

**Apocryphal Irish Texts, Revived in Australian Historical  
Fiction, as Collective Memory**

*Unsettled*, the Magistrate of Galway, *The Hibernian Father*  
and  
Narratives Arising from the Wreck of the *Admella*

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See Appendices for detailed acknowledgment of Lynch family members, *Booandik* cultural and language advisers, Mr Ken Jones, Mr David Moon, historian Pam O'Connor, NSW archivist and historian, Janette Pelosi, and Professor Peter Kuch.

**Declaration:**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: .....

## Summary

This thesis consists of a novel titled *Unsettled* and a critical exegesis that contextualises the creative work. Both pieces establish apocryphal stories, in all their transformations, as powerful contributors to collective memory. Both create new knowledge. As far as I know, no Australian novel has been written about a convict play derived from an Irish apocryphal story. Nor has a novel been written about 1859 Gambierton, South Australia nor, in particular, about fragments of oral apocryphal stories passed down through the family of settlers, Martin and Maria Lynch. The sesqui-centenary memorialisation of the wreck of the *Admella* in August 2009 makes its inclusion in my novel timely and unique.

The exegesis documents previously unpublished primary material, including Lynch apocryphal stories, and *The Hibernian Father*, a play by Irish convict, Edward Geoghegan.<sup>1</sup> It puts forward new hypotheses: that the Irish hero Cuchulain may have provided a template for the apocryphal story of the Magistrate of Galway; that working-class South-east Irish families were marginalised in South Australian historical records; that oral apocryphal Lynch stories may be true; that Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* (2006) offers an alternative history of the Hawkesbury River settlement, by some definitions apocryphal.<sup>2</sup> The mystery of Geoghegan's disappearance has been solved, knowledge about his life increased, and his unpublished play *The Hibernian Father* has been explicated in my novel. While Irish and Indigenous Australian subjects have been previously depicted as victims of British colonialism, my use of metaphor to link their migrations in times of turmoil with the migrations of bats offers a new inflection.

Identified characteristics of apocryphal stories frame their analysis: irreducible and enduring elements, often embedded in archetypal drama; lack of historical verification; establishment in collective memory; revivals after periods of dormancy; subjection to political and economic manipulation; implicit speculation; and literary transformations.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Hibernian Father: A Tragedy in Five Acts* [hereafter referred to as *The Hibernian Father*] handwritten manuscript, submitted by William Knight as *The Irish Father*, 6 May 1844, Secretary's In-Papers, 1852, No. 3673, Box 413078, play at [SZ55]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558. See <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/>.

<sup>2</sup> Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2005).

French theorist Gerard Genette's notion, advanced in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997), of all novels being transtextual, provides a model for the analysis of relationships between key apocryphal texts.<sup>3</sup> Chapter I of this exegesis establishes *The Magistrate of Galway* as hypotext for all the hypertexts which follow. Chapter II discusses *The Hibernian Father* as both hypertextual and intertextual. Not only does the play retell the story of the magistrate, but my novel quotes directly from Geoghegan's playscript. Apocryphal narratives of the wreck of the *Admella* analysed in Chapter III, cluster around the climax of *Unsettled*, and work as metatext for narratives of dispossession and the so-called extinction of *Booandik* traditional landowners. Sections incorporating metatext can be read literally and for alternative meanings.

Genette's work on prefaces and their paratextual functions, support Chapter IV's analysis of Kate Grenville's discarding of an apocryphal tale in *Searching for the Secret River* (2006) and her creation of an alternative history which might one day be construed as apocryphal.<sup>4</sup> Discussions about architextuality and, in particular, genre, in Chapter V, place *Unsettled* within the Australian fiction tradition, demonstrating how this new historical fiction narrative works in a discursive and dialectical way, reframing and transforming apocryphal stories. A contemporary novel, *Unsettled* aspires to literary historical fiction with a popular plot anchored by family stories.

Each chapter explicates the way particular apocryphal stories contribute to the fictional world that is *Unsettled* and therefore augment the collective memories of people linked with South-east South Australia: in particular, descendents of Lynch Irish settlers of 1852, Gambierton.

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<sup>3</sup> Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982; Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*, foreword, Gerald Prince.

<sup>4</sup> Kate Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2006).

## Explanatory Notes

For discussion about the nomenclature of Mount Gambier, see The Manning Index, Place Names, ‘Gambier, Mount,’ State Library of South Australia, <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/manning/> or *Mount Gambier: the City around the Cave* (1972), by Les Hill, pp. 11-21. In various nineteenth-century documents, Mount Gambier is referred to as ‘Gambier-ton’/‘Gambier-Town’/‘Gambier Town’/‘Gambier’ and ‘Mount Gambier.’ When settler Lynches arrived in 1852, the town of Gambier-ton and *Mount Gambier*, were discretely named, and for this reason I have used the former in my novel, until Chapter XXXVI, Coda, dated 1863. Chapter III of this exegesis follows the lead of newspapers at the time of the *Admella* wreck in using ‘Mount Gambier,’ although the name was not recognised until an Act of the South Australian Parliament, dated 29 November 1861.

‘South-east’ or ‘South-eastern District’ refers to the nineteenth-century region of South East South Australia in deference to this usage in *Geological Observations of South Australia: Principally in the District South-East of Adelaide* by Father Tenison Woods.<sup>5</sup> Margaret Allen, Catherine Martin’s biographer, also uses ‘South-east’ when writing about this location during this period, thus suggesting it as correct nomenclature.<sup>6</sup> In contemporary applications ‘South East’ is used. The term ‘southeast’ denotes geographical direction or is used in direct quotation from other texts.

Similarly, I have used Woods’s spelling for local flora including ‘banksia’, ‘grass-tree’, ‘honeysuckle’, ‘shea oak’, ‘stringy bark’ and ‘tea-tree’ assuming it to be common usage at the time of the primary setting of *Unsettled*. He also occasionally substitutes ‘mimosa’ for ‘wattle’. Variations occur in the spelling of Mount Schank (modern usage). In the novel I have used Woods’s spelling: ‘Mount Schanck’.

*Booandik* and Irish words have been conventionally italicised as languages other than English. I am aware that some contemporary orthographers and the

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<sup>5</sup> Father Tenison Woods, *Geological Observations of South Australia: Principally in the District South-East of Adelaide* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1862), p. 26: ‘...that part of South Australia called the South-eastern District.’

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Allen, ‘Biographical Background’, in Catherine Martin, ed., Rosemary Campbell, *The Australian Girl* (1890; St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2002), p. 647.

*Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia* (2006) render *Booandik* as *Buandig*.<sup>7</sup> Norman Tindale's *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (1974) catalogues twenty-four names but prefers *Bunganditj* for these people at the time of European contact.<sup>8</sup> This may have been phonetic. In using *Booandik*, I have followed the lead of missionary Christina Smith, who recorded their language at the time of my novel's setting.

Disavowing glossaries of words, footnotes, and pedagogic intrusions into the text, I hope that the reader, swept along by the narrative, will understand *Booandik* word choices by their repetition or by context. Occasionally, reiterations of English equivalents, after the use of an Irish or *Booandik* word, offer further support.

Settler accounts variously refer to *Booandik* people as 'natives', 'black-fellows', 'blacks' and 'Blacks'. In colloquial contexts, in the novel, I have used 'old people' or 'Blacks'. In the exegesis, the word 'Indigenous' is used in most cases, with courteous initial upper case because it has become conventional, apart from in direct quotes and nineteenth-century contexts, where 'Aboriginal', 'Aborigines', 'black-fellows', 'Blacks/ blacks' or 'natives' would be more likely to be used.

While some variation can be seen between *Connaught* and *Connought*, I have abided by the former, unless in direct quotation. To distinguish between the numerous Lynches and their stories I have commonly referred to the historical Lynch family as 'settler-Lynches', or 'real-life Lynches' and to their fictional counterparts by name, with regular references to their relationship to Rosanna, the novel's protagonist. The Magistrate of Galway Lynches have been referred to by name or as characters in the version of the apocryphal narrative being discussed. For brevity, The Magistrate of Galway apocryphal story is sometimes referred to as 'the magistrate's story' or 'the Lynch story'.

Copying Anthony Trollope's and Maria Edgeworth's use of ellipses to indicate missing letters constituting a profanity, for example, d...d attracted criticism from some twenty-first century readers who interpreted this as coy. My defence that it had been a nineteenth-century convention was dismissed. When I encountered blasphemy set out in the same way — H... M... of G... — I made the decision to remove ellipses from swearing and blasphemy. Of course, it is likely that sexually-explicit profanities

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<sup>7</sup> David Horton, ed., *Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History, Society and Culture* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1994), p. 159.

<sup>8</sup> Norman Tindale, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia: their terrain, environmental controls, distribution, limits and proper names* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974), appendix on Tasmanian tribes by Rhys Jones.

were employed in 1852, particularly by men and women working and enjoying the hospitality of inns, but I found no textual evidence of them. To have my characters swearing like colonial Australian bullockies would have introduced a third confusing vernacular to the narrative. Instances in which Skelly describes his brother and sister screaming at each other in the 'worst Irish' is a literary device, I hope admissible in a novel, reminding the reader of reality, rather than reflecting it.

As an unpublished manuscript *Unsettled* is not entitled to italicisation, however, I have abandoned this conventional prohibition in the interests of simplicity, mainly, to facilitate the use of possessive apostrophes. Thus, the novel will be referred to, as *Unsettled*.

## Epigraph

When my father had danced his white bear backwards and forwards through a half a dozen pages, he closed the book for good an' all, — and in a kind of triumph redelivered it into *Trim*'s hand, with a nod to lay it upon the 'scrutoire where he found it. — Tristram, said he, shall be made to conjugate every word in the dictionary, Yorick, by this means, you see, is converted into a thesis or hypothesis; — every thesis and hypothesis have an offspring of propositions; — and each proposition has its own consequences and conclusions; every one of which leads the mind on again, into fresh tracks of enquiries and doubtings. ...

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-67; London: Penguin Books, 2003), ed., Melvyn New and Joan New, essay, Christopher Ricks, intro., Melvyn New, p. 370.

## Introduction

Stories resonate through diasporic families, shaping conscious and unconscious beliefs about identity. As the author of *Unsettled*, an Irish-settler novel, I am interested not only in the complex psychological baggage carried by a family of Galway Lynches to frontier South-east South Australia (1852) but in the etiology of the apocryphal tales that coloured their life-journeys. Packed tightly amongst eidetic Lynch memories of landscape, home and belonging, these tales retain essential elements which have continued to convey meaning and have informed my characters.<sup>9</sup> Research focuses on each tale's genesis, its motility in its historical context, its interpolation and extrapolation in key texts including mine, and its transformations. When history and story collide apocryphal narratives wither away or renew themselves, constructing and validating particular identities.

This Ph D argues in its creative praxis and historical analysis that apocryphal tales purposefully revived, as oral stories or in literary transformations, re-depict and frame collective memories. Sociologist Maurice Halbwach argues in his influential book that collective memory is a social construction informed by the temporal concerns of its stake-holders including family.<sup>10</sup> While not the primary subject of this thesis, collective memory acts as a receptacle for memories bound up in apocryphal stories and is therefore relevant.<sup>11</sup> Fiction offers a way of recuperating memory. Apocryphal stories and collective memory can be shaped and renewed, and subsumed by individual memories. They can be associated with nations and with groups and sites of memory connect them.

Etymologically the word apocrypha derives from a Greek word, *apokryphos*, from *apokrupto* — 'to hide away' — and ecclesiastical Latin, *apocrypha (scripta)* —

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<sup>9</sup> While I primarily write in third person, first person lapses occur, following Sir Walter Scott's lead in his 1829 preface to *Waverly* (1814: New York: Signet Classic, New American Library of World Literature, 1964), p. 11: 'But it appears to him [her] that the seeming modesty connected with the former mode of writing, is overbalanced by the inconvenience of stiffness and affectation which attends it during a narrative of some length, and which may be observed less or more in every work in which the third person is used...'

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Halbwach, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), ed. trans. Lewis A. Coser.

<sup>11</sup> Halbwach, p. 59: he refers to the commemorated memories and secrets of families which 'express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses'.

‘hidden (writings)’.<sup>12</sup> Apocryphal stories cluster around two meanings: those which fall outside canonical stories accepted by the Judaic-Christian tradition and, therefore by extension, texts offering alternatives to canonical literature and history; and stories of doubtful authenticity. Those examined in this thesis fall mainly into the latter group whereby ‘apocryphal’ signifies popular but contested stories that thus far have avoided historical verification. Is it because apocryphal texts have been contested that they develop surprising resilience, or despite it?

The first meaning of ‘apocrypha’ encompasses sacred and esoteric Gnostic Christian texts inspired by spiritual enlightenment. Often ranked higher than books produced by rational thought, and frequently prophetic, these works were considered literature rather than scripture.<sup>13</sup> Biblical scholars classify the *Book of Judith* as an apocryphal text, a parable, and an early historical novel containing real-life historical figures and anachronisms.<sup>14</sup> Like the apocryphal tale of the Magistrate of Galway — the subject of Chapter I and the hypotext of *Unsettled* — Judith has been employed as an exemplar of moral courage. She stands up against her country’s subjugation by a foreign power. Her story challenged the canon and yet remained outside it — absent from the Hebrew Bible. Interestingly, Halbwachs considers stories about the childhood of Jesus to be apocryphal, imaginative localisations consolidating the occupation of holy places during the Crusades.<sup>15</sup>

Critics, who nominate non-canonical narratives as alternative or apocryphal, have expanded on this interpretation of apocryphal stories to create another.<sup>16</sup> For example, Joseph Urgo applies this meaning to describe several of William Faulkner’s novels, vigorously arguing that he [Faulkner] ‘employs the term in its etymological

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<sup>12</sup> “Apocrypha”, *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1997 ed. 1.

<sup>13</sup> George Reid describes pseudepigraphic composition, in vogue among the Jews in the two centuries before Christ, whereby authors attached names of great patriarchs from the distant past to fictional works in “Apocrypha”, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), 3 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01601a.htm>> Accessed 4 Apr. 2008.

<sup>14</sup> The story of Judith contains recognisable but inaccurately placed historical characters and invasions (Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV).

<sup>15</sup> Halbwachs, p. 234.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Canon’ and ‘canonical’ have several applications in a twenty-first century context. In this exegesis the terms are used, initially, to refer to ‘a collection or list of sacred books accepted as genuine’ and later, more broadly, as ‘literary works regarded as significant by the literary establishment’, definitions taken from *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1997 edition. I expand these definitions to include the idea of a canon of history. James Ley criticises the loose application of the word ‘canon’ in a review of Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman’s *After the Celebration: Australian Fiction: 1989–2007* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009); see ‘Coping with the Hangover’, ‘A2, Saturday’, *The Age*, 24 Jan., 2009. For the sake of argument I hope that readers will accept my broad usage of ‘canon’ and ‘canonic’ without more detailed qualification.

and biblical sense: that is to designate a subversive (thus “hidden”) narrative form that challenges and refutes traditional, commonly accepted (“canonical”) ideas about history and literature, particularly in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948) and *The Reivers* (1962).<sup>17</sup> A case can be made for Kate Grenville’s attempting something like this in *The Secret River* (2006), wherein she purposely revives a hidden story of white settlement of the Hawkesbury River.<sup>18</sup> At the time of writing, she challenged views present in national collective memory about the dispossession of traditional landowners. Only time will tell whether her book becomes a watershed for the way Australians view their history.

The same interpretation of apocryphal could also be usefully applied to *Waterland* (1983), a novel by Graeme Swift, frequently described as apocryphal, in which he interrogates the idea of history as progress. Using the fens as setting and its stubborn tides and rivers as metaphors for history, he suggests that human endeavour can be as unpredictable, forceful and regressive as tidal water. History, built on a flimsy base of family secrets, local custom and natural disasters, cycles rather than advances. He intersperses the main narrative with meta-fictional discourse about history — ‘a yarn’, ‘the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears of the dark’, an apocryphal tale, no less — conducted by his protagonist: a history teacher addressing his class.<sup>19</sup> Swift’s alternative view challenges and refutes western canonical views that history is progressive.<sup>20</sup> A case can be made for *Unsettled* as a polyphonic and alternative history of the South-east, which brings to the foreground hidden stories of dubious authenticity and, therefore, apocryphal.

Stories that fit the second meaning of apocryphal manifest themselves in every culture. This category covers unauthentic stories like Parson Weems’ invented stories about George Washington, including one about him hacking down a cherry tree, and the Magistrate of Galway discussed in Chapter I. Such stories remain in collective memory and gain increasing credibility over time. Such a story in Grenville’s family provided the catalyst for the writing of *The Secret River*. The dearth of historical evidence to support it does not mean that it is not true. But until substantiated, it

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Hamblin, untitled, rev. of Faulkner’s Apocrypha: “A Fable, Snopes,” and the Spirit of Human Rebellion, by Joseph R. Urgo, *South Atlantic Review*, May 1991, pp. 160-163, 5 Jan. 2008, [www.jstor.org/](http://www.jstor.org/)

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter IV of this exegesis.

<sup>19</sup> Graeme Swift, *Waterland* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1983), p. 53.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter V on Australian Fiction Tradition, Genre.

remains apocryphal and contextual. It remains an apocryphal story because of its factual unreliability and because it shares some of the characteristics of apocryphal stories: irreducible and enduring elements, for instance, often archetypal; acceptance in collective memory; revival after periods of dormancy; political and economic manipulation; implicit speculation; and literary transformations. These characteristics frame investigations in this exegesis of key stories informing *Unsettled*.

Apocryphal stories should be distinguished from myth — the terms are often used interchangeably because of their common features. Both derive from archetypal dramas.<sup>21</sup> Both transform themselves over time, particularly in literature, and both function as instructive or allegorical tools. Both suffer political, economic and religious manipulation, revive and resume after periods of apparent dormancy, and show fidelity to enduring elements which refuse reduction. But according to the literary critic Theodore Gaster, myth is more than story. Myth theory has come to incorporate ritual and it can not, therefore, be studied ‘merely as a branch of literature or art’.<sup>22</sup> Apocryphal stories do not employ ritual, and while they manifest in visual art, primarily exist in oral and written narrative.

Myth plays with parallel or archetypal worlds, and fantasy. ‘There was initially no ontological gulf between the world of the gods and the world of men and women,’ explains Karen Armstrong in *A Short History of Myth* (2005).<sup>23</sup> Thus, the feats of the god-like heroes and heroines of myth are supra-human and unbelievable. Gaster defines mythic idea as ‘the concept of an intrinsic parallelism between the real and the ideal.’<sup>24</sup> Imbued with secondary meaning, myths showcase rules for living rather than factual information, explaining natural phenomena in a non-scientific way.<sup>25</sup> Myth frequently springs from de-historicised stories closely linked to place.

Apocryphal stories, however, utilise everyday tools and historical events. Their heroes and anti-heroes *are* believable — capable of great deeds, but grounded in their

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<sup>21</sup> Jung argued that myth can be the vehicle for communication between consciousness and the collective unconscious. See Joseph Campbell, ed., *The Portable Jung* (England: Penguin Books, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> Theodor H. Gaster, *Numen*, Vol. 1, Fasc. 3 (Sep., 1954), pp. 184. BRILL, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3269498>, accessed 5 Jan. 08.

<sup>23</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing, 2005), p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Gaster, p. 187.

<sup>25</sup> For a comprehensive investigation of myth see Andrew Van Hedy, *The Modern Construction of Myth* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002). Van Hedy explicates the myth theory of Hans Blumenberg, James Frazer, Northrop Frye, Eric Gould, Leszek Kolakowski, Levi Strauss and others too numerous to mention. He also considered the treatment of myth in the work of modern writers: T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence and W.B. Yeats.

humanity and their temporality. The historically unverifiable story of Lady Godiva in which a naked woman makes her stand against high taxes, without losing her modesty, is considered to be apocryphal because of its competent plot and feasible denouement. The Arthurian romances, despite some allusions to medieval magic, play out in a generalised English setting during the Middle Ages, and valorise heroic traditions. Distinctions between mythical and apocryphal stories crystallise around their relationship with history and fiction, apocryphal stories being more closely aligned with history. Recent Australian contretemps over the credibility of historical fiction make timely an investigation of apocryphal stories.

Two motivations led me to an historical-fiction project involving apocryphal stories: fascinating Lynch narrative material discovered whilst travelling in Ireland, and a desire to bequeath to my children stories about their paternal family, including its maternal line — thus balancing the oral and written family histories of my family.<sup>26</sup> Apocryphal stories feature speculation and create discourse; they have the potential for endless interpretation and thus, thriving on renovation, lend themselves to creative writing. My pleasure in conveying in a novel the boisterous camaraderie between my Lynch children went hand in hand with another wish to portray the darker side of family personalities, which I attributed partly to their experience of traumatic historical events and migration, and partly to the same atavistic Irish energy evident in apocryphal stories. Replicating the Irish history of South-east South Australia, for the most part missing from the records of the dominant settler classes, allowed me to tell half-forgotten unsubstantiated family tales, and incorporate the apocryphal tale of the Magistrate of Galway. Critical reading of 1850s histories and literatures of two villages, each about three hundred strong — Woodford, County Galway and Mt Gambier, South Australia — scaffolded my fictional recreations.

Reading the French theorist Gerard Genette's work on narratology encouraged me to think self-reflexively about how apocryphal texts and the relationships between them would change the structure of my historical novel.<sup>27</sup> How would Irish and

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<sup>26</sup> My imagining of Rosanna was partly informed by stories about my maternal grandmother, Sarah Anne Theresa Fennel, who worked in the early years of the twentieth century as a parlour maid at Yallum Park, stately home of the Riddoch Family, pastoralists who frequently hosted Adam Lindsay Gordon's visits. She too rode her horse to work each day.

