from another text" (McHale, 1987:57) and also Eco's definition given above.

Within my fiction narrative structures such as juxtaposition and collage are used prominently; especially in the use of intertext, and, as I increasingly discovered while writing, the judicious use of footnotes.

Footnotes, in particular, are much used within an historiographic metafictional style of writing. Hutcheon notes that this practice could be "perhaps parodically exacting revenge for some historians' tendency to read literature only as historical document" (Hutcheon, 2002:80). She states that the use of footnotes are the main textual form through which the documentation of history writing is made believable. Therefore, to make use of them in fiction writing is to reinforce the notion of the "doubled narrative of the past in the present" (Hutcheon, 2002:80). Their use within historiographic metafictions, such as my novel, consistently refers the reader to other texts and through these to the larger external world of the real. As Hutcheon notes they also disrupt the linearity of the narrative, forcing the reader to read below the lines. I might add that they force the reader to read between the spaces of the voice of 'authority' of

the past. The visual space occupied by footnotes on the page, and the textual or narrative space within historical discourse, is that where opposing views are noted:

> …footnotes are often the space where opposing views are dealt with (and textually marginalized), but we also know that they can offer a supplement to the upper text or can often provide an authority to support it. In historiographic metafiction these footnoting conventions are both inscribed and parodically inverted….these notes operate centrifugally as well as centripetally (Hutcheon, 2002:81).

Within new forms of metafictional writing, such as my novel, found within the broader genre of historical fiction, it is the reader who becomes the meaning maker of 'truth'. This meaning can be one at variance with that which initially was hegemonically imposed. My novel sits within the theoretical framework of postmodern literature as a variant on a new form of the genre that has been described as historical fiction. Of the revitalisation of historical fiction writing since the 1970s it has been noted that:

> Historical fiction has been singled out as a highly important subcategory of postmodernist literature; Christos Romanos even goes so far as to state that a renewed interest in the past is the major distinction between modernism and postmodernism (Wesseling paraphrasing Romanos in Wesseling, 1991:3).

Although my novel breaks away from and challenges the 'saga' narrative, or 'grand narrative' within historical fiction, it is no less concerned with events of the past and with the idea of past experience than were those more traditional forms. However, it deviates from traditional historical fiction in that it foregrounds not only an imagined fictional past world which comes into being when the novel is read, but also the actual archival documents, the pieces *of* text from the past which, in other instances, and perhaps put together to form a larger whole, might be used to make traditional history. An explanation and examination of what is referred to as 'traditional historical fiction' is foregrounded in chapter five.

These pieces of text were the initial finds from the historical research undertaken for my novel, and are that which I term the 'sparking points' for the fictional world I have created. These fragments of archival text are used within the work as intertextual elements which frame or narratively interrupt, my female characters' stories. They are

in turn themselves framed by the stories. These introduced textual elements, here foregrounded, are those things most often hidden from view within the mimetic and hermeneutic worlds of traditional historical fiction. The nineteenth century sources which I re-textualise within my novel are, at the same time, both real items *from* our past and, even at the time they were written, representations and interpretations *of* past events. Therefore, my sources as well as my stories, are textual interpretations of past events.

The female characters' stories are an imaginative narrative re-interpretation of a narrative interpretation of an event.

In this way, the novel plays with the idea of both historical facts and historical fiction. Because it gives textual equality to the two, the border between what can be considered as historical fact and historical fiction becomes blurred. This is one way in which a type of textual agency can be brought to those marginalised and silenced groups from Australia's past. By juxtaposing parts of the initial textual account of these events alongside, or footnoted below, the fiction which originated from them, I create a female narrative of 'new writing' through which parts of the old texts, voiced from a male perspective, can still be read. The resulting, multi-layered narrative becomes a collage of text, voice and meaning thus enacting Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia—that "every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future. The discursive site in which the conflict between different voices is at its most concentrated is the modern novel" (Morris, 1994: 249).

Hannah Simpson, Mary Ann Brownlow, Caroline Collitts, Maria Walsh and Merrung/an unnamed Aboriginal woman

Within my novel I have chosen to foreground as 'transworld identities', those once real women whose names appear above who were (from our point of view) silenced. These particular women and their stories were chosen to enable a greater exploration of female identities in settler societies. Other female characters who occur within my novel, such as the woman on the boat, Lottie and her mother, the Aboriginal midwife

Merrung, the servant Mary and the mistress in the Yarramundi story, are imaginary and based loosely on generic 'types' found within Australian literature or gleaned from women's shipboard journals and letters home from the colonies.

The women whose stories I have chosen to extend into imaginative fiction and to whom the passages of newspaper journalism refer, were illiterate and therefore were silenced. Their individual opinions, life's narrations or 'voices' will never be heard. If not for the newspaper articles or archival records (in some cases small ones) their existence as real people might never have been known to us. Yet in all cases the first textual iteration of their individual stories was from a male perspective situated within a patriarchal and colonial hegemony. This meant that selective events were articulated and that the sensibilities of males positioned the stories, often assuming a moralising tone in describing the women's situations. The result was that women, like those I have chosen to write about, became textually and societally framed as the 'other'.

My thesis, in both my novel and its accompanying exegesis, suggests that to gain a clearer understanding of these events and the narrative of these particular marginalised colonial women's lives, a new way of engaging with history and writing historical fiction is needed. I suggest, through this work, that it is one which attempts a new understanding of what were once considered 'truthful' historical accounts. In choosing these once real women as characters within an imaginative re-writing of historical events I have instigated a change to their ontological status, as initially textualised in the newspaper reports.

The ontological status of these female identities is altered by the fictional re-contextualisation of their previously textualised narratives. Within my fiction they are altered from their initial textual and ontological positions as two dimensional, stereotypically immoral female identities—Anne Summers "damned whores" as opposed to the submissive and moral "God's police" (Summers, 1994:67). In my re-textualisation they become less stereotyped, thereby allowing them greater narrative (and by default historical) agency. Within my novel these identities exist as women who make decisions and who cause events to happen as a way of negotiating the limited choices that their individual circumstances have provided. In this way the

work re-contextualises and re-narrativises prior, hegemonically positioned, narratives of events in the lives of marginalised, colonial women.

Reasons for choosing these particular women's stories

In the initial planning and research stage of the novel I had decided that I would have particular criteria which my female characters would need to fulfil. This decision was made because of the type of novel I wanted to write, the period and group of people from the past that I wanted to illuminate with my fiction. The reasons for these decisions were based on my own personal interests and political agenda.

The female protagonists which I needed for my novel (and therefore those stories from the newspapers that I chose to follow with more archival research) had to be women who were:

- uneducated to such an extent that they were unable to read or to write;
- not convicts or emancipists themselves, but immigrants or Australian-born daughters of free settlers ('currency' as opposed to 'sterling' in the slang of the times);
- from the lower levels of society, relatively poor yet not the poorest or belonging to the criminal underclass;
- those who attempted, by the actions that led to their representation in the newspapers, (and therefore caused their existence to become visible to future generations) to change their situations. I wanted to write of women who were not primarily the rural, isolated 'victims' of Barbara Baynton's fiction, but who were still in situations for which, because of their gender and class, there were limited positive outcomes;
- those living as adults in mainland south-eastern Australia after the cessation of convict transportation to the eastern states, and during the period in which there was an increase in migration by the rural poor. This was the time when large numbers of free, 'assisted' or 'bounty' migration schemes became available to those who otherwise could not afford to leave Britain.

Female stories interrupt the artist's monologue

Six individual women's stories were chosen from the many stories which can be found in the newspapers of the 1800s. The stories have been placed within the novel as individual chapter-like narratives which interrupt the journal of an artist. These

fictional stories frame, and are in turn framed by, this literate male traveller's narrative.

Of my main female protagonists, three are transworld characters and three are imagined characters, based on generic composites. Within the novel there are also many female secondary characters, drawn both from once real persons who were noted in archival documents I consulted during my research, or from generic accounts of women's experiences. Together the women's stories form the concept of a 'whole' of a possible life journey of a woman from this period. This arc is articulated through the differing female characters' ages and personal circumstances.

Justifying a methodology

Between 1840 and the time just prior to the gold rush days following Hargraves's discovery in 1851, large numbers of government assisted or bounty immigrants came to Australia, in particular to New South Wales, which for part of this period also included Victoria and Queensland. This was a time in which the British government was attempting to rid Britain of its large numbers of rural 'working poor', as previously it had attempted to rid the country of its excess gaol population. Many of these 'working poor' were not, due to labour surpluses in that country, actually working or earning sufficient income to feed their families. They were people who were becoming marginalised through historical circumstances outside their control.

This was the first period in which the new colonies that made up Australia actively attempted to present themselves as viable, self replicating societies or colonies, rather than as some kind of antipodean gaol.[2] Ideas of colony 'growth' and formation were often based on ideological grounds such as those (for South Australia) of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and other 'systematic colonizers'. In paraphrasing a speech to the legislative council of New South Wales by James Macarthur, Manning Clark states that:

> Transportation had been of great advantage to the colony, as the convict's labour had laid the foundations of civilization and created the wealth of the settlers, but by 1840 it had performed its historic mission: the colony had now arrived at such a degree of wealth, thanks to convict labour, as to be able to populate the country with a free and virtuous people (Clark, 1995:90).

The statistics are interesting. Manning Clark, using figures that do not include immigration during the gold-rush years following 1851, states that between 1831 and 1850 over 200,000 people emigrated to the Australian colonies from Britain and Ireland under various government and 'bounty' assisted immigration schemes (Clark, 1995).

Robin Haines claims figures for NSW between 1831-1860 of 77 per cent[3] of all UK immigrants arriving as 'assisted' by colonial governments. For New South Wales this meant 134,547 out of a total number of 174,027 people destined for that colony. Because of the numbers immigrating to Victoria during the gold rushes (including from America) the Australia wide assisted immigrant's percentage reduces to 55.5 per cent out of a total of 357,904 immigrants arriving between 1831-1860 (Haines, 1997:15).

Looking at statistics which reduce the impact of the gold rush days, that is those from the years 1831 to 1900, it can be seen that over a seventy year period, almost every second person (47 per cent of the total of 1.5 million emigrants) who set sail from English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish ports was a government assisted immigrant who travelled on ships chartered by colonial legislatures (Haines, 1997:14). Sudden increases in numbers arriving in Australian ports put huge pressures on infrastructure, in some cases temporary tent accommodation had to be provided for government assisted immigrants.

For example, the population of Sydney more than doubled in the ten years between 1836 to 1846, from 19,729 to 45,190 (Madgwick, 1969:245). According to Robert

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[2] Transportation to New South Wales ceased in 1840, but to counteract this numbers of convicts sent to Van Diemen's Land between 1841 and 1846 increased markedly from the previous 1829-1840 average of 1,658 per year to 3,527 per year (Clark, 1995:115).

[3] NSW was the colony with the highest percentage, although all but Victoria, had percentages in the seventies.

Madgwick, in 1837 only 3,477 total immigrants had arrived in all Australian colonies, yet only two years later in 1839 the figure was 10,549. During 1841, the year of the largest number of arrivals between 1829 and 1851, there were 22,483 immigrants (Madgwick, 1969:223).

These British emigrants were carefully selected by colonial and British governments and their representatives as emigration agents. This was done not only to reduce the numbers of excess workers in Britain, but also to provide Australia with those skills urgently needed in the predominantly agricultural and settler society.

> From 1831, as demands for non-convict, free labour surged in each of the Australian colonies, government-assisted passages, financed mainly by the sale of colonial crown land, were offered to young, married, male agricultural labourers, shepherds, husbandmen, country tradesmen and their wives and families, and to single female domestic and farm servants (Haines, 1997:14).

The majority of these immigrants have been noted by Haines as being 'respectable poor'. In the main they were not destitute. Emigrants had to provide a compulsory deposit, regulation minimum clothing requirements and to finance their own family's travel to the port of departure. Some private philanthropic associations did assist with these requirements for those who could prove good characters yet still faced financial difficulties meeting the requirements.

> …agricultural labourers, especially from the low-wage regions of southern England, were more inclined to board government ships bound for Australia than to climb the gangway of a westbound vessel [to the United States] (Haines, 1997:227).

> …Australasia's assisted immigrants, prior to 1860, were attracted by its openings for rural occupations in an era when Australia was promoted as a 'Garden of Hygeia' where the rural poor would physically and spiritually prosper (Haines, 1997:46).

In my novel I wanted to look beyond what exists now in edited journal collections and literature of 'women's experiences' or 'women's texts' of these migrations and of colonial women's experiences in general. This is because these texts often create a

particular vision of colonial life via the writings of middle-class and educated women who kept journals and wrote letters.[4]

I also wanted to explore beyond fictional narratives, both those from the times and those written after, of colonial women's experiences of life in the bush, such as the stories by Barbara Baynton, Rosa Praed, Eleanor Dark, Katherine Susannah Pritchard, Henry Handle Richardson or Tasma.

I was interested in writing about the experiences and position of the types of lower class women, fragments of whose lives are often discovered yet not explored, except perhaps in derogatory terms, within the writings of literate women such as those mentioned. These members of the lower class are often positioned as a type of 'other' when they are mentioned in the writings of middle-class women.

There do exist some examples of writing by 'steerage' women who were literate enough to write of their migration experiences. I have found these accounts to be most helpful when imagining my characters. Unfortunately these accounts are often much less complete, or have less of a sense of 'closure' than the longer and often more detailed or expansive life-narratives written by middle-class women. This in part may reflect the difficulties of the lives of these women as they attempted to document their life journeys; which were often made up of many further internal migrations in Australia, following their departure from Britain. I am particularly indebted to the intriguing collections of life writing put together by Lucy Frost, Robin Haines and by Andrew Hassam:[5]

> Diaries by working-class women are fewer still…Out of perhaps only 300 steerage diaries in existence, there may be fewer than forty diaries of the type

[4] Rachel Henning *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, (Adams, 1988); Annie Baxter Dawbin *The Journal of Annie Baxter Dawbin*, (Dawbin (Frost), 1998); Louisa Anne Meredith *Notes and sketches of New South Wales during a residence in that colony from 1839-1844*, (Meredith, 1973 (1844)); Mary Braidwood Mowle *A Colonial Woman: the life and times of Mary Braidwood Mowle, 1827-1857*, (Clarke, 1986); Lady Jane Franklin *This Errant Lady: Jane Franklin's overland journey to Port Phillip and Sydney, 1839*, (Russell, 2002); Elizabeth Archer *Journal on board the John*, (Archer, 1839) also transcribed in *The Barque John: A voyage to the land of hope, Gravesend to Adelaide 1839-1840, (*Main, 1994) and Mary Lawry *Currency Lass*, (Reeson, 1985).

[5] Lucy Frost's (1995) *No Place for a Nervous Lady: voices from the Australian bush* or Andrew Hassam's (1995) *No Privacy for Writing: shipboard diaries 1852-1879* and also *Sailing to Australia: shipboard diaries by nineteenth-century British emigrants* (1994), Patricia Clarke and Dale Spender's (1992) *Australian Womens' Letters and Diaries, 1788-1840* and Robin Haines's (2003) *Life and Death in the Age of Sail: the passage to Australia*.

> represented here by Mary Maclean and Elizabeth Allbon; forty diaries to relate the experiences of 400 000 working-class women (Hassam, 1995:xvii).

With the exception of the indigenous population, and perhaps the earlier, female convicts, the lives of this class of women are the least textualised from this period in our past. Because of this, women from these classes are often written out of our colonial past or have the potential to only be represented (by the dominant hegemony) as stereotypes or as perpetual victims. For example, as Henry Lawson's 'Drover's Wife' (Barnes, 1986) or those few opposite examples such as the shearer's wife in Barbara Baynton's (2001) *The Chosen Vessel*.

Engaging texts

To find a basis for the characters, both female and male, within my novel I engaged with various written and visual sources. All of these are 'texts' which should be read and understood according to the conventions that apply to their particular form. I became fascinated by immigrants' letters, shipboard diaries and journal accounts of the new land. Surprisingly I found that not only letters home but shipboard diaries were expected to adhere to a precise, often prescriptive, form. This was set out in templates by those giving 'advice' to prospective emigrants (Hassam, 1994).

I became interested by the way in which, for something which one would assume to be uniquely individual, such as a person's own migration account, there was a prescriptive, almost societal level of control. This was particularly so with regards to the working class emigrants who had, because of migration, an opportunity to now take up this previously middle-class pastime. Those in support of British emigration to Australia, such as WHG Kingston, suggested keeping a journal as an occupation on board ship, and gave instructions of what and how to write. This was in order that those working class members on board ship who could write, might be saved from falling into "sinful, 'bad habits' if they had nothing with which to occupy themselves" (Hassam, 1994:36). This idea of a prescribed way of writing one's experiences as a participant in large scale mass migration is revealing in terms of what it meant to participate in, and to record, historical events. It is also interesting for what it means for us today, to have accessible and preserved in our state and national libraries, these

written, personal accounts of family migrations, as reflections of mass, state instituted migration.[6] These diaries, and the anthologies that now come from them are (like my intertext newspaper articles) textual records of past events, and as such: "Like all texts, emigrant diaries have circulated, accruing new meanings as old meanings have worn out and are lost (Hassam, 1994:1-2)."

I also visited numerous art exhibitions which proved to be extremely rewarding and stimulating for my thesis research. Viewing such art helped me gain not only a familiarisation with the period but helped in the creation of my male artist's character. These exhibitions added to the knowledge gained during my undergraduate art history studies and allowed me to see how different artists, artistic styles and movements represented the new colonies to those back in Britain. Importantly, some of the items on exhibition were artist's travel diaries and sketch books of the type my fictional artist would create. Viewing such material culture artefacts was extremely useful for my visualisation of the world of the artist. The exhibitions and gallery visits also gave me an opportunity to see small nineteenth century sketches and larger, important colonial art in a context of related works from the same period. These exhibitions included:

> *John Glover and the Colonial Picturesque*, NGA 2004
> *Travellers Art*, NLA 2003
> *Cook and Omani: the cult of the South Seas*, NLA 2001
> *The World Upside Down Australia 1788-1830*, NLA 2000
> *New Worlds from Old: 19th Century American and Australian Landscapes*, NGA 1998
> *The Wandering Artist: Augustus Earle's travels around the world 1820-29*, NLA 1996
> *Creating Australia: 200 years of art, 1788-1988*, State Gallery of NSW 1988

Style of fiction chosen

I deliberately chose to write my novel in a postmodern style of historical fiction which has been termed, by Linda Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction. I believe this style

[6] It would be interesting to compare, if at all possible, the percentage of post WW2 shipboard migrants who kept journals, with those who did so from the nineteenth century. I would suggest that, with the advent of photography the written account of migration might be somewhat less. Similarly the purpose for the migration post 1945 was vastly different, and did not relate so much to the founding of a nation, as it had in the 1800s, but rather was seen by many as an escape from devastation caused by the war. As such it might be considered as an emigration from (a past homeland which had been destroyed) rather than as an immigration to something which was going to be created.

best suits narratives about marginalised women, and those groups of 'others' silenced from our history. Within my fiction, events in these women's lives are recreated using a metafictional strategy. Through my reading of archival documents and my fiction their lives, re-created in the imagination, present to us as non-linear and fragmentary. I believe they readily lend themselves to a metafictional approach if we are to understand them from the position of the present. The events appear confusing, at times chaotic and rarely temporally coherent. Even with documentary (and of course temporal) evidence of their deaths the notion of any 'closure' is difficult to grasp. Questions about all of these women's lives remain unanswered by the scant archival documents—the birth, death and marriage records, or the third person newspaper accounts of parts of their lives—yet ironically it is these documents which bring the women's existence to our notice. The women are silenced by their illiteracy, their gender and their relative poverty.

In writing this creative work, I was able to engage imaginatively in finding answers, while at the same time questioning the 'reality' of any textually recorded past realities. The narrative strategies I have employed, and metafiction in general, point to a blurring of the boundary between fiction and non-fiction in texts about and from the past.

Family History

As well as visiting exhibitions, travelling to particular historic locations I wished to use in my novel, and reading journal accounts of nineteenth century Australia, I had also previously engaged in research of my own family's history. This was taken up again, where necessary, during my thesis research. Like many others who participate in this 'low' cultural activity, I discovered this is a particularly individual and poignant way of coming to an understanding of Australia's colonial past. Members of my own family migrated to Australia variously as Irish convicts (and free settler wife and children) (Collitts, 1801 and Skeen, 1819) to Sydney; free English/Scots assisted immigrant miller, to Adelaide and thence immediately Sydney (Simpson, 1840); free Prussian Lutheran farm workers to Adelaide/Barossa Valley (some via Moreton Bay) (Winter, 1864 and Hubner, 1848); free English settlers to Adelaide (Herbert, 1840);

Irish Catholic (possibly rebel exiles) to Sydney (Dwyer/Doyle, early 1800s) and others.

According to the trope of poor settler/convict-pioneer-makes-good, the members of my lineage should have worked hard, acquired land and ultimately become successful and wealthy. This, I discovered, was not the case. Rather, I found a family story of struggle, continued generational internal migrations, tragedies, death from preventable disease and early infant mortality, farmland acquired after a lifetime's work surrendered within the next generation, religious and ethnic intolerance, murder, alcoholism, vagrancy, adultery, suicide, lone death in the South Australian outback, children's deaths in floods and fire and an ongoing struggle against poor land and limited incomes. In short a typical, Australian working class or Australian rural working family's story.

Importantly for an understanding of the 'realness' of the past I discovered my family saga also encompassed participation in formative Australian cultural experiences. These manifested as the early settlement (first 15 years of the colony) of the Sydney convict years; the building of roads by convicts and the opening up of farm land once the Blue Mountains were crossed; the 1840s depression; the formation years of Adelaide and of German speaking, Lutheran enclaves in the Barossa and later mid-north of South Australia; the 'civilising' of early outback Australia by itinerant hawkers; the Victoria and New South Wales Gold Rushes (including subsistence gold mining); the coming of railways and rural change in New South Wales and later South Australia; the 1880-1900s influenza epidemics; the Great War; the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge[7]; the 'War in the Pacific' during the Second World War and the early years of the national capital, Canberra.

Through my own family's individual story(s) and participation in iconic points in Australia's history I discovered that the 'history' of the settlement of Australia did not fall within the neat pattern of the grand-history of Australia's successful pioneering

[7] Oral family history has it that my grandfather, mother and two siblings were among railway workers and their families on the first train over the harbour bridge, while their mother was in labour at home with her youngest child. Unfortunately, this cannot be confirmed as someone lost the tickets! Perhaps there was an 'officials' train and a 'workers' train.

past. This realisation led me to question pre-conceived notions of what made up the 'reality' of Australia's settler past, and the place of women within that pioneering myth.

The prior 'texts': newspapers, birth, death and marriage records, Governors Despatches, shipboard diaries

In creating my novel, the prior texts or archival documents were used as:

- sparking points and background for the stories;
- a means of familiarisation with the historical period, therefore, in this regard they have been used in a way similar to that of traditional historical fiction;
- non-fiction pieces as intertext within, and for framing the women's stories;
- historical 'facts' to be challenged by the fictional voices, or to support the 'realness' of fictional events, such as the artist's disappearance on a real ship which is later shipwrecked;
- a male voice (from the newspapers) which parallels the artist's male point of view.

The documents which I chose to transcribe as intertext are artefacts of material culture in textual form. These documents stand for events in once real women's lives and as text employ linguistic, journalistic, narrative and archival conventions. They are part of the discourse of history, part of the archival record of colonial Australia, but they are also third person accounts recorded by chance[8] from within a particular cultural framework. Documents, such as these, which stand for events in once real persons lives, are what Paul Ricoeur, following Heidegger, defines in *Narrative* as a 'trace'. He considers, in a discussion of the epistemological nature of history and its relation to narrative, the purposes of document collection when we know that they are being collected for the purpose of recording events:

> …history is conscious that it is related to events that "really" happened. The document becomes a trace for this consciousness, that is, …it is both a remains and a sign of what was but no longer is (Ricoeur, 1988:5).

Both de Certeau and Foucault also saw archival documents as separate from the history which they create. Foucault saw historical documents as "monuments, inert traces whose deciphering depends on their being allowed to remain as they are during

the act of interpretation" (Poster, 1997:142). The documents are not the history but are the 'facts' with which history can be narrated. The events of history do not change; it is the context within which they are placed that creates differing interpretations:

> The issue is not only one of bringing these "immense dormant sectors of documentation" to life, of giving a voice to silence, or of lending currency to a possibility. It means changing something which had its own definite status and role into *something else* which functions differently (de Certeau, 1988:74).

This change is mediated through the social order within which the historian exists. Deciphering historical documents can also take place on a fictional level. In my novel archival texts take on a role as something else, "which functions differently" but, at the same time, they remain textually as they were. It is the context, juxtaposed against the fictional account of the same events, which allows for a different reading of them.

When a record of the past exists within our present as an object of *our* material culture, then it seems apparent that the archival record functions as a dualistic 'object'. At the same time it is both a 'real' object and a concept. [9] To perceive that present day 'object' as representing an experience 'of' the past requires us to engage in narrative processes in order to bring about an initial conceptualisation of that past. The things themselves have no inherent 'historyness' about them; rather they are textual accounts of things that once existed in a performative context. The document as a *trace* of that past experience is that thing which "combines a relation of significance, best discerned in the idea of vestige, and a relation of causality, included in the thing-likeness of the mark. The trace is a sign-effect" (Ricoeur, 1988:120). The trace then becomes that thing, existing in our world but yet part of the past-world, which has the ability to refigure time:

> It refigures time by constructing the junction brought about by the overlapping of the existential and the empirical in the significance of the trace (Ricoeur, 1988:125-126).

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[8] This is also true in this context of those shipboard diaries, and other accounts written by middle class women, when the author makes reference to steerage passengers, or writes their opinion of the 'quality' of people in steerage including their own servants.

[9] Newspapers in libraries, micro-film, computer databases and CDs and typed lists which can be photocopied, downloaded or manipulated in such a way that parts of them can also be used to make up different and new 'real' objects. This idea will be expanded upon in chapter four.

To get to the point of having the elements which make up a 'story' (fabula) one must use narrative structure in two stages. We employ narrative structure in order to make 'facts' cohesive (Barthes's lexia, "the 'units of meaning' in a text" (Abbott, 2002: 192)). This is true for both historical fiction and historiography. If we did not use narrative structures, then as de Certeau claims, the 'facts' would just remain as they initially existed, inert material that has *not yet* been worked on "in order to transform them into history" (de Certeau, 1988:71). Materiality and narrativity change over time.[10] We, existing in our present, create a different narrative from that which would have been created when the archive entry was written. By virtue of our temporal position, we begin the narrative at a different place because we have prior knowledge of the outcome of past events. Narrative differs and is affected by the different context of the readers, yet the foundation texts (the 'trace') from which the narrative is made, remain unchanged.

Summing up

My novel insists upon questioning the truthfulness or degree of reliability of past textual facts as accurate historic records of real women's life events. This is achieved through the use of a parallel narrative which presents characters whose moments of breaking frame challenge these past texts. At the same time, the transworld characters' existence as fiction is reinforced by their being objects (of narration) within the archival texts. *Both* the archival texts *and* the fiction are now seen as potentially unreliable.

It is this which is at the core of my novel—an historiographic metafictional challenging by the fictional voices of female transworld identities of what had been written as an historical, legitimate account of the past. This self-reflexive style of

[10] For example, we use a pre-existing narrative as the basis for further extrapolation into a larger historiographic or fictional narrative. In the times in which they existed having names accepted by emigration agents and recorded thus: Henry Simpson, Miller, York and wife; on an emigration list, created for Henry and Hannah a future narrative of getting to a port city they did not know, getting on board a ship, and travelling to an imaginary place they had not yet seen. For us, reading that same entry creates this travel narrative *only after* we have constructed the prior narrative of a man and a woman who were born, lived a time in rural England, and belonged to a class of workers who could not finance their own journey. We add our prior narrative of the expected stereotype of these kinds of people and their place in 'history' to the travel narrative of getting to a port city and so on, which they also had to create.

fiction which allows for narrative structures such as juxtaposition, intertext and collage, makes for a multi-dimensional, non-linear view of female colonial experience. Ultimately, the reader is the meaning-maker of truth within historical narrative.

This idea of the reader of a text, rather than the author(s), being the meaning maker is close to Roland Barthes's concept of the death of the author. He makes two distinct statements about what he considers to be the text and the readers:

> A text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (Barthes, 1977:146).

Removal of the author(s) from meaning making within a narrative, and in particular within historical narratives, whilst at first seeming illogical—for after all it is the author who initially puts down the words—does open up a space to be occupied by other elements from the author-text-reader triad which can create meaning. If we follow this concept we find Barthes's perspective on the role of the reader to be very relevant to the style of writing I have attempted within my novel:

> A text is made up of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures, and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but here is one place where this multiplicity is focussed and that place is the reader…the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost (Barthes, 1977:48).

Similarly, by incorporating the concept of sideshadowing, the initial narrative and the narrow view that frames the women when we read the newspaper stories as history, can be modified. It becomes merely one possibility of many that might have occurred. Sideshadowing can change "the way that we think about earlier events and the narrative models used to describe them" (Morson, 1994:7).

The fictional possibilities created by these conceptual and stylistic choices add to our understanding of colonial Australian women's lives by bringing into view their realities as the 'other' suppressed element of the past. An 'other' which once existed

as real women whose ‘trace’ still exists as archival documents in the basement of the National Library of Australia in Canberra and in other archives.

Chapter 2

Events and Characters Chosen—how?

Research and characterisation methodology

Stage 1: Initial sourcing of material

The process of collecting material for my novel was intuitive and owed as much to serendipity as to my fixed categories of research. Many authors stress the importance of elements of chance in discovering suitable material which might fit their narrative purposes. They stress how important it is to be, as I was, open to a wide range of possible stimuli. For example, Robert Harris, [11] in a television interview about his research for material for the novel *Pompeii* (2003), stressed the importance of his discovery of an archaic academic text (he termed it his 'Bible') on the engineering of Ancient Roman aqueducts. He notes this point in his research as the event which led to his decision to construct a novel about power and Ancient Rome around the character of the engineer Attilius and the extensive system of aqueducts built around the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.

In a similar way I used newspapers as a way of familiarising myself with the period and understanding some of the political agenda of the times. This was especially so in the case of the interrelations between Aboriginals, settlers and the government. Letters to the editor, opinion pieces and articles proved useful in this case. A second important source were the journals and letters of middle-class women of the period. In particular these gave me insights into women's day to day lives and some of the attitudes of the time.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, newspapers from the period 1840 to 1870 were researched for stories of women and events that fitted my narrative and subject needs. The same newspapers and, to some extent, journals not only provided the intertextual

elements which are central to the structure of my work but helped me in writing the artist's journal. The newspapers were used as source material and intertext for historic events within the artist's journal. Newspaper sections read for references to the types of events I was looking for included Police Reports, Police Court or Quarter Sessions Reports, columns covering Local Intelligence or Domestic Intelligence and Shipping Intelligence, as well as the more expected Advertisements, For Sale's, Positions Vacant, Public Notices and Personal Column sections.

Many interesting stories were rejected because they did not comply with all of my criteria. Others were rejected on the grounds that although they were 'true' events their content verged on sensationalism or melodrama. As well as furnishing stories the newspapers gave me a sense of what was happening where and when, the day to day necessities that women might have needed or wanted, what goods were being imported and exported, the price of things in the shops and the wages being paid. All of these add to the 'flavour' of the times, allowing me insight into life in Southeast Australia during the period.

The best areas in which to find accounts of the types of women whose stories I wanted to write were rural newspapers. Within these, court reports gave accounts not only of criminal events and trials in detail, but also minor infringements and extremely detailed reports of inquests. Transcripts of sermons were also useful. Regional newspapers carried smaller, less 'important' accounts of people brought before magistrates. These accounts were often couched in a sensational or moralising tone, particularly when reporting on women on the fringe of society such as prostitutes, vagrants, homeless women and their children, alcoholics and local Aboriginals. The metropolitan newspapers carried less day to day suffering; but when they reported dramatic events such as violent murders or shipwrecks involving loss of life, they too used language that was emotive.

An initial good story was the cue for seeking out previous, latter or differing reports of the same events. This involved some secondary sources, including monographs and

[11] "The South Bank Show: Robert Harris interviewed by Melvyn Bragg about his fascination with Pompeii." *Sunday Afternoon*, ABC Television. Sunday 3 April, 2005.

modern newspaper accounts of events. In this way, for stories that involved more than one newspaper or multiple reports over time, articles were read as a comparison or as a type of 'triangulation' of information to get to the core of the events. This was particularly so in the case of the murderer Mary Anne Brownlow, the *Cataraqui* shipwreck disaster and the murder of Caroline Collitts. This triangulation of sources was also used, to a lesser extent, for the intertext of the massacre of Aboriginal women and children.

As well as this technique, newspaper and other archival documents were used in this context of discovery and cross referencing as a way of reinforcing or 'proving' elements of the characters' personalities or circumstances. These documents included births, death and marriage records, immigration records, land records and indexes, some convict records and Governor's Despatches.

For example, the marriage certificates of Maria James to John Walsh, and Caroline James to William Collitts were sourced via genealogical databases, marriage indexes and microfilm copies of the actual certificates. The archival documents revealed a number of important findings which in turn became, or led to, vital plot elements. Maria and John's wedding ceremony had been performed by a travelling minister of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Because the newspaper had previously referred to John Walsh as Irish, this, along with Maria's maiden surname 'James', led to the assumption that the family of the two girls were Presbyterian. This fact, along with a births index search for their names which found nothing, meant that they could therefore be characterised as daughters of poor Scottish immigrants.

The marriage documents of both Maria and Caroline note Amelia Skeen as the primary witness to both marriages, and were signed in her own hand. Through family history records compiled by others,[12] I knew Amelia Skeen was originally Amelia Collitts, elder sister of William, daughter of an (Irish) emancipist (ex convict Pierce) and married to an emancipist (John Skeen). I knew that Amelia's mother, Mary was involved in setting up the district's first school and that the family owned a number of

[12] Moira Bird, *The Collits Family: the Collits of Castlereagh, Hartley and Western Plains of NSW* and Gai Rimmer, *A Biographical look at the Collits Family.*

different inns in which Amelia worked, or in which she had a financial interest. The Collitts also owned land in the Blue Mountains and ran cattle.

The marriage certificates of the girls also indicated that neither could sign her name, both girls making the X mark where a signature was required. Because Amelia signed the document so neatly, it was a reasonable assumption that she could write and read. The archival 'fact' of her signature works in conjunction with a number of other elements; Amelia worked at the inn and had family involvement in teaching through her mother and later through her son, who became the teacher/principal of a one room school at nearby Whiterock. Of these 'facts' the signature is an archival fragment as are the reports and documents of her parent's ownership of numerous inns, while for the 'fact' that her son was a schoolteacher I am indebted to oral family history.

Importantly for my practice, it was the combination of 'facts' and 'hearsay' or non-documented facts, which allowed me to create the important plot points and the totally plausible series of 'events' of Amelia's teaching Maria to read from old newspapers, thereby making the discovery (as I as author/researcher/archival reader did) of the violent and murderous past of Maria's husband. These pieces of information also led to a number of plot elements such as Maria's working for the Collitts family "up at the inn"; friendship between the three women (as proven by Amelia's signature on both their marriage certificates); and Maria and Amelia's using newspaper court reports, rather than the more tradition method of The Bible, for their reading lessons.

These fictional elements of both Maria and Amelia's character also suited two of my overarching 'themes' of:

- female characters who might not necessarily be thought of as 'good' in terms of the strict religious morality of the times;[13]
- women who made an attempt to overcome what one can only describe as bad situations.

[13] "After his [John Skeen, Convict Overseer on the Mt. Victoria Pass, conditionally pardoned 1842] marriage to Amelia Collitts she applied for an inn licence and was granted on the 17 August 1835. This inn 'The Rising Sun' caused Mitchell to write of John Skeen in these terms: 'he had lately left the department and built a [public] house on the road side so situated it could scarcely be doubted he will encourage drinking and disorder among men employed in the neighbourhood' (Skeen quoting Mitchell in Rimmer, 2001:59).

Site visits

Once these disparate sources had been consulted and outlines of characters and plot had been sketched in, visits were made to locations in which the events might have occurred. With the Collitts murder story and the night of the violent storm in mind, a visit was made to the Blue Mountains. Places located were the Vale of Clwydd, the River Lett, Hassans Walls, Hartley village historic site, court house and convict lock up, the (last) Collitts Inn near Little Hartley—now an historic restaurant and B & B, and the private 'bush' cemetery at the base of a hill behind the old inn, in which Amelia, some of her family and other early inhabitants of the district are buried.[14]

In the same way, for other chapters, visits were made to locations and settings; these included a visit to view the compound gardens of the (present) Goulburn Courthouse, in which the original scaffold for hangings was built, and the location of Hannah Simpson's family selection, at Dirty Creek, near Carcoar and Bathurst. The main locations I used for internal settings were buildings I have visited and which date from the period: The Rocks area and some houses there (Sydney); Cooma Cottage (Yass); Lanyon Homestead (Canberra); Duntroon Homestead (Canberra); Dundulamill Homestead and outbuildings (Dubbo); Blundell's Cottage (Canberra); Elizabeth Macarthur's farmhouse (Elizabeth Farm, Rosehill) and Elizabeth Bay House (Sydney). These historic buildings provided rooms and other settings in which the fictional action takes place. These locations, along with paintings, sketches and photographs from the 1800s, provided a rich bank of imagery with which to visualise the women.

These sites could not be considered as having been 'analysed' with any degree of planning or particular investigation. Rather, the places that were visited were noted in relation to how they might have been in the past. This was done in conjunction with other historical source reading, and occurred over a period of a number of years. The general atmosphere of the places in which the action was set was internalised, in such a way, and to such a degree, that when the plot was re-worked over and over again in my mind I could 'see' or create 'spaces' so that the stories were grounded in a type of reality of vision.

For instance, when I was trying to visualise the setting in order to write the kitchen argument scene between the Mistress of Yarramundi Homestead and Mary, her Irish servant, I could imagine Mary standing beside the dresser in the kitchen of Elizabeth Farm. I used the memory of a 'space' I had once experienced, as the fictional 'space' in which the Yarramundi action takes place. This dresser is positioned (in my mind, and was then in reality) along the left wall when one is standing in the kitchen doorway and facing the large fireplace at the opposite end of the room. I also imagine that the dresser is beside a scrubbed kitchen table, and this is the table in the story that Mary places the vase on. I do not exactly recollect whether or not a scrubbed table was in that position in the room at Elizabeth Farm, but in my imagination, whilst creating the plot, (and even now) that is where the table 'exists'.

Other stories involved some prior knowledge. I had limited knowledge of the *Cataraqui* disaster having, by chance, previously visited the site of the wreck and the memorial on King Island in Bass Strait. The hanging of Mary Brownlow is mentioned as a historical 'event' of interest to tourists on a Goulburn website. I had years earlier 'discovered' the account of Hannah Simpson's death while undertaking family history research.

Unravelling chaotic chronologies

In order to make chronological sense of multiple newspaper reports of events, as well as to understand the degree to which reports often conflicted or sensationalised the events, different strategies were used for each of the stories. Examples from two of the most complex of the stories, the *Cataraqui* Disaster (Yarramundi Homestead) and Aboriginal and settler relations (The Eldest Daughter), follow.

The Cataraqui Disaster: In this case I tabulated five accounts which approached the events from different social and temporal spaces. Four different newspaper versions and one official government report, that of First Mate Thomas Gutherie, were transcribed from the documents into table form, keeping chronological order within each of the individual accounts. Each of the accounts began and ended the story from

[14] Interestingly the father of Henry Lawson is buried in the same small and isolated bush clearing cemetery.

a different temporal point. Once the comparison of the accounts was done, selections from each were combined into a 'new' rendition of the total events over the three days of the ship's striking the rocks, its disintegration and the rescue of survivors; thus creating a time line of what had happened. However, this new rendition conflicted internally as to the times of events and actions of participants. This was because the original five accounts also conflicted. These old texts, amalgamated into something 'new', formed a cross section of local narratives—narratives from which 'real' family and friends of those who perished would have gained the news of their losses. This account, chronologically ordered, yet conflicting itself in terms of both details and the tone used, became the intertext within my fictionalised story of the servant at Yarramundi homestead.

Secondary sources, both contemporaneous and modern, gave further background to the story.[15]

Aboriginal, Government and Settler Relations: many accounts of settler/Aboriginal relations were read in newspapers. An index search on 'Aborigines' was done in order to 'turn up' stories in greater numbers and in a more controlled way than for previous stories. In this case it was in order to get an understanding of relationships and tensions between indigenous Australians and settler communities during the period. This provided original and wide-ranging opinions.

Reports were avoided which negatively stereotyped Aboriginals. Those focussing on attacks on settlers' farms and families by Aboriginals in groups, as well as Aboriginal men acting alone, or in conjunction with white criminal elements such as bushrangers, were not chosen. Although I found accounts of reprisals or calls for reprisals by settlers, and some reports of massacres of Aboriginal women and children, these were not presented directly as the central story theme. This was because I believe that the greater narrative potential for stories of Aboriginal and settler interactions lay with those smaller detail events of day to day relations, framed by the larger and tragic events of the period. Opinion pieces, one massacre report and letters to the editor

regarding Aboriginal and settler relations were found and supplied the intertext for the Eldest Daughter story.

In general newspaper opinion pieces ranged from those in support of the right of Aboriginals to defend their land, declarations of concern for the poor conditions that the Aboriginal 'race' was exposed to, or for the way in which Aboriginal people were being treated, to those of the opposite opinion: in support of the rights of squatters to 'remove' Aboriginal people, by any means possible, from the land claimed.

There were calls upon the government, from many levels and perspectives, to bring resolution to the terrible situations faced by both sides. Reports of both good and bad actions by individual Aboriginals were also found. Noted were those referring to selfless acts of bravery for settler women or children at risk in the bush, or acts of kindness in sharing resources. Other articles noted the 'cleverness' of the 'natives' at particular skills such as language or bush craft. These pieces of background information helped in the formulation of the character Merrung.

Interestingly, those crimes in which Aboriginal people featured as either victims and perpetrators, or perhaps as accomplices, were reported in terms similar to those used for other, non-Aboriginal members of the lower orders. This was true for individual crimes such as rape, murder (other than homestead raids), larceny and drunkenness, where the crimes occurred near towns and were visible to the wider community. This reporting differed from the more obvious frontier 'crimes' of Aboriginal raids on settler's livestock, families and homesteads which was, on occasion, graphic in its detail.

This indicated to me a certain level of intermingling between those groups existing at the margins of 'polite' or educated society. This idea proved useful material for some plot points within my novel, particularly the possible interaction between Holroyd and an unnamed Aboriginal woman. It was also interesting to note in this research that, unlike many of today's media reports, these crimes were not reported using racial

[15] For this particular story modern day versions of the disaster were located in *Shipwrecks:Australia's greatest maritime disasters* (McHugh, 2003), *Australian Shipwrecks* Vol. 1 (Bateson, 1972), *Tackley to Tasmania* (McKay,

factors as the overriding primary point of interest. Rather focus was on the crime and its gravity.

The variety of reports gave great insight into the complex, differing and less than stereotyped interactions which existed between Aboriginal men and white settlers, Aboriginal women and white men and women, and Aboriginals and the government.

Secondary sources were again referred to for background to this story and the artist's journal.[16] Other background information for Aboriginal and settler relations also included middle-class literate women's writings. These often gave quite differing opinions and descriptions of Aboriginal people with whom educated women would have come in contact. Such accounts, opinions and descriptions of Aboriginals living on the edges of white settlement proved useful when creating plot elements.

Stage 2: Once the stories were decided

A point was reached with all of the women whom I chose to create as 'transworld characters' beyond which it was no longer fruitful to proceed with actual 'biographical' archival research.

This point was arrived at for two reasons. First, once the character had been visualised in my mind and a plot had begun to be formulated, any further information might be potentially damaging to my 'image' of the woman and of her experiences. Secondly, to continue might have led to difficulties of translating this 'image' into a character within my fictional account.

For instance, to find out that in fact Maria Walsh might ultimately have become a hopeless alcoholic, much in the same vein as her mother, would have 'killed off' the character that I had already created. Finding more biographical information might have made it impossible to form in my mind important fictional elements such as her

1992), *Poor souls they perished: The Cataraqui Australia's worst shipwreck* (Lemon and Morgan, 1995).

pregnancy to Walsh and her desire for William Collitts. Similarly Maria's witnessing her sister's last moments in the struggle with Walsh could only be formed by using an imaginary idea based on limited biographical details.

For narrative cohesion, my character Maria was required to form a relationship with William. She also needed to have been the witness of her sister's last moments, and especially of her last words. The plot of the story hangs on this fictional 'truth'. And such a fictional 'truth' can be destroyed by too much background information.

Significantly the *most* biographical research was for the 'character' of Hannah Simpson. I had previously researched her biography and that of her lineage and as a result she seemed to me to be the most biographically 'real', making me less inclined to embellish events within this story for the sake of narrative cohesion. As a result this story's plot most closely parallels that of the single newspaper account of her death and her own biographical details.[17]

When my research focus was on events, rather than characters as the main component of the story, newspapers and general history sources provided those details I needed for plot points. In these stories wholly fictional characters or real personages with extremely limited biographical details, such as Thomas Whelan (the fiancée of fictional Mary) and his sister, and an unnamed Aboriginal woman/Merrung, were added as characters layered over the events.

The wreck of the *Cataraqui* generated many sources, including re-evaluations of the disaster from a modern perspective. To consult *all* the available material would have taken too much time. It would also have made the already confusing 'noise' of the reports harder to analyse. Synthesising all of them into a logical, narratively cohesive, fictional account would have been much more difficult if every last skerrick of information had been consulted.

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[16] Publications such as Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aboriginies, settlers and land* and *The Other Side of the Frontier* and John Connor, *The Australian Frontier wars 1788-1838*.

[17] Hannah Simpson was my great great grandmother who, along with her husband Henry, came to Australia from Yorkshire as an assisted immigrant in 1840 on the barque *John* on whom Elizabeth Archer also sailed.

For simplicity and historic cohesion, numerous accounts from emigrants undergoing three to four month sea voyages in the mid-late 1800s were read. Many journals and letters referred to often similar events, making many events which occurred during a voyage into a kind of 'common experience'. These events, such as the shark fishing and the phosphorescence of the water at night, were then used as background in the 'Women in a Boat' story and, taken from one particular journal—that of Elizabeth Archer (Archer, 1839) (also transcribed in (Main, 1994)), were used as intertext.

Descendents of Elizabeth Archer can read first hand of her experiences on board ship. They can gain an insight into her thoughts and feelings about her decision to emigrate to Australia. Through this they also gain an insight into history. They can listen to her hopes for the future (a future which now includes them). Reading her shipboard journal allows an idea of her character and personality to be formed, descendants can see humour or impatience and through her comments might perceive likenesses to other family members. Elizabeth Archer, and those middle class women like her who wrote of their experiences, are not isolated or silenced. They are fascinating women who have historical agency. By their writings they deny the stereotypes that the hegemonic, and patriarchal society attempts to clothe them in.

The women who did not, or could not, write remain in the position of the subaltern at the mercy of that hegemony. The steerage women are also placed in a similar position with respect to those middle-class women who write often describe disparagingly of them in their own journals. As with the male newspaper journalists, and the archival lists which record them as 'wife of', the middle-class women write only of and not for steerage women.

Barthes and the Camera Lucida

In the beginning of his book *Camera Lucida*, Barthes makes a statement that I believe can also be applied when one reads the journal accounts of nineteenth century women who mention others whom they happen to meet or observe, and who themselves left no record of their lives:

> One day, quite some time ago, I happened on a photograph of Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome taken in 1852. And I realized then, with an amazement I have not been able to lessen since: "I am looking at the eyes that looked at the emperor" (Barthes, 1981:3).

With the same amazement that Barthes experienced in relation to Napoleon, when I read Elizabeth Archer's journal I can hear through her voice, Hannah and silenced women like her who were also on board the *John* and who lived down below in steerage. Yet while her voice allows me to perceive their presence in the world of the past, and otherwise without her they and their experiences would pass without notice, still I am drawn to an understanding and a 'viewing' of their experiences without their authentication of this process. Their presence is there and yet it is removed. I 'see' them but do not hear them. As the point is made by Barthes in relation to the photograph of Napoleon's brother, and in these journals, there is simultaneity of presence and absence. A simultaneous memory trace is created by the text in, and by the act of, writing the Archer journal.

My concerns therefore, in fictionally creating events within my novel, are with the "innocence of a face captured without the knowledge of the subject, which gives that individual 'life' but also rips away 'their' thoughts" (Burnett, 1991:2) and which ultimately, and similar to the newspaper's 'actual last words spoken' of once real women's life events "produces a visual object without content" (Burnett, 1991:2).

Ron Burnett in an analysis of *Camera Lucida* states that:

> meaning is 'more' than text (written or photographic) more than words (spoken or heard) and it is only through an exploration of the gap between self-image and photographic that is between identity and comprehension, that one can begin to understand the interpretive flexibility which needs to be used in discussing a photograph [or I would add an invisible textual person] (Burnett, 1991:2).

This statement can also apply equally in a textual context to the journal of Elizabeth Archer with regards to Hannah and the steerage women. There is a parallel with my practice of re-textualising the invisible image of silent women. My novel offers itself as an exploration of the gap between. That is the gap to be filled by new text as we are

forced, by Elizabeth Archer's words, to 'look away' and not see the real women because they don't write the journal but are present in it, and because, by her not naming any of the women she describes in steerage, then all steerage women become the women whose particular (and sometimes graphic) events she narrates:

> Ultimately—or at the limit—in order to see a photograph well, it is best to look away or close your eyes…The photograph touches me if I withdraw it from its usual blah-blah: "Technique", "Reality", "Reportage", "Art", etc.: to say nothing, to shut my eyes, to allow the detail to rise of its own accord into effective consciousness (Barthes, 1981:53-55).

In its illumination of what is written as text (both in the past of Elizabeth Archer's journal and in the present of the novel) is relocated what was once performative experience. The 'meaning' of these women's identities is found in that very absence of their own words. When Elizabeth Archer makes references to steerage passengers I am aware of a 'lack of specificity', in the meaning of representation. These references occur without the steerage emigrants own words-as-text, or even their knowledge that they are being so represented or 'ethnographied'. As Burnett claims for images, and which I believe can be also applied here to 'invisible' words and unnamed people, who are re-created in our minds as we read the journal:

> If the image is the fulcrum of a context-dependent interpretation of the relationship between seeing and understanding then images lack specificity. They are the "site" of a continuous process of reinterpretation produced out of the historical context of presentation and performance. This "instability" which is at the heart of postmodernist reflections of the variability of meaning in all texts, foregrounds images [and those lives re-created by this journal] as processual (Burnett, 1991:1).

Elizabeth Archer does not name the non-cabin class participants in events occurring on the *John;* this creates even more poignancy when one considers representation and mis-representation. When withholding names while describing a particularly dramatic situation but she lumps all steerage women together as behaving in one particular way. [18] For those seeking some kind of individual's 'identity' this leaves a gap, "between self-image and photographic" (Burnett, 1991:2)—or in this case, text represented as a recounted event, as in a photographic account—thus allowing room for a generic

[18] "October 8th, a steerage passenger partially deranged has attempted to destroy herself and succeeded in partly cutting her throat. October 25th, Two emigrants quarrelled with and struck their wives who were not behindhand in returning the compliment" (Archer, 1839).

'steerage woman' image, as described by Archer, to fall into that gap and to become the once real person I and family historians like myself might be seeking. This is a case of mis-representation by omission. In this journal, and the newspaper articles, we seek witnesses to a particular part of 'history' or to particular 'histories' that will remain un-recorded:

> Thus the life of someone whose existence has somewhat preceded our own encloses in its particularity the very tension of History, its division. History is hysterical: it is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it—and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it….(impossible for me to believe in "witnesses"; impossible, at least, to be one…). That is what the time when my mother was alive *before me* is—History (Barthes, 1981:65).

In terms of my fiction, this gap also exists between the 'sketches' created by my fictional artist (visually absent yet present on the diegetic level of the novel) and the textual self-narrated women's stories.

The travelling artist and his journal monologue

Why include an artist? Primarily because in the context in which I have set the novel he is an immediate contradiction. First, as a middle-class, educated man, his character is the antithesis of those of the six illiterate women whose stories intersect his monologue. Second, his efforts at pre-photographic pictorial representation of a new land reveal the impossibility of representing it unambiguously. His endeavours show that all acts of representation are culturally constructed, performative and act as exclusion. They emphasise that representation, like history itself, is culturally conditioned. We have come to rely on images of Australian landscape from the period of settlement as if they can deliver complete and true vision of how the country and people once were. For my fictional artist, and those like him, this is not the case because of his training, class, and in particular, of those ideas of the Picturesque landscape tradition. As he is engaged in representation and artistic practice within the 'grand' process of empire building this is especially the case. This could also be said to be true for all representational practices:[19]

[19] How this style acts as a form of ideology is discussed in detail in chapter three.

> The image of nature depicted in art is essentially ideological and the most important relation it bears is not to the 'real' qualities in nature, for example, but to an ideological formation of nature in the culture (Turner, 1993:33).

The existence of the actual painting and drawings which the artist has been working on during his fictional travels in Australia is always tenuous. The women's stories act in the place of these visual images, yet at the diegetic level of the narrative his wife in England 'views' images which are described by von Hübner, as considered by the artist to be "unsuited for reproduction".[20] The detritus of the artist's travels is claimed by von Hübner and is ultimately sent to the artist's wife after her husband's disappearance. They act as pictorial space represented as text. These diegetic 'pictures' which prove to be actual text, enact a relationship between a concept of something once 'real' and a visual trace of that same thing. As mentioned previously in the discussion of Bennett and Barthes and in relation to my novel's absent images, I endorse Burnett's comment that the meaning of 'pictorial' is that it:

> …would be incorrect to assume that the pictorial is based, in a simple sense, on the visual…A visual trace can have a life of its own but it is ultimately a performative device fitting into a context of communication and exchange…Its materiality can in fact be produced by the absence of the photographic (Burnett, 1991:9).

For my purposes, its materiality may be produced not by an absence of a visual image, but by the substitution of the visual by text.

The artist is also an ideal 'type' of character who can act as the 'mediocre hero' in the sense in which this term is used by Lukacs.[21] This character provides readers with information, or a point of view, from both sides of a situation, thereby creating a link within the narrative between two forces which act in opposition to each other.

In this case the artist links the world of the educated middle-class men and their wives and the world of those illiterate women (and their husbands) who work for them.

[20] And therefore by inference the artist also casts doubts as to the moral acceptability of the women.
[21] This is discussed in further detail in chapter five during a discussion of Lukacs's ideas on historical fiction.

Creating the artist's character and those of his companions

The journals of real artists who travelled to Australia during this period were used as sources for ideas of the ways in which an artist would be travelling, thinking and what he would be doing in practical terms. Other helpful sources I drew on included German or Prussian travellers accounts and biographies[22] of artists or quasi scientists, such as: Ludwig Becker, from Offenback, Germany or William Blandowski, from Silesia (Johns et al, 1998). I looked at the images from artists working in this style. I noted the sketches of their campsites and read of their experiences as recounted in their travel accounts which, during this period, were themselves often serialised in journals and newspapers.[23] Fictional characters based on historical figures, such as Voss as Ludwig Leichhardt, in the book by the same name by Patrick White, also influenced this character.

The districts that the artist and his companions travel through in his sketching expedition of south-eastern Australia were chosen because of my own familiarity with the area. During the last five to six years I visited most of the locations to which the artist travels.

[22] George Theodore Blakers, *A Useless Young Man?: an autobiography of life in Australia 1849-64.*
[23] *The Australian Journal of William Strutt, A.R.A 1850-1862* (Mackaness, 1958); *The Journal of a voyage from Plymouth to Sydney in Australia on board the emigrant ship Royal Sovereign, with a short description of Sydney* (Prout, 1844); *An illustrated handbook of the voyage to Australia and a visit to the goldfields* (Prout, 1852); 'The sketcher in Tasmania' in *Once a week, an illustrated miscellaney of literature, art, science and popular information* (Prout, 1862); 'Stories from the Studies: how I and my sketches were nearly drowned' in *Argosy* (Chevalier, 1888).

Chapter 3

A Short Digression: the Picturesque

The concept of the 'Picturesque' in English landscape art was influential during the latter part of the 1700s and the first half of the 1800s. Its influence can still be found in some paintings today. For art it was in essence a "set of theories, ideas and conventions which grew up around the question of how we look at landscape" (Copley and Garside, 1994:I). It referred to landscape painting which adhered to a definite style of pictorial representation.

One of the requirements of the 'Picturesque' in both art and landscape gardening, was to produce a reaction in the viewer definable as curiosity, or stimulation of the imagination. To do so it was valid within the style to readjust what was seen in nature, in order to make it fit more within the 'Picturesque' vision. The Picturesque was also an important literary style and architectural style (Osborne, 1984).

Therefore, what comes to us many years later through colonial travel images (and as I will elaborate, through 'text' from scientific expeditions, travel journals and other accounts of landscape) which have been influenced by this style, is a representation which might appear, on initial viewing, as an accurate depiction of how the world appeared, but which in fact is a 'text'. This 'text' has been carefully constructed and filtered through a social and cultural lens. In many nineteenth century Australian landscape images nothing is what it appears to be at first glance. I find that this idea, in which an image or 'view' of landscape is re-adjusted to suit a particular stylistic (and idealised) 'vision' can also relate to the way in which we consider the representation of 'history'. This is because history is itself a text. The idea of how history should and can be represented (or created) is complex. It is also central to this thesis. This chapter will attempt to examine an aesthetic concept such as the Picturesque because it is the artistic style that one of the main characters uses to represent his (and therefore the women's) world. It will reveal it as device which uses a set of elaborate, stylistic 'rules', which are formulated in such a way as to produce a

particular cultural object (a painting or a narrative history) within a discipline. As such, used within history or the set of practices that make up the 'Picturesque', these 'rules' can operate to make disappear those things which might be considered too difficult or outside the prescribed set of 'rules'.

Mixture; roughness and smoothness

The first author to put forward ideas of the Picturesque was the Reverend William Gilpin. In his work *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and on Sketching Landscapes* he stated that Picturesque landscapes incorporate roughness or ruggedness of texture, variety and irregularity, as well as the effects of light and shade, and which, when viewed, can stimulate the imagination:

> We speak of the grand scenes of nature, tho uninteresting in a *picturesque light*, as having a strong effect on the imagination—often a stronger, than when they are properly disposed for the pencil, we everywhere make a distinction between scenes, that are *beautiful*, and *amusing*; and scenes that are *picturesque* (Gilpin, 1792:ii).
>
> Roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque; as it seems to be that particular quality which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting (Gilpin, 1792:6)…yet more its smooth surface is ruffled, if I may so speak, the more picturesque it appears (Gilpin, 1792:12).
>
> Picturesque composition consists in writing in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects…variety too is equally necessary in his composition; so is contrast (Gilpin, 1792:19)…From *rough* objects also he seeks the *effect of* light and *shade*, which they are as well disposed to produce (Gilpin, 1792:20).

However, Gilpin's theoretical definition was somewhat vague in that he also considered that the distinguishing characteristic of the 'Picturesque' was: "marked of such beautiful objects as are suited to the pencil" (Gilpin, 1792:iii-iv).

Simon Ryan summarises Gilpin's Picturesque criteria to include, roughness, contrasted with smoothness and the effects of light and shade; foreground—consisting of deep tones, spatially introduces the middle ground, which contains the subject and which comprises the centre of interest in the picture; and background, as the last

element of a planar division and the final point for the illusion of depth (Ryan, 1992:284).

Gilpin's principles also included the concept of *coulisse*—a framing device of rocks or trees, always darker than the middle ground. Together these formed a visual point in the picture plane which, because it was darker, drew the eye's attention to the lighter centre or middle ground of the painting (Copley and Garside, 1994). There should be one focus of interest only and a point of view "which allows the framing of a limited scene rather than an endless expanse" (Ryan, 1992:285).

Uvedale Price later became an influential theorist for the style, particularly in the area of garden design. In this development of the style something that was termed 'mixture' also became important. Thus 'mixture':

> begins by identifying elements to be combined. Determining the acceptability of individual elements is not the immediate concern of the advocates of mixture. ….by allowing many things to contribute to the total composition. The Picturesque shifts attention away from individual elements to the relation between them. Elements that might be considered inadmissible in other situations are not eliminated straightaway even though they could be (Robinson, 1991:5).

In considering the structural integrity of my novel these ideas of roughness, sudden variation and mixture are apparent in the variations between the women's stories and the intertext elements used within them, as well as between the women's stories and the 'smoothness' of the continued single narration of the artist's journal. 'Mixture' might also be thought of as the juxtaposition of the stories of the female (transworld characters) and the male journey combining, interweaving and in so doing forming a new narrative in which each partakes of elements from the other's story (or history).

In picking up on ideas of the Picturesque concept of "elements that might be considered inadmissible"—featuring such elements as a component of the plot is another way in which the concept has been applied to the writing of my novel. The stories of the women are an example of this type of otherwise inadmissible element.

The Picturesque: appropriating land and labour

In journals of exploration accurate and Picturesque representations of the landscape were often confused. Even mimetic pictures, supposedly direct copies of what the explorers saw before them, employed a Picturesque arrangement:

> This mode of landscape production opposed scientific evaluation, but paradoxically already carried with it the same utilitarian ideologies of land function possessed by instrumentalist science. This meant that if the land was Picturesque it was ripe for transformation into wealth (Ryan, 1992:283).

Ryan goes on to claim that the Picturesque produces a frame which positions the viewer "so as to create a text of the landscape" (Ryan, 1992:283). Once the text has been created, it follows then that the landscape can be 'read' by utilising pre-existing notions of how to read works of art. Examples of this by explorers are:

> A beautiful looking country, splendidly grassed and ornamented with the fantastic mounds [anthills] and the creek timber as back and for grounds for the picture (Giles, 1889, 1:150 in Ryan, 1992:283).

Sturt, in his 1844-46 exploration journal of central Australia notes that:

> …we passed flat after flat of the most vivid green, ornamented by clumps of trees, sufficiently apart to give a most Picturesque finish to the landscape. Trees of a denser foliage and deeper shade drooped over the river, forming long dark avenues, and the banks of the river, grassed to the water, had the appearance of having been made so by art (Sturt in Ryan, 1992:290).

A similar statement is from Barron Field's *Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales*, he states:

> So English is the character of the scenery—downs, meadows and streams, in the flat—no side scenes of eucalyptus…you may see as far as the eye can reach. Stockmen, cattle and sheep occasionally form your horizon, as in old Holland—a Paul Potter or Cuyp effect rare in New Holland. At sunset we saw wooded hills, distant enough to display that golden glow which landscape painters love (Field in Smith, 1991:31).

It is within these theories, ideas and conventions of the Picturesque that the artist character of my novel is working. Although the areas in which he (fictionally) travels are not unexplored wilderness, to him they are still new, strange and different from what he had experienced previously. I chose these two artistic styles for the character

of my artist for a number of reasons. These relate to things as diverse as narrative structure, characterisation and period 'atmosphere', but more, they also relate to the intellectual concepts behind the novel. This chapter should go some way to making clear the reasons for this choice for the artist's practice and for the structure of the novel as a whole. Emphasis here of the concepts of the picturesque is important because elements of this (academically) outdated yet often still populist style of artistic representation and landscape design have been 'borrowed' by me in formulating a narrative scaffold for the novel.

By making use of these notions of 'Picturesque' representation within the structure of the novel, an extra level of meaning is brought to bear on an already multi-layered narrative. The artist character works within this style, and the structure of the fictional world within which he exists is also 'made' utilising notions from this artistic set of practices. I have chosen this for the structure to enable the formation of a thick mesh of interweaving between the fictional world created from within the text, in which the novel's transworld and fictional characters exist, and the 'real' world of reader reading text.

It is also a way of playing with the Umberto Eco concepts of the 'model reader' and the 'naive reader' of a text. The conditions for a model reader is defined as being "a textually established set of felicity conditions to be met in order to have a macro-speech act (such as text is) fully actualized" (Eco, 1979:11). The differing levels of 'knowledge' that a potential model reader may bring to a work, allow an increasingly greater depth of understanding of the levels of meaning that can be found within that particular text:

> The author has thus to foresee a model of a possible reader supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them (Eco, 1979:7).

Arranging structure around Picturesque concepts, and with a main character working within that style, links can be made within the subjectivity of the model reader; that is one who is aware of the style and, or, ideology as it exists within landscape painting traditions. The different levels of meaning to be found thus in my novel also allow the

'naïve' reader to glean these rules from the text, or for the 'model' reader to gain greater pleasure from their own knowledge when reading the novel:

> Thus it seems that a well-organized text on the one hand presupposes a model of competence coming, so to speak, from outside the text, but on the other hand works to build up, by merely textual means, such a competence (Eco, 1979:8).

It is also postmodern praxis to light heartedly borrow from past modes of cultural production in a 'take what you want' process.

Brief discussion on the Picturesque Tour

The idea of a picturesque tour was a large part of this movement. Gilpin notes the importance of it for the educated, middle-class male traveller:

> Let us then take another course, and amuse ourselves with searching after effects. This is the general intention of picturesque travel. We mean not to bring it into competition with any of the more useful ends of travelling (Gilpin, 1792:41).
>
> The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the pursuit of his object—the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view. We suppose the country to have been unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept continually in an agreeable suspense—the love of novelty is the foundation of this pleasure (Gilpin, 1792:47-48).

Tour guide books appeared frequently during this period, examples include numerous by Gilpin such as his *Observations on several parts of England, particularly the mountains and lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, relative chiefly to Picturesque beauty, made in the year 1772* (Gilpin, 1808) or Thomas Newte's, *A Tour in England and Scotland in 1785* (1788).

The artist of my novel can be thought of as participating in the journey that he undertakes for a variety of reasons:

- To gain some money—to make watercolours and later prints of exotic or foreign locations and sell them back in England;
- To make the kind of art he is planning on doing as a vehicle to emphasise or highlight his skills in landscape painting;

- To find a different and perhaps 'exotic' way of gaining entry into the influential Royal Academy of Art.

However, at the same time the characters of the artist and von Hübner are also participants at the extreme end of this popular nineteenth century middle-class leisure activity. In these 'tours' rural landscapes could be viewed nostalgically and as the 'other' by those members of the middle classes who normally resided in urban and built environments. They were a way of interacting with landscapes outside of that which was familiar.

For the character of my artist this concept has relevance. Undertaking a Picturesque sketching tour through Australia's pastoral southeast could be considered an antipodean example of the English tour. The artist's fictional journey negotiates a space somewhere between that of the actual journals of explorers such as Mitchell and artists like John Skinner Prout, who travelled in Australia for work during this period and those members of the middle classes undertaking 'the tour' for novelty value.

Picturesque tours of the period invite readings of them as symbolic journeys through landscapes inscribed with over-determined moral values. As such, the people touring construct their own symbolic geography of the country. The tourists' journeys from city to country, sophistication to simplicity, civilisation to nature, are articulated largely in relation to the trope of luxury. By undertaking his journey the tourist visibly renounces city luxury for rural simplicity. The journey also forces exposure to, and confrontation with, an imagined other; the natural world which exists outside the realms of the social and the economic. However, the journey is potentially compromised at every stage because it involves a search for aesthetic pleasure beyond the bounds of the moral. At an extreme it offers a route to illicit gratification (Copley and Garside, 1994:50).

My artist, as I have created his character, would understand his journey not just as a tourist enacting the tour for self gratification. As mentioned previously and like the real nineteenth century travel artists who came to Australia, my fictional artist travels with a stated purpose. However, he also travels with the background 'noise' of this

concept of the leisured Picturesque tour. The stated aims of his journey create a ground for cultural production in which he moves continually between the two worlds of passive observer (as on a tour) and active recorder of what he sees in the landscape (similar to an explorer's topographic artist). He also moves between the worlds of civilisation and nature, England and Australia, old societies and new.

Visual examples of the Picturesque style

Examples of traditional Picturesque treatment of landscape art from colonial Australia include landscapes of pastoral and natural scenes such as: John Glover's, *Patterdale, Van Diemen's land*, c. 1835 (Bonyhady, 1985:48); Conrad Martens, *Tempe in the seat of A. B. Sparke*, 1838 (Bonyhady, 1985:50) and John Skinner Prout, *Maria Island, from Little Swanport, Van Diemen's Land*, 1845 (Picture Australia, State Library of Tasmania).