<sup>27</sup> Gerard Genette: *Figures of Discourse* (1967–70; New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), trans.; *Narrative Discourse: an Essay in Method* (1972; Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), trans. *Discours du récit, Figures III*, Jane E. Lewin; *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1983; Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), trans. *Nouveau discours du récit*, Jane E. Lewin;

Australian apocryphal stories get along in an 1850s frontier setting? Would some dominate and others fade away? Genette deconstructs literature at formidable macro and micro levels, seeing criticism as dialectical and closely linked with creativity: ‘[W]hat would theory be worth if it were not also good for *inventing practice*?’<sup>28</sup> How useful his ideas proved to be as I moved back and forth between creative and theoretical writing. How helpful to have a model when constructing a novel narrative burgeoning with intertexts, hypertexts and metatexts. Criticism from self and others fed my re-writing.

I tried to beat back the urge to be seduced by his language: *bricoleur*, for instance; *I* was using old stories to make something new. In so far as I was writing over writing, was my novel palimpsestuous? Genette was interested in transtextual relationships — that is the relationships between texts in literature. In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997), he discusses five types of transtextual relationships. Hypertextuality defines a relationship between a text (hypertext) and an earlier text (hypotext) ‘upon which it is grafted in a way that is not commentary’.<sup>29</sup> Genette breaks down examples of hypertextuality into forms of textual imitation — pastiche, caricature, and forgery — and transformation — parody, travesty and transposition.<sup>30</sup> Citing examples of imitation and transformation in the text of *Unsettled* is beyond the scope of this exegesis, although some examples will be mentioned.

Genette defines intertextuality as the ‘relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several...typically as the actual presence of one text within another’.<sup>31</sup> Paratextuality includes all secondary signals on the threshold of the book’s actual text — titles, prefaces, book covers and exegeses like this one, and Kate Grenville’s *Searching for the Secret River*. Metatextuality, ‘often, labelled commentary’, Genette

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*Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982; Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky; *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987; Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Seuils*, trans. Jane E. Lewin. Citing the original French versions of Genette’s work on discourse would be a major project. In each case, I used modern paperback translations. Genette’s detailed analysis of Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, was nevertheless illuminating in the determination of narrative strategies for my novel.

<sup>28</sup> Genette, afterword, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, p. 157.

<sup>29</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, pp. 1-2.

claims, ‘unites a given text with another without necessarily citing it’.<sup>32</sup> This exegesis broadly interprets *Unsettled*’s referentiality to postcolonial sub-themes including race, class and gender, as metatext — these hidden texts being accessible only to an interested reader. Architextuality, ‘a relationship that is completely silent’, connects with title, and of ‘taxonomic nature’ concerns the book’s generic quality.<sup>33</sup> Locating my novel within an Australian fiction tradition calls upon this relationship.

Delineating textual relationships in *Unsettled* helped clarify my thinking about how apocryphal narratives worked within other texts. Genette offers a model — tools perhaps — that allows me to break into research that includes creative practice. There I was engaged in writing paratext, unsure about my novel’s architextual qualities — especially genre — and weighed down by a multitude of hypotexts, hypertexts and intertexts, including Irish and *Booandik* apocryphal stories. Readers of *Unsettled* need to make links between the Red Branch of Ulster Cycle, dialogue from a play by Edward Geoghegan, and new national stories set against hegemonic colonial models, in Ireland and Australia. Gerald Prince, foreword-writer for *Palimpsests*, summarises Genette’s thesis:

...any text is hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates or transforms; any writing is rewriting; and literature is always in the second degree. Now though all texts are hypertextual, some are more hypertextual than others, more massively and explicitly palimpsestuous.<sup>34</sup>

If the narrative of my novel *Unsettled* seems more palimpsestuous than some I hope that it is coherent. Genette has been criticised for his analysis of fragments, rather than the structural whole, and for his focus on narrative information and signification, but novels can be read in diverse and heuristic ways. This exegesis argues that applying Genette’s analysis of fluid and overlapping transtextual relationships in fictional narratives assists an understanding of the way that apocryphal tales work within my novel.

*Unsettled*, fictionalises several 1850s Lynch family stories that seek to validate ordinary people and the complexity of their lives.<sup>35</sup> It relates how an Irish boundary rider’s daughter, Rosanna, succumbs to the charms of an actor visiting the pastoral

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<sup>32</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Gerald Prince, foreword, Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. viii.

<sup>35</sup> See Summaries: Synopsis, *Unsettled*.

station where she works. He brings to her attention the story of the Magistrate of Galway transformed in Edward Geoghegan's play and wins her heart and her horse. Rosanna's brother Skelly's blood symbolises the Lynch tribe's precarious survival and the wreck of the *Admella* becomes a twist of fate. Rosanna, based on a real-life Lynch daughter whose historical records have been erased or simply never existed in the first place, has lived on the South-east South Australian frontier for seven years, engaging in archetypal battles against nature — fire and flood, shipwreck and drought — initially eating only what her family can catch and kill.<sup>36</sup> The novel speculates about why she never married or left home and whether she knew *Booandik* people.<sup>37</sup>

Chapter I of this exegesis argues that oral and literary narratives of the Magistrate of Galway — my novel's hypotext — encapsulate archetypal tensions between fathers and sons which, with no historical substantiation, re-enter collective memory in various historical periods and settings. The story transforms into many hypertexts including mine. I bring another layer to an argument about the genesis of the tale, adding the narratives of Cuchulain of the Red Branch of Ulster, to the list of its possible antecedents. Genette's assertion that true hypertext precludes commentary — for then it would become a metatext — makes the application of the notion of hypertext to *Unsettled* difficult but nonetheless productive. In the novel the magistrate's story is the subject of metafictional dialogue.

The magistrate would rather kill his son than have the Lynch name and any subsequent issue impugned, the primary function of this story being the irony of male hubris that ensures lines and tribes survive yet, at the same time, places them at risk. Presented as religious parable, or folk-story manipulated for economic gain, and popularly accepted, the Magistrate of Galway only feebly resists its apocryphal framing. How much longer it can be integrated in Galway history remains to be seen. Its nineteenth-century recasting as tourist spiel retaining central elements, allowed space for further embellishment and the nineteenth-century production of physical

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter III of this exegesis, and Appendix 8: Lynch Family.

<sup>37</sup> Janet Malcolm, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), p. 186. Malcolm interviewed various narrators of a story about Gertrude Stein and a Jewish child during World War II: 'The instability of human knowledge is one of our few certainties. Almost everything we know we know incompletely at best'.

artefacts for the town's economic benefit.<sup>38</sup> This positioning, continued and elaborated on into the twenty-first century, overshadows its literary transformations.

Making the convicted medical student and successful Irish playwright Edward Geoghegan the subject of Chapter II serves two purposes. Firstly, his crafting of the play *The Hibernian Father* reinscribed the apocryphal story of the magistrate in an Irish Australian and colonial consciousness. For reasons of scope I am not able to analyse Geoghegan's corpus. The play works intertextually in *Unsettled*, allowing its protagonist to act out the dark Lynch event and link family experiences with Galway history. Secondly, Geoghegan's disappearance in 1861 and, for 114 years the loss of all copies of his play, shifted his life story into apocryphal territory. Everything changed, however, with the 2008 discovery of his death certificate demanding that he be re-imagined as an historical rather than an apocryphal figure.<sup>39</sup>

Chapter III explicates apocryphal narratives connected with the wreck of the *Admella*: the invisibility of pre-1859 South-east Irish; the discovery of the wreck by Indigenous people; a heroic wild horse-riding yarn about raising the alarm; and a Lynch story handed down through several generations. Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* (1957) links signs and metaphors with ideology. His ideas can be extrapolated to include apocryphal stories. He suggests that in certain situations people willingly believe things that may not be true.<sup>40</sup> Such engagements spring from an instinctive understanding of narrative limitations put aside for local and collective gain: tourism, for instance, hagiography or resistance to authority. The presence of Lynch family members at the *Admella* site is speculative, prompted by an apocryphal story about Martin Lynch, the first Australian settler-Lynch. It may well be true.

Chapter IV hitches my argument to Kate Grenville, who discards an apocryphal story, inadvertently perhaps, creating another in *The Secret River*. *Searching for the Secret River* acts as preface to her novel. If its cultural context is university postgraduate, it is difficult to discern academic traces, now that it has been edited for trade publication. Her novel narrative plays out in dangerous territory at a particular time — during the 'Australian History Wars'.<sup>41</sup> The frontier, where events

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<sup>38</sup> Chapter I of this exegesis discusses a 'skull and crossbones plaque' dated 1624 and the Lynch Memorial Window completed in 1854.

<sup>39</sup> Geoghegan, Edward. Death certificate. 11 Jan. 1869. NSW Births Deaths and Marriages. Prepared for Janette Pelosi. 2 Jun. 2008.

<sup>40</sup> See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957; London, Great Britain: Random House, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> See *The History Wars*, Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2003). In 2004, Grenville uses the term 'step ladder' during a radio interview with Ramona Koval, to

often occur without witness or record, lends itself to apocryphal stories growing with each retelling, or being lost; it remains a contested site demanding historicity. *Searching for the Secret River* explicates the two meanings of apocryphal as potentially unauthentic, and as alternative history. Genette's work on paratexts allowed me to consider *The Secret River*'s cultural context in relation to common criticisms of historical fiction writing.<sup>42</sup> Literary historical fiction increasingly places itself in the line of fire by attracting reviews and the investment of public money — government grants and prizes, for instance.<sup>43</sup> Did Grenville intend to disrupt the complacency of historians, in creating an alternative history of white settlement at Wiseman's Landing? As a consequence will her novel damage the credibility of her family's apocryphal tale?

Chapter V interrogates the architextuality of *Unsettled* in relation to genre. Where does the novel fit within the Australian fiction tradition? The twenty-first-century collapsing of boundaries between commercial literary genres weighs against trade publishers' push for brand signifiers and makes defining fiction by genre challenging. *Unsettled* borrows from conventions and narrative strategies typical of literary fiction, popular fiction and historical fiction. Its preoccupation with apocryphal stories should not make any of these labels chafe. While its style leans towards literary historical fiction, the plot, apart from its denouement, is akin to that of popular historical romance. Genette's view that 'the text itself is not supposed to know, and consequently not meant to declare, its generic quality... one might even say that determining the generic status of the text is not the business of the text but that of the reader, or the critic, or the public', cautions me against consigning *Unsettled* to one genre or another; indeed, it may be cross-genre.<sup>44</sup> Whether Rosanna's historical prototype can now be separated from her relationship with *Booandik* land and people or from the apocryphal story of the magistrate, her father from his pride and hunger for security, her eldest brother from his Irish luck, has become more than a matter of genre. Architextuality is but one of the unstable transtextual relationships in *Unsettled*.

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imply that novel writers had an exalted and detached perspective on history, compared to historians squabbling metaphorically below them, a slip which later proves to be controversial. See Ramona Koval, interview, 'Kate Grenville', 'Books and Writing: Radio National.' 17 Jul. 2005. Transcript <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/bwriting/stories/s1414510.htm>. Accessed 5 Apr. 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter IV of this exegesis.

<sup>44</sup> Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. 4. Architextuality covers more than genre, but this section confines itself to that topic.

Genette, Gerald Prince suggests, delineates the subtle and not so subtle ways fictional texts link with others.<sup>45</sup> It is on this assumption that the work of this exegesis rests: that an understanding of *Unsettled*'s transtexts, riven though they might be with constructions of gender, race and class, will inform its reading. That these texts belonged to the collective memory of settler-Lynches is a speculative leap. My novel opens the way for the creation of further Lynch apocryphal texts, demonstrating their inexhaustibility. Apocryphal stories provide a stopgap measure preventing loss and closure. They open up new spaces in which other unreliable and unstable fictions (history and memory) can be tested. Paul Ricoeur argues that 'real and symbolic wounds are stored in the archives of collective memory'.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps like families of the holocaust, Lynch survivors of Ireland's Great Famine suppressed their memories and never passed them on. *Unsettled* builds on traces and is therefore transgressive.

Tensions arise from stories told years after the events they describe.<sup>47</sup> Synthesising family narratives can be redemptive, embracing present-day people who have lost touch with their history but may have the opposite effect, precipitating new conflict. Imagination overriding memory to create new apocryphal stories can signal the loss of an 'actual' story now considered irretrievable. But 'history does not limit itself to reproducing a tale told by people contemporary with events of the past, but rather refashions it from period to period', says Halbwach.<sup>48</sup> It is to be hoped that readers engage with *Unsettled*, a story which borrows from rather than imitates key apocryphal texts, creating anew, and that they find research about its transtextuality relevant to Lynch family and South-east collective memory.

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<sup>45</sup> Gerald Prince, foreword, Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, p. x: While in some cases — 'I can understand Joyce's *Ulysses* without Homer's help (even if the title would be baffling)' he says — and to the contrary — 'though I could decipher *Mots d'Heures, Gousses, Rames* without reference to its hypotext, I would probably not enjoy it much' — he believes that in all of the four cases he cites, he would 'better appreciate the text — its craft, its form, its force' — if he 'had access to its model.'

<sup>46</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, pp. 82, 87.

<sup>47</sup> Halbwach, p. 182: '... the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past...they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it'.

<sup>48</sup> Halbwach, p. 75.

# Chapter I: The Magistrate of Galway

Introduction

Section A: Hidden Stories

Section B: Economic Manipulation

Section C: Historical Unreliability

Section D: Archetypal Stories

Section E: Speculation, New Hypothesis

Section F: Enduring Common Elements

Section G: Literary Transformations, *The Warden of Galway, Unsettled*

Conclusion

## **Introduction**

In 1493 a young Galway man defrauded and murdered his rival in love, the son of his father's Spanish trading partner. Nothing is known of the object of their affections. Unwilling to compromise a local jury, his father — Magistrate Lynch of Galway — executed his son; then, after a period of depressive reflection, hanged himself from an upstairs window. This apocryphal story, hypotext for *Unsettled*, tests fictional Lynch family psychodynamics. Characters act out the narrative and analyse its relevance to contemporary and historical family events.

Inevitably, contemporary Galway Lynches visiting their ancestral city will be confronted by the tale and, by popular extension, the metonym 'lynch': a term in common usage.<sup>49</sup> This story belongs to their collective imaginaries, as members of a proud tribe. In 1652 Cromwellian soldiers persecuted Lynches — the magistrate's tale precedes this — alongside members of thirteen other prominent Galway mercantile families that became known as 'The Tribes of Galway'.<sup>50</sup> But it is now well attested

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<sup>49</sup> The term 'Lynch Law' was used in a court report, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 May 1844, p. 2 col.12. Catherine Helen Spence, footnoted 'Judge Lynch,' in her novel, *Clara Morrison: a Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever* (1854; Richmond Road, Net.: Wakefield Press, 1986), ed., Susan Magarey, p. 153: 'There is a settled responsible government there[referring to NSW], and not so much of Judge Lynch's authority,' says Mr Handy. Anthony Trollope mentioned the Magistrate of Galway in his novel *The Warden*, (1855; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984).

<sup>50</sup> Sean Spellissy, *The History of Galway: City and County* (Limerick City: The Celtic Bookshop, 1999), p. 41.

that popular use of the word ‘lynch’ for hanging sprang from the activities of eighteenth-century Lynches in Virginia, South Carolina, U.S.A.<sup>51</sup> Before embarking for Australia, Galway Lynches may have felt beleaguered by the morbid interest of travellers and tourists, gabby drinkers and theatre-goers, in the story of the Magistrate of Galway. Alternatively, they may have been pleased to imagine some connection with a long line of successful Galway Lynches including eighty-four mayors.<sup>52</sup>

As well as deconstructing the story of the Lynch magistrate, as apocryphal tale and hypotext for my novel, this chapter argues that scholars have overlooked the oral story of Cuchulain, supreme hero of the Red Branch of Ulster, who kills his son by Aoife, as a likely antecedent. The magistrate’s story exemplifies common characteristics of apocryphal stories, outlined in the introduction to this exegesis.<sup>53</sup>

### **Section A: Hidden Stories, Religious Manipulation**

According to an Italian newspaper article written by James Joyce (1912) the new Pope of the magistrate’s day, Alexander VI (1492-1503), rewarded him with a rosary for his rectitude.<sup>54</sup> That the story was sanctioned by the church has never been substantiated although secular examples of its application as moral exemplar can be found. A Lynch asked to complete an 1815 questionnaire on Lynch history suggests:

It was this James Lynch fitz Stephen in the Year of his Mayoralty actuated by a pure Love of Justice and overcoming the natural Feelings of a Parent had his Own Son hanged out of the window of his house the Mayoralty House in Lombard Street for having murdered [sic] a young Spaniard and

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<sup>51</sup> Spellissy, pp. 37-8.

<sup>52</sup> Spellissy, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup> See p. 7 of this exegesis: ‘irreducible and enduring elements, often embedded in archetypal conflict; invitations to seek historical verification; popular acceptance resulting in their establishment in collective memory; revivals after periods of dormancy; subjection to political and economic manipulation; containing implicit speculation; and literary transformations’.

<sup>54</sup> James Mitchell, ‘Mayor Lynch of Galway: a Review of the Tradition’, *Journal of the Galway Archeological And Historical Society* XXXVIII: 34: ‘Joyce is here evidently alluding to the reputed gift of a rosary beads which that pontiff was popularly supposed to have sent to the mayor on learning of his extraordinary dedication to the upholding of justice, and is, presumably, assuming that it was accompanied by a letter, still extant.’ Mitchell refers to James Joyce, ‘La Citta delle Tribu: Ricordi Italiani in un Porto Irladese’, *Il Piccolo della Sera* (August 11, 1912). The article was later reprinted in E. Mason and R. Ellmann, ed., *The Critical Writings of James Joyce* under the title, ‘The City of the Tribes; Italian Echoes in an Irish Port’.

breaking Trust with a stranger. And as an example of Fidelity to all Posterity.<sup>55</sup>

Historian James Hardiman affirms this, claiming that in 1484 when Galway was released from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Tuam and subsequently governed by a warden and vicars elected by the town, the inhabitants of the town were noted for ‘strict adherence to truth and love of impartial justice’, and that the tale of James Lynch Fitz-Stephen provided them with ‘an appalling instance of inflexible virtue’.<sup>56</sup> Apart from revenue-raising from tourism, by St Nicholas’s church where the magistrate is supposedly interred, I found no evidence of religious manipulation in modern transformations.

### **Section B: Economic Manipulation**

Common enough with apocryphal stories, the Lynch magistrate’s tale was promulgated for economic purpose. The story became a nineteenth-century tourist draw card. In 1844, the Lombard Street Lynch house was in a dangerous state of disrepair and subsequently demolished. Galway City Council then commenced budgeting for a commemoration of the magistrate’s story and a replica façade was erected, the Lynch Memorial Window, in 1854, referred to in a book by Peadar O’Dowd as ‘the world’s first official tourist trap’.<sup>57</sup> Historian James Mitchell has also referred to the window as a ‘tourist trap’.<sup>58</sup>

Visitors flocked to the ghoulish monument, making the story well known in Irish and English narrative repertoires. Travel writing brought about by ‘the tour of Ireland’ was in great vogue in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. ‘Ethnographic tropes defined the Irish as outside modern historical time altogether, and travel-texts ... routinely relegated the Irish to “savage” and “barbarous” states of society...’ Ina Ferris asserts.<sup>59</sup> Irish (and Australian) travel tales took the English reader into unsettled areas, beginning a literary construction of triumphant British imperialism,

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<sup>55</sup> John Alexander Lynch, letter to unnamed enquiry, Galway, February, 1815, cited in Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 24.

<sup>56</sup> James Hardiman, *The History of the Town and County of the Town of Galway: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1820; Galway: Reprinted by the “Connacht Tribune” Printing and Publishing Company, 1926), footnote, 22, p. 73.

<sup>57</sup> Peadar O’Dowd, *A History of County Galway* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2004), p.145.

<sup>58</sup> James Mitchell, ‘Mayor Lynch of Galway: a Review of the Tradition,’ *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII (1966–71): p. 44.

<sup>59</sup> Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 30.

soon reinforced in novels and in histories. Ferris saw travel writing as a ‘frontier discourse, a quasi-genre on the edge of the settled literary field’ manifesting in ‘assorted modes — picturesque, sentimental, scientific, philosophic, agricultural, antiquarian...’.<sup>60</sup>

While most nineteenth-century travel writing focused on the cliché of the Irish cabin and rural unrest, the barbarity of the Magistrate of Galway story shocked and intrigued several travel writers. Travel writing enabled Europeans to view Irish excess at a safe distance; it mediated the Act of Union (1800), which the Irish had ostensibly brought upon themselves by parliamentary incompetence. The magistrate narratives falsely established Irish law as obsessive and barbaric enough to kill its own children.

Galway historian, James Mitchell, who wrote two definitive articles on the Lynch magistrate narratives, lists several travel-writers who wrote on the subject: a clergyman named Poccoke (1752, published 1891)<sup>61</sup>; Reverend Daniel Beaufort (1787); Prince Hermann von Puckler-Muskau, of Silesia (1832)<sup>62</sup>; and John Murray (1864, republished 1866, 71, 78).<sup>63</sup> Puckler-Muskau’s book was read ‘in Europe, America and the Near East’.<sup>64</sup>

W. M. Thackeray’s *The Irish Sketchbook* (1843) includes a retelling of the story, which he had earlier read in James Hardiman’s *A History of Galway* (1820), and a description of the ‘wild, fierce and most original old town’ of Galway.<sup>65</sup> He quotes from a poem in which Galway is named as ‘Connaught’s Rome’, and footnotes a list

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<sup>60</sup> Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland*, p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* 32: 22.

<sup>62</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* 32: 9. Mitchell claimed that ‘the work was known to have been written by Prince Hermann von Puckler-Muskau of Silesia; although his name did not appear on the title page, “England was never in doubt for a moment as to the authorship...”’ He quotes from E.M. Butler, *The Tempestuous Prince* (1929), p. 234: ‘In the course of his tour, having already spent a fortnight in the neighbourhood, he returned to Galway on the evening of September 19, 1828, and on the following morning, before departing for Limerick, he noted that “in an obscure corner of the town stands a house of extreme antiquity, over the door of which are still to be seen a skull and cross-bones, remarkably well sculptured[sic] in black marble.” ...the version which he proceeds to give is an elaborated one of that found in Mangin and retold in Hardiman...’ I was unable to locate an English translation, in Ireland or Australia, containing the Prince’s recount. A National Library of Australia copy (<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/705476>) of *The Tempestuous Prince: Hermann Puckler-Muskau* by E.M. Butler (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1929) did not include Mitchell’s quotation.

<sup>63</sup> James Mitchell, ‘Mayor Lynch of Galway: a Review of the Tradition,’ *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXVIII: 38-9.

<sup>64</sup> Flora Brennan, introduction, *The Adventures of Prince Puckler-Muskau in England, Wales and Ireland as Told in Letters to His Former Wife, 1826–1829* (1832; 8 Grafton Street, London: Collins, 1987), by Prince Hermann von Puckler-Muskau of Silesia, trans. Flora Brennan, p. 9. This edition does not contain Puckler-Muskau’s recount of his travels in Galway or the Lynch story.

<sup>65</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Irish Sketchbook* (1843; London: Smith, Elder, & Co., Waterloo Place, 1887), pp. 171-2.

of the seven tribes of Galway, including Blakes and Lynches. He mentions the Collegiate Church which ‘looks to be something between a church and a castle’, Lombard Street, ‘otherwise called Deadman’s Lane...where the dreadful tragedy of the Lynches was enacted in 1493’, and a play, ‘The Warden of Galway’ which had been acted a few nights before his arrival.<sup>66</sup> The play, written by Reverend Edward Groves on the subject of the magistrate’s dilemma, was first performed in 1831, in Dublin, later in the provinces and perhaps in London, and was successful at the box office. The discovery that Groves’s play had been performed in Galway offered exciting possibilities for my novel, reaffirming my belief that the settler Lynches might know it.

Irish writer Maria Edgeworth knew the story when visiting Galway in 1834 and was sufficiently interested to relate the tale in a letter to her youngest brother, whom she assumes will know the story because of Groves’s play:

...and above all to the old mayoralty house of that mayor of Galway who hung his own son; and we had the satisfaction of seeing the very window from which the father with his own hands hung his own son, and the black marble marrowbones and death’s head, and inscription and date, 1493. I dare say you know the story; it formed the groundwork very lately of a tragedy [Reverend Groves, *The Warden of Galway*].

The son had – from jealousy as the tragedy has it, from avarice according to the vulgar version – killed a Spanish friend; and the father, a modern Brutus, condemns him, and then goes to comfort him. I really thought it worthwhile to wade through mud to see these awful old relics of other times and other manners.<sup>67</sup>

She accepts the municipal construction of the window as legitimate and considers that she has enjoyed a peculiar tourist experience that is on the one hand ‘worthwhile’, on the other ‘awful.’ Her reference to a ‘vulgar version’ indicates the fluidity of the tale, a feature of its apocryphal status. Like many writers, before and since, Edgeworth links the magistrate with Lucius Junius Brutus, Roman Consul (509 BC), who, according to another apocryphal tale, executed his sons for treason; not Shakespeare’s

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<sup>66</sup> Thackeray, pp. 171-3.

<sup>67</sup> Maria Edgeworth, letter to Michael Pakenham, Edgeworthstown, 8 Mar., 1834, published in F. V. Barry, *Maria Edgeworth: Chosen Letters* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1931), p. 392.

Brutus, derived from Plutarch's account of Marcus Junius Brutus (85 BC- 42 BC) in *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans* (0100CE).

For over five hundred years the tale of the magistrate ignited public imagination and was regularly rekindled. Tourists flocked to the medieval precinct of Galway City to see Lynch's Castle, historic residence of Galway mayors, and now a bank; to the Lynch window, a memorial to the magistrate, and to an unmarked tomb, in the south transept of St Nicholas's Church, advertised by tour guides as that of the magistrate. James Joyce uses the Lynch name in his early twentieth-century canonical Irish novels, after the story caught his imagination.<sup>68</sup> He first visited the Lynch Memorial, situated a stone's throw from Norah Barnacle's family home, and on a subsequent visit exploited the story in an article for a newspaper in Trieste because he needed the money.<sup>69</sup> My 2005 visit to the church cast no doubt on the veracity of the tale. 'He *is* buried there,' the church official told me.

The development of the magistrate's story is complex, but there is little doubt that it has been exploited for economic gain. A conflation of many versions produced the model currently touted to tourists. Lynch references in a small pamphlet offered to visitors, underline the deliberate construction and promotion of the Lynch tourist precinct: "'The Lynch Memorial Window'" is set in the railings at the north side of the church. It consists of a number of medieval fragments put together since the 19<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>70</sup> Its construction and transformation of the magistrate's tale was as deliberate as mine was in *Unsettled*.

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<sup>68</sup> R. Ellman, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 157, cited in Mitchell *Journal of the Galway Archeological And Historical Society* XXVIII: 33: 'James Joyce, according to his biographer, decided in 1904 to use the fictional name of "Lynch" for one of his characters, drawn from real life, "because Lynch as a mayor of Galway had hanged his own son, and in Ulysses he shows Lynch leaving Stephen in the lurch"; p. 295: 'Five years later, in 1909, when Joyce was on a visit to Galway, "He took care also to see Lynch's Memorial..."' See also James Joyce, 'La Citta delle Tribu: Ricordi Italiani in un Porto Irladese', *Il Piccolo della Sera* (August 11, 1912); and reprinted article in E. Mason and R. Ellmann, ed., *The Critical Writings of James Joyce* (1912), pp. 231-2. See footnote (1), p. 232: 'Joyce gave his friend Vincent Cosgrove the fictional name of "Lynch" in the portrait in *Ulysses* with the history of this family in mind.'

<sup>69</sup> James Mitchell assured readers that Joyce's account was 'clearly based on Hardiman's'. John McCourt, author of *The Years of Bloom: James Joyce in Trieste, 1940-1920* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2001), p. 184, also discussed Joyce's article referring to it as a 'potted history' but does not mention the apocryphal tale. He concludes that the citizens of Trieste would find details about fine continental wine passing through the port of Galway, more appealing.

<sup>70</sup> *St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church: a Short Guide* (Galway: St Nicholas Church, 2005).

## **Section C: Historical Unreliability**

If Galway historian, James Mitchell, is correct, commonly held versions of the Magistrate of Galway's story have sprung from fewer sources than was once generally believed; they have been augmented by a novelist, and taken up by historians, playwrights and tourists.<sup>71</sup> After reading and rereading Mitchell's articles I conclude that later versions of the Lynch story were borrowed and adapted, often unacknowledged, from James Hardiman's widely disseminated *A History of Galway* (1820). Hardiman confesses that 'most of the minor incidents... are the offspring of fancy' which he 'chiefly abstracted' from scenes from a novel titled *George III* (in three volumes), 1807, written by Reverend Edward Mangin, but that 'this by no means affects the truth of the principal occurrence'.<sup>72</sup> Hardiman's conviction demonstrates the powerful influence of literary transformations on apocryphal stories.

Mangin defended his version, partly invented, and partly built on 'a few traditionary incidents' in a history by historian Henry Hallum (1777–1859).<sup>73</sup> Mitchell disputes the Hallum citations. Hardiman's statement that '[F]ew transactions of so old a date stand better authenticated than that concerning young Lynch; for independently of the general voice of tradition, it appears recorded in several ancient manuscripts....,' sits at odds with his observation that 'the truth of the entire occurrence has been doubted'.<sup>74</sup> Creative writers have always exploited historical ambiguities, story being paramount.

Hardiman had 'adapted the whole six-page story, largely word for word,' from Mangin, argues Mitchell, and had also accessed other resources which, he said, probably included Lynch genealogical records held by John Lynch Alexander and the oral history of his father.<sup>75</sup> Mitchell shows in great detail that several of these

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<sup>71</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII; Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXVIII. Mitchell makes an exhaustive study of the story's likely derivations as well as its commemorations. I hope that I do him no disservice in borrowing, for the purpose of this chapter, pertinent points from his detailed examinations.

<sup>72</sup> Hardiman, footnote, 22, p.73.

<sup>73</sup> James Hardiman, letter to his cousin, J.R. O'Flaherty, 17 Apr. 1822, cited in Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 8: 'the autograph of Mangin's letter cannot now be found'.

<sup>74</sup> Hardiman, footnote, 22, p. 74.

<sup>75</sup> Mitchell, 'Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society' XXXII: 6, 20; XXXVIII: 36-37.

documents may have derived from an undated manuscript, which he cited as the ‘Collegiate MS’, and ‘the property of the Catholic Warden and vicars of Galway.’<sup>76</sup> He casts doubt on the veracity of the tale and its commemorations, including a skull and crossbones plaque dated 1624, by highlighting their perplexing omission from many historical accounts of Lynches and of Galway, ecclesiastical and secular. He offers his hypothesis that the story derives from the lynx motif on the Lynch family crest (affixed as plaque to the wall of Lynches’ Castle, incomplete in stone in St Nicholas Church). The magistrate’s story, he speculates, may have developed partly from a Merlin prophecy about ‘the Lynx bent on the destruction of his own stock.’<sup>77</sup> The magistrate’s existence has never been verified and thus the story retains its apocryphal status.

### **Section D: Archetypal Stories**

Like many apocryphal stories the magistrate’s has archetypal antecedents. Hardiman, too, like Edgeworth, compares the story to that of Roman consul Brutus. Mitchell suggests that this idea also came via Mangin and was adapted and extended by Hardiman because he found it colourful.<sup>78</sup> Common enough literary motifs, fathers slaying sons and the reverse, can be found in Christianity. Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his son, and God gave up his only begotten son. Michael Mangan suggests that The Fall foreshadows this theme of obedience.<sup>79</sup>

Traditional Irish fathers also slayed their sons. According to Hely Dutton, who retold the magistrate’s story in his *Statistical and Agricultural Survey of the County of Galway*, ‘another instance of this stern virtue occurs in the person of Strongbow who, in 1172, executed his only son, cutting him across the middle, after having reproached

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<sup>76</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 16.

<sup>77</sup> James Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXVIII: 35. Some versions of this story refer to the lynx as a she-lynx. Mitchell may have taken his reference from the preface or ‘Book 7, The Prophecies of Merlin’, of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s, *History of the Kings of Britain* (c 1160) in which the lynx deliberately destroys his nation. Monmouth, a Welshman, was considered a liar and an inventor of apocryphal tales, purporting to tell the true history of Wales. See David Nash Ford, ‘Geoffrey of Monmouth’, *Britannia History*, for a list of sources. 20 Feb. 2008. <http://www.britannia.com/history/arthur/geofmon.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 14.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Mangan, *Staging Medieval Masculinities: History, Gender, Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 34-5: ‘The mythology of the ancient world abounds in narratives which tell of relationships — and of crises in relationships — between fathers and sons. Sometimes these narratives outlive their own social origins, and are read and reread, told and retold, in circumstances and societies far removed from those which first generated them, so as to offer new meanings for succeeding generations’.

him for running away from the Irish at one of his battles in County Wexford.’<sup>80</sup> In Lady Augusta Gregory’s 1911 transcription of western Connaught village stories about the feast and the war of the words of the women of Ulster, Bricriu threatens, ‘I will stir up anger between father and son, so that they will be the death of one another.’<sup>81</sup> Later King Conaire commands ‘Let every father of a robber put his own son to death...’ When his people offer to assist him he recants and sends his robber sons to Alban [Celtic name for Scotland].<sup>82</sup> This narrative patterning resembles the magistrate’s story in which he hangs his son for theft and murder. It similarly resonates with tales of rebellious sons sent by their fathers to the colonies. In my novel, Edwin, the oldest son, brings trouble upon his family.

### **Section E: Speculation, New Hypothesis**

It is curious that Mitchell ignores a similar ancient tale about Cuchulain, supreme hero of the men of the Red Branch of Ulster, in his study of the genesis of the apocryphal story of the magistrate. I queried this omission in a 2005 Irish-Australian Studies paper delivered at the University of Cork.<sup>83</sup> The oral stories of the Ulster Cycle, including that of Cuchulain who leapt like a salmon at his enemies, were told from the seventh to the thirteenth century, after which they were preserved in manuscript form, becoming part of Irish cultural memory and widely known.

Cuchulain is confronted by a child he has never met, the product of his union with Aoife, and in some versions he beats back his instinct to spare the bold boy’s life and instead kills him in cold blood; in other versions he kills the boy in mortal combat. In each case the tragedy unhinges him. Cuchulain’s story foreshadows the magistrate’s and I will briefly compare two versions.

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<sup>80</sup> Hely Dutton, *A Statistical and Agricultural Survey of the County of Galway With Observations on the Means of Improvement; Drawn up for the Consideration, and by the Direction of The Royal Dublin Society* (Dublin: Printed at the University Press by R. Graisberry, Printer to the Royal Dublin Society, 1824), p. 223.

<sup>81</sup> Lady Augusta Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemn: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster* (1911; New York: Dover Publications Inc, 2001), p. 49 and *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*; Collected and Arranged by Lady Gregory: with Two Essays and Notes by W.B. Yeats (1920; New York: Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, 1970) provided useful background for my novel, about fairs and horse races, weddings and funerals, bogs and townlands, and superstitions about blacksmiths. Many of Gregory’s stories derived from real-life Lynches’ home county, for example: ‘A Country Galway Magistrate,’ ‘A North Galway Woman’ and ‘A Woman near Loughrea’.

<sup>82</sup> Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemn: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster*, p. 88.

<sup>83</sup> Gay Lynch, ‘Mythic & Literary Antecedents: Cuchulain, the Magistrate of Galway, and Edward Geoghegan’s Play, *The Hibernian Father*’, 14<sup>th</sup> Irish Australian Conference: Cultural Identities and Cultural Transmission, University College, Cork, 22-24 Jun. 2005.

T.W. Rolleston explains that his version of Cuchulain dates from the ninth century, and can be found in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, ‘one of the earliest extant appearances in literature of the since well known theme of the slaying of a heroic son by his father.’<sup>84</sup> He reminds the reader of ‘the Persian rendering of it in the tale of Sohrab and Rustum’, and as the subject of a poem of the same title by Matthew Arnold.<sup>85</sup> Unaware of his identity, Rustum fights the son born of his love affair with a princess. When he cries out his son’s name in the heat of battle, Sohrab lowers his guard and is killed by his father’s spear. Names are important symbols in filicide narratives. In Rolleston’s retelling Conall, Cuchulain’s son with Aifa, approaches, and Emer, wife of Cuchulain, says, ‘Do not go...surely this is the son of Aifa. Slay not thine only son.’ Cuchulain replies, ‘Forbear, woman! Were it Connla himself I would slay him for the honour of Ulster.’<sup>86</sup> Later he ‘drove that weapon against the lad and it ripped up his belly.... This was the only son Cuchulain ever had, and this son he slew.’<sup>87</sup>

In Lady Gregory’s translation, however, the boy recognises his father when the ‘hero-light begins to shine about Cuchulain’s head,’ and he deliberately throws his spear to miss. Cuchulain is unaware of his son’s identity until after the fatal blow is struck. Then he speaks of ‘great trouble and anguish.’ Under Conchubar’s instructions, Cath the Druid enchants Cuchulain to pit his sword against the sea, and exorcise his rage, ‘rather than kill us all.’<sup>88</sup> According to Mitchell, the magistrate in Mangin’s novel, similarly culpable and grief-stricken, retires to his mansion and is ‘never again seen in public.’<sup>89</sup>

Cuchulain and the Magistrate of Galway resemble archetypes. Governed by their zeal for leadership, they need to keep their clan’s name strong. Both stories demonstrate the tensions of group survival. Notwithstanding some soul-searching, each father exercises strong authority against moral and physical challenge, extending even to those presented by flesh and blood. Cuchulain and the magistrate choose pitiless leadership, suppressing paternal love. In Dutton’s version of the magistrate

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<sup>84</sup> T.W. Rolleston, *Celtic Myths and Legends* (London: Senate, 1995), p. 192.

<sup>85</sup> T.W. Rolleston, *Celtic Myths and Legends* (London: Senate, 1995), p. 192; Matthew Arnold’s poem, ‘Sohrab and Rustum’ from *Poems: A New Edition* (1853), can be found at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/13364>. 20 Feb. 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Rolleston, p. 192.

<sup>87</sup> Rolleston, p. 192.

<sup>88</sup> Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemn: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster*, p. 319.

<sup>89</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society XXXII*: 7.

narrative, the son is an only child; in Hardiman's abstracted version, he has a nameless sister; yet, although they beat their breasts, neither Cuchulain nor the magistrate felt sufficiently moved to save their line. They suffer for their pride. In *Unsettled* Garrick Lynch, the father, breaks this tradition.

### **Section F: Enduring Common Elements**

Cuchulain and the magistrate stories have been told and retold, shaped and reshaped, on the basis of immediate and remembered circumstance. They have been celebrated, repressed, forgotten by some and revived by others: apocryphal stories thrive on renovation. Versions of them have been retold in Irish language, and imbued with links to town and land. Apocryphal stories enjoy popular acceptance. While acting as a witness during a 1674 ecclesiastical enquiry, James Lynch, Archbishop of Tuam, referred to the dissemination and general acceptance of the story of the Galway hanging: "and this is publicked belived throughout all the province [sic]." <sup>90</sup>

The story of the magistrate derives from Galway, Connaught, where it is well attested that people clung longer to their language and hence their stories. Nineteenth-century Galway Lynches would be well acquainted with stories of Cuchulain and of the magistrate. It is likely that they remembered them even after migrating to Australia, retelling them in Gaelic. <sup>91</sup> Perhaps, over generations, their memories of them withered away until twentieth-century Lynches visited Galway and refreshed them in family narratives.

### **Section G: Literary Transformations**

Mitchell quotes Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, who suggests the magistrate's tale 'supplied materials to a host of romancers.' <sup>92</sup> His article reveals that as well as tourists, journalists and historians, the story has excited the imagination of writers on three

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<sup>90</sup> J. Lynch, *De Praesulibus Hiberniae*, II (1944), pp. 261, 280 cited in Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXVIII: 20. The Ayora enquiry was held in Galway in 1674 to confirm the appointment of Fr. Dominic Lynch as a regent of a college in Saville. Mitchell thought it likely that James Lynch knew the story of the Magistrate from seeing it in the 'Collegiate MS'.

<sup>91</sup> The production of a play on the subject of the magistrate, in Dublin and in Galway, makes the Lynches' knowledge of the story even more likely. See Chapter III of this exegesis for references to *The Magistrate of Galway* (1831) by Reverend Groves. Contemporary Lynches knew the story before I began my research.

<sup>92</sup> Mr and Mrs S.C. Hall, *Ireland* (1843, no publication details), in Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXVIII: 33.

continents, including novelists, playwrights, poets, and a filmmaker.<sup>93</sup> In Melbourne, William Carleton Junior published six cantos on the subject (1868).<sup>94</sup> Between 2004 and 2008, I took up the story and reified it in *Unsettled*. From the outset I incorporated it in my narrative. This section considers two transformations, an Irish play and my novel, as hypertexts of the Magistrate of Galway. Chapter II focuses on a third.

### ***The Warden of Galway* by Reverend Edward Groves (1831)**

Previews of this play link the excellence of its writing to the intrinsic value of the original story of the magistrate, commenting that ‘the plot is laid in Galway — and the entire piece woven out of an authentic historical fact of the deepest tragic interest, which happened in that ancient town in the beginning of the fifteenth century. The story of the “Cross-bones” is familiar to everyone who ever visited Galway, or read Mr Hardiman’s excellent and interesting history of that place’.<sup>95</sup> The writer is satisfied with the veracity of the oral tale and its recount in a popular history.

Extracts from the playscript published on the evening of its opening unabashedly proclaimed its historical significance: ‘such is the interest excited by the piece itself and by the tragic fact upon which it is founded, that a number of box seats have already been engaged.’<sup>96</sup> An advertisement for the second night affirmed this: ‘The tragedy is founded on a well known event of deep domestic interest which occurred in the History of Ireland’.<sup>97</sup> The writer makes no attempt to verify the story as history. Praise for the play as transformation of an exemplary tale goads the public, suggesting that non-attendance will show them to be socially uninformed.<sup>98</sup> This

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<sup>93</sup> Mitchell, *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 44-5.

<sup>94</sup> William Carleton (junior), *The Warden of Galway: a Metrical Tale in Six Cantos; and Other Poems* (Melbourne: Clarson, Massina and Co., 1868).

<sup>95</sup> *The Warden of Galway*, advertisement., *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Saturday, 21 November, 1831, p. 2, British Newspapers: 1600–1900, Gale Cengage Learning Website, www.galegroup.com, 20 Mar. 2009, accessible via State Library of NSW website, www.sl.nsw.gov.au via catalogue.