However, there are also other works that notionally might be seen to fall within the genre of topographic travel art but which are, on closer inspection, less obvious examples of artists working within this style. These (mostly) *plein air* watercolour or pen and ink sketches appear to be accurate depictions of the views seen by early Australian explorers. Yet these works also embody concepts of the Picturesque tradition in the selection of what is chosen and the construction of how it is depicted:

> he who culls from nature the most beautiful parts of her productions—a *distance* here; and there a *fore-ground*—combines them artificially; and removing everything offensive, admits only such parts, as are *congruous*, and *beautiful*; will in all probability, make a much better landscape, then he who takes all as it comes (Gilpin, 1808:xxv).

These images represent landscapes far removed from what Gilpin and others might classify as falling naturally within Picturesque ideals. These artist-explorers were working in an environment that was flat, relatively featureless, hot and hostile to European intrusion. This extreme landscape could be said to be the antithesis to the original very English 'vision' described by Gilpin. Yet each artist still managed to represent that which they saw on their journey within the frame of a Picturesque (and therefore English colonial) 'ideal'. This is particularly so in the case of images of the

arid inland. This concept was a wholly transported European visual system which assigned landscape features into some kind of correct 'order', based on class and political sensibilities born from the dominant group within that society. These explorers and artists (and it follows the artist character within my novel) could not 'see' the Australian landscape in any way other than through previously formulated European cultural conventions.

What they chose to represent was not a value-neutral *Australian* landscape. Rather, what they conceived of as 'landscape' is actually a set of visual clues that can be articulated through any form of stylistic cultural construction. These cultural conventions, formulated as 'rules' in the northern hemisphere, were outside of the environment they were attempting to represent. They were also applied to an environment for which other 'rules' of representation already existed within practices of indigenous cultural production. These indigenous 'rules' of representation were not of course understood (as text to be read) by the newcomers for many years to come.

A brief analyses of some images may help to sustain this point, as well as to clarify the point that for my novel, what the artist character saw and what was finally 'read' by his wife in England, was not the 'reality' before him.

Captain E C. Frome, *First view of salt desert called Lake Torrens* 1843 (Thomas, 1988:38).
In this image note the foreground, with its dark lumps of small vegetation (possibly spinifex); the mid-ground centre of interest of the distant puddle of water and the man on horse back. The man's body extends vertically (and pictorially) from the foreground up to the mid-ground to take up the same pictorial space as that of the mid-ground to distant horizon lake, with both becoming the significant 'feature' of the image. *Coulisse* exists here as the cluster of 2-3 dead sticks on the left hand side of the lake, the man on horseback or the slightly darker area of the horizon to the right hand side of him. Roughness is seen in the land and lumps of vegetation and smoothness in the tonal sky.

William Westall, *View of Wreck-Reef Bank Taken at Low Water* (engraving by Jon Pye, 1814) (Findlay, 1998:43).

In the case of this image of the reef and exposed sand island by Westall the conventions of the picturesque have been taken to a realm (the tropical reef) that they were never intended for. Yet in representing this natural structure and the ensuing human event that occurred on it and because of it, Westall has stuck doggedly within his convention. He sketched within the convention to such a degree that Matthew Flinders was forced to note his dissatisfaction with the way that Westall represented the things that he saw, and the way these departed pictorially from what Flinders saw as visual 'truth'. Flinders, writing of the image by Westall stated that Westall had:

> Represented the corals…to give a better notion of their forms and the way in which they are seen on the reefs, but in reality, the tide never leaves any considerable part of them uncovered (Flinders in Findlay, 1998:43).

As Findlay notes, the fact that Flinders stressed this anomaly could have been because having the coral so prominently featured above the water made Flinders appear to be "incompetent in not being able to avoid the coral [and that the coral]…caused the shipwreck of the *Porpoise* and *Cato*" (Findlay, 1998:43). The coral outcrops of the reef are used in this image as both elements of *coulisse*—dark points of interest on the left or foreground of the image that extend to the middle ground and foreground elements that act as an 'introduction' to the 'point of interest' of the tents, wrecked ship and flagpole on the coral cay. The coral also acts conveniently as a feature of 'roughness' (in fact rough enough to put a hole in the ship) where the flat featureless ocean might indicate 'smoothness'. I consider this image an extreme example of the way that artists of this period were prepared to 'alter' that which they saw before them to place it within a cultural production formed by the hegemony that they were a part of.

Aspects of the Picturesque as applied to the structure of *Hannah's Place*

In my work the artist acts as the *coulisse* to each of the women's stories. Each story is brought into clear relief by the male (artist's) point of view, as it is framed by, or

elaborated upon by, references in his journal. Through the female narration of each individual women's stories we get an altogether different 'view' or perspective of the artist's travels. We do not actually visually 'see' the women's images throughout the artist's journal but we 'see' the artist and his companions, through the women's eyes, via their descriptions. Structured in this way we get, throughout the text of both the women's stories and the artist's journal, 'multi' views of the same situation from two differing perspectives.

Each of the women's stories have as their central character illiterate women and this is one way of creating a sustained concept of 'one visual focus' of interest. Each of the women's stories also demonstrates a clear division of foreground, midground background which is translated textually as beginning, middle and end. The artist's journal does not have this same structure. Instead it has a continuous narrative, without a distinct 'middle' section and an end that does not end when the artist's homodiegetic narration does. Instead his journal dissipates towards an unresolved conclusion. The artist disappears and what remains of his story is a letter and intertextual newspaper elements which act as a form of dialogue narrating his possible fate. The differing women's situations and the 'roughness' of these situations equates to variety and contrast for depth, rather than a form of 'smoothness'. Smoothness might be said to exist in the artist's journal because it is written in a continuously similar style.

In the writing of my novel I have taken events of the past and re-positioned them according to the requirements of my neo-historical narrative. What is most important to the conceptualisation of the novel's text as enacting a Picturesque structure is an understanding of a form of representation which allows items of 'scenery' to be included, excluded or moved (and therefore contextually altered) according to the needs of the artist representing what he or she considers to be the 'best fit' image of the landscape:

> On the other hand, obtaining a Picturesque view is a matter of the viewer's position, and, if the original landscape itself is lacking, changing it (Ryan, 1992:284).

This re-application of the ideas of 'the Picturesque' to a form of historical meta-fiction means that items of narrative (of the past) substitute for items of scenery (in the visual construct of the Picturesque). Events that have happened or past possible events, are moved around according to the artist's (author's) idea of what might best represent their 'view' of the past. This also operates at the level of moving things to accord with what the author might consider as making the particular 'scene' being written more interesting, or textually compelling. In this way the Gilpin idea of the Picturesque becomes something that works within a narrative structure for purposes of narrative strength.

Narrative and propaganda

From examples given in this chapter, both literary and artistic, the meeting of Picturesque ideals with the necessity of topographical art can be seen to have occurred. Similarly a meeting between narrative and representation also occurs within this style. Ryan states that within explorers' journals "it is possible to see those rules Gilpin and others outline as constitutive of Picturesque art also operating in pictorial illustrations and textual descriptions that had generic roles determining them as mimetic and topographical art" (Ryan, 1992:285).

One example is 'The Falls of Cobaw' which were both described textually and put down pictorially by the explorer Thomas Mitchell. Not only does Mitchell recognise the scene before him as 'Picturesque', and therefore records it pictorially as such, but he also describes it textually within the same parameters. He compares the scene favourably with similar 'Picturesque' views from Europe as if giving approval to his discovery as something pre-existing within an approved European aesthetic:

> I had visited several waterfalls in Scotland, but this was certainly the most Picturesque I had witnessed…[the rocks] their colour and shape were harmonized into a more complete scene than nature usually presents, resembling the 'finished subject' of an artist, foreground and all (Mitchell in Ryan, 1992:285).

Mitchell goes further by adding to the foreground of his painting, two Aboriginal figures engaged in their own form of the 'gleaning' activity of fishing. The actual

presence or absence of these people is never made clear in Mitchell's text, so the 'truthfulness' of their representation is at best ambiguous and at worst false. Pictorially, and as part of the style, the function of these figures serves a similar purpose to the Aboriginal figure in the John Skinner Prout watercolour of Maria Island. Prout, along with other artists, makes use of this device of populating the image with Aboriginal figures in a number of his 'topographic' watercolour sketches. In these sketches small groups (often never more than three) of non-threatening Aboriginals are shown.[24] Such figures of indigenous men and women, and to a lesser extent figures of European rural folk, serve dual purposes within a Picturesque context. Firstly, they act as a pictorial device appropriate to the ideals of the Picturesque—they form part of the *coulisse* of the painting:

> From scenes indeed of the picturesque kind we exclude the appendages of tillage, and in general the works of men; which too often introduce preciseness and formality (iii)……In adorning your sketch, a figure or two may be introduced with propriety…but they should be introduced sparingly (Gilpin, 1792:77).

This is particularly obvious in images where the indigenous figures are pointing either with a hand or a spear, looking in the distance towards the middle ground, or the point of interest in the centre of the image. Secondly, and more importantly, indigenous figures placed thus act as an ideological or propaganda tool in that they are figures which clearly represent a 'new' land. Yet it is a land which appears as a tame, non threatening, visually pleasant one. In those images where non-indigenous figures are placed it is an ideal landscape inhabited by industrious Europeans. In images which depict indigenous figures, the aesthetic adheres to European traditions of what is acceptable and what should be included in a Picturesque landscape and, I would argue the ideology also adheres to the trope of the 'noble savage'. As well as this trope I believe images, such as these, create a new ideal or an extension of the 'noble savage'. It is one in which the indigenous inhabitants are presented not just as noble, nor a

[24] Similar figures can be seen at 'Picturing Australia', through the National Library of Australia website. <http://www.pictureaustralia.org/>. For example, images such as: *Residence of the Aborigines Flinders Island* (1846): in which two Aboriginals sit on a log in the foreground <http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/Detail.asp?WILetter=G&WICreator=Glover%2C+John%2C+1767-1849&Keywords=flinders+island&within=all&x=13&y=11&ID=AUTAS001124073354> or *Broulee, New South Wales* (1843): in which a group of three Aboriginals sit on a bank <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic.an 2431382>, and also by J S Prout *Tom Thumbs Lagoon, New South Wales* (1847): in which a group near the shore watch a man fishing <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic.an 2479121>. Similarly *Mount Egmont, New Zealand* (1865) by E A Williams: in which Mount Egmont is pointed to by Maori figures in the right foreground <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic.an 2948064>.

threat to European colonisation, but as taking up that pictorial space that in Britain the 'rustic poor' had occupied:

> …late eighteenth and nineteenth century drawing manuals assisted in naturalizing a differential in power between the sketcher and the subject sketched: the former necessarily and naturally occupies the position of narrative, representative, and appropriate agency, while the latter remains the object of scrutiny (Sha, 2002:82).

To apply these ideas to my novel, by inserting figures into a Picturesque scene the artist (and the class from which he came) also appropriates those figures' labour. His journal is a vehicle for their stories but it is also a way of appropriating their 'work'—as stories. Many instruction manuals called attention to a freedom of handling and 'liberty' which rapid sketching offered "yet one's liberty becomes another's discipline and punishment" (Sha, 2002:82). They instructed that people such as reapers, fishermen, ploughmen, haymakers and gleaners be used as "decorative objects, such people should be transferred to the sketch-book as materials always at hand for the purpose of enlivening and balancing a composition" (Wood in Sha, 2002:82). Once artists use these types in this way the individual has become an object. Subsequently the individual's labour is transformed into an extension of the landscape and, according to Sha, could then be harvested as nature is harvested (as were emus). Thus the artist of my novel 'harvests' these female narratives which are embedded within his journal.

For the indigenous people of Australia and New Zealand this might mean that not only is their labour (fishing, hunting, gathering, knowledge of the land for exploration purposes) transferred to a European consciousness, but as well ownership of the land in which those skills are based becomes an object of European control, and thus something which can be appropriated and transferred for profit. These figures represent the 'noble savage' as a *past* occupier of the land. Similar colonising imagery had also been used within the British Isles. This period which saw the rise in Picturesque imagery also coincided with the latter periods of the Scottish 'clearances'. For the popular sketching district of the Scottish Highlands:

> the combination of political repression, economic exploitation and aesthetic sentimentalism of the Scottish landscape in the early nineteenth century clearly

> tenders the Picturesque 'invention' of the region a hegemonic cultural manifestation of English colonising presence (Copley and Garside, 1994:6-7).

To relate these ideas of Picturesque representation of new lands to the ideas behind my novel, it would seem that there could not be a better propaganda tool than images which adhere to these ideals of Australia as an ideal place for immigration for the agricultural poor of Britain. By populating images with representations of 'natives of the colonies' as a substitution for images of 'the rustic poor' in paintings of colonial rural life the ideology inherent within such images speaks to those whose only source of 'authentic' information is the visual. That is the poor and illiterate, those willing, or forced by financial circumstances to leave Britain. It also speaks to the fact that these people, if they were to emigrate, would find in Australia others already beneath them on the social scale. The 'rustic poor' or those who substitute for them, are to be found in these southern Colonies, according to the propaganda inherent in images such as these, in the form of non-threatening, indigenous inhabitants.

This of course was not the reality in the colonies. The indigenous inhabitants of both Australia and New Zealand attempted to restrict and resist European incursion into their land in a multitude of ways. Also the 'rustic poor' in colonial Australia did not exist as they had in England but were substituted for by transported convicts. This class of society could be seen to be of themselves perhaps more threatening than the 'civilised' indigenous inhabitants, dressed and standing in as pseudo 'rustics'. Convicts therefore, were rarely, if at all, represented in Picturesque images of agricultural or pastoral Australia. The convict system, for paintings such as these, did not visually exist.[25]

Because both Aboriginals and convicts occupied the lowest levels of society in colonial Australia both were considered as 'savages'. Aboriginals were most often represented within strict 'types', such as the 'noble savage', tamed 'rustics', ethnographied or as caricatures:

[25] "Hence although many of these sketching manuals and drawings promised clear lines of demarcation between sketching agent and disciplined subject, ownership and theft, empowerment and disempowerment, these texts and images under pressure of critical analysis, reveal the opposite to be true. Absolute class stability and colonial authority were myths which had to be protected and promoted in the wake of potential and actual resistance" (Sha, 2002:74).

> Some pictures of Aboriginals were similarly intended as ethnographic documents…otherwise they generally ignored the European destruction of Aboriginal society, presenting a rose-tinted view of how colonisation had affected the Aboriginal people (Bonyhady, 1987:10).

Convicts were rarely represented in colonial, in particular picturesque, compositions, perhaps being too confronting for the potential settler population, or a crude reminder of the intent of 1788. Both Aboriginal and convict people existed outside of the rule of law:

> Children of nature, they are convicts without a criminal record. ….Whatever the difference of their racial and cultural origins, convicts and Aborigines constituted the rebellious nature which the authorities had to subdue (Carter, 1987).

Therefore, according to the ideology inherent in these type of images, if the agricultural poor of Britain were to migrate, they would find themselves immediately ascending a level of status within colonial society, compared to that which they occupied at home. The Picturesque was used as a visual ideology to make the country attractive to potential settlers. Topographic drawings and paintings by artists such as Westall and others like him:

> played their part in claiming discovery, and therefore refuting Aboriginal ownership of the land, the Picturesque was used to make the country attractive and desirable…Westall's Picturesque images presented a land that looked appealing rather than threatening—a pristine landscape, an Arcadia, unspoiled by the problems that plagued Europe (Findlay, 1998:29).

This is the ideology within which my artist character is working. Ideas of representation, who and why they are included or excluded, make up the ideology behind the six ambiguous 'sketches' that the artist is said to have created and which von Hübner sends to the artist's wife in England.

The ideas inherent in the real journal writings of emigrants, such as Richard Ellis on board the barque "John" in 1840[26] fed and were fed by the images from those artists

[26] "Here [Australia] there is a country prepared to our very hands for the purposes of civilized life while England is groaning under a population for which she cannot find bread. Here is an unmeasured extent of fertile land that has lain fallow for ages and to which the starving thousands of the North are beckoning to repair….England would be the gainer for lopping off one of her superfluous millions. Australia would be the gainer by their being planted upon her ample plains. In England the lower orders are perishing for lack of bread, in Australia they are like

who were working within this style. In this way art became ideology and representation became appropriation and propaganda.

A final oil painting by William Westall can be used as an example of this type of propaganda. *Part of King George III Sound, on the South Coast of New Holland, December 1801* (Findlay, 1998:25) takes a broad view looking down and over the sound. In the foreground are depicted two seated Aboriginal figures making a fire and highlighted, by the use of *chiaroscuro*. The figures are depicted as industrious and non-threatening (one wears a blanket and there is no sign of weapons) yet also exoticised (feathers in their hair and semi-naked). The vegetation which surrounds these figures consists of Port Jackson grass trees taken from an earlier pencil sketch done in Port Jackson (NSW), and eucalypts from another drawing done at Spencer Gulf (SA).

Because of this rearrangement of parts of the image from earlier divergent sketches Findlay states that "these paintings are complex texts that need to be analysed in context and carefully decoded" (Findlay, 1998:25). It follows that for my artist's character the choice of imagery, of what might have been represented within the ambiguous images, should also be considered similarly as complex texts requiring decoding. Within the fictional world of the travelling artist's journal these visual 'texts', which are not reproduced for the real world reader, are even more complex because they are imagined but not articulated. They are potential *visual* texts which exist within a *written* text.

These ambiguous images are the ghosts of the disruption of narrative and ontological levels inherent in the McHale concept of Chinese box worlds (McHale, 1987). They are narrative, recursive structures that straddle a boundary between visualised text and textualised imagery. They exist as a representation, as text substituting for image, within the text of the story and as such are the central and much considered 'inner'

Jeshurun "waxing fat and kicking" in abundance (Deuteronomy Ch.32 v.15)…Let the workhouses disgorge their squalid inmates on our shores and the heartbroken pauper shall very soon be converted into the honest industrious and jolly-faced Yeoman…In conclusion I would address myself to all inclined to better their condition in the words of scripture. "Be not slothful to go and possess the land. When ye go ye shall come into a large land, a place where there is no want of anything that is in all the Earth." (Judges Ch.18 part v.9 and 10)". (Ellis, quoted from his journal in Main, 1994:3, 5).

images of the artist's fictional world. Yet at the same time, because they do not exist visually in our real world, but do exist visually within his fictional world, it is the reader who creates meaning from their ambiguity. What the images might represent is at the core of the artist's journey, it underpins meaning in his journal, for if he was not going to paint these scenes he would not travel and therefore would not need to make the journal and the novel would not exist. The ambiguous images are created by ideology or the 'place' from which he sees the world. Yet this representation (as his ideology) is subverted and over ruled, challenged and made invisible by the fictional voices of the women.

It is the *reader* who decides what these images might be. The fictional world of the artist leaves open the possibility of the reader 'writing' into that world their own subjectivities and personal experiences. The Picturesque artist's 'sketches' are created by the readers in the light of their *own* ideology. In Barthes sense, it is again the reader who becomes the central meaning maker of the (multi-layered) texts.

> As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself; this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins (Barthes, 1977:142).

By virtue of the use of self-reflexive intertext the reader participates in a fictional world constructed by themselves from the author(s) of the text(s) and the intertext and original women's voices used as quotations by the intertext's author(s). The reader enters into a world of previous 'texts' (or intertexts) and the multitude of voices inherent in them. This strategy enacts the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia which is that "every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future" (Bakhtin, 1981:263).

Lexicography for an ideology of the Picturesque

Artists engaged in this style of representation clearly participated in claiming ownership of objects (objectified people) and land by use of terms such as 'snatching', 'taking', 'carrying off a scene' and similar phrases. In this way the search for the ideal

Picturesque view can also be seen as a type of 'quest' for the ultimate visual holy grail, or object of desire, for example:

> …we sallied forth on horseback one morning, if not in the spirit of crusaders, at least in anticipation of meeting with adventures as numerous and as exciting as those which befell Bohemond, Raymond of Toulouse or Godfrey de Bouillon himself…the country through which we passed being park-like in its character, and so exceedingly beautiful that I felt twinges in my artistic conscience at the disregard with which I treated it. However, upon arriving soon afterwards, at the Big River, I atoned for my neglect by carrying off, in my scrap-book, a very Picturesque bridge, which crossed the stream (Prout, 1861-2:276).

> I went out for the first time in the capacity of a digger, but found nothing, so took a sketch and regret that I omitted to draw some of the singular and pretty grass trees which abounded here growing out of the beautiful velvety grass sward (Strutt, from his journal in Mackaness, 1958:27).

As well as particular objects of and within the landscape there for the taking on the 'quest' were woman (and their labour). This idea also relates to my fictional artist's conception of how he might 'see' and how he might depict the women he encounters. For example: "The village maiden, loosely attired, performing her domestic duties, is always a sketch for the artist" (Hassell in Sha, 2002:82).

According to Sha, the phrase 'loosely attired' allows for the artist (male middle class) to "strip the woman of her dignity if not of her clothing" (Sha, 2002:83). This moralising and making available an unknown woman-as-object has similarities with the types of comments within the newspapers of the 1800s which I use as intertext. For example, the comment relating to the murdered woman Caroline Collitts and her sister Maria as "she, as well as her sister Caroline, since the trial, have been ascertained to have borne very loose characters" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1842). Such comments justify an appropriation of the woman's (unknown) virtue to serve the male fantasy of lower class working women as always available whores.

If a society could understand the Picturesque qualities of the land, then that society's occupation and subsequent 'ownership' of it was justified. Not only could it be considered as justified but in some cases pre-ordained by God: "If the land resembles an estate then surely the appropriation of land had received a natural confirmation" (Ryan, 1992:290).

As with my fictional artist, real artists' and explorers' renditions of Australian landscape are not fresh, descriptive transcriptions of what they actually saw, rather they are the ideologically, politically and culturally constructed texts of a colonising patriarchal hegemony. I agree with Ryan's statement that "the discursive construction in the journals [of exploration and of artists' journals, and fictionally by the character of the artist] of what is seen by the explorers, is generated by already existing cultural formations which are used to naturalise the appropriation of land" (Ryan, 1992:292). Such are the sketches from the character of the artist ambiguously 'seen' by the artist's wife and 'read' by the reader of the novel:

> The sketch's obsession with power and insistent need to demarcate lines between the empowered and the disempowered, however, indicates the very instability of power and possession (Sha, 2002:92).

By allowing a textual insertion of self narrated female stories into the artist's journal the instability of the 'power' and 'appropriation' within his situation and that of real artists who worked using this same style, and upon whom his character is based, is amplified.

Chapter 4

A Brief Background: history and literature

Fiction v history

The writer of historical fiction and readers may mistakenly assume that the genre is a comparatively recent one. However, this is not the case. Some of the concerns that arise within the writing of history and, for a writer such as myself, blending both historical fact and historical fiction, can be traced back to a much earlier period. Aristotle, for example, discusses the difference between historians and 'poets', which we might now extrapolate to include writers of fiction. He considered the differences to be that poets describe the kind of thing that *might* have happened "what is possible as being probable or necessary" (Aristotle 1451b in Roberts, 1984:234-235) but which does not need to be proven *as* actually having happened. Historians, on the other hand, according to him describe the kind of things which have happened:

> The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse…; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of a nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars (Aristotle 1451 a-b in Roberts, 1984:234-235).

One point needs to be made regarding the concept of history that Aristotle appears to be discussing. He seems to consider history as something unchallenged. Therefore, I believe that his claim that history records what has been is open to question. While I may not necessarily endorse this comparative literal vision of history as being something which happened with as much certainty as he assumes, I would still honour his claims to imaginative production being "of graver import than history" (Aristotle 1451 a-b in Roberts, 1984:234-235).

This view might mean that poetry (fiction) is in some sense better, or perhaps more flexible, and therefore more inclusive than history because fiction can step into the

realm of those multiple probable outcomes that exist on the periphery of any 'event'.[27] Therefore, according to Aristotle's perspective, poetry (fiction) can be perceived as a broader discipline, and one more inclusive of all aspects of human experience than history.

Truth or evidence of things having occurred in the past is itself a concept dependent upon and situated from within the culture that makes up the 'truth'. If this concept is expanded, it becomes clear that non-fiction history has a more limited and restrictive field of exploration in its attempts to make sense of past human experience than would at first appear.

For example, an indigenous 'creation myth' narrative might include an account of how the ancestors of a culture group came to be living in a particular place, such as an island. Yet because the narrative cannot be 'accurately' located (from a European perspective) both in time and space, or might appear in a narrative form different from what is endorsed by the dominant culture—it might be classified as belonging to the realm of myth or fable—that story is discounted as a 'truthful' account of past events. The fact that the events recounted did not happen is proven from the point of view of the dominant culture; the narrative is looked at from outside the culture that created it. Because of this perspective the account is seen as an inadequate or untruthful account of past events and as such will not be accepted as 'history' or 'truth'. This would occur even though those events might well have occurred just as the indigenous culture narrates, and in fact cannot be disproven by the dominant culture which is itself subject to change.

Although, as seen by Aristotle's statements, there was initially the sense of a possible problematic between what was history and what was literature, the relation between history and literature did not really become problematic until the end of the eighteenth century. In Europe, prior to this time, history was considered to be a branch of literature (Gossman, 1990).

[27] The concept of 'sideshadowing' relates to this and is discussed in chapter six.

As Gossman claims, it was after this time that literature became more closely associated with poetry and figurative writing and as such it was opposed to the (then) empirical world of historical reality. The field of history in turn began to align itself more closely with the natural sciences. Both these two areas of human investigation were concerned with problems of epistemology. This split between literature and history gave the freedom for literature, now seen as an artistic form, "to appear as essentially different from all other products of labor in the degraded world of industry and the market" (Gossman, 1990:229). This meant that the process of artistic production became mystified. Literature was now regarded as a "magical, or religious mission, which only those endowed with the gift of prophecy or second sight could fulfil" (Gossman, 1990:229).

Susan Onega, on the other hand, locates the split between literature and history somewhat earlier. In *Telling Histories: narrativizing history, historicizing literature*, she states that during the period of the Renaissance, and prior to the split between literature and history, history writing was seen as a combination of narrative and creative forces. This, she informs us, indicates that Renaissance historians were "perfectly aware of and free to acknowledge the narrative nature of history…[the historian] had no qualms in colouring the historical facts with his own subjective opinions" (Onega, 1995:8). However, the split between history and literature occurred because literature was seen to be a discipline which 'lied', and was morally dangerous (in the Platonic sense).

In the nineteenth century, under the influence of Hegel, history ceased to be considered as a cyclical phenomenon and instead came to be seen as a "process of constant progress, achieved through the principle of organic *development*…the past is viewed as that which must be overcome and the future as the promise of endless progress" (Onega, 1995:10). This overcoming of the past to achieve a kind of utopia was a totalitarian element which, according to her, justified Marxism and Imperialism and enacted the "obliteration of difference" (Onega, 1995:10).

Realistic historical fiction began its development with novels such as those of Scott. In my work I acknowledge indebtedness to Lukacs's analyses of these novels.

Onega and others such as Diane Elam, in *Romancing the Postmodern*, view Scott's novels as writing which depicts a clash of cultures, and one in which the dominant culture is described "by recourse to history, but the 'other' culture is accounted for by recourse to romance, for it is a culture already 'lost' to history and historicism: as an orally-transmitted culture" (Onega, 1995:11). This idea is also important for my novel. Marginalised women who could not write have *their* sub-culture, which differs from the dominant, 'lost', further disempowering them. This means that historical fiction writing can be seen not only from Lukacs's point of view as "an artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch" (Lukacs in Elam, 1992:96) but can also be viewed from a political perspective.

For my novel, the idea of the non-dominant culture being 'lost' to historiography because it is an 'oral history' applies on more than one level. The most obvious is the 'other', the indigenous Australian Aboriginal culture as found in the fictional character/s of the midwife Merrung and the unnamed woman of the intertext massacre story. It also applies to the female Anglo-Celtic women who make up the transworld characters of Hannah Simpson and the sisters, Caroline and Maria James. It also applies to those assisted immigrants who are named in intertext elements embedded in the Yarramundi story.

The narrative tradition of these groups was an oral tradition and one of the points that the novel makes is that which was flagged by Onega—those parts of our culture that belong to an oral tradition will always remain lost to historiography and 'lost' to future generations. In the case of the non-Aboriginal oral traditions in my novel, this is because although those people could be thought of as coming from the dominant culture group (white, Anglo-European), because of their gender and lower status in that hierarchy they came to be treated in a way similar to that accorded to those who were more obviously 'other'. The result is that their 'stories' were also ones which, until recently, did not form part of 'official' history. Added to this is the fact that, for many Irish and Scots immigrants, some oral traditions were preserved in a language other than English. We cannot be sure what language was spoken amongst those Irish immigrants aboard the *Cataraqui*, but Irish or Scottish traditions passed on in their

own language allow for the treatment of these ethnic groups' traditions to be considered, on one level at least as similar to non-literate cultures. The women's voices, fictionally heard within the text, are those which in fact still remain 'lost', in any traditional historiographic sense, to the narrative of Australia's settler past.

R G Collingwood: three rules of history

One of the things that has struck me in writing historical fiction of the type embodied by *Hannah's Place* is that its practice can usefully be contrasted with the writing of narrative history. Both are narrative acts, as previously discussed. However, in order to find the strengths that I perceive within historical fiction in general, it is useful here to consider further the differences between narrative history and historical fiction.

According to R G Collingwood in *The Idea of History*, the historian unlike the novelist, must write within limitations. He considered that both novelists and historians:

> …construct a picture which is partly a narrative of events, partly a description of situations, exhibition of motives, analysis of characters. Each aims at making his picture a coherent whole, where every character and every situation is so bound up with the rest that this character in this situation cannot but act in this way, and we cannot imagine him as acting otherwise (Collingwood, 1967:245).

Thus novelists and historians differ only in that the historian's narrative is meant to be true. When making it clear what historians must do in order for their narratives to be considered 'true' he applies three rules of method from which novelists or artists are free. A historian must write within these limitations:

- his picture must be localised in space and time;
- all history must be consistent with itself. Purely imaginary worlds cannot clash and need not agree; each is a world unto itself. But there is only one historical world, and everything in it must stand in some relation to everything else;
- the historian's picture stands in a peculiar relation to something called evidence….whether an historical statement is true is whether it can be justified by an appeal to the evidence: for a truth unable to be so justified is to the historian a thing of no interest (Collingwood, 1967:246).

Even with these three 'givens' in mind Collingwood still considered:

> the ultimate effort of the historian should be directed towards empathy, that is, towards entering into the minds of the people he was writing about and of re-enacting what they had done. This he argued was the ultimate purpose of historical research (Bentley, 1997:864).

This re-enacting, is, I believe, still closer to imaginative fiction than to the re-articulation of some concrete past reality. Collingwood further states that: "The whole perceptible world, then, is potentially and in principle evidence to the historian" (Collingwood, 1967:247). To view the world as if from the mind of another and to write a history in an empathetic way is a narrative exercise which borrows structural elements from the world of fiction. It combines elements of story, plot, characterisation and dialogue with appropriated facts (Collingwood's evidence) for the narrative and stylistic purposes of the author, and according to his or her world view. Such an author is then creating a particular and singular 'fictional world', one based on *his* version of 'historical events'. This cannot be called historiographic narrative within the terms of Collingwood's definition.

The concept of there being only one historical world has been challenged on many fronts, particularly with ideas from the New Historicism which is discussed at a later point in this chapter.

Liberté for the Text

In his essays Roland Barthes consistently espoused the concept of the liberation of text, from the God-Author and from history. He postulated that it is readers who create meaning from the text. The reader is seen not as occupying a fixed position, but one which can also change over time and over context, just as language can. For example, he points out that in earlier times reading and writing were both privileged by class (Barthes, 1977). I would add that in the present world it could be said that reading and writing are privileged by gender, class, country of birth and physical location.

If it is the reader who creates meaning from the text by the act of reading—which I would then call a performative act—are not all texts always in a transformative stage?

There would be no final and definitive narrative, just another iteration of past texts/voices which also then articulates the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia, in that all writing is made up of many voices which have at any time uttered those same words.

Bakhtin defined Heteroglossia as referring to the:

> conflict between 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal', 'official' and 'unofficial' discourses within the same language. Heteroglossia is also present, however, at the micro-linguistic scale; every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future (Morriss, 1994:249).

Andrew Taylor points out that for Barthes, the works of the past respond to exigencies of the present, ultimately "becoming texts to be reconfigured as times demand…the past is fluid, responsive to the interpretive demands of changing social realities and...constituent of the innovations of the present" (Taylor, 2004:3).

From my perspective in writing my novel, this concept is important. "It is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality…to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not [the] 'me' [of the author]" (Barthes, 1977:143). As discussed in chapter one, these equate to Barthes's ideas of the death of the author. This concept descriptively foregrounds a way of understanding what readers might focus on whilst reading or 'performatively' engaged in meaning making from my novel.

In his essay 'From Work to Text', Barthes noted six 'propositions' working in relation to how he perceived the 'Text' as separated from the 'work'. These ideas are relevant to my novel because they make clear the forces behind its structure. This is especially the case in areas relating to the novel's intertextuality, and its insistence on the reader as the final arbiter of what constitutes the 'real' from the vast textual cacophony of historical 'events' re-articulated by the women's stories. Barthes's six propositions summarised are:

1. The Text is a methodological field…a process of demonstration, text is held in language and exists in the movement of a discourse. "The Text is experienced only in an activity or production" (Barthes, 1977:157). I would add to this

'proposition' that we should also incorporate here that it is 'experienced' in the performative space of reading and therefore of creation of a fictional world.

2. The Text "cannot be contained in an hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres" (Barthes, 1977:157).
3. The Text can be experienced in reaction to the sign. The Text practices the infinite deferment of the signified. "The perpetual signifier in the field of the Text is realized…according to a serial movement of disconnections, overlappings, variations" (Barthes, 1977:158).
4. The Text is plural…"it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an irreducible plural" (Barthes, 1977:159).
5. The Text reads without the inscription of the father [or female maker/author]. "The metaphor of the Text is that of the *network*…hence no vital respect is due to the Text: it can be *broken*…it can be read without the guarantee of its father, the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing any legacy" (Barthes, 1977:161).
6. The Text requires an outcome in which we "abolish the distance between writing and reading, in no way by intensifying the projection of the reader into the work but by joining them in a single signifying practice" (Barthes, 1977:162).
7. The Text is bound to *jouissance*, that is to pleasure without separation…"the Text participates in its own way in a social utopia; before History…the Text is that space…where languages circulate" (Barthes, 1977:164).