<sup>96</sup> *The Warden of Galway*, advertisement, *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Saturday, 23 Nov., 1831, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Theatre Royal’, advertisement, *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Saturday, 25 Nov., 1831, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Theatre Royal’: *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Saturday, 17 Dec., 1831: ‘Every man, woman, and child, retiring from Dublin to the country, before the one or the other is properly seated at the cheerful fireside of home, surrounded by the anxiously inquiring group, both young and old, the first question popped will be, “pray, how did you like *The Warden of Galway*?” What looks of astonishment — what mutual staring — what expressions of disappointment displayed in every countenance when the insensible thing will answer, “I haven’t been to see it.” Above all, we would not advise a Connaught man to return to his native province without being able to give from

underlines the importance of popularity in renewing apocryphal tales, especially those based on archetypal stories.<sup>99</sup> An appeal to Connaught men places the tale in its Galway context, as local rather than national.

But advance publicity also proclaimed the play as an Irish masterpiece, a national tale: ‘The very name will shew that the piece is of Irish manufacture...the composition reflects great credit upon our native erudition, talent and genius’.<sup>100</sup> And a full review linked it with ‘the tragic muse of Greece [Brutus] arrayed in robes of Irish manufacture, wrought by native genius and ardent patriotism’.<sup>101</sup> Another reviewer informs the public of the superiority of the play to its English counterparts, claiming that the discerning judgements of Dublin audiences can be trusted.<sup>102</sup> Such cultural attributions no doubt played on the anxieties of Anglo-Irish maintaining houses in London and Dublin. In fact the reviewer saw the play’s lack of historical and contemporary political context as a virtue, along with its plain language, and the goodness of its characters.<sup>103</sup> While he values the play as a vehicle for moral instruction, he makes no attempt to link the play with the traditional tale.

In any event, the play was a great success: ‘*The Warden of Galway* was again brought out (for the seventh time) last night’.<sup>104</sup> The efficiencies of cross-channel

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personal observation a full history of the *Warden of Galway*, lest the Claddagh women in their fury might order the pavements to rise in mutiny against him’.

<sup>99</sup> Apocryphal tales may lose traction if they cease to be apocryphal — that is become verified or disproved. Dullness or lack of useful application can also make them unpopular, whereby they either wither away or experience a period of dormancy until they become popular again.

<sup>100</sup> *The Warden of Galway*, rev., 21 Nov. 1831, p. 1.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous, Private Correspondence, p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Theatre Royal’, rev., *The Warden of Galway* by Rev. Edward Groves, *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), 29 Nov. 1831. p. 2: ‘A Dublin audience are essentially good dramatic critics. The same faces we almost always see in the house. In Covent-garden or Drury-lane, or the Minor Theatres of London, strangers every night crowd to see the play. Hence it naturally arises, that either trash makes the strange audience laugh — and the Kent clodhoppers and the Yorkshire boor who, mayhap, never before saw a stage, will clap and shout and cry “bravo” for the veriest ranter that ever murdered Lear or butchered *Belvedera*. But an audience that frequent the same theatre and see repeated the same play and the same performers, must necessarily become good critics of the beauties of the one and the merits of the others — It is so in Dublin.’

<sup>103</sup> ‘Theatre Royal’, rev., 29 Nov. 1831, p. 2: ‘No clap-trap allusion to passing events — no effort at a dexterous tickling of a popular ear or a highly blazoned homage to the popular passions. The mind is not diverted from the sense to the sound: — the feelings and sympathies — not the prejudices and the pride are enlisted...In this tragedy, the lovers of pompous puerilities, inflated language, high sounding nonsense, luxuriant metaphor and quaint phraseology will find everything to condemn.’

<sup>104</sup> ‘Theatre Royal’, rev., 29 Nov. 1831, p. 3; Anonymous rev., pp. 1-2: “The “Warden of Galway” was again repeated last night — and again attracted a fine house; a pretty good proof by the way — of the excellence of the tragedy — and no bad answer to those critics! (and they are very few indeed) who, without venturing to analyse the play or point out a single defect or blemish would insidiously and from confounded political bias, undermine the author’s... merits and injure a spirited Manager — is another proof wanting of the pathos of the piece and its excellence as a literary composition! It is at hand — the attention of the audience is every night so riveted, that until the close of every passage or scene, a

packets, canal boats and daily newspapers rapidly disseminated news of its success. Chapter II confirms that this nineteenth-century renewal led to another transformation — *The Hibernian Father* by Edward Geoghegan — and eventually, to the twenty-first-century writing of my novel.

### *Unsettled*

*Unsettled* employs the magistrate story in two ways. The arrest of the protagonist's older brother creates archetypal tensions over family loyalty and the upholding of public law. Departing from the hypotext, the Lynch father in my novel quickly forsakes law, underlining class differences and power disparities, between himself and the patriarch in the apocryphal story.<sup>105</sup> Working-class, he privileges family survival over clan pride. The Lynch magistrate depends on his authority to govern Galway and stands by his legal principles.

The second employment is intertextual. Rosanna, the novel's protagonist, becomes aware of the Galway story when an actor tells her about Geoghegan's play. The playwright's interpretation, the actor's performance of the script in a sexually potent and class-ridden setting, and the Lynch father's recounted memory of the earlier tale all contribute to Rosanna's understanding of the apocryphal tale. The play influences three characters. It brings colour and meaning to younger brother Skelly's sheltered life. It allows Eilish, the Lynch mother, to engage with Skelly and Rosanna on the subjects of love and loyalty, something she views differently, being raised in a family of Walshes. It expands Rosanna's imaginative world, offering her a past, and through her rehearsals with the actor, a potentially more exciting future. The play and the magistrate's story are imbued with archetypal drama irresistible to Lynch family members. They explore ancient patterns of Lynch behaviour — including pride and resistance to authority — when reading the play together. They side with Anastasia against the Lynch father in the play. Edwin's arrest amplifies the significance of the Lynch family name, but his family defends him. Skelly's haemophilia provides a metaphor foreshadowing his impending doom, a physical and pathological sign of Irish ancestral predispositions that determine and undermine family luck.

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breathless silence pervades the entire house, and then a sudden burst of acclamation from Pit, Boxes and Galleries.'

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter III of this exegesis.

Writing *Unsettled* was partly motivated by the need to reinscribe Lynch women in history, to imagine their hidden back-stories, and to analyse their lack of agency in family narratives. Some versions of the magistrate's tale make women invisible. It is clear that Geoghegan's magistrate no longer sees women as relevant to his life. His ward is, in some sense, Oscar's sister. In Act Two, Scene Two, the short-lived garden wedding scene, he and his friend Blake declaim faint memories of a woman's love now replaced by love for their children, when Anastasia appears.<sup>106</sup> The guilty boy's fiance, his mother and, in one case, his sister, play a peripheral role in others. In several versions, including Hardiman's, 'his wretched and disconsolate mother, whose name was Blake, flew in distraction to the heads of her own family, and at length prevailed on them, for the honor of their house, to rescue him, and prevent the ignominy his death must bring on their name. They armed to deliver him from prison ...'<sup>107</sup> Eilish's children prevent her from flying to save her menfolk in my novel.

In the plays by Reverend Edward Groves and Edward Geoghegan, Anastasia, the boy's fiance, attempts to broker a pardon with the President of Connaught and the Viceroy of Ireland, respectively. In Groves's play she is swept into a ford and rescued. While sentimentalised in both plays, Anastasia's character is nonetheless heroic, and the authors concede her some adversarial lines with which to stand up to the magistrate. Her good sense and love for the Lynch boy contrast with the magistrate's obsessive sense of justice.

The mythic but bloodthirsty Cuchulain stories represent more formidable women: Aoife, and Maeve – Queen of Connaught for eighty-eight years – for example. Eilish tells their stories to her children. Although women were often seen as

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<sup>106</sup> Geoghegan, handwritten manuscript, *The Hibernian Father* 2.2.

Warden: Such peerless charms on every side abound  
 As almost lead me to forget that time  
 Has strewn the frost of age upon my brow  
 And bid my yielding knee once more to bend  
 At beauty's shrine!

Blake: Ah my good friend, the time  
 Indeed has been when woman's witching smile  
 Fired our young blood and vassal homage won  
 But that time's past with us.

Warden: Aye so it is  
 But still our age has some bright promise left.  
 Our children —...

<sup>107</sup> Hardiman, pp. 78-9. James Mitchell discusses the palimpsest of various versions of the Magistrate of Galway story, at length, in *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society* XXXII: 12-25.

symbols of capitulation, and partnerships were generally aligned with land and leadership, they were not precluded from war or sexual adventure. Maeve, Cuchulain's great adversary, 'was the ruler in truth, and ordered all things as she wished, and took what husbands she wished, and dismissed them at pleasure; for she was as fierce and strong as a goddess of war, and knew no law but her own wild will'.<sup>108</sup> It is Aoife's desire for vengeance that sets Cuchulain against his son. *Unsettled* makes it clear that like her father and brother, Rosanna suffers from pride. She proves to be as rebellious as her brother, throwing a horse race, standing up to Mr Ashby, the landowner, and becoming pregnant to an outsider.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter argues that, in all its transformations over five hundred years, the apocryphal story of the Galway magistrate expresses its apocryphal qualities. In two seminal essays, James Mitchell establishes that the story refuses historical verification, but has been manipulated for secondary purpose. Travel writing and a popular play spawn a tourist industry in Galway that reinforces stereotypes about the barbarity of the Irish; countless transformations remain faithful to confronting key narrative elements, but an historical incident reshapes my interpretation. Archetypal father-son conflict can be found in many texts, ancient and modern, linking anxieties about survival of name and line with pride, but this story belongs in the collective memory of Galway Lynches.

Most importantly, this chapter argues that the story of Cuchulain, in which he slays his son, cannot be overlooked as an antecedent for *The Magistrate of Galway* narratives. This new idea plays out in meta-fictional dialogue in my novel. Diasporic Australian colonial Lynches resist the archetypal paradigm and defend their son.

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<sup>108</sup> Rolleston, p. 202.

## Chapter II: Edward Geoghegan and *The Hibernian Father*

Introduction

Section A: Edward Geoghegan, Apocryphal Figure

Section B: Edward Geoghegan Found

Section C: Edward Geoghegan, Creative Writer

Section D: Edward Geoghegan, Copyist/Plagiarist

Section E: Hidden Stories

Section F: Enduring Common Elements

Section G: Archetypal Sons

Section H: Historical Unreliability

Section I: Writing Against the Canon, Melodrama

Section J: Literary Transformation: *Unsettled*

Section K: Speculation

Section L: Economic and Political Manipulation

Conclusion

### ***Introduction***

Edward Geoghegan's play production *The Hibernian Father* carried the apocryphal story of The Magistrate of Galway to Australia. He wrote the play after his friend's performance of *Brutus* reminded him that his 'own country could offer as sublime an instance of impartial justice as any recorded in the boasted annals of Imperial Rome', and after he read Prince Puckler-Moskqua's recount of the Lynch story.<sup>109</sup> Justice was a subject dear to his heart, for Geoghegan, historicised as a Trinity

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<sup>109</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 May 1844, p. 3, col. 2: 'It was my friend Mr Nesbitt's matchless performance...and happening to meet with Prince Puckler-Moskqua's *Travels of a German Prince*, wherein the narrative is detailed...I commenced my tragedy of the *Hibernian Father*...' Geoghegan probably read *The Tour of a German Prince* (1832), an English translation, by Sarah Austin.

Francis Nesbitt played the leading role in J.H. Payne's eponymous play *Brutus* (first played in London, 1818). See Francis Nesbitt: *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, Copyright 2006, ISSN 1833-7538 (Canberra: Australian National University, updated continuously). 1 Oct. 2009. <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/>

College medical student, was convicted in the Dublin Court on 6 June 1839 of ‘obtaining goods under false pretences, and transported to the Australian colonies for seven years.’<sup>110</sup> Brushes with Sydney law-keepers did not prevent him briefly shining as one of the colony’s most successful playwrights. *The Hibernian Father* opened at Sydney’s Royal Victoria Theatre to great acclaim and brouhaha. It proved to be his most controversial and successful play — performed seven times in 1844, it was last performed in 1871.<sup>111</sup>

After 1861, the author of *The Hibernian Father* — later found to be Edward Geoghegan — disappeared from the public record, as did all copies of his play. Stories about him seemed close to apocryphal — there were debates about whether he existed, concomitant to arguments about his pseudo-anonymous plays. The Greek idea of apocrypha — something hidden away, of uncertain authenticity or writings where the authorship is questioned — fits Geoghegan’s life and works. Between 1964 and 2003 the gradual unearthing of documents pertaining to his life brought a brief revival of interest in him after almost a century of dormancy — another feature of apocrypha. Then academic theatre research on Geoghegan stalled.

To a fiction writer, the circumstances of these mysteries — lost manuscripts and playwrights, a play transformation of *The Magistrate of Galway* — suggested themselves as plot devices. Janette Pelosi’s 2003 article on Edward Geoghegan led me to a microfilm of three of his handwritten play manuscripts, including *The Hibernian Father*, housed in the NSW State Archives.<sup>112</sup> In *Unsettled*, this play

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<sup>110</sup> Edward Geoghegan, Aged twenty-six years, National Archives of Ireland: Irish Australian Transport Data Bases, <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search/index>. 20 Apr. 2005. His record can also be obtained from Principal Superintendent of Convicts Indents: 1788–1842, NSW State Archives, <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/staterecords/>. Document references: National Archives of Ireland: TR 3, Transportation Register, Males and Females, 1839–40, p. 55 (Irish Gift, Reel Ii), microfilm copy at State Records NSW Reel II), CRF 1839 G 45. His convict record can also be obtained from Principal Superintendent of Convicts Indents: 1788–1842, State Records NSW, <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/>. State Records NSW (hereafter SRNSW): Principal Superintendent of Convicts; *NRS 12189, Annotated printed indents* (ie. office copies), 1831–42, [X642A, SR Fiche 741] Middlesex, arrived from Ireland, 25 Jan. 1840.

<sup>111</sup> *The Hibernian Father* was first performed on 6 May 1844 at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney. *Weekly Register of Politics, Facts and General Literature*, Vol. 2 No. 42, 11 May 1844, p. 584. It was also performed in Sydney 1858 and 1860. The play was last performed on Tuesday 23 May 1871 at the Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 May 1871, p. 8 col.1.

<sup>112</sup> Janette Pelosi, ‘Colonial Drama Revealed, or Plays Submitted for Approval’, *Margin: Life and Letters of Early Australia*, No. 60 (July/August 2003), pp. 21-34. Also available online at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0PEH/is\\_60/ai\\_108114095](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PEH/is_60/ai_108114095). 14 Apr., 2008 (updated link); Edward Geoghegan, handwritten manuscript, *The Hibernian Father: A Tragedy in Five Acts*, submitted for approval as *The Irish Father* by William Knight, 6 May, 1844.

works intertextually, as metatext, and as a dramatic frame story for the actor's seduction of Rosanna. *The Hibernian Father* is in rehearsal for a Melbourne revival. An actor playing Oscar Lynch arrives as a guest at the pastoral station where Rosanna works. He and his play offer her a welcome diversion and access to a version of an ancient family story. My first draft fictionalising of the plays' revival was tentative and speculative; Geoghegan's last letter was written in Melbourne in July 1852. Was an 1859 revival feasible, even as a passing reference, when the date, location and circumstances of Geoghegan's death were unknown? As his play became increasingly important to my trans-textual Australian novel, I feared new knowledge about his life and death might torpedo my plot, even though its discovery was unlikely. I was wrong.

### **Section A: Edward Geoghegan, Apocryphal Figure**

On a collision course with authority, Geoghegan was a troubled, exiled son, not unlike other subjects of this exegesis: the son of The Magistrate of Galway; poet Adam Lindsay Gordon; Patrick Lynch, and Edwin Lynch his fictional counterpart in my novel. Kate Grenville's character, William Thornhill, based on her ancestor Samuel Wiseman also fits this profile.

For much of his life in Australia Geoghegan remained hidden, a convict disenfranchised from civic life. Sketchy records of his life survive: his convict records, four letters; and a suite of plays submitted to the Colonial Secretary of NSW under other people's names. His probable expulsion from Dublin's Trinity College, his wheeling and dealing as an enterprising convict in a new colony, his subsequent reconviction for forgery, his regular absconding, and his pseudo-anonymous success as a playwright enact and subvert Irish stereotypes.<sup>113</sup> His convict certificate of freedom describes him as five-feet-four-inches tall, with brown hair, a dark pale complexion and full hazel eyes. Notes add that he had 'eyebrows meeting, scrofula marks under both jaws, light side of neck and left collar bone,

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<sup>113</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter, to His Excellency, Governor, Charles Augustus Fitzroy [additional flourishing titles], 20 Apr. 1849, '...that on the 28 Dec. 1847 your Petitioner pleaded "Guilty" to an indictment preferred against him at the Criminal Sittings of the Supreme Court of Sydney, of uttering a Forgery and was sentenced to Imprisonment for the term of Two Years in Her Majesty's Gaol, Sydney. State Records NSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letter received, 1849 [Letter no 49/4097 with 49/5645 in 4/2839.3].

indented scars on the upper left arm'.<sup>114</sup> Geoghegan bore scars, perhaps from punishment, and residual symptoms of disease.<sup>115</sup> When serving his sentence as a common labourer on Cockatoo Island he was repeatedly disciplined by the Water Police Magistrate for drunkenness and for making away with government property.<sup>116</sup> How had an educated man, a medical student, fallen into so much trouble?

His letters reveal his familiarity with the mannered and obsequious style common in writing to superiors at that time. What could be deduced from his manuscript of *The Hibernian Father*: that pen and ink fade; that his handwriting sloped; that he crossed out awkward rhymes; that his verse resonated with Shakespeare's? Early investigations failed to uncover any evidence of love familial, romantic or sexual; although a passion for the theatre led him on his weekly leave to Sydney Town.<sup>117</sup> Geoghegan disappeared from public consciousness for almost a hundred years, as neatly as if his construction of his own identity had outlived its usefulness. Had his Irish luck run out? Until the discovery of his death certificate in June 2008 no one knew.<sup>118</sup> How had Geoghegan's backstory influenced the genesis of his play and what did that mean for *Unsettled*?

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<sup>114</sup> Edward Geoghegan (No. 46/957) per Middlesex (1840), Certificate of Freedom, Bathurst, 15 Sep. 1849. State Records NSW: Principal Superintendent of Convicts; NRS 12210, Butts of Certificates of Freedom, 1827–67 [4/4405 Certificate No. 46/857, Reel 1022].

<sup>115</sup> 'Scrofula: a disease with glandular swellings, probably a form of tuberculosis', *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1997 edition.

<sup>116</sup> M. Horsey, report, 7 May 1849, on Edward Geoghegan.

- 25 Jan. 1840: Edward Geoghegan, "Middlesex"...sentenced 7 years
- 14 Jun. 1841— Placed on Cockatoo Island as a Common Labourer
- 11 Jul. 1842 —10 days cells — Drunkenness
- 22 Ju. 1844 — 14 days cells — Drunkenness

State Records NSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letters received, 1849 [4/2839.3 Letter no. 49/4097 with 49/5645 in 4/2839.3].

Geoghegan, Edward, Middlesex, 1840, from House of Correction, Carter's Barracks, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> instant. NSW Government Gazette No. 63, Friday, August 1, 1845, p. 814. 'Runaways Apprehended with Date of Apprehension.'

- 11<sup>th</sup> October 1845 — 7 days cells — Drunkenness.
- 11<sup>th</sup> April 1846 — 2 months t/mill [timbermill?] — making away with Government property
- 7 Sep. 1846 — Obtained a certificate of freedom, No. 46/857.

State Records NSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letter received, 1849 [4/2839.3 Letter no. 49/4097 with 49/5645 in 4/2839.3].

<sup>117</sup> Eric Irvin, *Dictionary of the Australian Theatre 1788–1914* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1985), p. 111.

<sup>118</sup> Edward Geoghegan, NSW Death Registration Transcription (REF No 1869/5554), 2 Jun. 2008.

## **Section B: Edward Geoghegan, Found**

In May 2008, everything changed, underlining the importance of fostering open communication between researchers. I emailed Janette Pelosi to update a link to her *MARGIN* article and asked her whether she retained any interest in Edward Geoghegan, offering her my suspicions that he and his friend Francis Nesbitt had lied about their Trinity College *alma mater*. My assumption that theatre historians would have published his year of death had documentation been available proved incorrect. Either they were not sufficiently interested or they had failed to locate it.

In June 2008 I spent an afternoon reading micro-fiche of Victorian deaths indexed by year.<sup>119</sup> The name Geoghegan appeared in most years between 1854 and 1870; none of them was Edward, allowing me to eliminate his death in Melbourne in one afternoon. Meanwhile, Pelosi began checking New South Wales and Victorian indexes, steamers, and death and marriage records. After one false start things happened very quickly. Pelosi is an experienced professional archivist and historian with access to newly digitised and indexed old records. Within a week she had tracked a NSW Edward Geoghegan to Singleton, north of Sydney, and obtained a transcript of his death certificate. When he died of bronchitis and epilepsy, on 11 January 1869 at the age of fifty-six, he was employed as Singleton's town clerk.<sup>120</sup> Pelosi rapidly confirmed this detail by checking government gazette notices. An obituary followed: this Edward Geoghegan's biographical details matched with ours. Now we know that he was married at the age of nineteen and that after his conviction his wife followed him to NSW. She was present at his deathbed.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages in Victoria: 1853–1900*, Microfiche 181, Flinders University Library.

<sup>120</sup> Edward Geoghegan, transcription, death certificate, 11 Jan. 1869, NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages [1869 No.5554], prepared for Janette Pelosi, 2 Jun. 2008: The last six years of his life had been spent as Town Clerk of Singleton. His father's name was Martin Hynes Geoghegan (occupation unknown). This did not match up with Trinity BA Alumni entries for an Edward Geoghegan. He had lived twenty-nine years in the colonies.

<sup>121</sup> Geoghegan, death certificate: the biggest surprise was the listing of his wife, Malvina White, whom he had married at the age of nineteen in Dublin, Ireland. While no one had assumed his single state he had arrived as a convict. Later attempts to piece his life together from his few unhappy letters failed to speculate about his marital state. Malvina and Edward had no issue; during a time of limited birth-control, another tragedy, perhaps. Pelosi has begun searching records of convicts who requested that their wives and families be brought out at government expense. At the time of writing, no letters attributed to Malvina have been found.

Soon after that Pelosi found a newly digitised newspaper article explaining the ‘peculiar circumstances’ of his transportation.<sup>122</sup> This article deepened my sympathy for him as a writer. I made the decision to cast my lot with Pelosi, offering her access to my research.<sup>123</sup> Her curiosity, professional work skills, and generosity combined to demonstrate how scholarly communities work best. Although she had not read the play, she had become an invaluable resource.

My interest in Geoghegan as an apocryphal figure had always been secondary to his importance as amanuensis to the apocryphal Lynch story. The *Hibernian Father* shared the Magistrate of Galway’s historically unreliable but enduring common elements; and it challenged the nineteenth-century canon of melodrama. Geoghegan speculated over and transformed narrative material for economic gain. Each of these criteria will be considered in relation to Geoghegan’s transformation of the apocryphal tale of the magistrate, and its intertextual relationship with *Unsettled*, with particular reference to archetypal fallen young men.

### **Section C: Edward Geoghegan, Creative Writer**

Edward Geoghegan was a frustrated ambitious writer transforming our shared apocryphal tale; he had my sympathy. He was also an opportunist. Can we presume that his perceived or self-acclaimed medical skills made him useful on his voyage out and that this bought him freedom and materials to write? When Geoghegan arrived in Sydney 25 January 1840, the R.N. Surgeon Superintendent of the ‘Middlesex’ strongly recommended him to the notice of Governor Gipps and he was employed as a dispenser in the NSW Medical Department.<sup>124</sup> Confinement at the Bradley’s Head Stockade and at Cockatoo Island dispensary gave him time to write prolifically and he was, first and foremost, a writer. This fact was borne out in his extant letters. Close scrutiny of documents relating to his requests for a Ticket of Leave suggests reasons for his illegal activities; he had a powerful need for money to pay for sojourns at the Royal Victoria Theatre in Sydney, and for paper, pens and ink. Skelly,

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<sup>122</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter, Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sep. 1846 (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW: photocopy A4043. Microfilmcopy ML reel FM3/236, Archival stray- originals formerly in possession of Mr G Johnson: originals in Mitchell Library MSS 5311): ‘When under most peculiar circumstances, I arrived in this Colony as a prisoner of the crown...’

<sup>123</sup> See Appendix 9.

<sup>124</sup> Helen Oppenheim, ‘The Author of *The Hibernian Father*: An Early Colonial Playwright,’ *Australian Literary Studies* 2:4 (1966): 283.

younger brother of my novel's protagonist similarly demonstrates his desperate need for materials, to make sense of his life on paper.

Between 1844 and 1863 Geoghegan made several fruitless applications to the Colonial Secretary for the approval of his plays. Ever stoic, he resubmitted. In his 1846 letter of application to the Colonial Secretary viz a viz *The Jew of Dresden* — a play never performed — he espoused his desire 'to emerge from obscurity and acquire for myself a name and reputation in the field of Colonial literature,' claiming 'literary pursuits which had been my daily enjoyment from my earliest years became the only solace of my bondage.'<sup>125</sup> This letter was written nine days after his release. Perhaps we will never know why twelve months later he re-offended — forgery — but he made it clear that like many writers he struggled to support himself. 'Incapacitated by health and strength from engaging in laborious work — unable, save by my pen, to procure a living you may well believe how helpless is my present condition. I am now penniless ...'<sup>126</sup> In an 1852 letter from Mount Campbell, Victoria, to the New South Wales Colonial Secretary, the last point of reference for Geoghegan scholars, he sought permission to borrow back his *Jew of Dresden* manuscript because (here he quotes from an apologetic letter from a friend who had carried the only other copy of the play to London) "due to an unaccountable accident, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> acts of your play were lost during the voyage."<sup>127</sup>

He also mentioned a novel: 'If I am fortunate enough to obtain a name as a dramatist it will enhance the release of a novel which I am about to forward to London for publication.'<sup>128</sup> The conclusion of his letter makes it clear that he identifies himself as a writer rather than as a doctor: 'Your generous disposition will incline you to afford this assistance to the efforts of a poor author struggling to emerge from obscurity'.<sup>129</sup>

A Dublin newspaper court report, 6 June 1839, explains the 'peculiar circumstances' of the conviction which led to his transportation to Australia; he was

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<sup>125</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sept. 1846 (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW: photocopy A4043. Microfilm copy ML Reel FM3/236; Archival estray — originals formerly in possession of Mr G Johnson; originals in Mitchell Library MSS 5311).

<sup>126</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson Esq., Colonial Secretary, 1 Jul. 1852, (SRNSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letters received, 1852 Letter no. 52/5556 [4/3112]).

<sup>127</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson Esq., Colonial Secretary, 1 Jul. 1852.

<sup>128</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson Esq., Colonial Secretary, 1 Jul. 1852.

<sup>129</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson Esq., Colonial Secretary, 1 Jul. 1852.

indicted ‘for obtaining two reams of paper from Henry Batty, by means of a false order’.<sup>130</sup> It does not take much imagination to surmise that a dedicated writer might find paper expensive to obtain. ‘The Recorder, in passing sentence,’ reported that a memorial from the prisoner was ‘written in a style much superior to what would be expected from the prisoner’s rank in life’.<sup>131</sup> Geoghegan was a creative writer.

### **Section D: Edward Geoghegan, Copyist/Plagiarist**

It is not surprising that *The Hibernian Father*, a new recount of an apocryphal tale, closely resembles another reconstruction. Nineteenth-century theatre conventions suggest that Edward Geoghegan saw himself as a complex blend of creative artist and copyist and was perhaps surprised that Sydney audiences would vex themselves with legal issues like plagiarism when dealing with his reinterpretation of an apocryphal tale well-established in Irish cultural memory. Theatre historian Leslie Rees suggests that Irish dramatists were not only successful because they had ‘as material Irish combative character’ but because they had ‘a deeper literary as well as folk tradition into which to delve’.<sup>132</sup> Geoghegan’s plays demonstrate this. He might well have considered his reinterpretation of the magistrate’s tale acceptable practice; it belonged to his Irish cultural heritage and, at that time, theatres often employed copyists to transcribe and adapt stories, plays and novels.

Early nineteenth-century international copyright protection ‘lagged behind domestic’, was tenuous and rarely prosecuted; playwrights were poorly remunerated and, according to Michael Booth, ‘since adaptation and straight theft went almost unpunished they were widely practised’.<sup>133</sup> Geoghegan frequently wrote plays in which he adapted other writers’ works.<sup>134</sup> He found inspiration in popular tales,

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<sup>130</sup> ‘City Sessions — Yesterday,’ court report, *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, Dublin, 7 Jun. 1839. Available in *British Newspapers 1600–1900* website, www.galegroup.com, as Gale Document No. BC3204523568. 20 Mar. 2009.

<sup>131</sup> ‘City Sessions’, 7 Jun. 1839.

<sup>132</sup> Leslie Rees, *The Making of Australian Drama: From the 1830s to the Late 1960s*, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1973), p. 129.

<sup>133</sup> Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), p. 49.

<sup>134</sup> Sir Walter Scott’s *The Bride of Lammermoor (Ravenswood)* (1840s, date unknown), for instance; and Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (1844). Did he re-write these plots from memory or adapt them from personal copies of the books? Only *The Currency Lass* (1844) and *The Royal Masqueur* (1845) were original compositions. *Lafitte: The Pirate of the Gulf* (1845), a novel adapted by Geoghegan is considered apocryphal but was based loosely on fact.

Edward Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sept. 1846, (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW: photocopy A4043, microfilm copy ML Reel FM3/236; Archival estray - originals formerly in possession of Mr G Johnson; originals in Mitchell Library MSS 5311): ‘I

delighting in putting his stamp on them, the apocryphal tale of the Magistrate of Galway being his most successful recount.

Geoghegan had heard, he said, of an earlier stage transformation of the magistrate's story, *The Warden of Galway* (1831), written by a Reverend Edward Groves, and performed in the 1830s in Dublin and Galway, but maintained that he never saw it or read it.<sup>135</sup> We already know that his friend's performance as *Brutus* and Prince Puckler-Muskau's account (1832) of the magistrate provided his inspiration. If the story of Cuchulain unconsciously informed his telling of *The Hibernian Father* the play makes no direct mention of it but does contain a minor reference to a hound.<sup>136</sup> Cuchulain was commonly called the Hound of Ulster.

Reviews of the play premiere on 6 May 1844 summarised the magistrate's story but accepted it as new work. A reviewer from Sydney's *Weekly Register* introduced it as "the first original tragedy" composed for the Sydney stage', acknowledging it as 'founded upon an episode in Irish history' that he had not read and was therefore, 'unable to speak as to the historical accuracy of the piece'.<sup>137</sup> By 1994, historian Geoffrey Partington had swallowed the apocryphal tale including the fictional magistrate's name, wryly commenting on the political sensitivity of the subject 'in a convict colony with a large Irish population'.<sup>138</sup>

Voluble Irish theatregoers, however, were not preoccupied with history on the play's Sydney opening night. Letters to newspapers called the attention of 'the *literati* of Sydney...' to a 'disgraceful piece of piracy and plagiarism' whereby, Geoghegan and the management of the Victoria Theatre were reviled for '...attempting to foist it upon the play-goers of Sydney as "a specimen of original Australian literature!"'<sup>139</sup> The Australian Irish diaspora, then and now, is complex

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continued to write for the stage...fraught with these ideas I have produced in less than four years the following pieces: "The Hibernian Father", "Currency Lass", "The Last Days of Pompeii", "Christmas Carol," "The Royal Masquer", "Captain Kyd", and "Lafitte the Pirate"

<sup>135</sup> Rev. Edward Groves (LLB), *The Warden of Galway: Tragedy* (Abbey Street, Dublin: Alex Thom, Printer & Publisher, 1876).

<sup>136</sup> Edward Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 3. 3: 'and friends arrayed themselves upon his side, like the fierce bloodhound would I still pursue his back....'

<sup>137</sup> 'Theatre Register', review, *Weekly Register...*, vol. 2, no. 42, (11 May, 1844): 584.

<sup>138</sup> Geoffrey Partington, *The Australian Nation: Its British and Irish Roots* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), p. 179: 'Geoghegan also wrote the much more controversial *The Hibernian Father*, based on the Irish judge, Walter Lynch, who conducted his son's trial for murder and was ready to execute him personally when convinced of his guilt. Lynch's rejection of a father's love for the role of judge and executioner leads to revolt among the citizens of Galway, convinced rightly of the son's innocence...'

<sup>139</sup> 'Theatricals,' 'TISIAS Charges that *The Hibernian Father* is a Plagiarised Copy of *The Warden of Galway*', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1844, p.3, col. 2.

and diverse. Complainants were not so much concerned with the appropriation of the Galway tale as they were with the question of the play's authorship because many of them had attended the production of Groves's play in Dublin or in Galway and were convinced that they recognised the plot.

A week later the original *Register* reviewer responded to the plagiarism charge, augmenting the discussion with his views on the differences between plagiarism and reinterpreting historical narratives. Although he did not know if the charge applied, not having read Groves's play, or whether the traditional magistrate's tale was apocryphal, he defended the ability of writers to rewrite history, retaining the 'leading characters and circumstances' but interpreting the plot and language in many different ways.<sup>140</sup> Nineteenth-century views on art and history, it seems, were not dissimilar to ours. On 20 May Geoghegan wrote to the Editor of the *Weekly Register* requesting leave for his right of reply and for justice. He claimed that he had never seen Groves's play and in 1831, the year of its acclaim, he was living in Paris.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, he claimed, many witnesses had seen him hard at work writing the play.<sup>142</sup> He insisted on the utter dissimilarity between his play and Reverend Groves's in plot and language.<sup>143</sup>

Theatre historian Paul McGuire discussed the plagiarism charge in 1948, unaware of Geoghegan's literary corpus, and unable to locate a copy of the play.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> 'Theatre Register', *Weekly Register...*, vol. 2, no. 43, 18 May 1844: 'It does not follow because there are, at least, fifty dramas of Iphigenia, that, forty-nine of them are mere plagiarisms from Euripides — that because there was an English Tragedy of Julius Caesar before Shakspeare's [sic] time, his must therefore be an imposition. In two plays founded on the same fact in history, the leading characters and circumstances will of course be the same, while the plot and the language may be entirely different; and the closer a play, professedly historical, adheres to the history; the more perfect it must be considered; other essentials not being overlooked. One of the finest tragedies in the English language is Otway's "*Venice Preserved*." We have never heard it spoken of as an imposition on the public, and yet it is taken almost literally from the "*Conjuration des Espagnols contre la Republique de Venice*," by the Abbé de St. Real. Moreover we have two tragedies of Pizzaro, two of Brutus, and so of many others.'

<sup>141</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter, *Sydney Morning Herald*: 'In the year 1831 when it [*The Warden of Galway*] was produced, I was residing in Paris and the only information I received respecting this tragedy, was the details of the plot as given in one of the Dublin journals, which I met with in the reading room of Galignani, in the Rue Vivienne.'

<sup>142</sup> Edward Geoghegan, letter, *Sydney Morning Herald*: '...I lately placed in your hands the first rough MS. Mr Nesbitt, Mr Griffiths, and various other members of the company, can testify that I was nearly fifteen months engaged in this work.'

<sup>143</sup> Albert Weiner, 'The Hibernian Father: The Mystery Solved', *Meanjin Quarterly*, No. 4 (1966): 458.

<sup>144</sup> Paul McGuire with Betty Arnott and Frances Margaret McGuire, *The Australian Theatre: An Abstract Chronicle in Twelve Parts With Characteristic Illustrations* (London~ Melbourne: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 58-61: 'We have not been able to find a text...The author of the *Hibernian Father* was perhaps A.G. Geoghegan, who translated into French *The Monks of Kilcrea*. On 30<sup>th</sup> May, a second piece from the same hand appeared at the Victoria, which suggests that

John Kardos made no mention of it in his 1954 lecture.<sup>145</sup> The controversy reignited in 1966 when Dr Helen Oppenheim and Dr Albert Weiner uncovered references to *The Hibernian Father* while working on a drama research project for the University of NSW.<sup>146</sup> Oppenheim's 1966 piece in *Australian Literary Studies* discusses Geoghegan, his newly discovered body of work and some critical colonial reviews. Although unable to locate a copy of *The Hibernian Father*, she was negative in her appraisal of it.<sup>147</sup>

In 1966, Weiner discovered a single manuscript copy of *The Hibernian Father* (1844) amongst 1852 colonial plays — perhaps the reason Oppenheim had not located it — in Sydney's Mitchell Library.<sup>148</sup> He subsequently obtained a copy of Reverend Groves's play, *The Warden of Galway*, from the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, which allowed him to compare the two plays. I also read this play at the National Library of Ireland.<sup>149</sup> He exonerates Geoghegan from the charge of plagiarism, concluding that: '*The Warden of Galway* is not a play at all, while *The Hibernian Father* has distinct possibilities.'<sup>150</sup>

Neither Oppenheim nor Weiner mention the traditional tale. Controversy frequently renews apocrypha, as we know from Galway's commercial exploitation

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he retained the confidence of management and players. This was the operetta in two acts, *The Currency Lass*, set in the local scene and another popular success'.

<sup>145</sup> John Kardos, *A Brief History of the Australian Theatre* (1954; University of Sydney: Sydney University Dramatic society, 1955), p. 21: 'the first Australian play professionally produced here, *The Hibernian Father*, written for Nesbitt, probably by A.G. Geoghegan, was presented at the Victoria Theatre on May 6, 1844, with pronounced success'.

<sup>146</sup> Eric Irvin, *Australian Melodrama: Eighty Years of Popular Theatre* (Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1981); Paul McGuire with Betty Arnott and Frances Margaret McGuire, *Dictionary of Australian Theatre: 1788–1914* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985); Helen Oppenheim, 'The Hibernian Father: Mysteries Solved and Unsolved,' *Australian Literary Studies* 3:1 (1967); Philip Parsons and Victoria Chase, *Concise Dictionary of Australian Theatre* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1997).

<sup>147</sup> Helen Oppenheim, 'The Hibernian Father: Mysteries Solved and Unsolved,' *Australian Literary Studies*. 3:1 (1967), p. 286: She sportingly suggested that it was 'his bad luck that he was accused of plagiarism for a practice which so easily could have passed unnoticed in his day,' and further implied that it was one of 'thousands of bad plays' performed in the early nineteenth century that were of dubious authorship. She admitted that 'whether original or not – *The Hibernian Father* was a great success'. After its 'seven performances in 1844; it was revived in 1846 and was played at Sydney's Prince of Wales Theatre as late as 1871'.

<sup>148</sup> The Archives Office of New South Wales, established in 1961 (now State Records NSW), was then located in the Mitchell Library building. The original correspondence and plays are now held at State Records' Western Sydney Records Centre (<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/>).

<sup>149</sup> Groves (LLB), preface, *The Warden of Galway: Tragedy*: 'Different versions have been given of the incident thus recorded and commemorated: but in adapting it to the stage, the author of the Tragedy followed the particular local tradition which best harmonizes with the scanty outlines supplied by history'. I read the play in June 2005. Librarians at the National Library of Ireland had some difficulty locating it as very old books remained unprocessed. Catalogue entries had been pencilled in thick, leather-bound books, fifty centimetres high. I found the prating tone of Groves' narration of the magistrate unsympathetic.

<sup>150</sup> Weiner, p. 464.

of the magistrate's tale. If Geoghegan's Sydney production of *The Hibernian Father* renewed interest in the apocryphal tale, newspaper reviews do not mention it. It was likely discussed by patrons; the play's success was attributed to Nesbitt's portrayal of the obsessive and tragic magistrate.

### **Section E: Hidden Stories**

The introduction to this exegesis lists the characteristics of apocrypha — including hidden away, of uncertain authenticity or writings where the authorship is questioned — all of which fit Geoghegan's life and works. Felon, exiled Irish son, Geoghegan occupied a colonial twilight zone in which he could only gain access to colonial audiences through the goodwill of theatre friends. Close scrutiny of 1840s plays listed in the NSW State archives reveals that many submitted by managers and actors from the Royal Victoria Theatre — Francis Nesbitt, Patrick Riley, Mr Willis, Mr William Knight — have since been attributed to Geoghegan.<sup>151</sup>

In early New South Wales, plays could only be performed with the express approval of the Colonial Secretary.<sup>152</sup> Compliant theatres were issued with annual licences. However, at that time, a booming Sydney theatre trade precipitated a shortage of play-scripts to perform. Oppenheim reminds us that since 1833 'one of the conditions of the early theatre licences was that if the licensees "shall employ, permit, or suffer any convict whether under a temporary remission of sentence or otherwise, to Act, Perform, or appear on the stage of the said Theatre at any time...then ...this Licence shall be and become absolutely null and void."' <sup>153</sup> While the wording does not specifically include writers, Joseph Wyatt, owner of the Royal

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<sup>151</sup> See Appendix 1: Works Attributed to Edward Geoghegan.

<sup>152</sup> Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Guide, plays submitted for approval prior to being performed (NRS 908), by an Act of the Governor in Council, 9 George IV No. 14 entitled, *An Act for Regulating Places of Public Exhibition and Entertainment* (1 Sept. 1828): '...if any person, or persons, shall act, represent, or perform, or cause to be acted, represented, or performed, whether such acting or performance be gratuitous, or be for hire, or gain, or reward, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, concert, play, farce, or other entertainment, of the stage, or any other parts therein, or any stage dancing, tumbling, or horsemanship, or any other public entertainment whatever...without authority and licence from the Colonial Secretary...forfeit and pay, for every such offence, the sum of fifty pounds' (State Records NSW: 1788–1825: The New South Wales Government's Archives and Records Management Authority: [http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/colonial\\_secretary\\_1788-1825\\_252.asp](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/colonial_secretary_1788-1825_252.asp)). 2 Feb. 2008.

<sup>153</sup> SRNSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 1059, Registers of important documents, commissions, oaths and licences, Jan. 1829–September 1844, pp. 290-1 [4/1710], p. 498, cited in Oppenheim, *Australian Literary Studies* 2:4 (1966): p. 285.

Victoria Theatre, who originally rejected Geoghegan's play, might have considered employing him a risk.<sup>154</sup>

Unable to put his name to his writing, Geoghegan felt alienated, poorly remunerated, and disgruntled.<sup>155</sup> He begged the public to 'stretch forth the shield of your protection over an unjustly attacked and unfriended author.'<sup>156</sup> The plagiarism charge resulted in subsequent plays being advertised as written by 'the author of *The Hibernian Father*' allowing him to assert his identity in a limited way.<sup>157</sup> In all but theatre circles, the playwright remained a shadowy hidden figure.