Writing of history as a discipline based in and also on writing, Barthes noted the failure of historians to see the linguistic nature of text. He considered that there was a failure to acknowledge the world of signs (*signifé*). "Like every discourse that claims to be realist, historical discourse believes it knows a semantic system constituted by only two terms—the signifier and the referent" (Barthes in Gossman,1990:248). However, this dispenses with a term that is essential to language and fundamental "to every imaginary structure—the *signifé*" (Gossman, 1990:248). From his perspective, the world of signs is what calls into being the world of things. I understand this to be that the writing of history, fundamentally an imaginary act, needs to acknowledge this third element of how we construct a world because in using his or her imagination the historian (or the writer of historical fiction) draws upon this structure in order that they can create their "objects of language" (Gossman, 1990:248) which then become either 'history' writing or 'historical fiction' writing.

Barthes considered that history shared elements with myth. He also pointed to the alienating fetishism of the 'real' *from* the past (for example the realist novel or diary, exhibitions of objects from the past, antique collecting and photography). These, he

believed, were used and fetishised to escape our role as makers of meaning from a text based discourse. "The real appears to him as an *idol*" (Gossman, 1990:250). It is perhaps easier to idolise a 'real' object from the past and to construct that as a solid example of the 'truth' than to admit that the construct of the same past occurs through the action of readers of past texts rearticulating a narrative.

Derrida stresses that we must distinguish between history in general (I take this to mean the things that happened in the past) and the concept of history as a text based and signifying system:

> I very often use the word 'history' in order to reinscribe its force and in order to produce another concept or conceptual chain of 'history': in effect a "monumental stratified, contradictory" history: a history that also implies a new logic of *repetition* and the *trace* (Derrida, 1981:57).

Supporting Althusser's view of history, Derrida states that "there is not one single history, a general history, but rather histories *different* in their type, rhythm, mode of inscription—intervallic, differentiated histories" (Derrida, 1981:58).

Raw materials to be moulded

Just as Barthes asserts that history is a text-based form, de Certeau also acknowledges a dilemma within history. For de Certeau this dilemma was because of history's need to manifest as a narrative form. He claims that not only does it adhere to narrative structures but it also purports to represent something once real. "How is it that a narrative form claims to produce not a fiction but a (past) real?" (Holton, 1994:110).

de Certeau saw history as part of a social system, something to be shaped by the system within which it develops. A (history) monograph produced within a system is only one form of history-making within that system:

> History could fall to ruins without the key to the vault of its entire architecture...If history leaves its proper place—the *limit* that it posits and receives—it is broken asunder, to become nothing more than a fiction (the narrative of what happened) or an epistemological reflection (the elucidating of its own working laws) (de Certeau, 1988:44).

The creation of history happens at innumerable points in the social space, places from which the discipline of history cannot completely sever its ties (Poster, 1997). This might mean that my novel makes up one of those innumerable points, one within the realm of historical fiction in the social space.

This leads us to the important idea that all aspects of society are valid as source material when attempting to explore how society works. The concept allows for alternative perspectives on history and even for multiple types of history which may emerge from within different subsets of the larger whole. de Certeau also considered that history should acknowledge and recognise its similarities to other narrating events such as media and oral accounts of people's lives (Poster, 1997:114). In this view there is no distinction between 'high' and 'low' history, because all are part of the larger whole that makes up the society from whence the narratization springs.

Traditional disciplines in intellectual and social history are also called into question by Roger Chartier's definition of cultural history as cited in Poster. In particular this questioned the dichotomies of:

- high vs popular culture
- production vs consumption
- reality vs fiction

It allowed for the changed context of debate, the emergence of blurred disciplinary boundaries to "open the gates to heterodox formulations, tearing down the defenses [sic] of disciplinary stability" (Poster, 1997:9). For my work, this validates the interrogation of documents such as immigration lists, births, deaths and marriage records, private letters, newspapers and court records which are more usually thought to belong to the realm of the popular culture fad of family history research (or to use its 'up market' term, genealogical research). Such documents were previously considered as forming part of 'low' history or culture as opposed to the 'high' culture of government authorised despatches and documents written for the purpose of recording 'history' as the day to day workings of authority.

This also, I believe, allows for a greater variation as to what might be considered historical narration and opens a space within history-making for a type of narrative based on imaginative elements combined with 'facts' from the past such as is found in my novel. The nature of the 'facts' of the past, that is any archival documents which exist to us now, has been discussed briefly in chapter one. I would stress again here that these 'facts', whether part of 'high' or 'low' culture are *not* history but are the things from which history is made and as such can be used to create new and different narratives of the past. The nature of these archival objects are noted by de Certeau, Ricoeur and Barthes.

Therefore, the problem becomes how to use something as a signifier of the real without its being modified by the very act of using it. This dilemma becomes unsolvable because using the signifier (or archival text) means it becomes contaminated by being imported into a different cultural space.

In my novel the use of transcripts of newspaper accounts and government records, unchanged other than in their context, is a good example of this. The texts are "allowed to remain as they are during the act of interpretation" (Poster, 1997:142) and the re-evaluation of them as something other than that which they initially were (accounts of recent news events) depends on the textuality of that which surrounds them in their new iteration.

As mentioned previously both Foucault and de Certeau saw historical documents as raw materials to be moulded to the historian's purpose. They considered that historians "work on materials in order to transform them into history. Here they undertake a practice of manipulation which, like others, is subject to rules" (de Certeau, 1988:71). The things themselves have no inherent 'historyness' they are just things that do exist, or text-based archive records of things that once existed in a different form. For example birth, death and marriage records point to that which was initially a performative event.

To take an example from amongst the type of 'raw materials' used in the making of my novel: a marriage record exists, written in ink inside a book it is 'something' that

now exists in our present. This 'trace' of the past, if one were allowed, could be touched. At the same time it also exists as an image, on microfilm, projected onto a microfilm reader screen or forming part of a computer database. The 'record' can be viewed in multiple ways, transformed from the prior hand-written record and copied in multiple ways, thereby creating a new thing. This new thing is not a new record but a version of the initial record that can exist only in our present because of modern technology. But both records are also an echo or a shadow of an event that happened and existed as a performative act between people, and for reasons that do not appear in either the book record from the marriage register or the microfilm (or summarised CD or WWW) version, or anything that follows from that materiality.

Reasons for the marriage once existed within the culturally positioned mind of the woman involved. These reasons might well have been articulated and as such might have once belonged to the realm of oral history or woman's journal/letter writing. Yet historians can take the archival marriage document divorced from the marriage 'reason' and use it within a larger narrative that they may create for reasons other than those for which initially the 'marriage' existed. In changing that something once existing as a singular time event 'fact' into a socially mediated narrative 'truth' made up perhaps of a multitude of similar 'something's' they articulate a twentieth century version of what they want to present as historical reality. For example, that in the nineteenth century 80 per cent of women married before they turned 25, and had their first child before age 27. This new historical reality then stands quite outside the woman's reason or 'fact' which may have been "I married for security".

Here Ricoeur again proves useful. In his assessment of archives, documents and 'traces' he considers the interconnections between 'real' events of the past, narrative history and fictional history. He makes two important points. He states that: "If history is a true narrative, documents constitute its ultimate proof. They nourish its claim to be based on facts" (Ricoeur, 1985:117) but he also expands the concept of past 'facts' to something similar to my statement above when he also claims "anything that can inform a scholar, whose research is oriented by a reasonable choice of questions, can be a document" (and by expansion I would add a 'fact') (Ricoeur, 1985:117). With this idea in mind, I see the strength of fiction lies in telling stories of the past over that

of other types of epistemological history. This is reflected in Ricoeur's concepts relating to collective memory:

> As soon as the idea of a debt to the dead, to people of flesh and blood to whom something really happened in the past stops giving documentary research [and I will add fiction such as my novel] its highest end, history [and historical fiction] loses its meaning. In its epistemological naiveté, positivism at least preserved the significance of the document, namely, that it functions as a trace left by the past. Cut off from that significance, the datum becomes truly insignificant. The scientific use of data stored in and manipulated by a computer certainly gives birth to a new kind of scholarly activity. But this activity constitutes only a long methodological detour destined to lead to an enlargement of our collective memory in its encounter with the monopoly exercised over speech by the powerful and the clerisy (Ricoeur, 1985:118).

The original source documents used in many of my stories were initially physically located in different places within England and Australia. Each of the source documents differs slightly from parish to parish and church to church in the way it was recorded and the information noted. These are records of lives recorded fragmentarily. The records make up part of our 'collective memory' but are without logical order, or were not collected with foresight towards the individual 'narrative' that all lives and events of the past create. For a third person narrator in the past, to write accounts of these women, such as are found in the newspapers, is to give a perspective on events of the past which is narrow. We read these accounts now from a different temporal and cultural 'space' and therefore without the knowledge of the cultural nuances of that time. But as well we gain only a narrow perspective because the newspaper writers themselves did not have all the 'facts' pertaining to their stories. They too were writing from a point of limited knowledge (of the women) and from a culturally constructed subjectivity different from that of the women.

We understand this narration as a complete account of events in the women's lives as much and as little as we would understand a male ethnographer's account of a particular culture group's female practices and construction of female identity gained through interrogations of the men of that society. For us today, reading from the point of view of their future, this is in effect what it is. The newspaper writers themselves, whilst admittedly recounting only a portion of events in the lives of the women, could not have a full understanding of the context of those events and we, as the readers, do

not have a full understanding of the context of the society of that past. We did not live it and the newspaper reporters were not the women. These accounts of events in the women's lives were narrated from the cultural position of a male of the past and hence from the outside.

The woman about whom the story is told, while having the greatest potential to understand the most about her situation, would not have had a full understanding of the larger social and political circumstances within which she was positioned and which created the cultural space for the enactment of those events. This was because of her position in society, and most significantly because she could not read or write.

Even if the woman at the centre of each story had been able to write, she would not have understood the cultural complexity within which she lived as we perceive it today. We understand her existence through a lens of 150 years of cultural change. Feminism, Marxism, racism, imperialism, post-colonialism are concepts now embedded in our present society. Because of these we perceive (and narrate) that woman's experiences very differently from the way in which she might have contextualised it, and if she had been literate, might have written it from within her cultural subjectivity in the way that women such as Louisa Meredith (Meredith, 1973 (1844)) and Rachel Henning (Adams,1988) did.

Therefore, if no self-narrated account exists, and if the textual account that does exist is written with such knowledge 'gaps', might it not then be possible, looking back from our perspective of a technological present to begin to 'make stories out of these lives' in order to challenge those knowledge gaps which exist within the historical record? The newspaper accounts, used structurally within my novel as challenging and challenged intertextual elements, were textualised and therefore form part of the 'historical record' which speak about, and ultimately because there was nothing else, 'for' these women. However, from our temporal and cultural point of view these texts, as they are read now, speak 'of' the women.

What of the other side of the narratization of facts—historical fiction? This does not purport to create something that 'was once real and is now here reconstituted in its

totality', but an imagined real—a possibility of what might have been—by linking a multitude of disjointed pieces of archive information. This creates an historical world that exists within its own context. By virtue of its being based on the same 'facts' as the historian might manipulate this 'other' historical narrative cannot be dismissed as wholly non-real. It has claims to reality which are neither greater nor lesser than those of the historian.

The narrative formed has been mediated through the social order within which the historian (or author) exists. It is also mediated by the willing participation of a reader (narratee) who uses their own culturally complex subjectivity. My novel is a fictional world constructed by the author, reader, intertext elements/newspaper authors and those silenced women whose words are quoted but whose voice is heard as an absence.

It could be argued that the cultural complexity of colonial Australia where women are the disempowered and subjugated 'other' has only been constructed in and from within the present day. The fictional narratives were written as a way of challenging unsympathetic pre-existing narratives found within the archives. That male 'voice' was one which presented the women as deviating from notions of nineteenth century middle-class morality, such that:

> Prior to 1840...the 'Damned Whore' stereotype was predominant. Female convicts and female immigrants were expected to be, and were treated as, whores, and this label was applied indiscriminately to virtually all women in the colony. During the 1840s and 1850s the bourgeois family was propagated as the most suitable form of social organization for the new nation and the 'God's Police' stereotype assumed ascendancy. Its general prescription was that women as wives of men and mothers of children were entrusted with the moral guardianship of society…(Summers, 1994:67).

Reading between the lines of history in this way, creating fictional stories and juxtaposing them against the non-fiction prior articulations of those same events, is an opportunity to make use of narrative structure in order to destabilise established constructs of our colonial past.

A writer of narrative history "maintains control over [their] object domain by constructing the past as an outside" (Poster, 1997:119). Yet writers of narrative historical fiction maintain control "over their object domain" by constructing that world as from inside. The reader of historical fiction has the freedom to re-create that world through their own subjectivity, their own imagination. Readers do this using the author's plotted points of an historical plane of reference, created from the author's research, the author's subjectivity from within or by disciplinary discourse and by the choice of words or 'signifiers' and the meaning that these choices create within the subjectivity of the reader. By entering into the world of historical fiction the reader enters into a participatory 'role' along with the author, the previous authors of previous 'texts' and a multitude of voices (Bakhtin's heteroglossia). An interesting example of this construction can be seen in the different interpretations of the phrase "our bleak Canberra Christmas" (Herbert, 2005:74).

The word 'bleak' when referring to Christmas has been interpreted in two different ways. The first reader's interpretation saw the word 'bleak', when juxtaposed with Christmas, as inappropriate because it was seen by them as a signifier for something cold (physically) and desolate, and therefore totally inappropriate for a day in Australia where the temperature may be into the mid 30s. The second reader's interpretation of the signifier 'bleak' when relating to Christmas was of something minimal in its celebrations, boring and not too 'Christmassy' but still possibly quite hot.

The difference between the two readers was that one had spent a childhood (of Christmases) in England and one in Australia. On consultation, *The Australian Oxford Dictionary*, defines the word 'bleak' as bare, exposed, windswept, unpromising, dreary (Moore, 2002). I suggest that the Australian meaning of the signifier 'bleak' was formed originally from an English consciousness but has been transformed by Australia's physical circumstances—our winters may be cold but could not be described as 'bleak' in terms of lacking colour.

If these different interpretations can be so great in the usage of a simple adjective, in conjunction with a noun such as Christmas, what then of contentious, politically or

culturally loaded terms whose changed context, following the settlement of this continent and the 'invention' of Australian culture, are more problematic? These are words such as convict (a criminal serving a sentence *and* a man running an inn—Collitts), settlement—"newly settled tract of country"; settler—"one who settles especially in newly developed tract of country"; (developed into what? developed *from* what and by whom? Such definitions could read as implying that the rolling semi-treed hills and vast spaces for grazing , that is the pastoral Arcadia spoken of by Europeans, existed for the purposes of 'settlement' by European pastoralists).

This concept of the new land being in a state of 'nature'[28] such that it was ready to be exploited by those with the (European) knowledge, and the backing of their God, can be found in many of the writings from this time and was explored in detail in chapter three. Suffice here to include a brief explanation on the expectations of settlers. Richard Ellis was a farmer and surveyor who sailed aboard the *John* from Gravesend to Adelaide, arriving in January 1840. Even before he reached port, he put his reasons for migrating and his expectations of Australia down in a shipboard journal (for more of Ellis's thoughts see footnote 28):

> There are no large animals and no beasts of prey except some wild dogs which sometimes attack the sheep. The nations [Aborigines] [sic] are fast disappearing; of them it may be said what one of their numbers said of the Kangaroo: white fellers come, kangaroo all gone.
>
> All ought to spread the report of the state and expectations of the splendid colony of South Australia where if indigence (poverty) [sic] should ever exist, the sweet climate would make it comparatively easy to be borne (Ellis quoted from his journal in Main, 1994:3-4).

My great-great-grandparents Henry and Susannah (Hannah) Simpson were steerage emigrants on board the same ship. They kept no journals that we know of (likely as

[28] "The type of Australian landscape here discussed readily lent itself to European pastoralism. Yet these grasslands with scattered eucalypts as the dominant species, were anthropogenically 'manufactured' and maintained by Aboriginal 'firestick farming'. Archaeological evidence from various sites within Australia in the form of pollen analysis of sediment cores shows a change over time away from fire sensitive plants, to fire promoting plants such as eucalypts" (Flannery, 1994:223-228). Historical evidence of this comes from the 1848 diary of Thomas Mitchell in which he notes that:

> Fire is necessary to burn the grass, and form those open forests, in which we find the large forest kangaroo; the native applies that fire to the grass at certain seasons, in order that a young green crop may subsequently spring up, and so attract and enable him to kill or take the kangaroo…but for this simple process, the Australian woods, had probably contained as thick a jungle as those of New

not could not have afforded to buy one even if they had been able to record their thoughts) and we do not know if they shared Ellis's opinions. As a result their migration story can only now be approached through the imagination. Unlike Richard Ellis's, their hopes cannot be heard and can only be imaginatively re-created from the point of view of the present. As with those groups previously mentioned, Aboriginals and non-English speakers who shared an oral history, their class and their illiteracy within a literate 'history-making' culture meant that Henry and Susannah's own personal history was also lost to future generations.

Similarly, if subtle changes in meaning, as exemplified by 'bleak', 'settler' and 'convict', occur through geographical and temporal dislocation, how do we understand politically loaded words and complex concepts such as the idea of 'history'. This is especially so, when re-considered from a modern Australian (female) subjectivity rather than from pre-federation Australian (male) perspective. These differences in textual subjectivity further problematise and de-stabilise the concept of history.

Here the Foucault idea of episteme is important. What we can know and cannot know are conditioned by the episteme within which our 'knowledge' resides. According to Foucault, subtle changes in meaning of a signifier can occur, while the signifier itself remains the same (as exemplified by 'bleak'). Therefore, I would argue that, meaning is conditioned by our temporal context (we are located within one particular episteme as opposed to another) as much as by the hegemonic position of the signifier. Interestingly it could both be argued that the hegemony is dependent upon the episteme within which it exists (for example Nazi Germany) and also that the episteme is conditioned by the hegemony. Yet within one episteme, multiple, and different, hegemonies can exist, because hegemonies exist in opposition to those things that fall outside of their control, but which are still within the episteme.

> What I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge…grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is…that of its conditions of possibility; in this account, what should

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Zealand or America, instead of the open forests in which the white men now find grass for their cattle (Mitchell in Flannery, 1994:223).

> appear are those configurations within the *space* of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science (Foucault, 1970:xxii).

Foucault gives two clear examples of what he considers an episteme. The first is the classical age, beginning mid seventeenth century and the second is the modern age, which starts at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Foucault, 1970:xxii).

Epistemes partake of "certain organising principles which relate things to one another (by classifying things and by allocating them meanings and values) and which, as a result, determine how we make sense of things, what we can know and what we say" (Danaher *et al*, 2000:17). Because the text of my novel makes clear its own sources and processes, readers can interpret different meaning. This type of historical fiction allows the reader to participate in the construction of that bit of the past or 'history' as it exists within *them* as an imagined world. Through their reading of the multi-voiced text of the past their understanding enacts 'knowledge' as construed by the episteme within which they exist. The reader takes on the role of imaginative co-author. The narrative also has a dual function of imparting 'story' whilst at the same time creating 'memory' as the reader views the text through their own choices of which part of the text to identify with (or 'believe') most—the often conflicting intertext 'facts' or the imagined text.

New Historicism: constructing the excluded

Like my own work, New Historicism[29] attempts to tell the story of the excluded participants of history. It perceives history as a textual discourse, a discursive practice influenced by the elements (words/texts) with which it was created. It is both limited by and structured around this fact. New Historicism considers that power and politics are at work in historical representations and in the interpretations of those discourses which can never be neutral or disinterested:

> New Historicism scrutinizes the barbaric acts that sometimes underwrite high cultural purposes and asks that we not blink away our complicity. At the same

[29] The term New Historicism emerged from America in the 1980s, in an introduction to a special edition of the journal *Genre* by Stephen Greenblatt. It can be considered "not as a doctrine but a set of themes, preoccupations, and attitudes" (Veeser, 1989:xiii).

> time, it encourages us to admire the sheer intricacy and unavoidability of exchanges between culture and power (Veeser, 1989:xi).

A central value of New Historicism is its continued questioning of what is known and how it is known: "Methodological self-consciousness is one of the distinguishing marks of the new historicism in cultural studies as opposed to a historicism based upon faith in the transparency of signs and interpretative procedures" (Greenblatt, 1989:12). New Historicism, has also been linked with the concept of cultural materialism expounded by Raymond Williams. Both terms denote loosely defined schools which approach literary (and other texts) contextually.

New Historicism finds a "recognition of the textuality of history which derived directly from the poststructuralist emphasis on exclusion, origins and closure" (Currie, 1998:88). This means more than to claim that history is textual because it is based on texts. What is recognised from this perspective is that history also carries within it values and assumptions imposed by narrative structure and plot.

Five common assumptions of New Historicism, noted by H. Aram Veeser, are:

1. that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices;
2. that every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3. that literary and non-literary 'texts' circulate inseparably;
4. that no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths or expresses inalterable human nature;
5. that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe (Veeser, 1989:xi).

A fundamental tenet for New Historicism was that selves and texts are defined by their relation to hostile others and disciplinary power. Critics of culture should not be concerned with the holistic master story of large-scale structural elements directing society, but rather look at the differences between the local conflicts engendered in individual authors and local discourses (Veeser in Onega, 1995).

From this flows a loss of faith in the truth of master narratives of 'world history' (Onega, 1995). This is an understanding central to my novel in that the master narrative of colonial Australia is a patriarchal one, exclusive of marginalised groups.

New Historicism would admit that any objective totalising description of the past is untenable, and argues in favour of a sense of history which appears as discontinuous, non linear, non grand narrative and concerned with multiple histories (Bullock and Trombley, 1999). These concerns, especially with non-linear and multiple histories are the histories which my novel seeks to illuminate. Similarly, my practice and the product of my research and my imagination (my novel) is a 'negotiation' between my practices, and the institutions through which those 'facts' of the past have been created, and those where they now reside as archival documents or 'traces' of the past:

> The work of art is the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society (Greenblatt, 1989:12).

This concept is important for the selection and recovery of archival material for a blend of fiction and 'non' fiction in a narrative of women's lives in colonial Australia. New Historicism is important because its concern is to turn away from grand narrative histories, making us focus on widely available yet smaller and multiple 'histories', previously thought to be unimportant to traditional history. At the same time, while I embrace this new focus on 'small' narratives as a source of writing about history, it is also true that historical narratives (either fiction or non-fiction) based around small moments in the lives of 'silenced' women, such as the characters of my novel, can also be in danger of being turned into the kind of narrative to which New Historicism was initially opposed. As Veeser warns "every act of unmasking…risks falling prey to the practice it exposes" (Veeser, 1989:xi).

The use of newspaper and archival (male) voiced intertext as a 'frame' and also a counter to the female self-narrated stories is one way of anticipating and perhaps preventing this from happening. When considering my fictional stories it is also worthwhile re-visiting the definition of historicism that Greenblatt attempted to counter. He saw this traditional historicism as:

1. the belief that processes are at work in history that man can do little to alter;
2. the idea that the historian must avoid all value judgements in his study of past periods;
3. a veneration of the past or of tradition (Greenblatt in Hawthorn, 1998:154).

In particular, when writing my fictional stories, it was useful to consider Greenblatt's oppositional perspective to point three. When I seek to challenge traditional history by telling insignificant women's stories it is important not to establish the silenced women as objects of veneration just because they were part of the past, lived difficult lives and were silenced. So too were a lot of other groups in the same period. New Historicism suggests a certain scepticism for events of the past. To venerate these women as 'survivors' or champions of their sex and class because their stories allow such a good narrative re-telling is to place their situations not within the context of the past, but within the context of a (post-Feminist) present. To do this is to further objectify these (once real) women as objects of (modern) Feminist iconology.

In the case of the stories within my novel the narrative point of view of the female characters places them as central players in events of the past in which they were marginalised. Therefore, they are voiced here in opposition to the archive documents whose narrative point of view is that of the male gaze which constructed them (in their present) as objects. Discussed in more detail in chapter three, the Picturesque style as ideology points to the representation of women and others outside the European male middle class (the 'rustic poor' or the 'noble savage') as objects, as a way of appropriating their labour and, in the case of indigenous people, their land. Examples of this are:

> but she, as well as her sister Caroline, since the trial, have been ascertained to have borne very loose characters,
> "The Mount Victoria Murder." *Sydney Morning Herald* 27Apr. 1842.
>
> wife of Hnry Simpson
> (Pike, 1987: *Index to register of emigrant labourers applying for a free passage to SA 1836-1841).*
>
> who was a confirmed drunkard and an abandoned woman without any home or place of abode,
> "Inquest." *Bathurst Times* 11 Nov. 1871.

It is this oppositional strong narrative 'voice' which elicits sympathies for and with the situations of the women. This is opposed to a form of historicism which would promote objectivity about the women's situation. There is a danger that a narrative which sympathetically positions readers in relation to female characters by presenting these characters as attempting to make sense of difficult personal circumstances may

slip into that veneration of the past which encapsulates historicism—venerating the past by its veneration of these women. These characters could here be 'read' through a post seventies Feminist lexicon as 'survivors' by virtue of the articulation of the fictional narratives of their stories.

The fictional narratives were written to counter the pre-existing, often unsympathetic 'voice' of narratives found in the archival intertexts. By the novel's making both points of view visible, the possibility that the non-fiction archival records could also be a veneration of the past is articulated. It is useful in writing this type of fiction to bear in mind Veeser's fourth point that: "no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature" (Veeser, 1989:xi).

Chapter 5

Historical Fiction

My novel falls within the broad genre of historical fiction. However, it does not adhere to the more traditional and, I believe, narrow definition of historical fiction which I address below. In this chapter I consider what might be thought of as traditional historical fiction, beginning with Fleishman. I then pay particular attention to Lukacs's more informative analysis of the genre. I will address these issues at some length not only because my novel can be categorised as falling within a sub-genre of this type of fiction but also because my novel relies on some, but not all, of the traditional features of historical fiction. It is with this understanding that I summarise the genre. Finally I will discuss metafiction within historical fiction, with particular emphasis placed on Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction.

Historical novels have been defined as "exercise of the imagination on a particular kind of object" (Fleishman, 1971:4). Traditionally historical fiction novels were expected to:

- be set in the past;
- have "a number of historical events, particularly those in the 'public sphere' (war, politics, economic change) mingled with and affecting the personal fortunes of characters";
- contain real as well as imaginary persons;
- contain 'truth' or the "faithful recording of presumably established facts" (Fleishman, 1971:3-4).

Traditional writers of historical fiction lay claim to many of the research practices of the historian. The research for my novel did involve research strategies similar to an historian. It is in the area of research undertaken, and of some plot strategies and characterisation that the work's similarity to traditional historical fiction lie.This broad genre can be said to encompasses works by Australian authors as diverse as Christopher Koch *Out of Ireland*, (1999); Nancy Cato *All the Rivers Run*, (1978); Bryce Courtenay *The Potato Factory* (2000), *Jessica* (1999); Patrick White *Voss*, (1957) and *Tree of Man* (1991); Colleen McCullough *The First Man in Rome* (1990)

and *The Grass Crown* (1992); and David Malouf *Remembering Babylon* (1993), *Conversations at Curlow Creek* (1996) and *The Great World* (1990); to name a few. However, within traditional historical fiction, as distinct from my novel, an uninterrupted, linear concept of historical events is maintained, and the whole is written from a teleological point of view. This results in an unchallengeable, hermeneutic whole, which proceeds logically no matter the length of historical 'time' covered.

To continue with Fleishman's definition:

> the historical novelist provokes or conveys by imaginative sympathy the feeling of how it was to be alive in another age. To do this he must describe and interpret the states of affairs that called forth personal responses of the kind he wishes to portray. In doing so he places himself on the same ground as the historian as a recoverer of what actually happened (Fleishman, 1971:4).

Narrative focus in my novel reveals that historical fiction can also be made from archival 'scraps' of minor events (within the public sphere) which were major events within otherwise unimportant people's lives. The female transworld characters of my novel are individuals who formed part of the times in which they lived but who changed nothing. These stories are constructed from micro-histories of those who left no written account of their existence other than that recorded by others. Yet the historical 'drama' of and within their female participants' experience of early settler Australia is as valid a part of our history as events which more obviously occur within the public sphere. The large scale migration, by sail, of settlers to Australia was an event enacted within the public sphere, but it was also an event enacted on thousands of micro-levels of individual experience, each one slightly different.

My novel sits within the theoretical framework of postmodern literature as a new form of the genre that has been termed 'historical fiction'. Although the novel breaks away from and challenges the 'saga' narrative, or 'grand narrative' within historical fiction, it is no less concerned with events of the past and the idea of past experience. However, it departs from traditional historical fiction in that it foregrounds, not only an imagined fictional past world that is created when the novel is read, but also the actual archival documents, the pieces *of* text from the past which in other instances

and perhaps put together to form a larger whole might be used to make traditional history. In my work they are the 'sparking points' for the fictional narrative. These fragments of text from archival documents are used within the work as intertextual elements which frame, and, in turn, are framed by my female 'transworld' characters' homodiegetic narrations. These introduced textual elements, here foregrounded, are those things most often hidden from view within the mimetic and hermeneutic worlds of traditional historical fiction.

In using the term 'transworld' for my female characters I am clearly positioning them as both fictional characters and 'once real' personages. This term was defined in chapter one following definitions by both Brian McHale and Umberto Eco. I would add here McHale's further point that in the case of transworld identity "between real prototypes and their fictional replicas the relation between the worlds is one of *asymmetrical* accessibility" (McHale, 1987:35).

Umberto Eco also considers that one problem of transworld identity is "to single out something as persistent through alternative states of affairs" (Eco, 1979:230). Yet it is McHale who elaborates on this concept as it relates to historical fiction when he states:

> All historical novels, even the most traditional, typically involve some violation of ontological boundaries. For instance they often claim 'transworld identity' between characters in their projected worlds and real-world historical figures (McHale, 1987:16-17).

McHale extends Eco's transworld identity in a discussion of the ontological levels of the historical dimension through which identities may undergo change. He suggests:

> Entities can change their ontological status in the course of history, in effect migrating from one ontological realm or level to another. For instance, real world entities and happenings can undergo 'mythification', moving from the profane realm to the realm of the sacred (McHale, 1987:36).

An example of this is the real man Edward Kelly, initially executed as a murderer, now mythologised as 'our Ned', champion of the poor and opposed to colonial power and oppression of the 'other'. Kelly has undergone an ontological migration and has become elevated to fulfil a mythic trope—that of an Australian Robin Hood.

Similarly, it could be said that a change occurs in the 'ontological status' of the women, initially textualised in the nineteenth century newspapers as 'immoral', and now fictionalised by me as the transworld identities Hannah Simpson, Annie Brownlow, Caroline (James) Collitts and Maria (James) Walsh. The ontological status of these female identities is altered by the fictional re-contextualisation of their previously textualised narratives. Within the fiction their initial textual and ontological positions as two dimensional, stereotypically immoral female identities are modified.

An example of this is seen in the newspaper accounts of Mary Ann Brownlow, upon whom my character Annie is based. Both newspaper accounts were written while she was in Goulburn gaol following her trial, in which she was sentenced to death for stabbing her husband, who later died from his wounds. In this example we see the representation of her as a 'damned whore' and also the possibility that, had she not been condemned to death, she could have became one of 'God's Police' (Summers, 1994: 67):

> his wife had been drinking and created an altercation on account of his having sold [her] lease; she asked him to drink, but he refused, when she replied "You can go and drink with your fancywoman". She came after him as he was going away and stabbed him…she did it from jealousy, although he had never given her any cause for jealousy.
> "Tuesday, September 11:Wilful Murder." *The Goulburn Herald* 15 Sept. 1855.
>
> She was always most obedient and quiet in her conduct, and her melancholy winning manners soon procured her the sympathy of all who came in contact with her. She became deeply impressed with the sinfulness of her previous life.
> "The Last Days of Mary Ann Brownlow." *The Goulburn Herald* 13 Oct. 1855.

In my re-textualisation of their stories, the women are freed from such stereotypes. Within my novel these transworld identities exist as women who have at least some agency, who make decisions and who cause events to happen as a way of negotiating the limited choices that their individual circumstances have provided.

The nineteenth century sources which become re-textualised within the work are at the same time real items *from* our past, and representations and interpretations *of* past

events. Both the new, imagined stories and their sources are textual interpretations of prior events. Therefore, the female characters' stories are an imaginative narrative re-interpretation of a narrative interpretation of an event. In this way, the novel plays with the idea of both historical 'facts' and historical 'fiction', blurring their boundary, or giving textual equality to the two in order to bring a type of textual agency to those marginalised and silenced groups from Australia's past that PF Bradley would call 'jarring witnesses'.

Jarring witnesses to history

Bradley's concept of a 'jarring witness' of history is very relevant to the ideas inherent in my novel. In particular his account of who can be considered as an 'authentic' agent to source an account of events of the past, selected from the multi-vocal archival records of the past.

Robert Holton (1994) in *Jarring Witnesses: Modern Fiction and the Representation of History*, considers the place of historical fiction and the place of narrative within historiographic genres. Within this context FH Bradley's idea (*The Presuppositions of Critical History [1874]*) (Bradley, 1935)) of the 'jarring witness' is taken up. These are witnesses who lived during the times in question but who existed outside of the clearly defined boundaries of history.

Bradley posed a problem that has been much theorised and is still relevant to historiography, and I would add historical fiction, today:

> We ask for history, and that means that we ask for the simple record of unadulterated facts; we look, and nowhere do we find the object of our search, but in its stead we see the divergent accounts of a host of jarring witnesses, a chaos of disjoined and discrepant narrations, and yet, while all of these can by no possibility be received as true, at the same time not one of them can be rejected as false (Bradley, 1935:9).

Bradley suggests that to form a coherent narrative of history these jarring witnesses need to be discounted (and therefore silenced). Jarring witnesses were unacceptable narrative agents and the reasons for excluding them are based on his view of what

conforms to a 'correct' way of understanding the world. According to Bradley "the best witnesses are those who from long habit have attained to comparative infallibility in their judgements" (Bradley, 1935:16). As Holton paraphrases: "orthodox Catholics, the uneducated, and now children and savages join the list of jarring witnesses whose narrations may be excluded" (Holton, 1994:17). With this list in mind, Bradley states his reasons:

> As is the man, so are his facts. Uneducated persons and children transform to their own likeness all they assimilate: and savages are in many cases literally unable to take in what to us seem simple impressions of passivity (Bradley, 1935:65).