### **Section F: Enduring Common Elements**

Edwin, Rosanna's brother in my novel and a larrikin, shares some resemblance with Edward Geoghegan and his play's character Oscar Lynch. He likes to drink and gamble and invest in money-making schemes. Believing him to have superior luck, his brother and sister view his adventures through rose-coloured glasses. Luck is a recurring theme in my novel and in Geoghegan's play. The Lynch family believes in it: if only that it can be re-energised after bad fortune, to help them survive. Geoghegan's character Bearnard speaks bitterly of 'Lynch's better fortune,' an irony which plays out later in the play.<sup>158</sup>

*Unsettled* fictionalises an historical incident involving Martin Lynch and his son Patrick assaulting a bailiff on 16 February 1967. Suppressed or forgotten, the last three generations of their Lynch descendents claim that they had no knowledge of

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<sup>154</sup> Oppenheim, *Australian Literary Studies*. 2:4 (1966): p. 285.

<sup>155</sup> Edward Geoghegan, Letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sept. 1846: 'I was coldly informed that there was "no vacancy in the theatre at present" and my fond expectations were blighted'.

<sup>156</sup> Edward Geoghegan, "'The Hibernian Father": to the editor of the Weekly Register', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 May 1844, p. 3, col. 2.

<sup>157</sup> Roger Covell, editor, Introduction, *The Currency Lass or My Native Girl: a Musical Play in Two Acts* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1976), p. xix: 'Royal Victoria Theatre for the Benefit of Mr J. Lazar'; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 July 1844, p. 3 col. 2: 'Monday Evening, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1844, *The Last Days of Pompeii* (first produced at the Adelphi Theatre, where it had an uninterrupted run of 200 nights). Upon this occasion, the author of "the Hibernian Father" has kindly undertaken to dramatize the piece from the original work, and it will be performed for the first time in this colony on the above Evening (sanctioned by the Colonial Secretary) with new and splendid scenery, Machinery, Dresses, Decorations, &c, forming the most gorgeous spectacle ever produced at this theatre; *Sydney Morning Herald*, Royal Victoria Theatre, Second Night of the Royal Masque, This Evening, May 13, 1845,' p. 2 col. 3: 'Will be presented an entirely new and original Drama, entitled THE ROYAL MASQUER: or, THE FLOWER OF CLYDE. Written by the author of the "Hibernian Father," "Currency Lass," &c....'

<sup>158</sup> Edward Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 1. 1, (SRNSW: Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letters received, 1852, Letter no.52/3673, [4/3078]. Play at [SZ55]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558 <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/>

this story until 2006, when I found Patrick's name in transcripts of gaol records, and an account of his arrest in the local newspaper.<sup>159</sup> The *Border Watch* article reports that Patrick assaulted the bailiff while resisting arrest for a charge of debt, and his father wielded a pitchfork in his defence. Mrs Lynch prevented further violence.<sup>160</sup>

This scene resonates with the conviction narratives of Edward Geoghegan and Patrick Lynch and their fictional and apocryphal counterparts. After an initial charge of assault was dropped, Martin Lynch, the nineteenth-century Lynch father, was released; Patrick Lynch was convicted of debt. Reports relate that unlike families of the magistrate and Geoghegan, perhaps because they were diasporic Irish and stood together in adversity, these Lynches showed no hesitation in standing by their son and brother.

### **Section G: Irish Archetypal Sons**

Now restored to family history, the story of Patrick's and Martin's arrest exemplifies an archetypal drama in which Lynch family traits — loyalty and hatred of authority — bring them into conflict with the law and with each other. I hope that the story of the arrest may rest more easily in family collective memory when contextualised by its representation in a novel. Patrick's arrest holds little interest outside the Lynch family but may still play on family nerves. Unlike the magistrate's apocryphal story, this one is unlikely to be exploited for economic or political reasons.<sup>161</sup>

Graham Huggan argues that 'the superimposition of Irish folk memory onto recent Australian colonial history produces a double effect in which the fear of renewed betrayal lurks beneath the sanctioned pride of violent dissent.'<sup>162</sup> He cites Peter Carey's *The History of the Kelly Gang* as an example of a text in which a protagonist's contradictory desires to revisit and to purge the past are reflected in a

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<sup>159</sup> H.M. Gaol. Mount Gambier: Prisoners' Admission Journal, 1866–1935, original transcription, Lynn Lowe. Gaol ID: 49. Native. 23 years. Roman Catholic Farmer; 'Police Court: Resisting the Bailiff,' *Border Watch*, 16 Feb., 1867, microfilm copy, State Library South Australia.

<sup>160</sup> 'Police Court: Resisting the Bailiff,' *Border Watch*, 16 Feb., 1867, microfilm copy, State Library South Australia: 'Patrick replied that it would take a better man than witness to arrest him [sic]. Martin Lynch who stood by, pitchfork in hand, remarked that witness had better be off or he would pitchfork him off the place if he did not go: neither of the defendants laid hands upon the witness, who placed his hand upon Patrick at the time of the arrest which he threw off! Martin held up the pitchfork and witness believed had it not been for Mrs Lynch who was present, would have used it.'

<sup>161</sup> It is noteworthy that the Mount Gambier jail now operates as a bed and breakfast establishment. Descendants of Patrick Lynch may like to spend a night with his ghost.

<sup>162</sup> Graham Huggan, 'Cultural Memory in Postcolonial Fiction: the Uses and Abuses of Ned Kelly,' *Australian Literary Studies* 20.3 (2002), p. 147.

dialectical interplay...'<sup>163</sup> Did this dual aspect drive Edward Geoghegan to write his play? Did Patrick Lynch feel doubly persecuted as an Irish man?

In the story of the magistrate, the Lynch name signifies family pride. Tarnishing it results in an archetypal Irish drama hinging on questions of freedom and authority, and anxieties about agency and autonomy. Geoghegan's Gothic melodrama explores these themes as does my novel. He paints his fictional Lynch father as agonised yet overwhelmed by pride and duty. Geoghegan's fate — disgraced, exiled from father, family and country, excised from, or only intermittently present on the public record — resonates with that of the frontier Lynch son, as well as the magistrate's son newly returned from Spain.

It is fitting that Geoghegan should take up an apocryphal story about a son's disgrace. What existential questions troubled him as he wrote — how fathers can betray their wayward sons? Had his convict psyche employed melodrama to attack authority? Why did the Lynch father capture his imagination? And why did he create a tragic antihero who upholds law at all costs? Perhaps Geoghegan believed the magistrate's harsh morality *ipso loquitur*. Nevertheless, his play dissects themes of power and love, justice and responsibility, pride and loss. Without doubt young Edward, a Protestant, had fallen from grace; Irish Geoghegans descend from an ancient family whose lands, like those of Lynches, were stolen by Oliver Cromwell. He had lost his country twice: once to the English and once by deportation. Why had not family patronage cleared him? Who was Geoghegan's Trinity sponsor?<sup>164</sup> If *he* was influential, why had he not intervened in court? No petition was presented at Geoghegan's criminal trial. The space for 'relationship' lies blank.<sup>165</sup> Where was Malvina, his young wife of eight years, finally revealed on his death certificate?<sup>166</sup> Perhaps the Geoghegan family had fallen into debt, preventing the calling in of

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<sup>163</sup> Huggan, p. 147.

<sup>164</sup> Trinity College, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin, Ireland] Wednesday 8 Feb., 1837; 'Trinity College, M.DCCC.XXXIX, Hilary Term Examinations', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin, Ireland] Monday 11 Feb., 1839. I was interested to note that Trinity College examination results were prefaced by this disclaimer: 'The names of the Successful Candidates in the same Rank of Honour (in each Department throughout the several Classes), are arranged, not in the Order of Merit, but in the Order of their Standing on the College Books.' All students required a sponsor to enter college.

<sup>165</sup> Edward Geoghegan: Aged twenty-six years. National Archives of Ireland: Irish Australian Transport Data Bases: <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search/index>. 20 April, 2005 (Document references: Tr 3, P 55. CRF 1839 G 45).

<sup>166</sup> Edward Geoghegan, death transcription.

favours, familial or civic? Perhaps young Edward was a serial offender and his father as tough as any despairing magistrate called his son to account?

Convict records play out Geoghegan's downward trajectory. No doubt hard labour, poor conditions and his enthusiasm for leave spent at the Victoria Theatre on the mainland, all played their part in his subsequent convictions.<sup>167</sup> This chapter suggests that in writing *The Hibernian Father* Geoghegan worked through his father's grief and his own disgrace. The Magistrate of Galway, on which his is based, examines the loyalties of fathers and sons, not just to each other, but to the notion of family determination and survival. Geoghegan pleaded at his trial that as 'his character was destroyed by the accusation, he might as well be transported, as he could not bear to remain any longer in this country.'<sup>168</sup> The judge complies with this request believing that 'it would be better both for the sake of justice and for the welfare of the prisoner.'<sup>169</sup> Where was Geoghegan's family? While early versions of the magistrate's tale include mothers raising mobs to free their sons, *The Hibernian Father* does not.

Cynics might interpret Geoghegan's plea bargaining as a gamble. Hoping perhaps, to avoid the consequences of looming debt and unemployment, the colony of Australia may have seemed more appealing. No theatre history details his Irish background or how it informs the characters of his most famous play. Geoghegan and his friend Francis Nesbitt, identifiably Irish, 'talked offstage with a thick brogue.'<sup>170</sup> In a 2004 essay on Irish Australian attitudes, Simon Catterson argues that events such as the Eureka Stockade and Vinegar Hill, during which Irish stood up against the law, signified 'their loss of language itself, the centuries-old conflict in which they had always been crushed...the eternal cringing and half-shame which forced upon them, and their oft-derided accent and position of subservience all added

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<sup>167</sup> Horsey, report on Edward Geoghegan; Oppenheim, *Australian Literary Studies* 2:4 (1966): pp. 283-4. Oppenheim relates how on arrival in Sydney his convict position in a government dispensary enabled him privilege and before long he was 'deeply involved' in a "regular system of traffick...carried on between prisoners on the Island and persons in Sydney" whereby 'shoes and "elegant workboxes, very cheap" were manufactured at Cockatoo Island and smuggled out to a well-known shopkeeper in town.' Governor Gipps then confiscated Geoghegan's pass to Sydney and removed him from his post to be "employed as a common labourer (but not in irons)". 'Yet the shortage of medical personnel was such that despite his lack of qualifications a few weeks later he was back as dispenser at Cockatoo Island.' He served his full seven-year sentence.

<sup>168</sup> 'City Sessions, 7 Jun. 1839.

<sup>169</sup> 'City Sessions, 7 Jun. 1839.

<sup>170</sup> F. C. Brewer, *The Drama and Music in New South Wales, Sydney 1892*, p. 11, cited in Roger Covell, ed., *The Currency Lass: Edward Geoghegan* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1976).

up to a negative which only death could compensate'.<sup>171</sup> He extrapolates this idea to suggest that the Irish 'taste for gestures and defiance' and 'reflexive anti-authoritarianism' have become central to Australian culture.<sup>172</sup> This logic plays out in my novel, working against the magistrate paradigm in which the Lynch father not only abandons his rebellious son to the law but acts as its instrument. Irish accents survive in family recounts of at least one apocryphal tale in which Lynch sons stood against the authority.

Furthermore, Australian academic Jennifer Rutherford believes that the concept of law as a deterrent triggered the very behaviour in young men that it was supposed to protect us from. She refers to 'the lawlessness of colonial masculinity'.<sup>173</sup> Confronted by more harsh authority in convict Sydney Geoghegan's nineteenth-century Irish rebelliousness may have quickly risen to the surface. The administration of British law was prejudiced against assertive Irish men battling to make their way in a new colony.<sup>174</sup> Colonial authorities considered larrikin activity criminal and yet, Australian oral and literary narratives commonly idealise or offer grudging respect to the bushranger, and the reckless cattle rustler.<sup>175</sup> Cultural bias cannot be discounted, but if Geoghegan was unfairly treated before or after his misdemeanours in Dublin or

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<sup>171</sup> Simon Catersen, 'Irish-Australian Attitudes,' *Quadrant Magazine* XLVIII. 11 (2004): [http://quadrant.org.au/php/issue\\_view.php](http://quadrant.org.au/php/issue_view.php). Accessed 27 Apr. 2007.

<sup>172</sup> Catersen, 'Irish-Australian Attitudes'.

<sup>173</sup> Jennifer Rutherford, *The Gauche Intruder: Freud, Lacan and the White Australian Fantasy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), p.61. For further discussion of the application of Lacan's work on colonial Australian fathers and sons, see pp. 59-75.

<sup>174</sup> For discussion of Irish attitudes to authority, see Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (1958; Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1970), pp. 49-57; John Docker, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture: a Cultural History* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 263; John Hirst, 'An Oddity for a Start: Convicts and the National Character', *The Monthly*, July 2008: 38. Hirst perceives anti-authoritarianism to be English working-class in origin.

<sup>175</sup> For mythologising Irish outlaws, see Peter Carey's, *True History of the Kelly Gang* (St Lucia: University Queensland Press, 2002); and, Rosa Praed's, *Outlaw and Lawmaker* (1893; London: Pandora Press, Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1988), pp. 278, 209, 140, 6. Praed writes Captain Moonlight or, the novel's passionate and political love interest, Morres Blake, in Gothic tradition. A secret Fenian, afflicted by 'taint in the Blake blood,' he 'dies' leaping from a cliff as he flees the law a second time, abandoning his true love, the plucky and feisty Elsie, and taking the 'Coola curse' with him. Bored and frustrated Elsie ('I am not like you — I can find no outlet in my life') lusts after Moonlight 'because he is a hero' and before she is aware of his identity. Blake is based on John Boyle O'Reilly, a Fenian, Praed had met.

See also, Docker, pp. 262-263, for discussion of this question in relation to television program, *Prisoner*, and its place in popular culture. Docker refers to 'Australian cultural history...developed and transformed in terms of robust mythology, literature and drama of inversion involving prisoners and authority, convict and officer, bush worker and squatter, bushranger and police. In this mythos, looking to white Australia's beginnings as a convict colony, "Australian," or at least "true Australians," are recounted as different from other Western peoples in supporting prisoners rather than their keepers, outlaws rather than police'.

Sydney, he made no complaint in extant letters. Although a convict, he worked the system, making his requests in educated language and in sycophantic tone.<sup>176</sup>

Nevertheless, Geoghegan creates a rebellious Irish son in trouble with the law for *The Hibernian Father*.<sup>177</sup> During rehearsals with the actor, Rosanna, the protagonist in my novel, eagerly engages with many plot points in the play. Gripped in the throes of melancholy, Oscar hurls Alonzo, his Spanish love rival overboard and subsequently makes full confession.<sup>178</sup> His depression, which precedes the murder, may be partly attributed to his guilt over the embezzlement of his father's Spanish trading profits, and partly to jealousy over Alonzo's fondness for Anastasia. Conflicting love for his friend and his lover turn his thoughts to murder.<sup>179</sup> Suspense builds when Alonzo survives, rescued by a fisherman close to shore. During his convalescence he hears of Oscar's impending execution and rushes to save him. The magistrate ignores all intercessions including those of his son's fiance who secures a pardon from the Viceroy, and the play ends with the father, axe in hand, the son, black-draped and prone. Anastasia promptly collapses and dies; the magistrate, in a state of catatonic shock 'remains motionless and seemingly unconscious'.<sup>180</sup> His father's grief resonates with Cuchulain's and that of the traditional Magistrate of Galway.<sup>181</sup>

Geoghegan's magistrate is a man whose sanity is undermined by conflicting instincts. He is the focus of the playwright's investigations. Perhaps Geoghegan's father's actions flesh out the magistrate in his play. Why does he kill the only Lynch heir thus subverting his instinctive desire for survival of his clan, believing their good name to be paramount? In Act One, Scene Two, he presciently foreshadows the outcome of his stubborn morality when he accepts the wardenship.

And as the guardian of my country's laws

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<sup>176</sup> Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 1 Jul. 1852: 'I am Sir, With the greatest respect, Your obedient, grateful, And most humble Servant, Edward Geoghegan.'

<sup>177</sup> See *Unsettled*, for review synopsis of the play: 'Theatrical Register', *The Register...*, 11 May 1846.

<sup>178</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 2. 1:

He frequently would pace the vessel's deck,  
With moody sadness traced upon his brow.

<sup>179</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 2.1:

And when at times, his eye would set upon,  
The unconscious object of his vengeful thoughts  
His angry glance would kindle to a glare.  
A settled hatred and a withering scowl  
Proclaim the conflict raging in his breast.

<sup>180</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 5. 3.

<sup>181</sup> See Chapter II, of this exegesis.

I will as zealously discharge the truth  
As their unspotted purity demands  
Within our courts, Corruption ne-er shall stalk  
But Strict impartiality shall reign.<sup>182</sup>

His soliloquy foreshadows the action and alludes to an archetypal story:

I have enough the Roman father in me,  
Though, in the effort did my heart strings crack,  
To seal his doom and lead him to the Scaffold.<sup>183</sup>

Torn between twin desires, to save his son and mete out justice, he generates a great deal of energy on both accounts. 'Blasted my name, the honour of my house...' he says, when confronted with his son's guilt.<sup>184</sup> This tension also brings the Lynch father and son in *Unsettled* into conflict and perplexes the Lynch women.

A name is 'the symbol of organization regulating marriage,' argues Rutherford, quoting Lacan: 'The prohibition of incest is merely its subjective pivot...' <sup>185</sup> And 'the father, then, is more than his person, more than his characteristics as father and as man. He is primarily a name...' <sup>186</sup> Name haunts the magistrate, Geoghegan and the Lynch settler-men. While a convict, Edward Geoghegan's name had no legal tender. Only free men could submit plays for performance. His 1846 letter railed against the rewards of authorship without a name: 'as my anxiety urged me to struggle for a *name* [sic] I continued to write for the stage in the hope that I might, eventually, find it an advantage.'<sup>187</sup>

Women's names constrain and define them in a different way. Names link them to men. In Act Five, Scene One, the dungeon scene, Oscar prepares to farewell the world. But it is the thought of tarnishing the Lynch name, not love for his son, which reminds the boy's father of his wife, when he makes this speech:

Oh that name, that name! How in my mind it brings  
The recollection of that hour when Jeist [transcription illegible]  
Thy sainted mother placed thee in my arms...

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<sup>182</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 1.2.

<sup>183</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 1.2: 'Roman father' alludes to Lucius Junius Brutus.

<sup>184</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 3. 2.

<sup>185</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), trans. A. Sheridan, p. 66, cited in Jennifer Rutherford, *The Gauche Intruder: Freud, Lacan and the White Australian Fantasy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000), p. 67.

<sup>186</sup> Rutherford, p. 67.

<sup>187</sup> Oppenheim, *Australian Literary Studies* 2:4 (1966): p. 282.

...yet I behold my son  
Worthy inheritor of the stainless name,  
So long and proudly borne in our house.<sup>188</sup>

Late in Act Three, Scene One, Rupert, the villain of the piece, brags that he has brought down the last [Lynch] of ‘the haughty house’.<sup>189</sup> The audience has only the loyalty and forgiveness of Oscar’s Spanish friend and the passionate avocation of his fiance on which to pin their hopes. That Malvina Geoghegan stood by her husband in the Dublin court is supposition but Geoghegan uses Anastasia to expose the Lynch father’s inhumanity, framing universal questions about women’s loyalty, and the ethics of capital punishment. What if the accused is innocent of murder; or a writ served for *habeas corpus*? What if Alonzo survives?

‘It is not Justice rules thy stubborn heart  
But reckless Stoicism and haughty pride,’

Anastasia berates her guardian.<sup>190</sup> Geoghegan rams this point home — pride is the source of the magistrate’s energy not love for his son. The magistrate’s *confidante* and friend, Blake, counsels him to examine his recalcitrant and inhumane stand.<sup>191</sup> The play demands sympathy for the son; a twist makes the magistrate’s behaviour appear more bizarre and unsettling. When he takes up his axe to kill his son, he alludes to ancient antecedents — perhaps to Cuchulain, Abraham and God himself.<sup>192</sup> In *Unsettled*, the Lynch mother is outraged by the magistrate’s cold justice. Geoghegan’s ‘fifteen months engaged in this work’ suggests the play’s importance to him.<sup>193</sup> The play bears out Geoghegan’s conclusion — that there should be no place

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<sup>188</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 5.1.

<sup>189</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 3.1.

<sup>190</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 3. 4.

<sup>191</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 5. 1:

Ask your own heart, explore its secret springs  
Search out the cause and you perchance may find  
That pride as much as principle there weighs  
With justice thus to counterbalance mercy.

<sup>192</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father* 5. 3:

But even as the patriarch of old that I  
When called by Heaven to devote his Son  
So I when honor...the call  
And thus as ministering priest fulfil  
The ... of the law [transcript unclear].

<sup>193</sup> Geoghegan, letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 May 1844, p. 3, col. 12.

for overweening pride in families. How can a father be so highly principled that he will kill his son? In real life, Geoghegan's wife followed him to NSW.

## **Section H: Historical Unreliability**

Apocryphal stories thrive on ambiguities. Knowing this, and because of limited historical evidence of Geoghegan's existence, early research suggested him as an apocryphal figure. He published anonymously and pseudo-anonymously and was referred to in newspaper reports as 'the author of *The Hibernian Father*'. His friend Nesbitt, now the subject of a longer paper, used several names. Theatre histories established Geoghegan and Nesbitt in collective theatre memory as medical students from Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>194</sup> At the time of their Trinity enrolment — somewhere between 1836 and 1847 — it was customary for medical students to enter the MB program after achieving their BA, the college holding to the firm belief that doctors required a classical education.<sup>195</sup>

My 2005 visit to Trinity College led me to believe it impossible for Nesbitt and Geoghegan to be medical students.<sup>196</sup> The Trinity College Alumni lists two Edward Geoghegans neither of whom matches the age of the author of *The Hibernian Father*.<sup>197</sup> A listing for Francis Nesbitt, BA, fails to match known

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<sup>194</sup> While no residency records remain extant, it would be ironic had Geoghegan been accommodated at Trinity in 'Botany Bay,' a square with a range of residences completed in 1817, lying to the north of Library Square. This square is described by J. V. Luce as 'a rather squalid expanse of muddy gravel dotted with stunted hawthorn bushes,' the derivation of the name uncertain but perhaps he suggests, the buildings were as remote as the Sydney colony, perhaps because of Trinity's Australian graduates (Sir Robert Torrens, for instance), or perhaps because of its location in an area where the kitchen garden had once grown botanical specimens. See J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years*, (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, 1992), foreword, T.N. Mitchell, Provost of the College, p. 73.

<sup>195</sup> See J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: the First 400 Years* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, 1992), p. 89.

<sup>196</sup> Whether evidence of their medical training was gathered by anecdote was uncertain. Phillip Parsons and Victoria Chase, *Concise Companion to Theatre in Australia* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1997), p. 198: 'He was reported to have studied medicine in Ireland.'

<sup>197</sup> Edward Geoghegan's convict documents record his age as twenty six in 1839, therefore born in 1813. Neither of the two Geoghegans listed in the alumni seem to fit. The first was born in 1893: 'Geoghegan, Edward, Pen. (Mr Martin), Oct 1, 1810, aged 17; s. of James, Mercator; Dublin. B.A. Vern. 1815. M.A. AEST. 1818 (320)'; the second was born in 1819, and could match the subject of this chapter's chronology but for the fact that he receives his BA degree after nine years, in 1845, when convict Edward Geoghegan was already engaged at the NSW Government dispensary on Cockatoo Island: 'Geoghegan, Edward, Pen. (his father), Dec. 5, 1836, aged 17; s of Edward, Clericus; b. Dublin. B.A. Vern. 1845. Born 1819 (320)'. See George Dames Burtchaell, M.A. K.C. MR.A (sometime Deputy Ulster king of Arms) and Thomas Ulick Sadleir, M.A. MR. A, *Alumni Dublinenses (1593-1860): A Register of the Students Graduates, Professors & Provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin (1593-1860)*, (2 Crowe Street, Dublin: Burtchaell & Sadleir Publication, Alex. Thom & Co, Ltd, 1935).

biographical details and no McCrons (Nesbitt's stage name) or McCrones are listed.<sup>198</sup> The Royal College of Physicians, Dublin, have no record of Geoghegan returning to practice medicine in Ireland.<sup>199</sup> I pursued this line of enquiry for several years believing that although legendary drinking and whoring, absconding, trouble with the law, and interest in theatre were quite consistent with studying medicine at Trinity, Nesbitt's and Geoghegan's student identities were unreliable.<sup>200</sup>

Suppose Geoghegan picked up enough rudimentary medicine to pass himself off as a medical student. Suppose, for example, that he kept company with Trinity fellows because his father worked on campus. Interestingly, an 1820 Trinity memoir makes reference to a Mr Geoghegan, apothecary at the college.<sup>201</sup> Had he been Geoghegan's father, or any other relative, it might explain Edward's medical knowledge. Pelosi intends to pursue this line of research through a contact in Ireland, the following evidence against it being unconvincing, when combined with the actors' age disparities in the alumni.

Between 1839 and 1844 medical students were allowed to enter medicine two years into their BA (in other words they didn't have to graduate). This was described by J.V. Luce as a 'brief break from tradition', and provided a possible explanation for

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<sup>198</sup> Nesbitt, Francis, S.C. (Enniskillen Sch) July 3, 1809, aged 18; s. of Matthew, Generosus; b. Co. Leitrim, B.A. AEST. 1813 (Dublin...614). If our Nesbitt was born in 1793, as these records suggest, he would have arrived in Australia at the age of forty-nine. The *ADB* suggests that he was born in 1810. See Burtchaell and Sadleir.

<sup>199</sup> Robert Mills, Librarian, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, email letter to Gay Lynch, 6 Mar. 2006:

Dear Gay,

Thank you for your interesting enquiry. I have checked through our College records and some other potential sources but, regretfully, I have found no mention of these two men. Records of their medical careers in Ireland, apart from the Trinity ones that you have seen, will be very difficult to find as they, apparently, did not complete their studies and never practised as doctors. I am sorry that we cannot be more helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Mills.

<sup>200</sup> See Constantia Maxwell, *A History of Trinity College Dublin: 1591–1892* (Dublin: The University Press Trinity College, 1946), foreword, G.M. Trevelyan, O.M. pp.15-16; J.V. Luce, *Trinity College Dublin: The First 400 Years*, (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Press, 1992), foreword T.N. Mitchell, Provost of the College; C. Kirkpatrick and T. Percy, *History of the Medical Teaching in Trinity College Dublin and of the School of Physick in Ireland* (Dublin: Hannah and Neale, 1912). See also Lady Morgan's *The O'Brien's and the O'Flaherty's: a National Tale* (c1828; London: Henry Colburn, New Burlington Street, 1828), in which her protagonist, Lord Arranmore, a Trinity student, is involved in a drunken riot in Phoenix Park, Dublin. Arrested in full college [Trinity] regalia he is called to appear before the provost of the college.

<sup>201</sup> Extracts from the journal of Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker (1777–1855), a Trinity College graduate (MA, 1803), in Maxwell, *A History of Trinity College Dublin: 1591–1892*, Appendix B: The Visit of George IV to Dublin in 1821, p. 275: 'We were fortunate enough to get a window in the drawing room of Mr Geoghegan (?) [sic] our apothecary, half a dozen doors from the head of the street and with a commanding view...' [describes a student's attempt to gain access to scaffolding erected in front of houses in Sackville Street during George IV's visit to Dublin].

Geoghegan's absence from the alumni register. After 1844 they were required, once more, to take a full BA. Had Geoghegan left medicine some time during 1839 (he was sentenced in June that year) he would have been a medical student, without an Arts degree; hence his name doesn't appear in the alumni.<sup>202</sup> This, combined with Pelosi's discovery, in July 2008, of an Edward Geoghegan's 1837–39 exam results in newly digitised Dublin newspapers, might persuade a researcher that doubts about his medical studies are unfounded.<sup>203</sup> Exam results were compatible with his Dublin trial date and convict documents, making this identification of Geoghegan seem possible but not conclusive.

Careful reading of new primary documents bring the literary figure of Edward Geoghegan into focus, demanding that we temporarily put aside the medical student as an apocryphal figure, and bring him alive as the playwright, purveyor in Australia of the apocryphal magistrate's tale.

### **Section I: Writing Against the Canon, Melodrama**

Writing against the canon is a strong feature of apocryphal stories. This section argues that Geoghegan did not deliberately set out to do so, in transforming the Lynch story. It has been hypothesised in the previous section of this exegesis that the author of *The Hibernian Father* uses the magistrate's story to play out an archetypal drama about his fall from paternal grace. Geoghegan uses melodrama to tell his apocryphal story.

Melodrama and Gothic melodrama have close links but there is no room here to delineate these play genres. Theatre historian Leslie Rees accepts *The Hibernian Father* as melodrama; 'no doubt the verse is commonplace, with end-stopped lines

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<sup>202</sup> Luce, p. 89.

<sup>203</sup> Edward Geoghegan, examination results, Richard MacDonnell (Senior Lecturer), exam results, 'Trinity College, 1837, Hilary Term Examinations, Junior Freshman, Honours in Science, Second Rank, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin, Ireland] Wednesday 8 Feb., 1837; Edward Geoghegan, examination results, Richard Macdonnell (Senior Lecturer), Trinity College, M.DCCC.XXXIX, Trinity Term Examinations, Senior Freshmen, Honours in Science, First Rank, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin, Ireland] Monday 21 May, 1838; Edward Geoghegan, examination results, 'Trinity College, M.DCCC.XXXIX, Hilary Term Examinations, Charles Hare (Senior Lecturer), Junior Sophister, Honours in Science, Second Rank, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* [Dublin, Ireland] Monday 11 Feb., 1839. See also, 'Death of Dr. Geoghegan', obituary, *Maitland Mercury and Hunter General Advertiser*, vol. xxvi, no. 3227, 14 Jan. 1869, p. 2, col., 4: 'He had, when a young man, pursued his studies in medicine at the Paris University, where he was successful in obtaining several degrees.' This information opens up a new avenue of research.

galore and dreary tricks of inversion;’ but despite this likes the play’s ‘intensity’, describing it as ‘perhaps the earliest Australian-written emotional play to make an impact on the public’.<sup>204</sup> He cites Paul McGuire, author of *The Australian Theatre* (1948): ‘it was melodrama at the highest pitch.’<sup>205</sup> The *Weekly Register*’s reviewer (1844) believes the play’s melodrama detracts from an otherwise literary script. He suggests that although the play has ‘literary merit,’ the ‘defects are a want of probability in some of the incidents and a straining after effect, after the modern melodramatic style.’<sup>206</sup>

Genuinely exciting — complete with brigands holed up in caves, heroes rushing along treacherous pathways through the mountains, a French villain (pirate) disguised as priest, vengeance and ransom, a virtuous girl abducted and prison scenes in a grim castle — *The Hibernian Father* shares some of the tropes of Gothic melodrama, as well as themes of jealousy, violence, virtue and death.<sup>207</sup> The father poses greater threat to his son than the villain; the damsel in distress dies trying to rescue her beloved; the ending is unhappy rather than happy, and tragic rather than semi-tragic. The play lacks the natural disasters and unremitting slapstick conflict of traditional melodrama, ending in real violence, and on a note of horror. And the villain does not return to gloat over the father’s misfortune in the final scene; perhaps the father is more spectre-like. Geoghegan adapts melodrama to suit his apocryphal material, leaning towards realism. Among others, John Docker believes popular melodrama of the 1830s influenced the development of the Victorian novel.<sup>208</sup> In turn, Geoghegan was heavily influenced by the novels of his time.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Rees, pp. 25-6.

<sup>205</sup> McGuire, p. 58.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Theatrical Register,’ review, *Weekly Register*, 11 May 1844, vol. 2, no. 42: 584.

<sup>207</sup> Melodrama grew out of the eighteenth-century Gothic play and novel tradition. Both had popular appeal and used theatrical effects. See Gothic Drama: <http://www.enotes.com/nineteenth-century-criticism/gothic-drama>. 12 Sep. 2007: ‘Gothic dramas were typically set in dungeons or castles, ruined churches or cemeteries, dense forests, steep mountainsides, or other forbidding natural landscapes. Their dramatic situations were usually projected far into the past for the purpose of deflecting criticism by contemporary reviewers who found the Gothic reliance on ghosts and specters to be out of step with the post-Enlightenment age. By placing the action safely back in medieval times, playwrights attempted to make the characters’ belief in superstition and the supernatural seem more plausible. Gothic themes involved terror, jealousy, violence, death, abductions, seduction of virtuous young women in the sentimental novel tradition, and revelations of crimes and punishments. Progression from enclosure or imprisonment to freedom characterized many Gothic texts, as did the influence of the past on present (and future) characters and events’.

<sup>208</sup> Docker, p. 248.

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of works.

In keeping with melodramatic convention, characters in *The Hibernian Father* speak their deepest feelings, of sexual jealousy and turpitude, of hatred and revenge, of fear and despair, often in blank-versed soliloquy. Docker argues that melodrama ‘exteriorises conflict. It makes visible psychic structures at work in relationships and situations... Melodrama attempts to break through the repression of daily life by reaching towards and bringing to the surface the most basic, the most primary roles and relationships, of Father, Daughter, Protector, Persecutor, Judge, Duty, Obedience, Justice, exteriorised in particular characters and in their conflicts and confrontations.’<sup>210</sup> Geoghegan brings the magistrate’s singular and obsessive purpose to the foreground.

The play’s denouement also subverts a classic melodramatic restoration of order after chaos and triumph of good over evil. Good sense has not prevailed, innocents have died, and justice appears flawed. Geoghegan’s Lynch son is not a murderer. Furthermore, his complex characters have no clear moral conviction; all but the magistrate will use patronage to resist the law. The play lacks melodramatic moral clarity: even the thwarted villain enacts revenge on past injustice. The Lynch father struggles with his conscience but his commitment to law and order never wavers. True to the apocryphal story Geoghegan opts for an unhappy ending.

Unlike struggling melodramatic heroines, Anastasia shows great goodness and agency, morally defending her lover against her stubborn guardian, risking her life by marching into the hills for help and in the process, putting her life and maidenly virtue at risk. Resisting sexual assault and kidnap she spirits a dagger from her bodice attempting to commit suicide before her rescue. This decision horrifies Rosanna in my novel. Anastasia’s death, in the final scene — set in Lynch’s Castle, a Gothic mansion — underlines her refusal to live under patriarchal law. The fine line between evil deeds and law is made doubly ironic by *habeas corpus*. Lynch characters in *Unsettled* discuss the moral implications of Anastasia’s role in the play.

Reminding us that melodrama made up ninety-five percent of nineteenth-century drama for clear sociological reasons, Eric Irwin quotes Booth: ‘the lot of a member of the working class ... a harsh and poor one at best, crushed under a massive edifice of authority power and wealth dependent on him for its strength and giving him nothing in return but a bare and hard existence...Melodrama fulfils a real need in

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<sup>210</sup> Docker, p. 252.

human nature and has its own logic and approach.’<sup>211</sup> During the 1840s Sydney remained a convict town, its theatre pits populated by noisy rabble.<sup>212</sup> Melodramas received a warm reception and *The Hibernian Father* was considered more moral than some.

Apart from the word *miadh* (Irish for bad luck: pronounced ‘meeorr’), and the references to Galway’s trade relationship with Spain, *The Hibernian Father* does not have a particularly Irish flavour. Gothic melodramas of the nineteenth-century frequently portrayed Irish peasants, particularly for an English audience, as ‘comic, drunken buffoons,’ after the 1840s, as sinister subversives, and after the 1850s, as Fenians.<sup>213</sup> Luke Gibbons argues that the anti-Catholicism of Gothic genre merged with British determination to see the Irish as a doomed race during the penal years.<sup>214</sup> A reviewer for the *Weekly Register* laments the *The Hibernian Father*’s departure from convention but perceives the fault to be a wardrobe malfunction: ‘Most assuredly the “dresses and properties” want a complete reform, for of late they have been beyond all measure inappropriate’.<sup>215</sup> In fact the play makes no mention of peasants, only townspeople and brigands. Geoghegan’s magistrate, a figure of power and authority, leads a cast of historical characters representing the fifteenth-century Galway mercantile class trading with Spain. In this way Geoghegan writes against the

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<sup>211</sup> Booth, cited (no page given) in ‘Melodrama’, Irwin, *Dictionary of Australian Theatre*, pp. 192-3.

<sup>212</sup> See letter ‘To the Editors of the Sydney Morning Herald’, 16 May 1844, in which the writer compares *The Hibernian Father* with ‘those *legitimate* concomitants... which, although not exactly congenial with the classic muse of a Trinity man, are in exact accordance with a stage where the English drama is discarded for Whitechapel horrors and French atrocities, and where the management only aim at enlisting the sympathies of their pit and gallery audiences in the interesting misfortunes of noble-minded ruffians and warm-hearted affectionate murderers’; and Leeanne Richards, *A Short History of the Australian Theatre to 1910*, <http://www.hat-archive.com/shorthistory.htm>. 30 Sep. 2006: ‘“There were brawls in the stalls, members of the audience frequently leapt on stage in the middle of performances and the performers themselves misbehaved. All this behaviour combined, reinforced the stereotype of theatre as an activity which encouraged immoral behaviour. The rowdy behaviour was typical of audiences of this period. Performers often used the stage to ad lib indelicate jokes, or to poke fun at members of the upper classes.’

<sup>213</sup> Edward Hirsch, ‘The Imaginary Irish Peasant,’ *PMLA* (Published by Modern Language Association), Vol. 106, No. 5 (Oct., 1991), pp. 1119, 20 Jun. 2007, [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org).

<sup>214</sup> Luke Gibbons, *Gaelic Gothic: Race, Colonisation and Irish Culture* (Galway: Arlen House, 2004).

<sup>215</sup> *The Weekly Register*, 11 May 1844, , Vol. 2, No. 42, p. 584: ‘We are surprised that Mr Simes, who is usually so happy in his own characters, should commit the absurdity of dressing Irish peasants like mountebanks; Parsons and Chase, p. 258: ‘Simes was a mainstay of theatre in Sydney from 1832 until his death, partly from overwork, in 1846... Simes was in the opening company at the Royal Victoria Theatre. He and his wife were responsible for costumes and property. .. acting manager and also stage manager’.

Gothic melodrama canon. Weiner judges that *The Hibernian Father* 'stands up very well' when compared with 'hundreds of trashy, poetic melodramas' of the period.<sup>216</sup>

While not entirely true to genre *The Hibernian Father* encapsulates and re-interprets the magistrate's moral dilemma in melodramatic style with Gothic elements. With the influx of gold-seekers in the 1850s theatre-going became an even more popular pursuit in Australia. By 1859, when the actor delivers *The Hibernian Father* into Rosanna's hands, colonial theatre is well established in regional cities, although the first travelling troupe does not arrive in Mount Gambier until 1864, nor Miss Aitkin, "the world renowned Tragedienne", until 1865.<sup>217</sup>

## **Section J: Literary Transformations: *Unsettled***

Geoghegan's play provides discourse for Rosanna's and actor George's verbal and sexual gymnastics in *Unsettled*: Rosanna plays at acting; George plays with her body, her trust, and her affections. It provides intellectual stimulus for an Irish girl who yearns to know about life. It screens her love affair with the actor and her attempt to realise herself, underlining the irony that she has left the constrictions of family life only to work as a housemaid. Lusting after Rosanna and her brother's horse, George considers further dalliance in a cottage near the Melbourne racetrack. He placates her growing impatience to leave Gambierton by fanning her anxiety about the loss of her horse, and encouraging her ambition to become a Melbourne actress.

The play provides an intellectual outlet for Rosanna's mother, who uses the text to reaffirm her conflicted love for her family, and as a conduit for her fears about her rebellious and yet vulnerable children and her needy and volatile husband. Family discussions about the plot allow her to play out her helplessness as a woman on the frontier, at the same time articulating her strong commitment to loyalty and endurance. Geoghegan's play offers the settler-Lynch family a discourse in which to act out family and archetypal conflicts. Women take a low profile in many versions of the magistrate's tale. The guilty boy's fiance, his mother and, in one case his sister, play a peripheral role in others. In several versions the angry mother belongs to one of Galway's founding families, and raises a mob against her husband. As we

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<sup>216</sup> Weiner, p. 464. Indeed, he says, 'if Geoghegan had written it in English instead of that execrable stage verse of the time, it may even have been a cut above the ordinary.'

<sup>217</sup> Les R. Hill, *Mount Gambier: the City Around a Cave* (Leabrook, South Australia: Investigator Press, 1972), p. 214.

have seen in Chapter I mothers do not feature in similar biblical narratives, perhaps because they could not kill a son.

Young, fit and a keen horsewoman, Rosanna is frustrated by her quiet life in a boundary rider's hut. Entering the world of the play expands her outlook, offering a personal link — the characters in the play are Lynches — with her birthplace and, through the actor, the outside world. Such a plot device fits my time-frame and allows the girl, who is culturally marooned, to examine her family through performance art. In plays by Reverend Edward Groves and Edward Geoghegan, Anastasia, the boy's fiance, attempts to broker a pardon with the President of Connaught and the Viceroy of Ireland. In Geoghegan's she arrives too late to save her lover. While sentimentalised in both plays, her character is nonetheless heroic. Rosanna and Anastasia are both stuck. The climax of *Unsettled* at the wreck of the *Admella* stymies Rosanna's hopeful plans: George is likely drowned, taking with him one of the few remaining copies of the play manuscript. Only two of Geoghegan's hand-written manuscripts remain extant making this idea feasible.

Several ironies surface at the wreck: Lucifer, the racehorse, the object of George's desire and Edwin's disgrace, saves himself by swimming ashore; the drowning of Rosanna's lover leaves her to cope alone with an unwed pregnancy and family stigma — the priest will no longer consider her worthy enough to teach in his school; the actor will never get to play his part in the play or in the lives of his lover and his wife; and Skelly's and Rosanna's transcript of the manuscript remains in its rightful place with the Lynch family.

Rosanna's complaint that Charles Dickens undermines the agency of *his* creation, dutiful Little Dorrit, could apply to *Unsettled*. My imagining of the real Lynch girls is based on them remaining at home until they die. Reinscribing one of these two historical figures — mainly unaccounted for in historical records and in masculine apocryphal stories — provided motivation for writing a strong Lynch girl. Geoghegan's play allows Rosanna to engage with Anastasia, an apocryphal Lynch fiance: on the one hand a heroic girl, on the other, a passive victim who dies of shock in the final scene. She has Rosanna's sympathy.