The once real women whose stories are re-textualised within my novel would belong in this list of exclusions. Two of the women were Catholics, one would have been considered a child and one a 'savage' and all might be thought of as 'uneducated', according to Bradley, because they could not read or write. For Bradley suitable witnesses should also share the same world view: "the witness's mind is a universe, a cosmos, like my own and subject to the same laws; and hence,…his judgement is to me precisely the same as my own" (Bradley, 1935:29-30).

For Bradley a good historian is:

> …the writer who consciously orders and creates from the known foundation of that which for him is the truth.
>
> It is when history becomes aware of its presupposition that it first becomes truly critical, and protects itself (as far as is possible) from the caprices of fiction (Bradley, 1935:21).

Following this view jarring witnesses are to be discarded, because their perspective is inadmissible within the 'correct' reading of what took place. This is because it falls outside the hegemony of the history which historians such as Bradley seek to create. Within my novel it is the stories which originated in acts performed by, or to, these jarring witnesses which are used to create a new form of historical fiction. Bradley seems to assert that to give voice to these jarring witnesses is to cause narrative history to become something that is less than valid and which runs the risk of falling into the suspect area of fiction.

For historians such as Bradley, historical narrative is valid only when constantly corrected to the world view of the historian writing the history; otherwise it might fall into that world of the 'other' in which jarring witnesses reside.

From this perspective historical fiction can be thought of not as residing on the boundaries of historical praxis, but as something lesser, to be owned by those who do not reside within the 'correct' world view or hegemony created by the one historical world of the suitable witnesses and the historian. This is a view which places historical fiction on a level of importance below that of narrative history. Can this view be challenged?

Historical fiction, if we follow the Bradley concept, belongs to those who would threaten the 'authentic' historical account of how the world was once. Fiction becomes the default product of an uncorrected narrative act. Yet who is to say that one particular Bradleyesque 'authentic' historical narrative has more validity than any possible others? If it is fiction which allows for a multiplicity of histories, because fiction allows for the filling in of knowledge gaps, and for the inclusion of elements which seem irrelevant, is it now fiction which becomes the greater rather than the lesser of these two narrativising acts. Again we are reminded of the statement by Aristotle, (referred to in chapter four) to the effect that fiction can allow for possibilities, and therefore deals with universals, whereas history must remain limited to "the thing that has been" and deals with "singulars" (Aristotle 1451 a-b in Roberts, 1984:234-235). Historical fiction allows for the possibilities of what might have taken place. It is therefore broader and more inclusive than narrative historical non-fiction created, as Bradley himself states, by 'fixing' the carefully chosen elements into a particular order. We now see this order to be a hegemonic construction.

Return of the repressed: de Certeau and the James girls

The voices of the women in my novel are heard as an absence. As mentioned, their stories are the record of female existence 'recorded by others' and as such remain as

faint echoes or 'traces', to use Ricoeur's term, of what once existed as women's lived, performative experience. Thus according to de Certeau:

> The violence of the body reaches the written page only through absence, through the intermediary of documents that the historian has been able to see on the sands from which a presence has since been washed away, and through a murmur that lets us hear—but from afar—the unknown immensity that seduces and menaces our knowledge (de Certeau, 1988:3).

Past records which exist only as traces of incomplete (in terms of a narrative 'whole') lived experience such as these textual fragments can easily be overlooked. European colonial expansion is a good example of Bradley's 'grand narrative' in action.

Men were the decision makers and figures of authority and, particularly in Australia, were those most likely to be at the frontiers of colonial expansion as explorers, scientists, convict guards, squatters, military and administrative personnel. Women were also there, but for a long time they were numerically less. [30] Literate women were also recording events with their writing, or collecting and documenting botanical and ethnographic information about the new land, such as the botanical paintings by Ellis Rowan and Fanny Macleay's natural history recording and painting, but for the most part, it was men who participated in the 'public sphere' of colonial life:

> Most botanical societies did not admit women,…the papers they had written might be read out for them by a male member, but women remained isolated from the informal support so vital to building a professional image and expertise (Davidoff and Hall in Windshuttle, 1988:49).

As long as archival accounts of women by third persons, like the source material for my novel, do exist they have multiple historical (and narrative) potential. As records of events involving once real people whose own interpretations of those experience are lost to us, they are both greater and lesser than the events which they document. As de Certeau maintains:

> Whatever this new understanding of the past holds to be irrelevant—shards created by the selection of material, remainders left aside by an explication—

[30] Anne Summers notes that in NSW in 1833 there were 44,688 men and 16,173 women. In 1838 at Port Phillip there were 1580 men and 431 women and 267 bonded servants, whose sex was not recorded (Summers, 1994:345). By (roughly) the time in which the artist's journal is set there had been an increase in family migration. According to Robert Madgwick, again for NSW, and excluding the convict classes in which the male to female ratio was 6.01, in 1843 there were 80,115 men and 69,436 women (Madgwick, 1969:230-231).

> comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies: 'resistences', 'survivals', or delays discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of 'progress' or a system of interpretation (de Certeau, 1988:4).

Therefore, the lives left out of official history, these 'remainders', 'shards' or 'traces' are the same as Bradley's initial 'jarring witnesses' or 'things'—once real people, which from the perspective of grand narrative history should be discounted. Remainders are by definition fragments of something larger, and, in this instance are examples of female experience. It may be that Bradley was right; in order to hear the jarring witnesses of the past we must make use of historical fiction. However, rather than being an inferior thing as he sees it, it is historical fiction which might best enact the notion of disparate and multiple views of history.

This is particularly so when, as in some of the women's stories, historical information surrounding that particular piece of the past is both minimal, fragmentary and made from a socially constructed 'reality' or point of view other than that of the participants.

For Bradley, history appears as a limiting of the past to that one strand created only for those who share a similar view. It becomes, I believe, historical fiction which has the wider view and insight into the possibilities of the past. This notion relegates traditional narrative history, based on what might previously have been considered as verifiable 'facts' to a narrow sub-genre within the larger genre of historical 'fiction' or historical writing. It falls to historical fiction, exemplified by the female stories within my novel, to be seen more easily as "entering into the minds of (the) people he was writing about and (of) re-enacting what they had done" (Collingwood in Bentley, 1997:864).

In a further critique of Bradley's notions Collingwood makes the point, with which I agree that:

> Bradley stops short, however, of taking the next step and realizing that the historian re-enacts in his own mind not only the thought of the witness but the thought of the agent whose action the witness reports (Collingwood, 1967:138).

Neo-historical fiction of the type I have written, acknowledges both agent and witness and present day author within its multi-vocal intertextuality. It is only by adding an

imaginative perspective/voice from within a literary narrative and creating imaginary linkages between thin historical archival 'facts', that these events can be perceived in terms of empathy. This is because the tone of the documents from the past is often one of sensationalism. It combines melodrama and moralising: in both cases it disregards the feelings of the participants. Other official records of the women's stories are textualised by record keeping conventions and as such carry little in the way of empathy, rather they are expressly and minimally descriptive. An example is the previously referred to entry: "wife of Hnry Simpson", or even—as on one archival record—a number in a column for the wife's age, indicating that Henry Simpson, miller, aged 28, was married to a woman aged 24. These records define a woman solely in terms of a man, while at the same time making her invisible (the wife has no name on either the index or the register).[31]

The re-articulation or construction of historical 'facts' using a framework of postmodern literary historical fiction allows the archival documents to be seen as the traces of women to whom those 'documented facts' once referred. The archival record becomes once again the world of women, women who had flesh and blood and who felt emotion.

It is within these micro-histories of illiterate lower-class women that we find shards of a hidden past. By fictionally imagining a possible narrative of their lives we also allow for those things that existed in the past as possibilities and we (author/s *and* readers) allow for the creation in the present of an image of who these women were. The fictionalised stories are a way of invoking what *could* have once existed. In this way the stories invoke Bernstein and Morson's concept of 'sideshadowing'. This will be examined in more detail in chapter six, but for the purposes of this chapter it can be initially understood by referring to the following statement:

> While we see what did happen, we also see the image of what else could have happened. In this way, the hypothetical shows through the actual and so achieves its own shadowy kind of existence in the text (Morson, 1994:118).

[31] (Pike, 1987: *Index to register of emigrant labourers applying for a free passage to SA 1836-1841)*.

Lukacs: expanding some useful definitions of and strategies for historical fiction

As previously noted, my work does not wholly discount traditional historical fiction. Lukacs was one researcher who analysed this genre in great detail. Linda Hutcheon is another whose analysis proposes an extension of the genre into her concept of 'historiographic metafiction'. (Historiographic metafiction was defined in chapter one and will be discussed in detail in chapter nine). In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon uses Lukacs's analysis to create her own meta-fictive definitions. Hutcheon considers that Lukacs felt that the historical novel could enact historical process by presenting a microcosm which generalizes and concentrates. In this (Lukacs) view the protagonist, should be a synthesis of the general and particular, of "all the humanly and socially essential determinants" (Hutcheon, 1988:13).

Historical novels, according to Umberto Eco, "not only identify in the past the causes of what came later, but also trace the process through which those causes began slowly to produce their effects" (Eco in Hutcheon, 1988:113). She concurs with him when he says that there are three ways to narrate the past and adds a fourth way, historiographic metafiction:

- Romance
- Swashbuckling tale
- Historical novel
- Historiographic metafiction

Hutcheon defines historical fiction as "that which is modelled on historiography to the extent that it is motivated and made operative by a notion of history as a shaping force (in the narrative and in destiny)" (Hutcheon, 1988:113). More usefully she makes an analysis of Lukacs's original definitions of the historical novel, narrowing his ideas to three main points:

1. historical novels "enact historical process by presenting a microcosm which generalizes and concentrates" (Lukacs in Hutcheon, 1988:113). She sees the protagonist, as a particular type, "a synthesis of the general and particular" (Hutcheon, 1988:113).

2. the historical novel is "defined by the relative unimportance of its use of detail" (Hutcheon, 1988: 114). Lukacs saw this as "only a means of achieving historical faithfulness, for making concretely clear the historical necessity of a concrete situation" (Lukacs in Hutcheon, 1988:114). Hutcheon considers that historical accuracy is not of prime importance.

3. historical novels should, according to Lukacs, relegate "historical personages to secondary roles" (Hutcheon, 1988:114). Hutcheon claims that "real figures of the past are deployed to validate or authenticate the fictional world by their presence, as if to hide the joins between fiction and history in a formal and ontological sleight of hand" (Hutcheon, 1988:114).

Hutcheon re-casts these three defining points in terms of her concept of historiographic metafiction in order to clarify the way that her 'new' postmodern concept of fictional history writing differs from that of the more 'traditional' historical fiction, exemplified by Scott as analysed and defined by Lukacs.

Historiographic metafiction is concerned with the "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs [and this] is made the grounds for its rethinking and re-working of the forms and contents of the past" (Hutcheon, 1988:5). I have found it useful because it allows the freedom to create a space for a new understanding of silenced women's lives. However, I see the crystallisation, by Hutcheon of Lukacs' broader definitions into only three key aspects as somewhat reductive. Perhaps, in terms of her concept of 'historiographic metafiction', a narrow or reductive analysis is required to bring about a way of 'flipping' previous definitions of historical fiction on their heads to support her ideas. According to Hutcheon, her new type of historical fiction acts upon the ideas of Lukacs in the following ways:

1. historical novels "enact historical process by presenting a microcosm which generalises and concentrates" (Hutcheon, 1988: 113) producing a synthesis of the "general and particular". Historiographic metafiction uses the "ex-centric, the marginalised, the peripheral figures of fictional history" (Hutcheon, 1988:114).

2. historical novels are defined by the relative unimportance of a use of detail. Historiographic metafiction contests this in two ways:

- by playing upon the deliberate falsifications and errors of the historical record "in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error" (Hutcheon, 1988:114).
- by incorporating but not assimilating such data (Hutcheon, 1988:114).

3. historical personages in traditional historical fiction occupy secondary roles "real figures of the past are deployed to validate or authenticate the fictional world by their presence" (Hutcheon, 1988:114). Hutcheon considers that these real figures of the past are used within traditional historical fiction "as if to hide the joins between fiction and history in a formal and ontological sleight of hand" (Hutcheon, 1988:114). Historiographic metafiction's self-reflexivity prevents this from occurring, and instead she sees historiographic metafiction as utilizing the presence of real figures from the past in order to problematise the join. Its use, in relation to my novel, will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

I believe that Lukacs has more to say which might prove useful for an understanding of my novel, and its position within the genre of historical fiction. Reducing his broad analyses to three key points, is too easily to discount other important elements he might have raised with regards to historical fiction in its broadest sense.

In my work I am not attempting a defining work of historiographic metafiction and can therefore see affinities between my approach and that recommended by Lukacs. In naming my fiction as a variable 'type' of this sub genre, or a 'type' of postmodern historical fiction, I allow myself greater freedom to act as a bowerbird, in a sense, and to use ideas from all previous definitions of the forms that historical fiction writing might take.

Hutcheon reduces Lukacs' wide-ranging definitions of historical fiction concepts to only three points and then posits a flip side which acts as if in opposition to those now

'primary' points. It is almost as if the categories are reduced to primary colours, whose opposites, the secondary colours stand aligned, and in contrast to them.

Table 1: Hutcheon's 'flip side' to Lukacs definitions of historical fiction

RED present a microcosm of generalisations	YELLOW accuracy of detail unimportant	BLUE historical personages in secondary roles	Hutcheon's selection of some Lukacs traditional historical fiction definitions
GREEN present ex-centric personages	PURPLE accuracy of detail incorporated but not assimilated	ORANGE self-reflexive in terms of all characters	Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction sourced from her interpretation of Lukacs initial definition

My novel, although taking elements of postmodern fiction in its style, is still a form of historical fiction and as such may not necessarily demand that every element once conceived of as traditional needs be re-articulated by some kind of oppositional quality or position. To extend and re-invigorate a literary categorisation it might perhaps be better to conceptualise it in a way that does more than allow only a narrow dichotomising of that genre. Greater benefit in writing of the past, particularly of those previously silenced parts of the past, may be found in utilising all of the notions to be found in the conceptualisation of this genre. Metafiction is, by its nature and self-reflexivity, a fluid form which continually re-articulates its 'empire'. Hutcheon herself notes in a more recent book *The Politics of Postmodernism* that "the postmodern is seemingly not so much a concept as a problematic, a complex set of heterogeneous but interrelated questions which will not be silenced by any spuriously unitary answer" (Burgin in Hutcheon, 2002:15). As well as the three points that Hutcheon analyses and manages to invert while defining her concept I have found, from within Lukacs's analysis, the following perspectives to be useful. This is particularly so when thinking of the processes involved in the writing of my novel.

World-historical and maintaining individuals

One particular concept I have found useful is that, originating with Hegelian thought, of the difference between a 'world-historical individual' and a 'maintaining individual'.

Lukacs stated that historical novels "demonstrate by artistic means that historical circumstances and characters existed in precisely such and such a way" (Lukacs, 1962:45). This authenticity of local colour is an artistic demonstration of historical reality. It is the portrayal of the broad basis of historical events in their complexity and in their interactions with other individuals. "The difference between 'maintaining' and 'world-historical' individuals is expressed in this living connexion with the existential basis of events" (Lukacs, 1962:45). To this end Lukacs saw 'maintaining' individuals as "those who experience the smallest oscillations in this basis as immediate disturbances of their lives. The 'world-historicals' are those individuals who "…concentrate the main features of events into motives for their own actions and for influencing and guiding the actions of the masses" (Lukacs, 1962:46).

In other words there are those characters within a fiction whose circumstances and personalities and the decisions that this matrix may bring about in *their* life's story, combine to cause the circumstances and events within *other* characters' life stories. World historicals' choices and decisions, cause in a larger sense the circumstances and events of the lives of maintaining individuals: for example as Hitler was to Anne Frank, Governor Sir George Gipps of New South Wales was to Annie Brownlow. Although Lukacs was writing from a Marxist perspective, prior to the fall of Communism, it is still useful to consider this idea of a world-historical figure whose actions influence and guide those many maintaining characters' lives, in terms of a fictional world.

Fleishman also takes up Lukacs's point with his own preference for not using 'world-historical' figures as central characters. He extends the idea to state that "the relation of the representative hero to the society of his time is not one of statistically-determinable typicality but that of symbolic universality" (Fleishman, 1971:11). He considers that the ultimate subject of historical novels is "human life conceived as historical life" (Fleishman, 1971:11). This idea harks back to the historiographer Wilhelm Dilthey. It is useful, for both historical and fictional personages, to understand that:

> The only complete, self-contained and clearly defined happening encountered everywhere in history and in every concept that occurs in the human studies, is the course of a life…it is also the point of view from which we grasp and describe the coexistence and sequence of lives in history, emphasizing what is significant and meaningful and thus shaping every event (Dilthey in Fleishman, 1971:11).

This statement has even more meaning if, as in my novel, the life events of some transworld characters are events that did, or might have occurred, to particular ancestors of the author (or possibly of the readers). That some of the characters are also my ancestors brings a certain particularity to the statement "course of a life". For as in the science fiction of time travel, the *possible* events and lives invoked by the fictional narrative allow the author to imagine and invoke those personages and events that *actually* did happen. Because the past *did* happen as it did (these people migrated to Australia and survived here long enough to produce children) the author/descendant can then imagine the other possibilities that their lives might also have encapsulated. Fleishman articulates well this idea:

> The historical novelist writes trans-temporally: he is rooted in the history of his own time and yet can conceive another. In ranging back into history he discovers not merely his own origins but his historicity, his existence as a historical being (Fleishman, 1971:15).

My novel focuses narrative interest on the myriad of historically unimportant maintaining individuals whose actions were attempts responses to the decisions of some distant and perhaps multi 'world historicals'. For example, Annie Brownlow—the Governor's death sentence stands decision; *Cataraqui* immigrants and Hannah Simpson—the English parliamentary decision makers who formulated Australia's migration policies in conjunction with the emigration agents and companies; Caroline Collitts—those 'world historicals' involved in the setting up of a convict transportation system that allowed for the brutalisation of a man such as Walsh; Merrung—squatters and at Port Phillip, the colonial Superintendent C. J. La Trobe, who attempted to intervene in favour of the Aboriginals.

However, it is not only these distant and powerful 'world individuals' who create 'oscillations' within the lives of the transworld characters of my novel. Because the majority of the 'maintaining' individuals are women they are also subject to the

circumstances and events/decisions of another level of a type of 'world-historicals'. For these women's worlds at least, these figures were the men in their lives. Annie's husband with his plans to sell her land and bring home his 'fancywoman'; the Reverend Sowerby with his attempts to win her appeal; the white men on horseback who attack the Aboriginal camp (which ambiguously may be that of Merrung's people) and in the case of the *Cataraqui* the lives of the women (and lower class men) are in the hands of the Captain (and perhaps the ship's surgeon) who decide to set sail in a storm.

This concept of a lesser level of 'world-historicals', those with power over others but not necessarily 'world' figures in the geopolitical sense, extends Hegel's idea, expanded by Lukacs, to embrace the position of illiterate women in colonial Australia and the men whose decisions were an act of authority/power over events in their lives. I would suggest that hierarchical levels of maintaining individuals exist to a greater extent in settler societies because the nature of settler societies means that these societies are in the process of formulating a structure to take into account all the categories of people within that blended society. Hierarchical structures within early settler societies are still being formed, thus allowing for individuals to rise or fall more easily than in conservative, stable non-settler societies. In 'older' societies, usually those of the colonising power, it might prove more difficult to move easily between one level and the next in a 'set' hierarchy of authority based on land, power and money, all often inherited over many generations. Settler societies will allow a greater chance for opportunity but also for the resulting abuse of power. It is usually the case that this abuse of power places illiterate women and indigenous peoples on the lower levels of the society.

Historical faithfulness

Lukacs considered the use of detail to be relatively unimportant. He saw detail as "only a means for achieving the historical faithfulness…, for making concretely clear the historical necessity of a concrete situation (Lukacs, 1962:65). And he further considered that "measured against this automatic reproduction of the real components of historical necessity, it matters little whether individual details, individual facts are historically correct or not" (Lukacs, 1962:65).

Hutcheon responds to this comment by stating that "accuracy or even truth of detail is irrelevant" (Hutcheon, 1988:114). However, as I understand it, Lukacs's statement was more about the psychological motives of the characters enacting an historical drama. This perhaps is a point missed by Hutcheon. Lukacs was also interpreting this historical faithfulness in terms of the historical psychology of the characters, their inner motives and behaviour. This is his historical faithfulness and it is this which is difficult to invert, in terms of some oppositional dichotomy towards which Hutcheon was striving within her definition of historiographic metafiction.

Additionally, for work such as mine, it is worthwhile considering the two types of data. Firstly, there exist elements from the past that have been processed that are of a realistic, non narrative type such as archival material of births, deaths and marriages, immigration and shipping records. Secondly, there are elements of data that are already formed narratives, things such as the newspaper stories, court reports, Governors' despatches and the like. I work on creating a sense of the past from both of these types of data, and at attempting to call up imaginatively those things which are traces within narratives. For example, the women's voices (and motives) as 'traced' by the newspaper quotations. Both of these types of historical source material add another level of opacity to how we view historical 'data' and therefore our ability to fully challenge 'historical faithfulness' on any level.

Lukacs states that for Scott, the detail is "the authenticity of the historical psychology of his characters, the genuine *hic et nunc* (here and now) of their inner motives and behaviours" (Lukacs, 1962:65). In other words, as I understand, it is not what happened in history that has primacy but why people made things happen the way they did. What were the emotional reasons behind their actions? To this end history becomes not so much a vast chess game occurring in the past, and for reasons that will never be fathomed because they are so different from any that we may understand. Rather it becomes something almost tangible, almost reconstructable, because it deals with people's emotions.

'Never modernize the psychology of characters'

With this previous point in mind, Lukacs still asserts that the best in historical fiction is that in which historical faithfulness is preserved in the conception of the characters. "He [Scott] never creates eccentric figures, figures who fall psychologically outside the atmosphere of the age (Lukacs, 1962:65).

In one sense this is the most difficult aspect in writing about real people from the past, especially real people who did not themselves leave a written trace of their existence. How does one interpret their motives or understand their sense of themselves, and their understanding of the world in which they lived? How was 'identity' maintained by women within colonial Australia? I did not want to imbue the female transworld characters of my novel with the psychological makeup of a woman from the twentieth century, yet I needed to imagine their motives or a justification for the actions which occurred to make their lives 'visible' in the public arena. To approach this important element in the characterisation of my female characters I read journals from other nineteenth century women chronicling their times, thoughts and lives.

Most of the writers whom I read were middle class, well educated and they wrote well. Most articulated a descriptive and clear account of their lives and their reasons for embarking on their travels. Examples of such writers were Rachel Henning (Adams, 1988), Annie Baxter Dawbin (Dawbin and Frost, 1998), Louisa Ann Meredith (1973(1844)), Elizabeth Archer (Archer, 1839) also in Archer journal as transcribed by Main (Main, 1994), Mary Braidwood Mowle (Clarke, 1986) and Mary Hassall (Reeson, 1985). There were also more fragmentary yet less polished accounts from women who were less educated and which, in some respects, seem more 'immediate' due to the writers' less extensive education. These are often gripping accounts of lives lived tenuously during this period. Because of their irregular grammar and spelling, and almost 'stream of consciousness' writing style they evoke an immediacy and understanding of events, as well as of the efforts the women had to go to in order to record their thoughts. These writers include women such as Sarah Davenport (Frost, 1995), Eliza Whicker, Elizabeth Allbon, Maria Steley and Mary Maclean (Hassam, 1995) who travelled steerage class to Australia. However, for the majority of the women, both those from an educated world, and those from the 'lower

orders', it is clear from the journals and letters that their conceptualisation of their world, and their attempts to improve or to cope with their own and their families' changing situations, are both similar to and yet very different from ours.

As women, they were much concerned with building and maintaining relationships—family and children figure to a great extent as did health and finances. Yet the women narrate a world, and also world concerns that appear quite different to those of a woman of today. This is not only in the physical sense of their inhabiting a new Australia, something difficult to imagine today, but also in the sense that many overtly state their reliance on their men folk for their status, position and for the direction that their lives take. The women of colonial Australia were to a greater extent at the mercy of men's bad decisions in terms of finance, career and life choices. Women settlers seemed more prepared to 'put up with' greater upheavals for themselves and their children and with vastly more dire circumstances, than would most women living within a western culture whose psychological outlook is post 70s or even post WW1 and the Suffragettes.

Yet writers from both classes of women tell how they attempted to change their circumstances as much as was possible within the limitations imposed on them. Rachel Henning felt able, in Australia, to marry a man considered otherwise below her status, and to go with him to live in a slab house in the bush. This would not have occurred if they had stayed in more socially conservative England. Annie Baxter Dawbin formed a number of supportive, emotionally close male friendships and towards the end of her life made the decision to live apart from her husband because of his financial problems. Louisa Ann Meredith insisted on travelling with her husband to remote areas and Sarah Davenport, while recognising her financial dependence on her husband, wherever possible took the initiative and made decisions for the family and did as much as she was able to improve its circumstances.[32]

[32] "My husband having a sister hear [heard reports of the place] her husband was a soldier but he had bought his Discharg and got a publick house in the country and [was] making money so fast so the news to us was from them that we should come out...I wanted to make a fresh start in a new country my husband was a cabinet maker by trade and he used to suffer with the sick headach almost every week I had to work very hard myself to keep our familey and I found my strength very low I concluded the best was to try a new country...we had 4 young children

In writing these stories about the transworld characters that I chose, my construction of their motives was very much to the foreground. I was always conscious of the readers' need to understand the past as 'other'. It must be said that historiographic metafiction, in challenging the constructedness of traditional historical fiction has not sufficiently taken this original need (of readers) into account. If we are not to write, in one way, so as to fully envisage (and allow to be entered fictionally) a past yet constructed 'real' world, then why make the attempt to 'read' the past? For a reader's need to create the past through a 'total' fictional world a space for elements of traditional historical fiction needs to be incorporated, or at least recognised, within postmodernist writing forms such as mine.

The women from whom I have created these transworld characters, experienced lives apparently more constrained than ours today. Their psychology was very different, but when push came to shove they were still women who wanted to improve their circumstances. This is clear, even without any autobiographical account from them, because if they had not wanted to change their existing circumstances they would not have found themselves in the situations that they did. Something existed within their personalities or individually constructed 'identities' which made them act, despite the potentially bad outcomes which saw them shipwrecked, murdered, executed or dying on a boarding house floor. And when they did act they acted with the same emotions that we can still recognize today. This is why we so readily identify with statements such as that quoted from Sarah Davenport. Despite the time differences, and the ideological differences that capitalism, feminism and post modernity have wrought upon our world view we *can* place ourselves in her position. The temporal and ideological gap is not yet so great that we cannot see the world (*her* world) from her perspective. This is the same as the identification we feel with the situations of the transworld characters within my novel.

The temptation to produce extensively complete totality

Lukacs considered that within historical fiction the creation of a complete picture of the past was impossible:

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we sould our house hold furniture gathered up our effects paid our dets and got an order to come out…..we was all in good hopes that we was coming to beeter our selves" (Frost, 1995:199).

> For the historical novel presents the writer with a specially strong temptation to try and produce an extensively complete totality. The idea that only such completeness can guarantee historical fidelity is a very persuasive one. But it is a delusion (Lukacs, 1962:43).

In quoting Balzac, Lukacs notes that "talent flourishes where the causes which produced the facts are portrayed, in the secrets of the human heart, whose motions are neglected by the historians" (Balzac in Lukacs, 1962:43). Lukacs exemplifies this statement by comparing European authors such as Eugene Sue, who attempted to draw a complete coverage of a rebellion (under Louis XIV), with Tolstoy, and Scott who when writing about war, choose "to take an episode from the war which is of particular importance and significance for the human development of his main characters" (Lukacs, 1962:45). More modern examples might be in those film narratives of complex conflicts in our past such as *Braveheart, Gallipoli, Breaker Morant, The Guns of Navarone*, or even the Phillip Noyce film *Rabbit Proof Fence*, based on Doris Pilkington's book (2002). In these narratives the primary focus is on one event, and the characters involved in that, as one episode which stands for the whole of the conflict. This style of narrative also enacts the concept of metonymy, in that one stands for the whole.

This concept relates well to my novel. In drawing on writing of the past it is impossible to "produce an extensively complete totality" in an attempt to create a type of historical fidelity, whether fiction or non-fiction, because of the nature of understanding and of knowing the past, and because of the way in which chaotic events come to be recorded as 'facts' (things that occur in the 'here and now' and which therefore exist in a chaotic, pre-narrated form). When we choose to write of such an event the minor experiences of a few must stand in for the experiences of many. Even those who lived through events perceive them only from the viewpoint of how those events related to themselves. That is their own personal past, yet each individual personal past is not the past of everyone who lived through the events or who formed society. As such a 'complete' past that attempts to take into account all aspects and nuances of past events, as they related to all groups within society, cannot be re-created. This is because all elements of past societies are not represented in textual accounts. This is the nature of hierarchical, hegemonic societies and in

particular of settler societies whose creation is most often at the expense of indigenous peoples and marginalised groups from within the founding society.

Again, representation of the past is a form of metonymy. In a discussion of 'traces' Paul Ricoeur states:

> …insofar as a trace is left by the past, it stands for it. In regard to the past, the trace exercises a function of 'taking the place of' of 'standing-for'. This function characterizes the indirect reference proper to knowledge through traces, and distinguishes it from every other referential mode of history in relation to the past (Ricoeur, 1988:143).

In discussing Ricoeur's ideas, Middleton and Woods consider that "any historical writing has to 'stand for' a past that is absent, and this is more than representation but less than direct metonymy" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:68).

Within the structures of historiographic metafiction we can find alternative ways of writing and understanding the past. We can provoke an illusion which is not only intelligently and ontologically "controlled by critical distance" but which is also clearly seen to be so.

"Poetic awakening": 'smaller' relationships

Lukacs states that the important element of the historical novel is not the re-telling of great historical events, but rather the "poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act as they did in historical reality" (Lukacs, 1962:44). To do this the author needs to focus on smaller insignificant events and relationships such as I use in my stories. This statement can be analysed in relation to the events within my novel in such a way that it might mean: "Great historical events" would be the waves of (European) migration and (Aboriginal) cultural destruction that occurred with the settlement of Australia. "Poetic awakening" might be the voicing of previously silenced women (and lower class illiterate men) who figured in those events. "Re-experience the social and human motives" is the why of the positions of the women, some of which is answered in the imagined stories.

Chain of catastrophes

Interweaving crises of personal destiny within a context of historical crisis in a "chain of catastrophes" is a feature of my novel. Lukacs considers that the best type of fiction uses this technique. For example he considers that Scott "endeavours to portray the struggles and antagonisms of history by means of characters, who, in their psychology and destiny, always represent social trends and historical forces" … "certain crises in the personal destinies of a number of human beings coincide and interweave within the determining context of an historical crisis" (Lukacs, 1962:42).

Here we can consider some of the secondary characters within my novel. For example, the father of the 'Eldest Daughter' story, pushed to his limits by the squatters' demands. Fictional characters, acting as 'world maintainers', are interwoven with transworld characters who enact Lukacs's concept of 'world-historical' figures. For example the squatters, who in the intertext letter[33], request protection from the government, via Superintendent La Trobe against the raiding Aboriginals, whilst at the same time setting out to perform a massacre against Aboriginal women and children; or C J La Trobe at Port Phillip, who declares a reward for capture of the men responsible for the massacre. Think also, of the interwoven fate of Annie's newborn baby, Governor Gipps (as a world-historical) and the convict executioner Robert Elliot (as both a world maintaining figure, in relation to Gipps, and as a world-historical, in relation to the baby and his mother) in the Brownlow hanging story. By carrying out his job and executing the baby's mother is Elliot also partly responsible for the future death of the child, together with the immediate death of the baby's mother?

I very much agree with Lukacs' thoughts when he states: "It is always a fate suffered by groups of people connected and involved with one another, and it is never a matter of one single catastrophe, but a chain of catastrophes, where the solution of each gives birth to a new conflict" (Lukacs, 1962:42). This idea is to the foreground in some of the plot sequences within my novel.

[33] A letter signed by the "settlers and inhabitants of Port Fairy" (presumably only those who could write, and to go by the list of names who record "outrages recently committed against them", all men), "Port Phillip Extract: The Aboriginal (From the Patriot) Representation to his Honor, C.J. La Trobe, Esq. by the settlers and inhabitants of Port Fairy." *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 Apr. 1842.

What eventuates, from this idea of a 'chain of catastrophes' in Lukacs's thinking, and also from within my work, is the concept that it is people's motives which are important, not the more obvious results of those actions, which in grand narrative histories might have been the case.

"Hostile social forces bent on one another's destruction are everywhere colliding"

This statement relates to the Lukacs concept of the "compositional importance of the mediocre hero" (Lukacs, 1962:37) as opposed to the Hutcheon, postmodern concept of a protagonist (hero/anti hero) who is ex-centric and marginalised. Lukacs idea of a mediocre hero taking neither side with great passion can provide a link without forcing composition. I find this idea very important and have used it within my novel in the form of the artist/narrator character. Lukacs noted that Scott always chose as his principle protagonists persons who, "through character and fortune, enter into human contact with both camps" (Lukacs, 1962:37).

Use of this type of fictional character enables us to perceive both sides of an argument more clearly than if, as historiographic metafiction would have it, we were to view it only from the position of the marginalised outsiders, or ex-centric identities. In my novel the role of mediocre hero is found in the character of the travelling artist. For my novel, the mediocre hero is necessary because of the ability of this character type to reflect both sides. Because the women's stories deal with transworld identities that are/were marginalised and so very silenced as to have left no record themselves, the mediocre hero's position is necessary in order for the reader to see just how far from the 'centre' their position was. Yet here I am also attempting a variation on the Lukacs idea. My artist traveller is a mediocre hero who allows the reader entry into both sides and in so doing points to the ex-centric position of the women, as Lukacs envisaged. Yet the artist could also be said to fail to see both sides. He moves between two (possibly three) worlds. He inhabits the world of educated men, the world of hegemonic power. But he also has a chance to be part of the world of the illiterate women and through that the reader perceives that world in a way which differs from when they perceive it from the point of view of the women's narrations.

Positioned, as he is, coming from the world of British colonial power, it is his ultimate identification as a character within that world, in particular his artistic practice within the 'Picturesque' style and his admiration and desire to be part of the art 'Academy', that means he fails to take up the viewpoint of the women's world. His position is also such that he not only fails to see fully the women's world but also does not 'see' fully the world of successful, male colonial Australia. This is exemplified by his statements in his journal after his dinner with an emancipist squatter on convicts-made-good. The artist is uncomfortable in this situation and does not fully accept, or even understand, the social structures within Australia because they seem unnaturally different from that of the colonial power, England.

Others travelling with him, for example Holroyd, do participate much more in the world of the women, with possible detrimental effects. Yet it is the artist who never really 'sees' their world. Most often he collides with their world as a marginal observer, not as a participant. When he tells Mary Ann, the Irish servant in the Yarramundi story, of the likely death of her betrothed he feels sympathy for her, but his strongest reaction is towards the squatter's wife, as such he remains acting on the level of the middle-class members of society. Overall the artist does not take up or champion the women's position, or sympathise with their point of view because that point is so strongly filled by their multi-vocal identities. The artist is a metaphor for the hegemony for which he is (artist) observer, and that hegemony does not want ex-centric identities represented.

At times the artist does act as an agent of change, or at least as a messenger for change. At other times he represents those in power and the moment of change/chance but remains solidly in observer status. In 'She Being Dead Yet Speaketh' the artist waits for the mail coach, hopeful of his own letter, and so discovers that on the same mail coach is anticipated good news of Annie Brownlow's fate. In this instance he acts as a stand in for the reader, awaiting news of a character's fate. The characters fate is something outside of the reader's control, unless they choose to close the book and cease to read beyond that particular point. In that moment of waiting for the mail coach the artist 'stands in for' the reader but he also represents the male, educated

hegemony and those in power who can/could influence Annie's fate. He becomes the observer as well as the decision-maker in Annie's life. If the artist had not waited for the mail coach the reader would not know of the events of Annie's life. He might have continued his travels, oblivious to the drama happening in Goulburn. Yet he did not and because of his decision to wait for the coach, the reader also then discovers Annie's story. His decision and his anticipation of a letter from the mail coach make Annie die for the reader. In this way he acts as a 'stand in' for the Governor and those in power.

Metafiction

I consider that my novel's style could be termed metafictional in the sense that it "self consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh, 1984:2).

As both Patricia Waugh and Wenche Ommundsen note, the practice of metafiction is not altogether a new phenomenon, rather it is as old as the novel.

According to Waugh, metafiction, goes a fair way to making the Bakhtinian idea of the 'dialogic' explicit, whereas realism, "often regarded as the classic fictional mode, paradoxically functions by suppressing this dialogue" (Waugh, 1984:6). This is because in realist fiction the conflict of languages and voices is subordinate to the dominant voice of the author-god.

The unique features of metafiction, are considered by Waugh to be that it is:

- constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition in that it constructs a fictional illusion while laying bare that illusion (Waugh, 1984:6);
- a response and a contribution to a sense that reality or history are provisional (Waugh, 1984:7);
- a means of providing, by its metafictional deconstruction, a better understanding of the fundamental structures of narrative and offers models for understanding the world as a construction "...a web of interdependent semiotic systems" (Waugh, 1984:9);

- a response to the problem of how to represent "impermanence and a sense of chaos, in the permanent and ordered forms of literature" (Waugh, 1984:12);
- not so much a sub-genre as a "tendency within the novel which operates through exaggeration of the tensions and oppositions inherent in all novels" (Waugh, 1984:14);
- a form of the novel which rejects the traditional figure of the author (Waugh, 1984:16);
- a form which lays bare the conventions of realism without ignoring or abandoning them (Waugh, 1984:18).

I would agree that as a broad style many of Waugh's points defining metafiction also apply to my novel. However, not all of the points apply equally strongly or can be seen overtly in my work. Yet, as I see it, this is the beauty of this kind of writing. Many works can take on metafictive elements and use them to embrace that fiction's own content or to make their own intellectual expositions clearer.

Metafiction can therefore be thought of as an "elastic term which covers a wide range of fictions" (Waugh, 1984:18). It encompasses fictions which range from those that "take up fictionality as a theme to be expanded" to those that "manifest the symptoms of formal and ontological insecurity but allow their deconstructions to be finally recontextualised…given a total interpretation" to the more extreme version of fictions which "reject realism more thoroughly and posit the world as a fabrication of competing semiotic systems" (Waugh, 1984:18-19).

I would argue that my fiction is one that sits in the middle between these points. Within this broad description of the types of metafictions can also be found those that deal with history. These take the name, given by Linda Hutcheon, of historiographic metafiction.

Historiographic metafiction

This particular form of metafiction can be usefully employed as a means of challenging prior patriarchal narratives written about women who existed in silence on the periphery of society. Historiographic metafiction allows the freedom to create a space for a new understanding of silenced women's lives.

In a later essay Hutcheon expanded the definition I noted in chapter one so that the term refers to "novels that are intensely self-reflexive but that also both re-introduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge" (Hutcheon, 1996:474).

Problematising the question of historical knowledge is, I believe, a core task when we attempt to consider the representation of women in history. This is especially so for those types of historical situations in which women were numerically fewer, or because of circumstances within society, were less educated, or where class and race factors acted in cohort with their gender to further marginalise them. The grand narratives of settler societies are one such case.

According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction's "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historio*graphic meta*fiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and re-working of the forms and contents of the past" (Hutcheon, 1988:5). Therefore, I consider that her term, with extension to allow for less narrow 'metafictional' aspects, is one possible way of categorising my work.

My novel emphasises a re-thinking as well as a re-working of both the forms and—to the extent that marginalised women's experiences are fictionally narrated from the point of view of multiple female narrators—the contents of the past. For my purposes in writing about women's lives, the style raises multiple important issues regarding the interactions between history and fiction. These are:

> issues surrounding the nature of identity and subjectivity; the question of reference and representation; the intertextual nature of the past; the ideological implications of writing about history; narrative emplotting; and the status of historical documents, not to mention 'facts' (Hutcheon, 1996:486).

To be historical, and to be metafictional the novel must not only successfully create an historical fictional world, but at the same time must subvert that world using textual strategies which make plain that the fictional world created is a contingent one, slipping from our grasp at the very moment of its conception. This asserts that both history and fiction are discourses. Within my novel this has been done self-reflexively by the repeated use of intertextual elements: fragments of other texts which have been

worked into the fiction, referred to and echoed by the fiction. This self-reflexive metafictional structuring of new and prior text is used to disrupt time and to challenge history.

Attempting to assimilate: revealing the process

By using this fictional strategy the archival record of individual facts (old texts) becomes once again a world of women's life experiences. My novel allows for some of the possibilities that the marginalised performers of the past, whose voices are written out of formal history, might have achieved if the survival strategies they chose to use had succeeded.

Historiographic metafiction most readily lends itself to the process of attempting to assimilate 'facts' of history whilst at the same time revealing the process and the way in which it is impossible for such a cohesion to occur within a text:

> the process of *attempting* to assimilate is what is foregrounded:…As readers we see both the collecting and the attempts to make narrative order. Historiographic metafiction acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of the past but its *textualized accessibility* to us today (Hutcheon, 1988:114).

I believe it can also be thought of as an extension of pre-existing 'types' of historical fiction rather than as something altogether different. Wenche Ommundsen considers that historiographic metafiction has always existed and that in terms of being postmodern it is only the extent to which it "flaunts its violation of ontological boundaries" (Ommundsen, 1993:52) thus showing itself as an imaginary construct that makes the difference between this type of postmodern fiction and more traditional versions of historical fictions such as (her examples of) Tolstoy's (1976) *War and Peace* or Eleanor Dark's (1980) *Timeless Land* trilogy.

> All historical fiction is a conscious re writing of the past…historical fiction has always violated ontological boundaries, presented the real and the fictional as if they belonged to the same level of reality (Ommundsen, 1993:52).

Similarly Susana Onega sees it as an extension of prior styles when she describes historical metafiction as combining both the:

> intensely parodic, realism-undermining self-reflexivity of metafiction inherited from modernism, with the historical element suffused by the relish in storytelling, in the construction of well-made plots, carefully delineated characters and realism-enhancing narrative techniques characteristic of classic realism (Onega, 1995:7).

John Barth, in an early 1980s paper 'The literature of replenishment' argues for what he considers postmodernism, as good fiction, might be. For my work, and my claim that my novel is a type of historical fiction which takes from realism, but can still be classified as postmodernist, because that is what the subject of the work demands, he makes a useful point when he suggests that:

> Actual artists, actual texts, are seldom more than more or less modernist, postmodernist, or formalist, symbolist, realist, surrealist, politically committed, aesthetically "pure," "experimental," regionalist, internationalist, what have you. The particular work ought always to take primacy over contexts and categories (Barth, 1980:69).

If my work is considered in this way as a 'type' of historiographic metafiction—a style which is itself a type of historical fiction—something which inherits elements from both modernism and classic realism, it is easier to understand why points raised by Lukacs and discussed in chapter five, apply also to my work. Therefore, the theoretical frameworks from both Lukacs and Hutcheon (who attempts to invert Lukacs's ideas), which initially might seem to be in contradiction, are both relevant to my novel.

While it is not necessarily "intensely self-reflexive" the self-reflexivity which does occur within my work is a constant element which acts as an internalised or meditative consciousness in such a way that the characters contradict, challenge, interact and metaphorically talk to each others' narratives, as well as to the reader, through their stories. They talk of, and to, the character of the artist and talk back to the authors of the non-fictional intertext. Other than the discrepancy with temporal reality between the women's stories and the artist's narrative, the work does not overtly reinforce itself as an unreliable historical narrative to the extent that it could, or to the extent that other postmodern historical fictions do, for example Kate Grenville's (1993) *Joan Makes History;* Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970); Umberto Eco's (1983) *The Name of the Rose* or Salmon Rushdie's (1981) *Midnight's Children*. The fact that the novel articulates a suspect

historical narrative emerges slowly and finally once the total narrative is complete and all of the intertextual elements have been aligned from within the readers' subjective understanding of each of the sub plots that break the narrative of the artist's journal.

Barth argues that postmodernist fiction should synthesise modernism and postmodernism, while still aspiring to a more democratic fiction than late-modernists would have:

> He [the writer of postmodernism] may not hope to move the devotees of James Michener or Irving Wallace—not to mention the lobotomized mass-media illiterates. But he should hope to reach and delight, at least part of the time beyond the circle of what Mann used to call the Early Christians: professional devotees of high art (Barth, 1980:70).

Linda Hutcheon considers that historiographic metafiction's emphasis on "its enunciative situation—text, producer, receiver, historical, and social context—reinstalls a kind of (very problematic) communal project" (Hutcheon, 1988:115). This statement is in response to one made by Nancy Streuver: "historical novels are not histories, not because of a penchant for untruth, but because the author-reader contract denies the reader participation in the communal project" (Streuver in Hutcheon, 1988:115).

Putting to one side Streuver's rather simplistic statement of historical novels' penchant for 'untruth' because of the problematic nature of 'truth' and 'untruth', I agree with Hutcheon's ideas which relate to the communal project. That historiographic metafiction can reinstall a kind of communal project between text, producer, receiver, historical and social context, is identical with the author/reader/text nexus in which the 'truth' or non-truth of the past is found and culturally constructed in those spaces between the fictional text and the intertext archival non-fiction elements within my work.

This idea is also an indication of why my work can be considered as falling within the parameters of historiographic metafiction. Although I still maintain that within each of the individual women's stories it also makes use of elements of traditional historical fiction as defined earlier in this chapter.

According to Fredrick Holmes, historiographic metafiction, "creates a vivid illusion of the unfolding of historical events, involving people who actually existed, only to dispel the illusion by laying bare the artifices that gave rise to it" (Holmes, 1997:16-17). This contrasts with traditional historical fiction which, he claims, sustains:

> the pretence of supplying direct access to the past. ...Such novels employ the methods of formal realism, such as 'solidity of specification' to combine as seamlessly as possible wholly fictional ingredients with information garnered from actual historical sources (Holmes, 1997:16-17).

However, to raise Ommundsen's previously noted point, traditional historical fiction also involves the use of people who actually existed interacting with fictional characters and historical sources in ways that would have been impossible for that to occur. This she sees as being a less overtly reflexive form of historiographic metafiction. She notes of *The Timeless Land* (Dark, 1980):

> Eleanor Dark draws on historical figures such as Watkin Tench and Arthur Phillip, citing their letters and diaries, but showing them acting and thinking in accordance with a version of Australian history which would have been unthinkable at the time of the First Fleet (Ommundsen, 1993:52).

I seek to problematise and illuminate the 'seams' of traditional historical fiction with a type of fiction which falls somewhere between these two levels of self-reflexivity. I do this by the use of non linear narrative techniques such as collage and juxtaposition, intertextuality, framing, use of footnotes and embedded narrative. All of these devices add to the metafictional practice of structural incoherence and the refusal to adhere to reader expectations of a particular genre—such as traditional historical fiction:

> The presence of footnotes generally points to genres such as criticism, historiography or other kinds of scholarly writing; when they occur in a work of fiction, they upset our generic expectations, forcing a reconsideration of how texts are sorted into categories, and how the category itself determines our mode of reception (Ommundsen, 1993:9).

Juxtaposition of the fiction against elements from prior non-fiction texts, clearly enunciated as being those same historical sources of which Holmes speaks, and upon which the fiction is based, reinforces the concept of the novel as a work of fiction. This strategy also reminds us that the narrative is one which is provisional, residing

within the fictional text. At the same time, the clear narrativity and suspenseful and sensationalised text of the archival accounts, against which my fiction is juxtaposed, brings these texts into question *because* of their place alongside the fictional world for which the archival text was also the catalyst.

Within historiographic metafiction the process of turning the events found within archival accounts into facts makes clear the contingent nature of the past. In my work the re-articulation of real women's life events, the use of a parallel narrative and characters whose moments of breaking frame or use of the rupturing effect challenging past texts is one such example of this. Hutcheon makes this point, quoting La Capra she states that it is a process:

> of turning the traces of the past…into historical representation. In so doing, such postmodern fiction underlines the realization that "the past is not an 'it' in the sense of an objectified entity that may either be neutrally represented in and for itself or projectively reprocessed in terms of our own narrowly 'presentist' interests" (La Capra in Hutcheon, 2002:55).

My novel plays with the concepts of historiographic metafiction. It uses ex-centric transworld characters, embedded intertextual 'fragments' challenged from within the fiction and creates a covert self-reflexivity through this interplay. It also makes use of and confuses/disrupts expected narrative temporality and linearity of plot. It does this by the juxtaposition of the 'real' (intertextual element) dates alongside the conflicting periods of time and minimal use of temporal 'signposts' of dates, months, days of the week. These temporal signposts are those which are expected from a 'real' artist's journal account of his travels and work. They also occur more frequently in traditional historical fiction.[34]

> Historiographic metafictions are the creative response to the same basic question concerning history and literature posed by poststructuralism and deconstruction and in this sense it might be true to say as Linda Hutcheon does that this narrative form….truly measures up to the contradictory nature of the post-modernist ethos (Onega, 1995:17).

[34] The consequences and implications of this temporal structure are discussed in later chapters.

A broader definition?

As previously stated, I consider that historiographic metafiction of the type within my novel still sits within the broader definition of historical fiction. According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction "works *within* conventions in order to subvert them. It is not just metafictional; nor is it just another version of the historical novel or the non-fictional novel" (Hutcheon, 1988:5). Yes, I consider that historiographic metafiction is subversive of traditional hermeneutic historical fiction but it relies on a prior existence of this type of fiction for its very ability to have its meta-fictional aspects *recognised* as being subversive. As such, it still does not wholly break frame outside of this genre/category. Hutcheon also considers both fiction and historiography:

> If the past is only known to us today through its textualized traces (which, like all texts, are always open to interpretation), then the writing of both history and historiographic metafiction becomes a form of complex intertextual cross-referencing that operates within (and does not deny) its unavoidably discursive context (Hutcheon, 2002:78).

She maintains that "we cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are *texts*" (Hutcheon, 1988:16). From my point of view, this is both a useful statement (we only know of the past events in the lives of the transworld identities I have chosen to write of through the existence of archival texts) and a statement that can be contested.

I disagree with the extent of her assumption, and reiterate the phrase "cannot know the past" to mean the past as the discourse history: thus we cannot know history except through its texts. From this point of view 'history' and 'the past' are two quite different concepts. History is only knowable through its texts because history is a human *textual* construct, made out of other texts. As has previously been discussed, written history, as we traditionally conceive of it, is made from within the contemporary cultural milieu of the author of that history. The contentious 'facts' or data of history are textual objects (and therefore hold within them a meaning that can be read by initiated members of a particular culture group) but the texts are also objects or artefacts of material culture in the same way that non-textual artefacts are. And the past is also knowable to us through these artefacts.

The past extends far beyond what is written as history. It encompasses material objects from a time before text and from non-literate cultures. The past also extends far beyond what can be written as imaginative historical fiction into a realm which encompasses oral storytelling, myth and fantasy. The past and history are quite different things. In imagining and writing an historical fiction an author takes from both. This is particularly so when such as in my research, objects from the past (sites, houses) are used as stimulus for the fiction.

History can only ever be a cultural construct, manifesting as textual material culture. It appears, initially, as similar to the past but the signifier 'history' does not stand in for the signifier 'the past' even though it purports to represent it. History is created by, for, and within people's minds and therefore takes on those structures that our minds use to order our world. Although it might seem so, history itself is not linear, organised and epistemological—rather it is our minds, and our desire for order that create structure from the chaos of 'facts' which surrounds us. A social past separate from, yet forming part of, the present of each culture group, or a history which reiterates a past state, as a more general or Western concept, has always existed in human experience. This is because we are able to create images and use narrative structure to make stories and thereby form out of chaos a mind concept of those past events which created the conditions of the present. It is this which forms the discursive context which historiographic metafiction does not deny. In this broader concept of things that tell of the past oral accounts, myth, and epic poetry could also be acceptable as 'history'.

Understanding or contextualising events of the past is to reiterate our present condition, because our situation in the present has been formed by what has occurred previously. Because we, and those who have gone before us, are born, live and die, leaving physical traces of our existence as relics or material cultural objects we understand the past as something that once existed. However, like our lives as they are lived, what we understand as 'the past' is formed out of 'the present' which is a jumble of chaotic and seemingly unconnected elements, even when viewed from a personal perspective. While it is happening it cannot be conceived in terms of some

overarching 'theme', period or concept, such as colonial Australia; as is often done by historians.

People alive during what we now call this period in history did not read and experience the events that they experienced through the ideas embodied by that concept. The past, or past time, is known to have happened because it involves enacting narrative structure, "narrative is the principal way in which our species organizes its understanding of time" (Abbot, 2002:3).

Events themselves, happening one after another, create time for us. For example on a micro level this might be something like, my parents met, they conceived me, I was born and now work in an office writing a narrative. Alternatively, on the macro level, an English sea captain 'discovered' a continent with areas of what was deemed empty land, white Europeans excess to nineteenth century English society's needs came to live in it and displaced indigenous owners, subsequently Aboriginal vs. police riots take place in Redfern. It is narrative structure working upon a concept of 'the past' that allows order to be created. In this way the notion of time can be perceived.

Stasis; things happen, change has taken place; things differ from before=time has moved along:

> Historical intentionality only becomes effective by incorporating into its intended object the resources of fictionalization stemming from the narrative form of imagination, while the intentionality of fiction produces its effects of detecting and transforming acting and suffering only by symmetrically assuming the resources of historicization presented it by attempts to reconstruct the past. From these intimate exchanges between the historicization of the fictional narrative and the fictionalization of the historical narrative is born what we call human time, which is nothing other than narrated time (Ricoeur, 1988:101-102).

History then, as has been previously discussed, can take many forms and many points of view. In order to make any sense within the milieux from which they emanate, all of these will have a logical (narrative) coherence, yet the events which made up the past will also remain inherently chaotic.

This distinction allows for pieces of the past to be re-textualised in order to enhance any point of view. For example, the series of events termed 9/11 have been already written as 'history', the events have been textualised by our culture (TV, media, newspapers, books, academic and other articles). It is now part of our history, it happened. But the act of flying a plane full of people into a building on September 11 is 'the past': people are dead because of it. Time has moved on and the material culture artefact that resulted from the events was initially a jumble of concrete and metal and body parts which was re-worked into an empty building site, and will soon be re-worked again into a new building. Yet a 'history' of that past can be read both as a justified and strong empowering statement/message (Al-Qaeda point of view) or an unthinkably evil act of barbarous treachery *and* an event which was both an act of war (by Al-Qaeda) and a precursor to an act of war (USA). The two views are diametrically opposed because the two subjectivities are part of two different belief systems and therefore create two different narrative 'histories'. Yet the events were the same events. The same people were killed, time passed, the buildings collapsed. It is after, in the narrativising of the events, that these things become ideologically and culturally positioned and therefore make two, quite different, narratives.

To return to the context of my novel, Australia's 'settlement'—viewed from an Anglo-European perspective as the beginning of Australia's piece of 'the past', rather than from an indigenous perspective where it might instead be termed 'invasion', and as such mark an end of exclusive indigenous control of the land—may present in the form of artefacts. The artefacts may range from convict leg irons from a road working gang, a spear, a wooden butter churn, a scrap torn from a cotton print dress, the official letters of the Governor's Despatches, a German Bible, part of a painted Chinese willow pattern plate, an Aboriginal dillybag or a page from the *Bathurst Times* of 1842. All of these objects would be contemporaneous with Australia's settlement period, all of them inscribe the idea of the 'past' as knowable. But only some of them (The Bible, the newspaper, and also it could be argued, the porcelain plate and the dillybag) might be interpreted as 'texts' from which members of a group might read narrative meaning, and from which history might be formed.

Yet all the objects have the power to bring the concept of the colonial past to us. Some of them form part of what could be termed the written 'history' of Australia because they recount or record events for reading by those authorities (both in Australia and in England) who governed Australia. Some of the objects may evoke a more immediate image of the past. To view or touch an artefact can create a more immediate or emotive response than to read texts such as the Governor's Despatches relating to settlement. This is especially so if we understand the context, and the power the object holds within that context (for example Ned Kelly's armour) or, similarly, if we have a personal connection to objects.

Objects from 'the past': books, crockery, hand embroidered objects, heirloom jewellery, children's toys or carpentry tools can convey a greater understanding of the existence of past events than other objects, the initial intent of which was to enact the construction of history (such as the Governor's Despatches). This is because the non textual material culture objects have a contextual meaning which is constructed by us, or relates to something that we might have done. We form 'the past' out of the chaos of meaning surrounding that object from elements of our own personal experiences.

Similarly, the female voices of my work allow for a subjective view of history because the circumstances that they experience are circumstances we, even as modern women, can identify with. We can form 'their past' out of chaos by empathising with and comparing their 'past events' with our own past experiences. The newspaper intertextual elements that speak about those women's circumstances speak from their time and therefore make a form of order out of the chaos of the past, but as they do they also create a moralising and patriarchal history. Because they are third person narratives written to make sense of chaotic past events, they are texts already formed within another's subjectivity. Therefore, we have less understanding of them, in terms of emotion, and may not agree with their ideological take on 'history'. This can be exemplified by considering the two points of view of the events of September 11; Americans may not agree with, or even be able to comprehend, an Al-Qaeda version of the 'history' of that day.

In this way my female stories, juxtaposed against the same intertextual elements upon which they are based, subvert the idea inherent in previous forms of historical fiction, of the single point of view that one or two main characters may hold. This view is challenged by the continued restating of multiple, conflicting (gender, race and class) points of view. No one perspective can claim a correct reading of the past over any of the others.

This construct rearticulates the idea that the past, like the present, comprises different points of view, not all of which adhere to the 'correct' view created by the political, social and economic 'factors' in play at the time those events happen. For colonial Australia this single point of view has given us the myth of heroic (white male) pioneers. Examples of this from literature are those characters written of by Banjo Paterson such as 'The Man from Snowy River' and 'Clancy of the Overflow' (Paterson, 1993:42, 46), or Henry Lawson's Joe Wilson's stories (Barnes, 1986). These mythic figures are in contrast to those male (and female) protagonists in Barbara Baynton's *Bush Studies* (2001) or Katherine Susannah Pritchard's *Coonardoo* (1975).

Heroic pioneers, and in particular the male pioneering 'spirit', also feature in pictorial representation of Australia's past. Examples of such imagery are seen in Frederick McCubbin's 'The Pioneer' triptych (1904) and 'On the wallaby track' (1896)or Tom Roberts's 'Coming South' (1886) (Smith, 1991: Plate 72) and George Lambert's 'Across the Black Soil Plains' (1899).[35]

Strings of pearls

As well as being considered a form of metafiction, because of its structure, my work could also fit the definition of a "string of pearls narrative". As defined by Hawthorn, this type of fiction "consist[s] of a number of relatively or completely unrelated episodes strung together by thin thread" (Hawthorn, 1997:229). The threads by which

[35] George Lambert also painted 'Anzac-The Landing', 1920-22 and 'The Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba' (1915). Upon taking up his duties as official war artist in Palestine during WW1 the first person he reported to was Major 'Banjo' Paterson...as Bernard Smith states "truly it must have seemed as though Clancy himself had brought his horse all the way from the Overflow to drive the infidel out of the Holy Places" (Smith, 1991:158).

each individual narrative within the whole may hold together can consist of "a causal sequence, or the person of an individual character" (Hawthorn, 1997:229). For my work the thin thread holding the narratives together would be the artist's journal as well as the appearance of the same transworld characters in both his journal account and the individual women's self-narrated stories. The unique difference here is that within his journal those characters are viewed from one perspective (from the outside) and within the self-narrated female stories they are viewed from another (the inside). A narrative formed by partly related episodes gives one the sense of 'fragments' of something larger (the pearls making up the necklace) that I am trying to achieve.

My work could also be categorised as a 'neo-historical' fiction. Pierce suggests that these works "address and subvert the 'saga tradition' of historical fiction" (Pierce, 1992: 306) and are…"neither homogenous nor susceptible to rigid classification" (Pierce, 1992:310). I agree with this statement and believe my novel also is not susceptible to rigid classification. I feel this is partly the allure of this type of writing. It allows for a broad range of narrative structures to be used as an informed response to the material one is writing about.

For Australia in particular, Pierce sees neo-historical fiction as emphasising the "partiality and unreliability of the sources from which formal and fictitious histories are constructed…" (Pierce, 1992:310). The reality that the colonising of Australia was first as a prison, then a cluster of individual colonies settled over different periods and for different reasons and populated by predominately agricultural working poor or the second (or third) sons of the British middle class, is why a style which questions the reliability of its sources fits so well with Australia's history.

Neo-historical fiction, or historiographic metafiction, allows the possibilities of marginalised people's past lives and the colonial past in the present to be articulated, problematised and therefore extended. In so doing the power of one group within society over others, and also over the constructing of historical 'truths', is exposed. It is this type of self-reflexive fiction, used in this way, which makes marginalised people's lives something other than, or richer than, the building blocks of ideology as

they exist within the mythic nationalistic stereotypes of 'traditional' hermeneutic historical fiction.

Chapter 6

Lost Archipelagos of the Past

My novel is an attempt to expose the idea of the past as a place of possibilities, the 'truth' or accuracy of any of which can never be entirely known, no matter how many documented elements remain within our archival record. Traditional historical fiction, according to Brian McHale attempts to:

> ease the ontological tension between historical fact and fictional invention and to camouflage if possible the seam along which fact and fiction meet. Postmodern historical fictions (on the other hand)…aim to exacerbate this tension and expose the seam (McHale, 1992:152).

It is the exacerbating of tension along the seam where fact and fiction meet which I consider positions my work as a postmodern piece. In my work tensions are created between sympathies with the women's situations, in terms of gender and class, and technical openness to new ways of writing which place the reader in a position of considerable autonomy. These are the engines driving not just the writing of the text but, it is hoped, the stimulus for readers to continue reading.

In *Literatures of Memory: History, time and space in postwar writing* Middleton and Woods suggest that our condition of postmodernity has prompted a:

> new turn to the many lost 'archipelagos' of the past. Postmodernity represents itself as the leading resistance to the hegemonic history that buried these narratives [of Auschwitz and Hiroshima] under a false coherence (Middleton and Woods, 2000:55).

The collective consciousness of the past is no longer a homogenous narrative, but rather diverse and incommensurable, and grows out of the conflictual spaces and symbolic ruptures within society. Multiple text narratives of the past, such as my work, help to reveal this and are in themselves a rupture of the homogeneity of the past. They exemplify the de Certeau idea of 'resistences'—those things which may, once hidden, return and threaten the establishment or the "pretty order of a line of progress" (de Certeau,1988:4). They are that which symbolises a return of "the

repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment, has become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable" (de Certeau,1988:4).

Textual memories are "polyvalent and polysemic practices that draw upon the resources of many different cultural myths for a plurality of ideological and political purposes." (Middleton and Woods, 2000:55). As previously mentioned, the existence of archival texts relating to my transworld characters allows for a plurality of narrative *and* a plurality of political purposes. This plurality occurs through the creation of non-fiction historical narratives, fictional accounts and in non-narrative uses of textual memories such as statistics dealing with the age of marriage, education levels or similar within colonial Australia.

In attempting to place my work and to understand history writing within contemporary literature I found Middleton and Woods placed more emphasis on the renewal of an ethics of history than on the obvious change that postmodernism has wrought to our understanding of the past. The idea of writing an 'ethical' historical fiction has resonance with the types of stories I have chosen to tell within my work and with how I have structured the text:

> Literature can also act ethically by altering its form to put the 'other' first, and in this way dominant aesthetic and cultural forms are reconfigured in order to make room for narrative modes and cultural forms which stand for the other, manifested as different 'ways of telling'. Lost, defeated, or unknown pasts emerge through forms of the 'other' which have been suppressed.
>
> This locates an ethics of history in the reflexive, performative writing of the past (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77).

This approach is valuable when one is writing marginalised people's stories. But before considering an ethics of history further discussion of some forms of historical fiction needs to take place.

David Cowart—possibly in a reaction against what he considers the "cautiously pluralistic Fleishman" (Cowart, 1989:5) and as a way of perhaps avoiding a definition which might lean too heavily towards the "ideologically tendentious inclusiveness of

Lukacs" (Cowart, 1989:6)—suggests a minimalist yet inclusively broad definition of historical fiction:

> I myself prefer to define historical fiction simply and broadly as fiction in which the past figures with some prominence. Such fiction does not require historical personages or events…nor does it have to be set at some specified remove in time. Thus I count as historical fiction any novel in which a historical consciousness manifests itself strongly in either the characters or the action (Cowart, 1989:6).

Using this broad definition my novel, since it is set variously in the years 1842, 1845, 1847, 1855 and 1871 can clearly be categorised as historical fiction. However, I consider that Cowart's definition is too broad. I question the assumption of the reader's expectations of the past and of an already formed past in the present. It raises the question of what the past might be and leaves the door open again for the Bradley concept of a past (discussed in chapter five) which has had its elements 'fixed' in order to conform to one particular point of view. For a theorist such as Bradley the historical event is not necessarily one confined to the past. It need only be one of sufficient political or social magnitude to be assured of a 'place' in the record of its time. However, this again raises the problem that the past can become 'owned' (and therefore recorded) by the dominant groups within a society.

From this perspective a novel, written in our present, about the successful 'liberation' of Iraq by a friendly USA would qualify because its concerns are events of such magnitude that in the future they will be considered 'historical'. However, a novel read as such now, might also be considered as propaganda because the 'liberation' or 'invasion' of Iraq is still an ongoing process.

I would also argue that a historical consciousness of events occurring within the reader's living memory is quite different from a historical consciousness which needs to be invoked from archival documents. It is useful here to reflect again on the Ricoeur concept of a trace (Ricoeur, 1988).

Following from this argument we also come up against the continuing problem of who can claim ownership over a narration of the past. Whose past is it, and who has a right

to narrate it? Is it a real past, an invented past, or a past situated only in the context of the present? And what if these differences depend upon a subjective reality based upon which version of the past you more strongly identify with? As previously noted, the past is multi various and contingent. I believe it is also highly contextual. As Saussure says contextual meanings occur in the gap between the signifier and signified.

Therefore, forming any idea of the past from archival facts—slippery things which themselves have contingent, culturally constructed meanings—is inherently a subjective exercise dependent upon the cultural location of the person making the judgement. To make claims over the 'correct' interpretation of past events and therefore the narratives that reside within those interpretations via a 'history' is always a political act because it allows for one version of the past to gain ascendency over all the possible other versions. As such it can be an act that is done to enforce an already existing hegemony or an act to subvert the pre-existing hegemonic status quo.

This happens because traditional narrative structures tend to exclude other possible narratives. Narrative, which needs a beginning, middle and an end, also has a temporal element in that something needs to have undergone change between the beginning and the end of the story. In this sense it is hermeneutic and linear. Things happen to, and within, characters/groups/stories created within this narrative structure only. They do not, and cannot, happen to those 'outside' of, or on the margins of, the narrative. Those things get left out.

Therefore, by not mentioning marginalised groups, history can exclude. By writing of those groups in a less than favourable tone history can create pro-hegemonic meanings emphasising only the positive elements of a hegemony's ascendancy to power, while casting those outside or those on the edges in a negative light. This creates a sense of inevitability and support for those currently in power as a thing that was 'meant to be' to the exclusion of all other possible outcomes. It is within this exclusion zone that the ideas from Middleton and Walsh of the "lost archipelagos of the past" well and truly reside.

I consider that the women's stories within my novel are examples of lost archipelagos which were buried under "a false coherence" of colonial Australian history. One need only consider popular media representations in Australia over the last few years to realise that the battles for ownership of the past, within colonial and settler societies, are not only alive and well but often motivated politically or racially (which is also political).

All settler societies are an imposition of one culture upon a pre-existing culture and this results in an ongoing and constantly changing 'readjustment' of the power relations between the two. Because of this settler societies continually re-work narratives in order to understand the events of the two (or more) cultures' 'pasts'. Not only is the prior, indigenous culture radically affected, but also the colonising mother culture itself has been 'transported' and as a result altered by the experience of meeting the 'other'. These narratives of past events therefore, are always dichotomised between the winners and the vanquished (or suitably silenced) groups which still exist within the 'new' culture formed by the meeting of the two.

Another way of understanding this might be as the differences between the 'centre' and the 'periphery', yet even here, it is not a simple dichotomy between these two nodes. In Australia, for example, the 'winner' 'vanquished' or 'centre periphery' dichotomy is not just limited to the obvious European/indigenous dualism inherent in all colonial societies. Here it also encompasses other groups whose centring is dependent upon, and moves between a centre and a peripheral node in a contingent relation with other groups with which they appear in conflict or contrast to. These possible other dualisms, I would suggest, include the following:

- the obvious convict powerlessness and English authority, for example: *For the Term of His Natural Life* (Clarke, 1970); *The Conversations at Curlow Creek* (Malouf, 1996);
- those convicts who became the beneficiaries of British power and those who were subjugated (covertly and from within the convict hierarchy) by them;
- convicts/emancipists and free settlers;
- smallholders and pastoralists—each themselves made up of emancipists, free settlers or 'currency' (convict's Australian born children)—an

example is the smallholder status, and resulting powerlessness against the police, of the Kellys in *True History of the Kelly Gang* (Carey, 2000);

- male and female;
- Irish Catholic and English Protestant: *True History of the Kelly Gang* (Cary, 2000);
- Pastoralist expansion and Aboriginal land ownership: for example, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (Keneally, 1975), *Capricornia* (Herbert, 1963), *Snake for Supper* (Baxter, 1968);
- Aboriginals and smallholders: *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (Keneally, 1975), the book *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* (Pilkington, 2002);
- 'the bush' (hostile and threatening) and civilisation (as the city) for example: *The Thorn Birds* (McCullough, 1977), *The Tree of Man* (White, 1991), *Walkabout* the 1971 film based on the book by James Vance Marshall (1963), *Snake for Supper* (Baxter, 1968), *Remembering Babylon* (Malouf, 1993), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* the book by Joan Lindsay (1967) and especially the 1975 Peter Weir film of the same name;
- Irish Catholic male authority and women: for example the female characters' positions in *The Thorn Birds* (McCullough, 1977) or *Sister Kate* (Bedford, 1982).

These potential dualisms can also be viewed from the perspective of those more obviously 'traditional' dualities such as 'nature v nurture'; 'nature v culture' and 'high v low' culture. This continual centre/periphery re-positioning is dependent upon contextualities and is therefore fluid. It occurs both in historical narrative and historical fiction:

> To be ex-centric, on the border or margin, inside yet outside is to have a different perspective, one that Virginia Woolf…called "alien and critical", one that is "always altering its focus", since it has no centring force (Hutcheon, 1988:67).

Australian society's recent fascination with the so called 'history wars' between academics Henry Reynolds and Keith Windschuttle, which appeared in abbreviated form as articles in newspapers, editorials and on television and talk back radio is a further example of the battle for ownership of the past.

Similarly, I note with interest the attempts by the Howard government to claim or formally list the beaches at ANZAC cove in the Dardanelles at Gallipoli (or to the Turks Geliboulu) as an *Australian* (white presumably) 'sacred site', when in fact it could equally be considered by the Turks (or New Zealand or Britain) as a 'sacred

site'. This claim was suggested partly in response to the media backlash which was occasioned when the Turkish government considered charging an entry fee to the war memorials (on their soil but now presumably not *their* sacred site) at the Lone Pine cemetery and later the construction of improved road access at the request of our government. Reconceptualising the past, as these examples indicate, means that history may not always belong to the victors but to those with the most powerful 'voice' at any particular political moment. In the mythologising of the Gallipoli campaign it is at times a bit 'fuzzy' that the Turks did defeat the allies' in this particular series of battles.

Such politicising of historical events often increases when comparable contemporary events occur. It is no coincidence that the same Howard government is also in favour of sending troops to fight further (Middle East) wars in support of its current allies imperialist agenda. There may, in the future, be sites within Iraq which will become white Australian sacred sites. These events are also similar to the recent memorials and ceremonies at the location of the Bali terrorist attacks in which large number of young Australians were killed. Are now Australian backpackers and tourists at the party 'fronts' within Asia positioned as the new young and innocent heroes for the cause of freedom as the young men of the Gallipoli campaign were?

A stimulating definition of historical fiction, comes from Joseph W. Turner. He suggests that there are fictions which have at their core three degrees of emphasis of the past. These are historical fictions "that invent a past, those that disguise a documented past, and those that re-create a documented past" (Turner, 1979:335). It is for readers to draw these distinctions. Simplified examples may be given of these categorisations such as:

- those that invent a past=when Christopher Columbus discovered Tasmania;
- those that disguise a documented past=Patrick White's character Voss standing in for the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt;
- those that re-create a documented past= films such as *Pearl Harbour* or television mini-series such as *Henry VIII.*

The latter two distinctions could also be considered as the subsets of a broader category which might be called: 'those that interpret/dialogue/investigate a

documented past'. For its usefulness to my novel this category might then also have a third subset in addition to those two. This subset might be, those that interpret a documented past:

- by disguising it, changing names or places but not events;
- by re-creating it, keeping faithfully to an authentic recorded account;
- by assimilating it within the text when 'story' matters more than artefacts;
- by isolating it within the narrative by foregrounding original historical texts.

This additional categorisation allows for neo-historical fiction in which the textual documents of the past, written about in the fictional work remain (textually but not contextually) *as they initially existed*. These are now re-contextualised within or against a fictional world in order to emphasise their 'truth' or 'fictionality'. Questioned also is the limitation upon our knowledge of either of these concepts when placed within the context of a fictional world (and therefore within history). Other similar historical novels that make use of these assimilating devices, although not to the same extent as it is used within my work include Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1988), Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000) and *Serpent Dust* (1988) by Debra Adelaide.

This re-contextualising of a documented past allows readers to draw their own conclusions, based on their own subjectivity. Readers not only make the distinction of what type of historical fiction a novel may be i.e. one in which a past is invented as distinct from one which re-creates a documented past, but they do so by using their own pre-existing and culturally acquired knowledge of the past. Therefore, for this to take place, they must already be an observer/participant within the cultural 'soup' from which the historical fiction is drawn. This is one drawback to Turner's strict categorisation and one which, I believe, can be negotiated by considering historical fiction from a postmodern context.

For example, having little knowledge of Inca histories, I would not be able to determine if an Inca history recounted should be categorised as one which invents a past (ruthless King X bravely fought six contenders to his throne and had four beheaded, one of whom was his sister's husband) or one which re-creates a documented past (ruthless King X was over thrown by his youngest sister's husband,

who then ruled benevolently for fifty years). Unfortunately, as I see it, this definition of (traditional) historical fiction by Turner relies upon cultural proximity to enable the distinctions to be drawn and therefore limits historical fiction to only those 'fictions' (or is that histories?) with which the reader is culturally engaged. This does not sit well with our experience, or the realities and exigencies, of postmodernity.

Viewing historical fiction as some kind of articulation of universal truth is of little value in a world where groups are no longer as culturally cohesive as they once were. Readers in the West want to read histories about other cultures of which they may not necessarily have a great understanding, or whose stories may have become lost through migrations and assimilations. Similarly it is of little value where marginalised groups within a culture may be re-voicing their experiences, in opposition to the dominant view. Therefore, in these circumstances what is meant by 'universal truths' is not so clear cut?

Similarly Turner's categorisation, which initially looked promising, becomes even more problematic when writing about previously marginalised participants of the past whose voices have been 'written out' of official history. Like the example of Inca history, if a reader does not have an awareness or knowledge of a marginalised group's experiences, how are we then to determine if the historical fictions that narrate that group's experiences are disguising a documented past or inventing a past? Those whose histories are 'written out' of official 'non-fiction' history (such as indigenous peoples, the poor, uneducated and women) also risk being 'written out' of historical fiction because there is no benchmark for conceiving the reality or unreality [truth-non-truth] of their experiences within the dominant cultural stream.

By my making use of a postmodern narrative strategy, whereby disparate pieces of a documented textualised past form part of the fictional history, and by making it clear that these are part of the cultural record of that society, readers can see both the previously hidden remains of the arguably 'non-fiction' past and the imaginative invention of a 'past' based on those sources. This would also be the "re-creation of a documented past". Readers can then draw conclusions about what the chaos of the past might have been. They do this based on their understanding of textual and

narrative elements influenced by, and participating in, the dialogue set up by those same intertextual, documented pasts juxtaposed against and/or framing part of the 'imagined' narrative. This, in turn, is 'sparked' by that same piece of material culture *and* any pre-existing knowledge they might have.

This type of structure allows an author to address the limits of the silenced 'voice' and therefore people's understanding of marginalised cultural groups within grand histories. It seems, to my understanding, no surprise that a neo-historical fictional style is used more when the subject matter of the fiction is that of marginalised groups. Perhaps this is a case of form following function. Silenced voices need to be heard. But their documented existence, hitherto overlooked by those other than family historians seeking out individual and personal 'pasts', also needs to be recognised at the same time that it is being re-textualised within historical fictions.

The idea, as exemplified by my work, that an historical fiction might be something which interprets/dialogues/investigates a documented past by including various and conflicting elements of that past as non-fiction elements within the fictional world of the narrative, is in direct opposition to the ideas of Fleishman discussed below.

I would also agree with Middleton and Woods's statement that historical fiction is most successful when it is about itself. Yet I would add that it should also be about exposing the multi-vocal, multi layered reality of the past while at the same time making a narrative engaging enough to keep readers interested in the world of the past:

> historical fiction is at its best not, as Fleishman believed, when it is an articulation of universal truths in a local historical context, but when it offers a narrative 'which is ultimately about itself, about the meaning and making of history, about man's fate to live in history and his attempt to live in awareness of it' (Middleton and Woods, 2000:59).

If we re-consider Fleishman's historical fiction definition, noted in chapter five, as an "exercise of the imagination on a particular kind of object" (Fleishman, 1971:4) we see that it is challenged by work such as mine. This is because the "object" (the past texts/historical fragments) are now subsumed as part of the new text which makes up

the fiction. Now the "exercise of the imagination" happens at multiple points within the work. These points reside both with the author of the fiction and the reader. It happens initially when the author creates the work from 'sparking points' based on archival research. This would also be the case in a traditional historical fiction. But when the fictional text and the intertext are read and compared the readers create, through an "exercise of their imagination" their particular fictional world. The object of this exercise of the imagination now becomes a two headed snake.

The act of incorporating past texts further problematises the idea of the "exercise of the imagination" because if parts of the text remain as they were in the past the exercise of the imagination ceases to be a singular act and becomes something twofold. The singular "exercise of the imagination" is restricted to those areas of text that have little or no intertextual parts, such as the artist's journal. In other areas that incorporate past texts without any change other that the contextual there is a lingering "act of the imagination" which was created by the past author—the author/newspaper journalist of 1800s. This combines with the "act of the imagination" of the present day author who selected particular texts for re-use in a different context from that which they were originally intended—an interesting example of Bakhtinian heteroglossia.

Because of reasons such as these, I find a postmodernist approach to be more productive for history writing. Traditional historical fiction, of the type defined by Fleishman, Turner and in part Lukacs is often too limiting to allow for previously silenced voices to be seen as having been silenced. Marginalised groups from the past can form a central narrative of traditional historical fiction, but by focusing on those groups as the central characters they appear less marginalised that might have been the case because of their strong fictional representation. (For example, Bryce Courtenay's, *The Potato Factory* (2000) which recounts the story of Ike Solomon, a Jewish convict, his wife Hannah Solomon and his mistress Mary Abacas). They remain as 'the centre' within the new hegemony created by them as primary and dominant characters within the fictional world.

> Postmodern historical fiction is unconvinced that there is a single unitary truth of the past waiting to be recovered, and is more interested in who has or had the power to compose 'truths' about it (Middleton and Woods, 2000:21).

Postmodern neo-historical fiction, such as mine, brings the focus to marginalised groups while also pointing to the degree to which these groups were marginalised. It makes clear that while in the narrative they may appear as strong, even dominant characters, in the world of the past they were without power. This is done because the past 'centre' of hermeneutic history (archival documents, male newspaper voice, government official record) remains as a force within the narrative as it is re-narrated from the marginalised group's point of view. The past 'centre' remains to challenge the strong fictional voice of the marginalised groups at the 'periphery', which appear in the fiction as central characters. This allows for an ongoing, textual dialogue between the two positions. The result is that both history and the narrative are exposed to be questioned.

These last definitions of historical fiction while having some useful points, still do not fully grapple with the ideas or structures embodied within types of postmodern fiction such as those of my novel. Hence my suggestion for an additional Turner category which incorporates within the text, the raw material from which the historical fiction is drawn. This would make his broad definition of historical fiction more useful by including neo-historical techniques.

I use my particular choice of stories, along with a style of narrative collage—'facts' juxtaposed against fiction—to enhance the idea that the historical record does not necessarily *reliably* capture women's experiences of the past. As Brian McHale says:

> …if only we could be sure that the historical record reliably captured the experience of the human beings who really suffered and enacted history. But that is the last thing we can be sure of, and one of the thrusts of postmodernist revisionist history is to call into question the reliability of official history. The postmodernists fictionalize history, but by doing so they imply that history itself may be a form of fiction (McHale, 1987:96).

The task of the postmodern historical novel is, therefore, "to read between the wavering lines of history" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:63). With this statement, two obvious questions occur: how is this reading between the wavering lines of history achieved? Which or whose history 'lines' are we *reading between*, to get to the point where they may be seen wavering?

Is this suggested 'space' also that where elements previously discounted by hegemonic grand histories return "comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies: 'resistences', 'survivals', or delays discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of 'progress' or a system of interpretation" (de Certeau, 1988:4). This questioning also leads to the idea of something that might be added between spaces (inserted, interleaved, intertexted) of *any* version of history. This would apply equally to history written in line with the dominant powers and from the perspective of the dispossessed 'jarring witness' and inserted between the spaces within an historical fiction of past events.

When considering the structure of my novel, expanding upon this concept of the task of postmodern historical fiction to read between the lines, may prove a fruitful direction. Could not the text (or text's structure) of a historical fiction also then enact or reflect this "reading between the wavering lines of history" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:63) and make use, as a structural component, of the space formed between the wavering lines? Why not fill the void (both physical and metaphorical) created between those lines of history (or even between pre existing texts) with the voices of the 'other': that silenced part of the (perceived) solidity of grand narrative history which otherwise might be considered to belong more to what de Certeau has noted as being "on the edges of discourse" (de Certeau, 1988: 4).

We might then take this analogy further. What might the outcome be if the more solid bits of this conceptual space, the parts where the 'lines' waver less, became the space for the fictionalised voice of the other and the void created between the lines of the hegemonic voice of those with control over 'official history' (the male newspaper voice of opinion, the Governor's official despatches and the government record keeping)? This concept might become, structurally, the shape of the multiple voiced texts that make up my novel.

This is one way in which concepts from postmodernist fiction are made use of within my novel. It is an enunciation of the postmodernist frame of mind and an enactment of the re-evaluation of the textual landscapes that are available to create a new and

possibly more meaningful historical narrative. It is meaningful because it includes and admits its own limitations. Middleton and Woods claim that "the postmodern novelist answers that sense of dislocation and loss [no longer trusting official history]…by wrapping ruins of earlier textualities around the narrative" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:66).

This to my mind, above all else, is a call for intertextuality as found embodied in the narrative structure of my novel.

Time and space: and all things nice

I do not see postmodernist fiction with its disruptions of time and space as merely a way of playing with the past. Rather I find it more useful to see the type of approach I have used as the freeing up of a previously strictly linear one dimensional space. This happens in order to emphasise how 'meaning', and therefore historical knowledge, is formed. The disruption to time and space is a feature of postmodernist fiction:

> The open display of ontology in postmodernist fiction raises what one critic [Amy Elias] calls 'the literary problem of how to represent time and space' in a world for which these are no longer fixed, unchanging foundations (Middleton and Woods, 2000:67).

Temporal moments within my novel, or 'events' in one section of narrative, occurring in one particular temporal space, are also embedded in the context of other 'moments' in other temporal spaces within other parts of the intertextual or fictional narrative. As a result meaning in the novel always bears the trace of other temporal spaces and meanings from the other elements within the fiction. Meaning is therefore diffused and made from the whole rather than from any isolated particular temporal and narrative event. Treated in this way temporal moments become similar to Derrida's trace structure of a sign:

> any sign is embedded in a context and its meaning bears the trace of the signs which surround it, which have preceded it and which follow it. In short, the meaning of a sign is not complete in itself, or is not present within itself, but somehow spread out across all the others (Currie, 1998:77).

Similarly, time and space become multi nodal. Within my fiction time becomes multi-focussed, in that it consists of various points of reference of different times within the narrative, rather than one continuous logical temporal flow. These temporal points are contingent upon their place within a particular narrative 'moment' in the different texts that make up the whole. This leads to a narrative strategy within the novel of what might loosely be termed 'corrupted time'.

The way in which temporal space is addressed brings another persuasive force to bear upon the idea of history, similar to the way archival documents have been used. This way of treating temporal space parallels the way that the archival documents are used. It stresses the point that a reconstructing of events of the past only occurs within and because of an ever changing, culturally constructed 'present'.

Therefore, the temporal world created within my novel is one which I would consider disjunctive and 'corrupted'. I take this word as not just meaning separation, but also in the sense of its initial meaning having connotations of 'alternatives' as in 'dis-joined'. This I consider to be the case when the word is applied to the position of the women within their world of the past, as well as to their temporal space within the novel. I believe that the past world of the women involved separation, as well as a sense of disjoining inherent in living within a newly transported culture. In addition to this initial disjoining is the re-iteration, in our present, of the female stories I have chosen which also involves an alternative perspective, or a separation from, the purpose for which they were initially narrated.

This temporal separation takes place within the novel in the spaces between the fictional sub-worlds of the woman's stories and that of the artist's journal. Temporal space is logical and coherent within each of the individual characters' worlds or stories. It is only within the larger holistic 'world' that exists where the artist's journal, the women's' stories, and the non-fiction intertextual archival documents intersect, that temporal space and understanding begin to break down. This textual and temporal space becomes then that space where the postmodern novel can make a judgement upon history based on an ability to interpret or "to read between the

wavering lines of history" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:63). It is also the space of the 'absences' of which de Certeau speaks.

The artist's journal has no real logical flow of dates/time vis à vis his meetings with, observations of, or viewing by the female characters within the 'sketches' as recorded in their stories/p.o.v./time. This could not be possible in a 'real' time situation. Yet within a postmodern strategy the illogicality of these occurrences is set to one side in order to allow for two temporal 'spaces' to be created within the novel because of the interlinking of narrative (and plot) between the stories.

This strategy again reinforces the concept of history as contingent, contextual and uncertain. It makes clear that this contingency occurs as a void (absence) or a gap in interpretation and textual certainty between women's (and other marginalised groups') histories and male perspective within any society.

More traditional narrative, on the other hand, even though it permits variation of chronology, is not as disjointed or manifesting as 'nodal' in approach. It makes use of multi linearity analepsis and prolepsis, or foreshadowing and backshadowing (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002) but remains logical and linear.

Analepsis is defined as "a narration of story-event of a point in the text after the other events have been told" and prolepsis as "a narration of a story-event at a point before earlier events have been mentioned" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:46). Both of these temporal attributes act to "constitute a temporally second narrative in relation to the narrative onto which they are grafted and which Genette calls 'first narrative'" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:46-47).

In my novel the linear narrative node points are logical within their own constructed worlds. Also each temporal node, within its own world, makes a logical plot connection to the following one in different 'worlds'. For example, the artist talks of waiting for the Goulburn mail coach, and of the expectation that people have, that on that day's coach a response will arrive from the Governor to their appeal for Annie's death sentence to be commuted. This plot point occurs prior to our meeting with

Annie in Goulburn gaol and before we form an understanding of her as a character. This makes us, as readers, also hopeful that the death sentence will be commuted, even though we do not as yet have any real understanding of why she is sentenced to death. It also occurs prior to our reading of the intertext from the *Goulburn Times* of the account of her execution. Yet each of these plot points occurs in a different 'space' within the fictional world (or section of the novel) created: first within the artist's journal, then from Annie's self-narrated account and finally in the archival intertext.

The temporal node points, however, do not flow logically. They are deliberately illogical; each conflicts with and contradicts previous ones. Similarly, at points within the narrative in which a temporal indicator might be required, none is found. This absence of dates further adds to the confusion of time. It also acts as a metaphor for the absence of time and, therefore, cohesion. This is done in order to give different points of view as much equal weight within the narrative as is possible, while still articulating the stories from a female perspective.

Temporal disjunction: conflicts with the illusion of time

The artist's account of his journey (and therefore the past) begins logically enough in Sydney, but no exact date is given. It is not until he arrives at Yarramundi homestead that we read the newspaper intertext and discover a date of 1845. The reader must assume that that is the time period within which the artist is operating. In other words, the reader must first make an independent assumption that the setting of the historical fiction is 1845 by reading outside of the artist's journal and comparing information from that source with the artist's account: "the ship set sail on April 20th of this year".

The narrative then moves to the Blue Mountains. Again within the artist's journal no date is given and it is not until the intertextual newspaper element of the sudden storm, preceding the frame of the next woman's story, that it is assumed the artist also experienced the same storm whilst camped in the mountains. The date of this new intertext element is given as 11 January 1842, three years prior to the Yarramundi homestead/*Cataraqui* shipwreck section of the narrative and the initial 'presumed date' which the artist should be experiencing of 1845.

Again the intertext archival documents state a date of 1842 for events in the Blue Mountains. However, at the end of Maria's narrative of the murder she speaks to a girl, presumably her daughter, as if the events she has just recounted happened many years previously, before the daughter was born. The reader assumes then that this woman is narrating events which happened 10-15 years in the past. This is further reinforced by the reference to her son, now grown and working with his step-father, the child she was presumably pregnant with when the events of her story (and the intertextual elements) took place. The artist's journal account of the same events that follows this story then talks of the police interview with Holroyd, who admits drinking with Walsh the night prior to the murder of Maria's sister. These events are narrated as if they are happening in the story's present time, also mentioned is the storm, with the artist statement that it happened 'last week'. All of these comments reinforce the artist's temporal placement within 1842, yet previously he announced the news of a recent shipwreck which was noted in intertext to have happened in 1845.

Similar temporal disjunctions occur throughout the artist's journal. In the story of Hannah Simpson she recounts events in a post Gold Rush Bathurst of 1871, and mentions seeing the artist and his companions pass by. Hannah says of the artist: "They say the short one comes to paint this land, to send it back to those at home". Hannah continues with a prophesy of the artist's failure and death. Yet this statement occurs in her hermeneutically sealed time of 1870. At the end of the novel we discover the intertextual element of an account of the shipwreck of the *British Sovereign*, in January of 1847. This creates a temporal illogicality in which the ship upon which the artist was said to be travelling departs on a date 23 years before Hannah recounts seeing him in Bathurst. Her statement, foretelling that he would die in Australia's harsh inland, is also a mis-information. It alludes to a classic trope of early Australian inland exploration and death in an unforgiving, dry outback: Patrick White's *Voss* as Ludwig Leichhardt on his ill fated on his ill fated expedition, the Sturt expedition and the notorious Coopers Creek 'dig tree' experience, as two examples.

As previously mentioned, narrative plot elements which are used as linking devices between the women's stories, the artist's journal and the intertext allow the narrative

to flow in a logical linear way. For all its seemingly initial intertextual narrative disruptions the overall plot sequence of the novel follows from A event to B event to C event. The devices such as the news of the *Cataraque* shipwreck, the Holroyd/Walsh meeting and then the police interview, mountain storm, mail coach near Goulburn, Aboriginal massacres, dillybag occurrence and Holroyd's argument with the artist, regarding a dillybag, link together between the artist's journal, the women's stories and the intertext. In this way they act to make a linear narrative and a logical plot. Therefore, narrative sequencing of events, if isolated from the stated and missing dates, forms a relatively logical chain of expectations. Narrative time (of how events occur one after another) is stable. Temporal time is nowhere near stable. This type of structure reinforces the idea of all narratives being outside of, and therefore apart from time and history and that "narrative time relates to events or incidents...narrative time is not necessarily any time at all" (Abbott, 2002:5).

This contradiction, between the 'real' time of the intertextual non-fiction items and the fictional items, emphasises the impossibility of making absolute meaning from events that occurred within the past. This contradiction also acts to problematise the intertext time and to make this past (newspaper voice) appear as impossible where once, in the newspaper-as-news context, it conjured a sense of telling 'truth'. The use of narrative and temporal time within my novel now means that this newspaper truth also becomes destabilised, thus further challenging history as first read.

The events which occur within my plot also allow for a multilinear time or 'frequency'. This has been defined as the "relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:46).

Frequency relates to time and to plot. "Statements about frequency would answer the question 'how often?' in terms like: x times a minute, a month, a page" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:46). The importance here for my work is that each occurrence or frequency allows for subtle shifts in meaning. These meaning shifts and the resulting delayed, or invisible causalities (at times the narrative event is only alluded to and happens in some ex-textual space) further problematise time. Therefore the certainty

of historical knowledge is also challenged. Yet in order to keep the 'whole' itself logical enough to make a fictional world happen, these features play with, but do not fully disrupt, the linearity of the narrative.

A tension or point of conflict is set up between the structure of the text (the way time would be expected to unfold) and the temporal context of the text. One is linear and within its framing devices and use of multiple intertextual elements, narratively logical. In one way this acts to restrict the closure of the artist's journal or of the ending of 'the history' as recorded by this male narrator's voice. This is because of the lack of temporal certainty between his text (and time) and that of the women. He cannot, in any fulfilling sense 'end' or secure his story/His-story/(H)istory, because he as the travelling artist is present in some of the women's stories. Yet from his narrative's 'time' sequences it is impossible for him to be within all of their temporal spaces. He appears as a character in their narratives but cannot physically exist in their disparate 'times'. Each of the women's stories/narrations clearly 'ends'—and in two of six of those stories (Hannah, Annie) it ends with the death of the main narrator which in effect creates the 'end of time'. This is clearly a disjunction of ontological boundaries or "anarchism, the refusal either to accept or to reject any of a plurality of available ontological orders. This, I would maintain, is precisely the postmodern condition: an anarchic landscape of worlds in the plural" (McHale, 1987:37).

The artist is there but not there, the women's sketches/stories imply that he is there but the temporality within his fictional world does not allow for it, while at the same time the narrative of both the women's stories and the artist's journal clearly states that it is actually happening. The plurality of ontological levels in which one character can exist is, as noted above, a feature of postmodernist fiction.

This disruption/non-disruption strategy again suggests that my novel be categorised as a postmodern fiction. However, the strategy performs more than one function. It also acts as a metaphor for the concept that history should be considered non-linear, multivocal and made up of smaller histories which risk being subsumed when linked to form an epistemological account of what occurred as the past. The reverse of this, flagged by my novel, is the possibility that smaller breakaway histories might spread

out from those points of reference created from the less enunciated elements within a larger history. This is much the same as the way that the artist's journal/travels/experiences both creates the narrative space for the stories (=smaller histories) of the women to exist and at the same time is 'created' by the re/con-textualised 'histories' of the women. The artist, a wholly fictional character, has been created because of a narrative need. The transworld characters are best reflected by such a character in order for their stories, and their position within their society, to be fully understood. I reiterate that he is the ideal character type of Lukacs's mediocre hero and as such is fictionally brought into being by the direct needs of invisible, silenced women of the past.

In *Positions* Jacques Derrida notes that we should be wary of the metaphysical concept of history, and that this metaphysical character is linked to history's linear construction. The linearity of history therefore, creates a larger system of ways of understanding. Then exists an:

> entire system of implications (teleology, eschatology, elevating and interiorizing accumulation of meaning, a certain type of traditionality, a certain concept of continuity, of truth etc) (Derrida, 1982:56).

This raises the question of what is wrong with a linear (and therefore cohesive) history? There is, as I see it, a significant problem that occurs with linearity. Both in its function as a force within narrative fiction and narrative history, linearity, "is a form which represses difference" (Currie, 1998:79). It represses difference because it does not allow for any other parts of the narrative or of history, such as those that do not fall within the linear construct, to be textualised.

As previously mentioned, narrative structure within my novel appears at first to be disjointed and disparate. Different stories, different characters and different perspectives are presented. Things appear chaotic. However, on closer reading the disjointed plot elements combined create a narrative account of events of the past which forms a loose and, in particular, an open linearity. It is the differences between the point of view of events that create the apparent non linearity. These differences ultimately reside with the narrator of that event's gender, ethnicity, social position and

narrative purpose. The ultimate direction of the plot is linear, but within that there are multiple places, points of view (subjectivities) and ultimately 'histories' where events and 'reality' zig zag between two or more points. It is a type of linearity of plot that allows for, rather than represses, difference.

In its apparent chaos, yet ultimate linearity, this structure enacts that which the content of the novel foregrounds—that is the differences and similarities between textual narratives (opinions and point of view) and what could be considered 'fact or non-fiction' and 'fiction'. At the same time this structure is that which holds it together. This is because the temporal structure and the logical impossibility of the differences between the fiction and non-fiction parts of the text is continually trying to dislocate the narrative.

> Postmodern texts paradoxically point to the opaque nature of their representational strategies and at the same time to their complicity with the notion of the transparency of representation (Hutcheon, 2002:17).

My use of temporal space within the narrative is a metaphor for the postmodern idea of a dislocated, fragmentary world. The social 'space' in which a character, such as the artist, might have resided would have been one in which the certainties of society and history (and therefore time) were relatively stable.

The world of the women, and other marginalised groups, was less certain. Their position was that of the subaltern, at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy and thus less able to influence things. Their lack of education and their contingent 'place'[36] in society meant that their world was more chaotic than that of an educated male artist. The introduction of corrupted time into the certain (and linear) world of the artist, through and by the women's stories, is a reversal of the degrees of stability that these two groups might otherwise have experienced. Within my novel it is the world of the women's self narrated stories that is temporally stable, cohesive and to some extent expansionist, because their longer, self-narrated stories come from the smaller scraps of intertextual archival 'facts'. It is the larger male world of the educated artist that

[36] Hence my title *Hannah's Place* as the place of lower class women in that society and the play on 'place' as home. Let's go to Hannah's place. And the 'place' of Hannah as a vagrant alcoholic within my maternal family history–a family in which three generations of women who came after Hannah were in the main strict teetotallers.

appears to be chaotic and 'impossible' temporally, because it is based on the women's (stories) temporal certainty.

The artist's narrative is placed in the same position in which women (of the mid 1800s) were placed. His story depends on theirs (as women depended on men). His decisions and the events which occur in his narrative mirror the way that women's lives were dependent upon patriarchal society's control over them and upon *their* men. The artist's narrative is constrained and disrupted by the women's temporal realities.

Temporal space is contingent with the narrative context. It is not homogeneous over the whole novel, as might be the case in a grand narrative of history. The stories 'break frame', referring back or forwards to the artist and, more threateningly for cohesion of the narrative, so does time.

> Narratives can show what it is like to sustain a sense of identity through time, because narrative is necessary to maintain continuity, and without it the identity of a person would seem just smoke and mirrors hiding an amorphous swirl of material constituents, situations and behaviours constantly altering over time, an instability which would make the idea of an identity based on absolute self-sameness untenable (Middleton and Woods, 2000:69).

For example, I did this then this and now I am here becomes existence/identity in one place/position/time—something happens and causes a different existence/identity in a new place/time.

> Narrative also provides a means of presenting a coherent identity to others, and in addition, allows the subject the possibility of self-transformation through re-narrativisation (Middleton and Woods, 2000:69).

The fictional self-narrated stories of these transworld characters allow for a self-transformation away from the moralising and shallow two dimensional description in the newspapers (itself a narratised account) to a more developed sense of female identity.

Because these women left no written account of their experiences, and because we can never experience the society within which their identities were formed, we will never know their 'identity' as they experienced it. Fictional self-narrated stories of

transworld characters allows for a transformation of the women away from an identity created by the moralising, stereotyped descriptions in the newspapers towards a more fully developed sense of female identity. Third hand male accounts written for the (then) newspaper reader's consumption (and for us as occupiers of the 'future') are a construct of one possible identity only. They do not reflect the women's reality. Adding another fictional 'identity' through an imagined self-narrated account deconstructs that limited 'identity' formed through the male gaze. It does so because of the ability of fiction to allow the reader to create a fictional world which can be experienced imaginatively from within their own subjectivity. Thus:

> Rather than something passively recorded, literature offers history as a permanent reactivation of the past in a critique of the present, and at the level of content offers a textual anamnesis for the hitherto ignored, unacknowledged or repressed pasts marginalised by the dominant histories—feminist narratives (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77).

Sideshadowing the past

Another way of looking at the past which proved useful to employ in order for these marginalised women's voices to break free from the past was 'sideshadowing'. The idea of sideshadowing helps to explicate the way I have conceptualised the past in the writing practice within my novel. By making use of this concept, developed by Gary Saul Morson and Michael André Bernstein, I have been able to find a richer, multi-dimensional and non-linear view of female colonial experience. And it is one which departs from that hegemonically imposed by patriarchy.

Of sideshadowing Bernstein says: "counterlives count because they are a constituent element of the lives we have, just as it is often by the shadows the sun casts, not by its direct light, that we can best calibrate where we stand" (Bernstein, 1994:8). Morson states that it involves "both an open sense of temporality and a set of devices used to convey that sense" (Morson, 1994:5).

Its use both as a literary device and a concept applies to the way I have approached both the structure of my novel, and the way in which it as a written text, challenges and re-articulates what might constitute history. However, I believe its most important

aspect for my stories is that it allows for a history which comprises multiple possibilities.

> Sideshadowing admits, in addition to actualities and impossibilities, a *middle realm* of real possibilities that could have happened even if they did not. Things could have been different from the way they were, there are real alternatives to the present we know, and the future admits of various possibilities…sideshadowing deepens our sense of the openness of time. It has profound implications for our understanding of history and of our own lives (Morson, 1994:6).

In applying the idea of a sideshadowing of history to micro-histories of moments in the lives of nineteenth century women readers are forced to participate in the 'presentness' of the past women's lives. They experience, in their *own* present time, a sense of the past women's present as something chaotic and bursting with real possibilities. In this presentness that we as readers experience, our own identity is inevitably drawn into comparison with that of the transworld characters. This occurs at a level of understanding of them as coherent, fully developed beings, rather than as the limited textual representations which initially occur when we read the newspaper accounts. Comparing the two points of view is possible because we experience narratively their (past) presentness as our own as we read and are drawn into the fictional world in which that 'presentness' occurs as logical experience.

As Morson and Bernstein see it the 'presentness' of the past, that which exists in time as it happens, is restored by sideshadowing. Sideshadowing shows that our experience of presentness makes a multiplicity of paths available, each extending from an already chosen single point. The possibilities inherent in presentness apply equally to past moments and future moments. This realisation:

> calls attention to the ways in which narratives, which often turn earlier presents into mere pasts, tend to create a single line of development out of a multiplicity. Alternatives once visible disappear from view and an anachronistic sense of the past surreptitiously infects our understanding. By restoring the presentness of the past and cultivating a sense that something else might have happened, sideshadowing restores some of the presentness that has been lost (Morson, 1994:6).

Morson considers that when time is viewed in a linear way it is understood in terms of a Ptolemaic viewpoint. From this perspective the sense of things having multiple

outcomes and futures is lost, because our focus is looking back from the present, on a state of things having happened as a sequence of cause and effect. However, "a present moment subjected to sideshadowing, ceases to be Ptolemaic...It moves instead into a Copernican universe: as there are many planets, so there are many potential presents for each one actualized" (Morson, 1994:118).

The possibilities that the sideshadowing of the women's lives invokes by the articulation of their stories "alters the way that we think about earlier events and the narrative models used to describe them" (Morson, 1994:7). We alter our view of the women, as initially described and textualised in the newspaper and archival records, because we now perceive the narrative, through which these events and therefore their 'lives' have been written, as merely 'one possibility' of many that might have occurred. Sideshadowing alternative possibilities that events in their lives may have allowed for, gives us a way out of patriarchal hegemony into a more multi-dimensional and non-linear view of female lives in nineteenth century Australia. Sideshadowing also allows for the 'non-closure' within female narratives that these fragments of women's lives represent.

Of sideshadowing Morson states: "along with an event we see its alternatives; with each present, another possible present" (Morson, 1994:118). The event in this case being the newspaper archival artefacts and the alternatives are the imagined stories for which those artefacts were the textual 'sparking points'. This idea is further explored when he suggests:

> In sideshadowing two or more alternative presents, the actual and the possible, are made simultaneously visible. This is simultaneity not *in* time but *of* times: we do not see contradictory actualities, but one possibility that was actualized and, at the same moment, another that could have been but was not (Morson, 1994:118).

In this way, the actual loses some of its temporal legitimacy because it is seen as being not an epistemological necessity but rather a chance event, or a series of interconnected possible chance events. These chance events could, therefore, just as easily have become the invisible past (now re-articulated by sideshadowing as a possible).

At the core of my novel is a challenging, by fictional voices, of what has been written as an historical, legitimate account of the past. In this process these voices narrate from the female point of view an alternative position. The concept of sideshadowing is, therefore, useful to this work and is here explained in detail because, as Morson states, "however and wherever applied, sideshadowing multiplies stories" (Morson, 1994:120). For my work "multiplying" these previously narrated stories is also a way of making visible the reality of the lives of these silenced women about whom the archival records were written.

Sideshadowing, in my opinion, is a very useful tool; not only does it multiply stories, but it also makes the silenced, invisible participants of history visible again when used in a metafictional context.

Sideshadowing involves the concept of time acting as a field of possibilities, in that each moment is one from a set of possible events that can occur from that moment. From this 'field' a single event emerges by chance, choice, combination and always contingently. Yet to those observing from the vantage point of the future (us when we read of the narratives about women as written in the newspaper articles) other possibilities are invisible. Over time each successive field of possibilities is reduced to a line (Morson, 1994). In this way linear time is understood as flowing through history in a logical, and unalterable way. By an author's use of sideshadowing the field of possibilities is restored to recreate the 'fullness of time' and therefore allow us to see that "to understand any moment is to grasp its field of possibilities" (Morson, 1994:120). For example, when sideshadowing is applied to the inner thoughts of Annie when considering the motives of Reverend Sowerby, they reveal the real possibility that her sentence of death might have been commuted to life. Also raised are the possibilities that her husband might not have died from the injuries she inflicted upon him, or that if she had pleaded differently (or had more advice or understanding of the court system) then the court's verdict might have been different.

My novel presents the imagined 'stories' which narrate the possibilities of the women's lives as one of many events within the past field of possibilities. Their

stories appear as a sideshadowing of the stories as written in the newspapers and archival fragments that remain. Yet within these now sideshadowed fictional stories there remain yet more potential sideshadows of female narratives. This aspect is addressed in the next section.

In this way sideshadowing, as explained by Morson, multiplies stories by recreating the fullness of time (as it was) because it allows for multiple textual explorations of those other events that could have happened. In my novel the use of the concept of sideshadowing allows for the 'voices' of nineteenth century illiterate women to be placed within the landscape of their own possibilities. The 'other' voice is now recognised as having once had a 'real' place, and choice, in the myriad of moments that made up the field of possibilities of the past.

Sideshadowing: as a device

As a concept, sideshadowing has intellectual relevance for a theoretical approach to my novel. But as a method it is also appropriate for the type of fiction I am writing. Taking Dostoevsky as an example Morson analyses how the device of sideshadowing has been used most effectively. I see his analysis as having implications for my own work.

According to Morson, Dostoevsky's use of the device allows the possibility of many 'alternative' stories that may branch out from events within the novels. In his works the concrete actuality that events mentioned in the plot really happened (within the story) is continually questioned by the voice of an omniscient narrator or, as Morson calls it, the 'chronicler' of the story. As well as this questioning, a multiplicity of 'facts' is presented to the reader in such a way that:

> Too many facts, presented with no clear explanation and an air of mystery, lead us to construct or intimate many possible stories. What is irrelevant to one account, after all, may be central to another, and the reader, like many characters in the novel, seeks to reconstruct many stories from each one (Morson, 1994:121).

A similar treatment of sideshadowing is also used extensively in my novel. It appears in situations such as the 'Eldest Daughter' story, when characters combine with the intertext accounts of a massacre and events within the artist's journal in such a way that it is possible that:

- the men on horseback who came to Lottie's family farm to talk to her father could have been those same ones who participated in the massacre and wrote to the Governor asking for protection from Aboriginal raids. Alternatively the two events may have had no connection at all;
- the situation of Merrung, as midwife and the unnamed Aboriginal woman who escaped the massacre raise the possibility that the woman in both instances, was the same person. Alternatively it could also be two different individuals;
- Merrung could also have been one of the (real) Aboriginal women murdered by the squatters during the massacre;
- The change in behaviour of Lottie's father, and the silence surrounding his disappearance, raises the possibility that he (as a fictional character) also may have taken part in the (real) massacre of Aboriginal women and children;
- the tobacco in Holroyd's possession is in a dillybag which looks the same as/is the one used by Merrung.

All of these characters, situations and events, both fictional and intertextual, appear to have strong links, many seem to be interconnected. Yet very few of them can concretely be shown to be a causal factor in a future, or the result of a previous, narrative or event? The strong interlinking and ambiguity which sideshadowing allows in situations such as this raises multiple possibilities within the plot.

Many such possibilities flow from a reader's decision on an ambiguous 'position' within the plot. For example: has Holroyd harmed Merrung in order to obtain tobacco and the dillybag found in his possession? Is the dillybag Merrung's or does it belong to someone else? Is Merrung dead or still alive? Has Lottie's father been the murderer of his child's saviour? Perhaps Merrung has not been killed but has given Holroyd the dillybag and tobacco after some chance or pre-planned meeting? Perhaps Merrung, a benevolent character initially, is now following the artist and his party stealing from their supplies or acting as co-conspirator with Holroyd? Was Holroyd involved in the massacre on the night he disappeared near Port Fairy?

In all of these situations no clear explanation as to what might occur is given. Because of such ambiguities or 'possibilities' readers can construct many plausible outcomes

or story extensions. By juxtaposing both fictional and intertextual non fiction events within my work as ambiguously linked events such as these, sideshadowing is used as a device which allows for the multiple possibilities of story extensions or 'sidetracks' to the stories to continue along their own, often quite different, narrative paths. These events are not textualised as concrete occurrences, rather they exist as a shadow of what might occur as events away from the main story.

Similar strategies happen surrounding the Goulburn hanging and the Hartley murder story. In the Hartley story they present with the arguments about the inn, and what might have occurred on the night of the storm. The implication is that Holroyd, like the murderer Walsh, is a man prone to outbursts of extreme violence and not to be trusted. These events also act as a foreshadowing, within the artist's journal, of the later Holroyd/dillybag event.

Like the statement about the many facts in Dostoevsky's work, the ambiguous, multiple facts presented in my novel increase the confusion. To address these ambiguities within the plot the reader must question, or come to a realisation, how it could possibly be, that Walsh (a once real person) could have ever met Holroyd (a fictional character). For readers to begin to think that Holroyd and Walsh may have met, or that Lottie's father could have been involved in the massacre is a result of following the narrative and the unfolding sideshadowed possibilities so closely that they have been 'tricked' into believing in the completeness of the fictional world. This 'trickery' is made easier by the use of 'real' facts juxtaposed against a fictional plot which seems logical.

Sideshadowing: the artist's journal

With the artist character and events surrounding his journal sideshadowing as a device is used in ways which become more complex. With modifications, the artist character is a narrator or 'chronicler', similar to those in the fiction of Dostoevsky.

The artist's journal allows for those sideshadowed possibilities of the women characters and their stories to exist. Events and intertextual facts present in their

individual stories also exist in his story, in fact they are mirrored there—but with a twist. Within his journal, these events are story elements that have other possible streams or 'threads' that might be followed but which do not get narrative closure. For example, as mentioned previously the threads of possibility concerning Holroyd and the fight-with-Walsh thread, or the Holroyd-Merrung-tobacco thread. However, as well as this 'classic' use of sideshadowing *à la* Dostoevsky, a second possible use of the device also exists. The sketches in the artist's journal are highly ambiguous. This is because the reader is never absolutely told if the artist really has:

- painted any of the women's images at all;
- seen *all* the women and included only *some*;
- seen *all* of the women but chose to depict none;
- seen only two women out of a possible eight.

It may be a possibility that his wife, by the act of reading his journal, is the catalyst that brings about the narration of the women's stories as she looks at her husband's work. In this way my writing again points to the previous claim that using the device of sideshadowing means: "Too many facts, presented with no clear explanation and an air of mystery, lead us to construct or intimate many possible stories." (Morson, 1994:121). This is the nature of the artist's journal as a framing device for the women's stories and as a narrative account of *his* journey which allows for the multiple possibilities that the women's stories, juxtaposed against the intertext, create. Thus:

> Sideshadowing restores *the possibility of possibility*. Its most fundamental lesson is: to understand a moment is to grasp not only what did happen but also what else might have happened. Hypothetical histories show actual ones…the temporal world consists not just of actualities and impossibilities but also of real though unactualized possibilities. Sideshadowing invites us into this peculiar '*middle realm'* (Morson, 1994:119).

Sideshadowing, as a way into the middle realm, is used in my novel as a device to link and contest those things perceived as historical 'facts' and historical 'fiction'. It frees up these two often conflicting aspects of how we represent the past and it makes us aware that the past was never as concrete nor as neatly packaged a place as some writers (from them and from now) would have us believe. "The more a work cultivates sideshadowing, the more it seems to 'preclude' closure" (Morson, 1994:12).

I consider that sideshadowing both as a concept and as a literary device can be fruitfully employed, especially when, in work such as mine, the narrative (of the past) comprises both fiction and non-fiction elements. It is also important when the actualized past comprises only third hand (archival) accounts. Once the possibilities of the past have been opened they challenge and disrupt the world of archival facts.

Chapter 7

We End by Ex-pressing a History of 'the Other'

Transworld women's stories: renewal of an ethics of history

Deliberately and inherently incorporated into the style and structure of my novel is the assertion, or perhaps challenge, that it is for readers, as the ultimate meaning makers of any text, to draw their own conclusions on the 'truth' of past events. In order to do so, they must acknowledge their own subjectivity (towards 'history' and towards 'text') and make a connection with the author/s' subjectivity, creativity and research. Literature offers history as a "permanent reactivation of the past in a critique of the present" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77).

For my work, the intertextual reiteration of stories from multiple points of view is one attempt to write an historical fiction that might approach an 'ethical history'. I am in agreement with Middleton and Woods when they state that "ethical literary texts raise questions of identity, meaning and truth without supplying answers" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:76). By making a connection with past texts, and past and present authors, we enter into a dialogue with the past. This dialogue is a positive one with which to engage, because it makes us aware of the political dimension of our relations with the past by showing us how different interpretations can be placed on events which occurred.

An alternate position would have been to write historical fiction that attempts to create a 'seamless' fictional world. Using this form of traditional fiction would mean taking the moral high ground, as if the author were the sole arbiter of the 'truthfulness' of events of the past. I find this position untenable. Therefore, in writing stories that borrow events from the lives of people from marginalised groups, I find it unacceptable, in a postmodern environment, to write in a purely traditional historical fiction style.

If we are to write the past, either as fiction or non fiction, then we need to provide cultural spaces for the multiple voices of the past to be heard. This is particularly so when those voices may be at odds with a modern author's world view. This is one reason why I have allowed the male voice of the archival documents to remain textually in opposition to that of the women. To write imagined stories of women's experiences, using archival documents as source material and adhering to the praxis of hiding the source of that fiction, is to disallow the 'voicing' of male/hegemonic positions by the seamless incorporation of archival documents within the fictional world.

This would foreground once marginalised female voices, but it would be a fiction which might be considered unethical because it leant too heavily towards an empathetic reading of the women's experiences and in so doing create as the new 'other' the past (male) hegemonic position. This is a case of when: "if the resistance to some hegemony uses the same resources as the oppressor, the revolution will simply substitute one form of domination for another" (Currie, 1998:110).

Historical fiction produced in this manner would be, I believe, as 'unethical' a representation of the past as that of accepting unquestioningly the record of past events as the single male voice of newspaper and archival documentation—the documents that speak 'of' and not 'for' or 'by' the women.

As discussed in the previous chapter, I also consider that there is merit in the suggestion that literature can act ethically when it is: "altering its form to put the 'other' first…Lost, defeated or unknown pasts emerge through forms of the 'other' which have been suppressed (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77).

Altering its form to put the other first

As an example of my approach, in the story of the murder of Caroline Collitts cultural forms become reconfigured. The newspaper accounts of her death are reconfigured to form a fictionalised version of events (with the addition of extra imagined plot elements) that produces cause and effect within the plot. The narrator of the murdered

woman's story becomes, instead of the male voice of the newspapers, the fictional voice of her (once real) sister. There are, in addition, plot elements that may well be inconsistent with events that actually formed part of Maria's life, such as:

- her being pregnant to Walsh;
- wanting William Collitts as a potential father for her unborn child;
- following her sister and Walsh in order to watch what happened that evening;
- cohabiting with William Collitts and having a daughter by him after the murder.

These imagined plot elements allow the murder to be seen from the perspective of the uneducated lower class 'woman of low morals' (as described in the newspapers). These additional elements may appear, or could be argued to be, historically incorrect, or more correctly factually 'unknowable' because the archival documents do not state otherwise They might also cast Maria and even Caroline in a negative light. Yet these elements are included as a way of allowing us to understand the position of women, such as Maria and Caroline, whose predicament was compounded by lack of education and money, and by their dependence upon the men they were associated with. Therefore, through the use of imagined elements within the plot a different reading of their situations can be drawn, when compared with the other 'factual' version of events against which they are juxtaposed, and which comes to us as an historically 'plausible' textual account of the murder and of the girls' lives leading up to it.

In this way, even while I make use of additional plot elements that are not 'proven' (but also not disproved) many of the women's' stories *could* be said to approach 'ethical' history, in Middleton and Woods's terms. This also supports Lukacs's idea of historical fiction that should not slavishly adhere to accuracy where individual details are concerned: "it matters little whether individual details, individual facts are historically correct or not" (Lukacs, 1962:65).

In my novel the dominant aesthetic and cultural forms are "reconfigured in order to make room for narrative modes and cultural forms which stand for the other" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77). My work uses textual narratives within historical fiction, as a cultural representation which is altered to embrace the point of view of

the 'other'. In bringing together, within the one text, two *different* cultural forms, the newspapers and the novel, my work also challenges each of them with a new reading. I bring together both these 'high' and 'low' cultural forms—the two pre-eminent types of texts that have been used to create meaning within our world, and especially within the world of nineteenth century Australia, and ultimately each is altered.

I have used my novel as one possible example of the way historical fiction might be reconfigured when writing of marginalised elements of the past. Middleton and Woods see the 'forms' as being manifested as different "ways of telling" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77). I would argue that these different *ways* of telling also include different possibilities for narrative structure, different and new sub-genres, or facets of the genre. In my work the silenced elements from the past, re-narrativised, framed and juxtaposed against other textual 'voices' also *incorporate* those textualities which emerge from the point of view of the hegemonic, but which themselves now begin to appear as 'lost' or partially silenced as they sit adjacent to the emerging point of view of the once silenced 'other'.

> This locates an ethics of history in the reflexive, performative writing of the past…if history is an 'impression' in the mind of generations then it is a case of filling out that 'impression'—ex-pressing it (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77).

I am drawn to agree with them; however, this idea of a type of history writing that is reflexive, and performative, a type of 'expressionist' enactment of the past in the present, poses the question, what form would this ex-pressive aspect of an 'impression' of history take?

I would suggest that it is postmodern metafiction, such as my novel, rather than traditional hermeneutic or seamless historical fiction which best fits this description. To bring clarity to this argument, can we imagine, if instead of the style of postmodernist fiction I have employed, I was to have utilised traditional historical fiction? What would an 'impression' of history in that style mean for stories about groups, or people, whose experience is as the 'other'?

As I see it one problem with traditional historical fiction is that its re-voicing of marginalised groups does not indicate the hegemonically imposed 'boundaries' that initially brought about the 'silence' of those groups? This type of fiction is found in some populist historical fictions. Sagas such as *Pompeii: a novel* (Harris, 2003) often include transworld characters which, while operating within the fictional space of the past, appear to make decisions and to act with a consciousness more like that of people today. This is particularly so in novels that have as their central characters 'feisty' women whose dialogue and actions seem influenced by post 70s feminism, for example *Beyond the Blue Mountains* (Plaidy, 1973).

Not only does this type of fiction flout Lukac's point about not modernising characters, to the extent that these type of characters do "fall outside the psychological atmosphere of the age" (Lukacs, 1962:65), but does this create too tenuous an 'impression' of history? Does this type of history-based fiction fall into the trap of becoming a 'Disneyland' history, rather than a fictionalised and contextualised re analysis of the situatedness of past events. A few points will be considered.

Should historical fiction writing, when attempting to re-voice marginalised groups, always point to the fact of its own creation as a subjective, culturally constructed act? If it does this, then it indicates the limits within which *all* cultural production exists/existed? 'Ex-pressing' history might be best achieved by making use of a postmodernist style that allows for the incorporation of aspects of the past hegemony within its textuality.

With my novel, I attempt to negotiate a middle ground in representing past female lives. I believe my novel is an ethical, ex-pressive historical fiction because it stands as an example of a negotiation between marginalised 'others, those existing at the 'periphery', and the hegemonic 'centre'. It makes use of intertextual historical artefacts (the tone of which positions them close to the hegemonic 'centre') juxtaposed against stories narrated (imaginatively) from the point of view of the 'other' of history (those more distant from the centre). Because the 'voice' of the female stories is more immediate and personal (first person in most instances) it is likely that empathy resides more with those elements of the novel. This brings the

female characters back more towards a strong central position within the fiction. However, the reader's empathy with these female characters is tempered (and at other times extended) by the homodiegetic narration of the artist's journal in which they are framed, and by references to 'real' historical texts which narrate from an alternate point of view.

The women's stories are not allowed to attain total narrative control of the work.

The female narrative, as a larger construct of women's multi-voiced experience (heteroglossia), is intercut with the singular male artist's story in such a way that each 'voice' or 'story' is segregated from the others. This means that it is not possible for a women's collective 'voice' to form and to overwhelmingly contest the male narrative. Similarly their segregated stories are also intercut by the male voice of the newspaper intertexts. This narrative construct allows for conflicting layers of perception which may in turn lead the reader to a nagging possibility that perhaps the women's fictional self-narrated story is itself not 'truth', however fictionally convincing and narratively satisfying it may appear. The reality, perhaps unpalatable to modern women, may actually have been closer to the one which speaks from the male voice of the newspapers. This occurs partly because the male artist is also narrating from a similar point of view to that of the newspapers and partly because the artist's journal (or train of thought) is only occasionally interrupted by newspaper intertext. That his journal is not continually interrupted by things 'outside' his control acts as a metaphor for male power and for the status of an educated, British man such as the artist, within the hegemony of British colonial expansion and land accumulation of the 1800s.

Similarly, the element of mystery and obfuscation which surrounds the knowability or actuality of the existence of his sketches also acts as a metaphor for women's hidden lives. It also points to the presence of three (possible) female consciousnesses. These are: the implied reader of the journal/novel (the artist's wife in England), the actual reader, and that of women's lost past as narrators (and as potential readers) of their own (once) oral history.

By contextualising the newspaper sources within a female 'voice' one challenges the male hegemonic perspective. Yet at the same time the structuring of their narratives, the interrupting and contesting that the intertext brings, also allows for a sub-textual articulation of the challenged male position.

In this way 'ex-pressing' that history is facilitated by fact (or archival textual 'facts') and fictional worlds combining. This creates a different way of understanding past events—a way of positioning a subjective history outside the control of past hegemonies, while also simultaneously acknowledging them. This impression also makes clear that historical events existed within a world of chaos. This chaos is permitted to feature within the formation of events which might later be regarded as historical. This strategy also makes the claim to a form of realism all the greater because aesthetically it comes closer to the reality of events from the past at a time when they had not yet been narrativised. We begin, by reading through the women's voices, to have glimpses of a female oral history, one once possible but now lost to our time and therefore unknowable.

Re-ex-pressing the 'other'

There may also be further extensions to this concept of an 'ethics of history' being a performative writing of the past. 'Ex-pressing' it to create an impression in the mind, might also mean continually re-writing or re-creating a reflexive history based on many different or multiple perspectives. This might further allow for a concept such as an *ex-pressive* history, a history written from one 'other' point of view, and a *re-ex-pressive* history (history written from more that one 'other' point of view).

How many different forms might the 'other' take? It seems that there may well be rather a lot. If the 'other' is part of the us/not-us dichotomy, in that it is made up of all those who are non-like us ('us' as the readers and meaning makers of ex-pressive history) then a re-ex-pressive history might mean a history that never achieves any sense of closure because no one group can ultimately claim the ascendant viewpoint. This allows for the possibility that all comparative and narrated history might be ultimately as chaotic as the events that existed in the 'real time' of their formation.

The real time of event formation (the now within which our own individual 'story' is being formed) *is* chaotic because it is there that events exist as multi focussed points which have not yet allowed any type of narratising structure to penetrate their temporal frame. The 'now' is always the middle of the narrative template of beginning, middle and end.

In other words a *re*-ex-pressive history might be one which is formed from as many participants of 'other' as are known to have existed at the time of the events in question, with the possible addition of those others who existed but were not recorded in archival documents. Yet this might well render any possible understanding of past events impossible.

In the present, events are understood in relation to a 'self'—no matter how fractured identity theory may claim that 'self' to be—that is, we perceive and understand events that happen in the world in relation to ourselves. For example that WW2 was 'lost' if during the war, we identified as German or Japanese and 'won' if one was a member of the allies. For those of us who did not live through that period, in attempting to conceive of and understand something so monumental, some point must be reached by which individuals can reference the events. A concept of a past 'self' must be constructed against which or from which these events can be taken. It may be a self not necessarily 'us' but a point for interpretation that we can accept.

If we consider, for the story of Caroline Collitts' murder, a continual re-writing from different perspectives of the 'other' we might form versions of a reflexive, performative writing of the past from the point of view of:

> *John Walsh*, the murderer, as an Irish emancipist;
> *Caroline Collitts*, as an adulterer (as implied in the newspapers) and the murdered daughter of poor drunken Scots immigrants;
> *William Collitts*, husband to the murdered girl and the 'idiot'[37] son of an Irish emancipist inn keeper;

[37] "[Pierce Collitts]…This is to caution any person giving trust or credit to my son, William Collits, who I proclaim to be an Idiot, and has no command of any property, only through me, and I will not pay any debts he (William) may contract after this date, Mount York, February 16, 1839." "Public Notices (re William Collits)." *The Australian* 19 Feb. 1839.

> *Amelia Collitts*, sister-in-law to the murdered girl and emancipist's literate daughter;
> *Driver of the mail coach from Hartley*, the man who found the body.

Yet even the idea of just who makes up the 'other' within history becomes problematic. I would argue that the position of the author and that of the reader also needs to be taken into account. If the 'other' is always the non-like us group of a culture, then positions are easily taken. No hegemony can exist without the concept of outsiders or 'other'. The other frames and creates the hegemony. At the same time it also validates the hegemony's need for control and hidden power by continuing to exist as another 'element' to be subsumed. The other, in its most obvious incarnation, comprises those elements of society that have the least voice.

However, if an imaginary 'ex-pressive' history is called for, then it is by its nature written after the period with which it is concerned—"history is an 'impression' in the mind of *generations*…" [my italics] (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77). In the same way that all members of a different cultural or ethnic group might be considered 'other' to a Western ethnographer, without regard for any hierarchy which itself enacts notions of 'otherness', at a future temporal point might not all those who reside within the 'culture' of the past be considered 'other' in relation to the present day author or readers?

Otherness, I would suggest, is something that occurs by degrees. The like/non-like dichotomy of what might constitute the 'other' is a shaded grey scale, rather than an abrupt delineation of black and white.

It could be argued that the fact that Amelia Skeen and Caroline Collitts, Maria and John Walsh all resided in a past very different from ours is enough to make them 'the other' to ourselves. The cultural practices, norms and expectations of their society are not those of our present society. In that regard they are unlike rather than like us, even though our present society has been created from theirs and they are, thus, part of our culture group's history. Yet in so ex-pressing a history of the 'other' (of the past of our culture group) we may well be ex-pressing a history of ourselves now, and we are not now necessarily 'other'? For example, as literate Amelia (Collitts) and also illiterate

Hannah Simpson are my female ancestors, can they really be considered 'other' to me?

Amelia (Collitts) Skeen was a woman; her surviving infancy and bearing children, some of whom also survived, meant that I was born. In that sense she is one of my ancestral 'mothers'. Yet she was ethnically and socially different from me. During the period in question her ethnic identity as an Irish Catholic, emancipist's daughter, would have appeared as 'other' to those who might have occupied the cultural position that I now do (educated, white, non Catholic, Anglo-European). Yet a part of me is ethnically the same as her because I, as a descendant, carry parts of her genetic make up within myself. This exemplifies the ways in which the concept of who makes up the 'other' is unstable and constantly contestable.

Identities shift and are contingent, as is the concept of what forms the 'other'. In terms of a performative ex-pressive history of the past I would argue that to determine who makes up the 'other' is difficult. However, even so, it is still clear that there are members of society whose stories have been far less articulated by official history. As previously mentioned, these are most often women, members of ethnic or indigenous groups and the poor. It is one of the aims of my work to create: "narrative modes and cultural forms which stand for the other, manifested as different 'ways of telling'" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:77) as previously quoted in this chapter.

The idea of where the other resides in my fiction is a duality in that while being self-reflexive there are also two concepts of it:

- the 'other' in relation to the world of 'reader' reading 'text' and (reader/author/character positioning);
- the 'other' within the text in relation to past hegemonic power (British colonial/male/educated).

It is not all of the stories of the whole of the 'other' which emerge. As mentioned previously, this would make a chaotic, ceaseless multi-narrated history (which perhaps is the essence of 'histories'). Postmodernism is, to my mind, a form which best enacts the reality of this vision of history as ceaseless and multi-narrated. Yet I also found that to make a clear narrative fiction out of the lives of the silenced it was necessary to

choose a small number of particular 'others', and to do so for considerations seemingly arbitrary, but ultimately narrative or stylistic. Even postmodernism, stylistically useful for my fictional purposes, is I believe, best tempered when the needs of narrative cohesiveness (and perhaps elements from realism) can act to influence it. Readers still need to make meaning out of what, in actual fact, is closer to chaos than historical fiction has in the past been willing to acknowledge.

Cultural forms and occasions for remembering the past

Historical fiction, my work included, could be considered a cultural form for remembering the past: "The moral function of history is to compel us to confront what we—and all around us—wish to leave behind. Societies must provide cultural forms and occasions for remembering the past" (Kirmayer in Middleton and Woods, 2000:78). However, traditional seamless historical fiction can prove to be an unethical writing of history because in hiding its sources it does not directly compel us to confront those things we might rather choose to leave behind. Instead it makes the choice of what is left behind for us, and it does so without our knowing of those events/opinions/points of view's existence. As previously stated, the reader's position with regards to the other is unknowable and is the point of view which they, as inheritors of events of the past, may wish to leave behind or to keep.

The structure of traditional historical fiction allows for writing out of that which threatens, or conflicts with, its closed fictional world. In this way it is similar to Bradley's idea of a coherent narrative of history which excludes the 'jarring witnesses'. All writing is an act of choice, and all things which do not suit the moral or narrative stance of the author are, of course, at risk of being excluded from the story. However, a metafictional approach allows greater latitude in the re-telling of multi-voiced narratives because its form is based on the conception of a world which is itself multi-identified, fragmentary and at times oppositional.

It is also possible that if history were to enact its moral function it would divest us of that excuse constantly given that we in the present (yet the beneficiaries of *all* past

actions), did not personally enact the suppressions of marginalised groups and therefore need take no responsibility for the 'wrongs' enacted in the past:

> The fact that history is essentially an act of interpretation, a re-reading of documents, means that it hides our origins from us. For, by its nature, history excludes all that is not quoted or written down. Only what has been transcribed is available for interpretation (Carter, 1987:326).

And what is most often left out of such a transcription, is that which those members of the past who 'created' the textual record did not necessarily want to have recorded.

It may be, therefore, that cultural forms which can act as occasions for remembering the past, such as the novel, poetry, songs, film, theatre, can and do occur as some kind of symbiotic textual response once the multi-faceted, multi-significant past has been articulated with reference to our present condition. When once silenced groups are given voice to speak in the present (for example women, indigenous peoples) this brings with it a reiteration of their position within the past of "a murmur that lets us hear—but from afar—the unknown immensity that seduces and menaces our knowledge" (de Certeau, 1988:3).

Traditional historical fiction, in its seamless world and as a response to our desire for an ordered past, creates for us something analogous to 'nostalgia' or to Rushdie's 'imaginary homeland', for example in those popular fictions which are later made into television mini-series such as Bryce Courtenay's *Jessica* (1999), or Robert Graves's *I, Claudius* (1976). Yet it could be said that these do not really satisfy curiosity for a past as it might have been, rather they create for us a past that is exclusive and based on the aesthetics of our present.

Postmodernism strengthens the voice of the once silenced groups by making the process (and thereby the past and its possibilities) visible in a way that traditional historical fiction fails to do. Postmodernism, or neo-historical or historiographic metafiction, as a response to our present, multi-voiced and multi-identitied 'now' is a vehicle which allows for this content/context matrix to be 'voiced'. The re-voicing of silenced members of the past is dependent upon their present content and context. The

context of this history (when the history is being written and by whom) shapes the form according to the preoccupations of the present.

If, rather than the novel *Hannah's Place*, there was only the journal narrative (perhaps for example *The Artist's Place*) of an artist traveller, alone, concentrating on *his* work, *his* feelings and *his* way of seeing the world, then the text would not have needed to utilise the structure of neo-historical fiction. It is only when the 'other' point of view is to be fully articulated that the form of the text requires the expansion and multi-focussed viewpoints that postmodernism can bring. By continually and critically calling to account once considered solid versions of reality and truth through a sense of the relation of the signifier to the signified, through the ideas of heteroglossia or identity theory, among others, post structuralism and postmodernism have allowed us to confront what we might rather leave behind in the narrative of Australia's settler past. Added to this, from cultural studies we find useful the idea that a valid reading of culture (in this case of the past) can also be found by utilising sources other than 'high' culture.

The high versus low culture duality, with low culture as an acceptable form of cultural production, questioned the appropriateness of previous grand narratives of the past and indicated the fallibility of grand histories. In this way, the past is able to be challenged because we see, through popular cultural forms such as television (for example media war coverage beginning with the Vietnam war), film, popular fiction, or discourse analysis the crumbling of the certainty of previously accepted or hegemonic versions of history.

For my novel the reality of the archival textual accounts (the historical sources) can now be questioned as 'real' *both* by discourse analysis and by a fictional version of events from within a supposedly closed fictional world. Narrative logic of the fictional stories is understood as real (within the fictional world) but at the same time, and within that world, the representation created is challenged by newspaper and archival accounts because the characters exist in both texts. This textual re-iteration expands the ontological confusion that is manifested by my use of transworld characters. Both the creative fiction and the past archival texts then become texts which lay bare the

processes of their own production. Not only is history challenged by the fictional version of events but the textual uncertainty which results creates unanswerable questions. What if both sets of texts are a lie? What if 'the past' and the matrix of events that we might consider 'history' can only ever be located in a present which is both uncertain, and lost in the moment of its construction? Are constructs of the 'past' mirrors reflecting concerns of the present moment?

> The ethical imperative is a constantly negative procedure, a persistent unfixing of positionality and identity; an ethical text is a 'laying bare' of the signifier, a text that opens up the processes of its own production to scrutiny by the reader (Middleton and Woods, 2000:78).

By including past texts, my novel does just this, it "opens up the processes of its own production" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:78). Making use of original texts within a new narrative can be a form of "negativizing of narcissism within a practice" (Kristeva, 1984:233). The practice of narcissism in this case being the hermeneutic writing of traditional historical fiction from text-based sources without making clear the cultural subjectivity and position of those sources. To give Kristeva's definition in full:

> Ethics should be understood here to mean the negativizing of narcissism within a practice; in other words, a practice is ethical when it dissolves those narcissistic fixations…to which the signifying process succumbs in its socio-symbolic realisation (Kristeva, 1984:233).

Because of its signifying disposition, Kristeva sees all text practice, and art practice in general, as dissolving the unity of the subject and therefore encompassing the ethical. It is clear that there are instances within art practice where this occurrence is more overt than others. Reading a metafictional text such as mine becomes what Kristeva describes writing as being—a performative practice. The reader switches between the past textual account and the more obviously fictional story of the same events and, in this process, each allows for "its unceasing reflexive reconstructions of meaning and subjectivity which can be activated by new genres and new deconstructions of realism" (Middleton and Woods, 2000:78).

Therefore, it is construction and re-construction which becomes the name of the game in reading; identifying with and analysing these 'other' elements of our narrativized

past based on our own positioning within the dominant cultural forms of the present. The reader's own position and context becomes part of the process and it is there that an understanding of the historical persona or transworld character's 'identity' is formed. The transworld 'identity' becomes constructed by multi-referents in the same way that our own present identities are constructed. It is contextual, contiguous and fluid, contingent and reflexive of other social aspects or situations. In so doing marginalised silenced women re-emerge as much more than stereotypical female 'others'.

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