Women's lives have always been shaped by the behaviour of their men. That colonial accounts overlook women is well attested, but Mrs Maria Lynch is represented in the newspaper story about her husband and her son as silent; she is

spared a stereotypical depiction as Irish biddy, drunken and raucous outside her filthy skillion. She offered, it is reported, a mediating role. During the arrest of her son, Mrs Lynch has no identity, no name apart from her husband's. She stands by and at the same time, against her man. She is subsidiary.

Eilish Lynch, the mother in my novel, takes an active role in the family's interpretation of the apocryphal tale during kitchen readings of the play and in conversations with her children, but she has no antecedent in Geoghegan's tale. She reminds the family of their maternal line — her family — whom, she believes, would take action to save their son. This conviction is balanced by her powerlessness in controlling the narrative direction of Geoghegan's script, or feeling confident enough to ride out in bad weather to save her husband and son, while she has duty of care for little children.

Stimulating conversations and a shared goal — when transcribing the play — bring Eilish, Rosanna and Skelly closer. The Lynch story brings colour and excitement to Skelly's fragile life. Father's memory of the apocryphal story of the magistrate and of Groves's play enables him to engineer and guide a kitchen performance of Geoghegan's play to a cathartic if stressful conclusion. This enacted authority softens him, providing a safe pathway for Rosanna to speak to him about her fears. *Unsettled* allows the apocryphal story of the magistrate to enter the family's narrative repertoire and disturb their consciousness.

In the final scenes of my novel, Geoghegan's play unites a family damaged by their son Edwin's swift conviction and incarceration, confirming and strengthening their autonomy, and beginning the necessary rebuilding of self-esteem. The reintroduction of the apocryphal story of the magistrate, mediated through the play, provides my characters with an ethical framework for responding to Edwin's plight. Their response resembles and overturns the apocryphal story, in the same motion. In fighting their inner demons — hatred of authority, and fear of breaking up their family — the Lynches unite, acting quickly to demonstrate the power of individual consciousness over the circular and patterned elements of apocryphal stories.

## Section K: Speculation

Had Geoghegan chosen the magistrate's story for its narrative quality, its potential to fill a theatre house or, for its grim speculative elements about pride bringing down the family house? *Unsettled* speculates on an alternative outcome to a similar Lynch story in an Australian settler-context. No doubt in real life, Martin Lynch would take umbrage at Lacan's fancy ideas about fathers and their sons, and make a claim for social justice. Although we cannot know the specific circumstances of the case it is possible that Patrick Lynch was innocent of the crime of which he was convicted and, therefore, his family stood by him, reshaping their identity.

Had Lynches viewed *The Hibernian Father* they might have seen it as a moral, if melodramatic tragedy, signifying their unstable sense of well being. No oral tales mention Lynches travelling to Galway, let alone to attend a theatre performance. Nonetheless, newspaper reviews of Reverend Groves's successful play circulated in Galway during the period from 1831–1851 during which time there were forty-four performances in Dublin alone.<sup>218</sup> 'I dare say you know the story; it formed the groundwork very lately of a tragedy', wrote Maria Edgeworth (1834), referring to the story and the play, when visiting the tourist precinct of the magistrate, in Galway.<sup>219</sup> Furthermore, according to Thackeray, who toured Ireland in 1843, Groves's play was performed in Galway: 'A tragedy called "The Warden of Galway" has been written on the subject, and was acted a few nights before my arrival,' he wrote.<sup>220</sup>

In my novel, the Lynches lived in a village twenty miles from Galway Township and had heard discussions about a successful and long-running Irish play on the subject of Magistrate Lynch. Irish landlords may have been vocal about the Dublin play, perhaps while at market or shoeing their horses.<sup>221</sup> A newspaper review suggests this was the case.<sup>222</sup> Perhaps Sydney visitors to the Meredith station may

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<sup>218</sup> Groves (LLB), preface.

<sup>219</sup> Maria Edgeworth, letter to her youngest brother, Michael Pakenham, Edgeworthstown, 19 Feb., 1834, published in Barry, introduction), p. 391.

<sup>220</sup> Thackeray, p. 132.

<sup>221</sup> According to a Lynch family oral story, Martin Lynch was a blacksmith in Woodford.

<sup>222</sup> 'Theatre Royal', preview, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 17 Dec., 1831.

have seen Geoghegan's play: 'It was played until it became *stale* [sic],' wrote JC, a Sydney correspondent.<sup>223</sup> The idea that the Lynches may have heard about Groves's or Geoghegan's play is not far-fetched.

### **Section L: Economic and Political Manipulation**

Geoghegan saw little personal profit for his fifteen months spent writing the commercially successful play *The Hibernian Father*.<sup>224</sup> Although he had produced seven plays in four years, he claims to have earned less than six pounds overall. His hopes for a glorious career in the theatre were never fulfilled. 'Fate seems to have a spite against me,' he writes after he has regained his freedom and cannot find employment at the Victoria.<sup>225</sup> *The Hibernian Father* has never been played or published since 1871. Only *Currency Lass* has been revived.

Performance with no publication relegates many plays to the ether. According to Pelosi it is remarkable that copies of *The Hibernian Father* survive at all.<sup>226</sup> The Colonial Secretary did not approve every play and indeed not every play was subsequently performed. He required a copy of the play be retained. Authors and actors borrowed back their plays to make new copies, failing to return them and many originals were lost. Pelosi explains that 'some colonial plays have only survived because the actors who had performed them retained a copy, or theatres kept collections of plays performed in them. However, many theatres of the time burned down. 'Indeed,' she says, 'the Royal Victoria Theatre, in Pitt Street, Sydney, was destroyed by fire in July 1880'.<sup>227</sup> In my novel the actor's copy of the play is unaccounted for.

The loss of hard copies of many of Geoghegan's plays made his pessimism well-placed. 'The projected Benefit at the City Theatre could be the means of

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<sup>223</sup> JC, *The Australian*, 15 May, 1844; also cited in Weiner: p.457.

<sup>224</sup> Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sep. 1846: 'Still fate seemed to have a spite against me — in consequence of another change in the dramatic Ministry my tragedy [*Hibernian Father*] was again returned and would have been consigned to oblivion had you not chanced to mention it to Mr Knight who from your favourable opinion of its merits produced it much to his own pecuniary advantage, though my reward was scarcely more than the name of Author.'

<sup>225</sup> Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sept. 1846; For discussion of the complex social stratification in a colony whereby trade mixed with gentility, see Kirsten McKenzie, 'Of Convicts and Capitalists: Honour and Colonial Commerce in 1830s Cape Town and Sydney,' *Australian Historical Studies Special Issue: Reflections on Australian History* 33, 118 (2002): pp. 216-222. Geoghegan's forgery charge may have been a direct result of lack of local currency.

<sup>226</sup> Pelosi, pp. 21-34.

<sup>227</sup> Pelosi, pp. 21-34.

enabling me in a great measure to rise above the difficulties which now surround and press upon me,' he writes in 1852.<sup>228</sup> This contrasts sharply with the buoyant optimism of his 1844 creation, the playwright Simile in *The Currency Lass*.<sup>229</sup> In 1966, *The Hibernian Father* was briefly rediscovered only to be dismissed and relegated once more to obscurity. One copy of the manuscript survives, attached to letters to the Colonial Secretary, and on microfiche, in the NSW. State Archives. It is to be hoped that the play will one day be revived.<sup>230</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The repetitive nature of apocryphal stories ensures that they retain key elements; nevertheless, each new narrator shapes them. Whilst I hope that *Unsettled* faithfully conveys the narrative of *The Hibernian Father*, I have shaped it to suit my purpose, showing the impact of civil justice and family pride on a settler-Lynch girl. The play serves multiple functions in my novel.<sup>231</sup> It mediates the apocryphal story of the magistrate for my characters. For most of my research journey I mourned Geoghegan's historical absence. Why had I thought of putting aside my novel to track another wayward Irish son, for a lost story, an unpublished manuscript or a life lived in the shadows? History is seductive.

During my research I found advertisements for *A Trip to Geelong*, performed 15 July 1861 at the Princess's Theatre, Melbourne, which ratified my decision to write Geoghegan and his play into my 1859 novel.<sup>232</sup> Since then an advertisement for the same play, at the Victorian Royal Haymarket, 19 October, 1863, has been

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<sup>228</sup> Geoghegan, letter to Edward Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary, 16 Sep. 1846.

<sup>229</sup> Geoghegan, *The Currency Lass or My Native Girl: a Musical Play in Two Acts*, ed., Covell, p. 31: 'Admirable! Exquisite! Beautiful! There's imagination, poetry, taste, pathos! Positively, the sun of Australia seems to possess wonderful powers in fertilising genius! What a fortunate idea was mine to abandon a country where envy blights merit, where authors sink into insignificance before scene-painters, mechanists, tailors and property men, and actors play second business to goats, monkeys, horses, dogs and elephants! Here I will pitch my tent and boldly struggle for dramatic fame'.

<sup>230</sup> Geoghegan, *The Hibernian Father*.

<sup>231</sup> Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), identifies those that interpret the text by means of ideas or ideologies outside the text; those that explain the text by means of linguistic, semiological and analysis, and those that use the historical context and the author's biography to penetrate the text, as writers of metatext. Geoghegan's life and work informed and enriched my research on apocryphal stories.

<sup>232</sup> Eric Irvin, *Dictionary of the Australian Theatre: 1788–1914* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985), pp. 110-111: '...possible his last work for the stage.'

added.<sup>233</sup> Irvin argues that the 1860s was a difficult time for local playwrights. The aftermath of the gold rushes brought unemployment and financial difficulties for theatres. English plays were favoured over colonial ones, and world-wide audiences were interested in new ‘sensationalism’ with its dramatic stage effects.<sup>234</sup> We now know that Geoghegan’s theatre career ended in Singleton where he worked for three years as town clerk; his obituary restored him to the public record as doctor, ‘forcible writer’, ‘gentleman with a *penchant* for the stage’ and as a ‘valuable and trusted officer’ — not a hint of convict stain.<sup>235</sup> His life and work deserve more attention, an entry, at least, in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*.<sup>236</sup>

Transformations of the magistrate’s story invariably turn bleak: Rosanna’s and Skelly’s plans come to little. Geoghegan died young after a difficult life; although no longer an apocryphal figure, he brought the Galway magistrate’s apocryphal story to Australia, now safely installed in my novel and part of Lynch family collective memory.

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<sup>233</sup> Veronica Kelly, compilation, ‘Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850–1869,’ File 4: Productions. 20 Aug. 2008. [http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:10249/vk\\_prods\\_50-69.pdf](http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:10249/vk_prods_50-69.pdf)

<sup>234</sup> Eric Irwin, *Australian Melodrama: Eighty Years of Popular Theatre*: p. 20, and pp. 27-8.

<sup>235</sup> Geoghegan, obituary.

<sup>236</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, Copyright 2006, ISSN 1833–7538 (Canberra: Australian National University, updated continuously). 1 Mar. 2009. No entry. <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/>

## Chapter III: Apocryphal Stories Generated by the Wreck of the *Admella*

Introduction

Section A: A Diasporic Apocryphal Story — South-east Irish (1847–59)

Section B: A Postcolonial Apocryphal Story: *Booandik* Nation

Section C: Archetypal Exiled Sons, Apocryphal Story: Adam Lindsay Gordon

Section D: Lynch Family Apocryphal Story: Martin Lynch and the *Admella*

Conclusion

### **Introduction**

The wreck of the inter-colonial steamer *Admella* at 4 a.m. on Saturday, 6 August 1859 precipitated a flurry of narratives, both apocryphal and historical. The ship struck Carpenters Rocks off the coast of South-east South Australia in heavy fog. Six horses pitched into the sea; passengers and crew scrambled onto the deck and clung to the rigging. Two crew members drowned after setting out for shore, and two ships passed by. News of the shipwreck finally arrived in Mount Gambier, two and a half days later, at four o'clock the following Monday afternoon.<sup>237</sup>

The isolation of the site and stormy weather hindered attempts to rescue the survivors, visible and audible from the beach, for eight days. Every delay increased the unprecedented suffering and cost more lives. For over a week the predicament of the *Admella* loomed large in the collective imagination of South Australians; their

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<sup>237</sup> Samuel Mossman, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the "Admella": Inter-Colonial Steamer on the Southern Coast of Australia: Drawn up From the Rescuers and Survivors* (Melbourne: Committee of the "Admella" Fund, J.H. Moulines & Co., November 1859), p. 28.

Parliament adjourned. Eighty-nine people died of exposure, thirst or drowning. Twenty-four survived.

The *Admella* story provides the novel *Unsettled* with a dramatic climax. Within hours of the wreck, Moorecke and Rosanna arrive at the site. Edwin Lynch has sold his stallion to his sister's lover to resolve a gambling debt. Lucifer, instead of travelling to Melbourne for the Champion Sweepstakes, is found running through sand hills near the wreck. Rosanna's lover is feared drowned, taking with him his manuscript of a play about the Magistrate of Galway, and leaving Rosanna pregnant with his child. Her father, based on settler Martin Lynch, rides with the first rescue party to the beach. Lynch presence at the wreck is based on an apocryphal family story.

A major historical event, the wreck of the *Admella* mobilised master narratives concerned with colonial identities. Carl Jung might have considered the wreck an epic clash between man and nature, akin to the battles settlers repeatedly fought against fire, flood and traditional land owners. Despite the recent installation of the telegraph and the use of boats, the rescue attempts depended on horses and humans, fine weather and calm seas. Until *The Border Watch* opened its doors on 26 April 1861, the closest town, Mount Gambier, had no newspaper. Adelaide and Melbourne newspapers told the traumatic stories. Furthermore, they exposed political and economic rivalries between the colonies of Victoria and South Australia, and the vulnerability of settlers in the South-east region which lies between them.

Apocryphal stories shaped all these narratives, reconstructing diasporic and family collective memories. Enduring elements from hypotexts entered hypertexts; speculation inflected them in metatexts and each linked intertextually with other texts. They transformed in oral and written accounts that promoted and resisted the pioneer enterprise.

### ***Section A: A Diasporic Apocryphal Story — South-east Irish (1847–59)***

An Irish reading of the wreck may seem difficult to sustain when official narratives — the commissioned Mossman report (1859), the Adelaide *Register* and the 'Parliamentary Report on the *Admella* (1860) — for the most part, ignore diasporic

identities.<sup>238</sup> Irish people were present in all the *Admella* narratives: they were there amongst the passengers; amongst riders in apocryphal stories about raising the alarm; amongst the settler rescuers on the beach; and involved in the inter-colonial political fracas which arose over funding rescue attempts. And yet as an identifiable group, unlike English, Scottish, Prussian, Chinese and Indigenous Boandik, they were absent from 1850–1860 lists and indexes of South-east colonists.

Researching an apocryphal story about Martin Lynch riding to the wreck of the *Admella* with the earliest rescue party throws up questions about why Irish settlers were often missing from or marginalised in historical narratives of pre-1859 South-east South Australia. Key Irish diasporic figures represented in this chapter could never be described as simply Irish; but *Unsettled* demanded characters with regional and diasporic identities. Reading Homi Bhaba's, 'DissemiNation', cautions a writer not to trap their characters in easy stereotypes labelled 'Irish', 'South-east settler', or 'migratory' family but, rather, to consider the complex interplay between such categories. *Unsettled* is not a 'counter-narrative' that might 'evoke and erase its totalising boundaries'.<sup>239</sup> It is the story of an Australian family who lived on the frontier. On their journey, and until the moment they arrived, they were Irish. By 1859, seven years after their migration, the settler-Lynches no doubt had forged new identities. A plethora of narratives could have shaped their consciousness: apocryphal stories of name and family, Irish archetypal stories linked with landscape, anxious frontier stories about violence and survival, and protection of their brood, diasporic stories of race and class, and local stories of enmity and friendship. *Unsettled* depicts Lynches as having stoic and melancholic dispositions, balanced by propitious luck and a strong sense of justice.<sup>240</sup>

Frontier writings, including letters, newspaper accounts and literary constructions reflect a white hegemonic framework favouring the dominant colonisers, English and Scottish, with some attention later paid to Germans. This

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<sup>238</sup> 'Colonists' was the most common epithet.

<sup>239</sup> Homi K. Bhaba, 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', *Nation and Narration* (1990; London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), p. 300.

<sup>240</sup> My concerns about balancing Rosanna's darkness against her hopeful mania were often alleviated after reading Irish books like Liam O'Flaherty's, *The Black Soul* (1924; London: Jonathon Cape Ltd., 1936); I hope that she and her father stay true to the spirit of the Irish national psyche, and the Lynch one in particular, without stereotypical depiction. Rosa Praed addresses this issue in her Gothic settler novel, *Outlaw and Lawmaker* (1893), p.209: 'I have got the Celtic temperament, and I can't help my queer forebodings and superstitions and mad impulses, and generally melodramatic way of looking at things...' Blake tells Elsie. Praed's text teems with references to race and blood — a preoccupation of the nineteenth century — particularly Celtic strains.

trend was not limited to the South-east. Irish are omitted altogether from the index of the *Wakefield Companion to SA History* (2001).<sup>241</sup> Les Hill's comprehensive 1972 history of Mount Gambier contains sections on 'Early German Settlers,' Chinese, and Aborigines, but none on Scots nor Irish as specific ethnic groups, distinct from Catholic parishioners.<sup>242</sup> His list of two hundred and three Mount Gambier pioneers and their countries of origin includes ten Irish patriarchs and two Irish widows. Scots, German and English landowners dominate the list.<sup>243</sup> He mentions four women — two of them Irish — in each case managing business and property as a consequence of their husband's deaths.

The Strangways Act (1866) opened up pastoral lands for smaller 'family farm' purchases enabling Lynches to buy land. Historians Pam and Brian O'Connor, authors of half-a-dozen local histories on South-east South Australia, document the stories of many families who took advantage of this opportunity, in *Second to None: a Story of the Rural Pioneers in Mount Gambier* (1988). Yet, while they make reference to the 'Irishness' of many early settler families, they make no attempt to construct them as a cultural entity. Their index contains no entry for 'Irish', but 'Germans' are named as a group. The *Birthplace by Commonwealth Censuses, 1828–1991* records no Irish-born immigrants for South Australia against 1846–59.<sup>244</sup> Although it is accepted that Irish made up a smaller percentage of the population than in other states, James Jupp's preface notes that South Australian censuses frequently failed to record place of birth, preferring questions about Aboriginality and religion, and generally keeping records in a haphazard way.<sup>245</sup> The 1861 census recorded 12,694 South Australians born in Ireland.<sup>246</sup> Irish people arriving overland from other colonies, like the Lynches in 1852, may have been counted late.

If histories of the area fail to define Irish settlers as a homogenous group, this may also be, in part, because they were not. Superficially, at least, they appeared more fragmented than other settler groups. Suggestion by the O'Connors that the Sutton family were not considered 'real Irish,' as they were descended from a pair of

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<sup>241</sup> Wilfred Prest, ed., *Wakefield History of South Australia* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2001).

<sup>242</sup> Hill, pp. 31-57.

<sup>243</sup> Hill, pp. 31-57.

<sup>244</sup> James Jupp and Barry York, *Birthplaces of the Australian People: Colonial & Commonwealth Censuses, 1828–1991* (Canberra: Centre for Immigration & Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences Australian National University (CIMS), 1995), p.17.

<sup>245</sup> Jupp and York, p.1.

<sup>246</sup> Jupp and York, p.17.

English brothers conscripted in the army to fight an uprising in Ireland, and who subsequently married County Wicklow girls', illustrates the complexities of recording ethnicity.<sup>247</sup> Anne Ashworth's 1994 booklet on the history and influence of religion in the South East refers to *Irish Catholics*, Scottish Presbyterians, Lutheran Prussians and Anglican English.<sup>248</sup> The Mount Gambier Catholic Church Centenary booklet explains that 'Catholic Irish, as elsewhere in the colonies, were a significant influence in the development of the church in Mount Gambier'.<sup>249</sup> But the notion of designating Catholics as Irish is misleading; the forefathers of the Catholic Church in Mount Gambier sprang from various émigré groups, from Scottish, and English backgrounds as well as Irish.<sup>250</sup> Mount Gambier's largest benefactor, William Crouch, converted to the Catholic faith when he married an Irish Catholic girl. At the time of the wreck of the *Admella*, Catholic parishioners made up a complex and diverse group and were widely distributed over a parish covering twenty thousand square miles, and served by a peripatetic priest on horseback. The first Mass was held in a small storeroom attached to Black Byng's Hotel in 1855.<sup>251</sup> Services were often held in private homes, most notably at the Sutton family home at Dismal Swamp. Perhaps only major donor families were recorded.

Language can signify ethnicity.<sup>252</sup> Isolated Irish frontier families, particularly those from the west — the Lynches came from Connaught, in the west — most likely spoke Gaelic at home.<sup>253</sup> A close reading of South-east history shows Irish settlers present from the beginning, and demonstrates their sociability. Pauline Rule's studies of 1850s colonial Victoria suggest that while several Irish families might settle together 'overwhelmingly, Irish women did not live in segregated groups bound together by their ethnicity.'<sup>254</sup> If some Irish settlers came to the South-east in family groups, or like the Sutton family, sponsored chain migrations of family members, it

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<sup>247</sup> Pam and Brian O'Connor, *Second To None: A Story of the Rural Pioneers of Mount Gambier* (Mount Gambier: District Council of Mount Gambier, 1988), p.105.

<sup>248</sup> Ann Faith Ashworth, *Love and Endurance: the History and Influence of Religion in the South East* (Mount Gambier: South East Book Promotion Group, 1994), p. 5.

<sup>249</sup> *St Paul's Church Mount Gambier: 1885–1985* (Mount Gambier: Mount Gambier St Paul's Centenary Committee, N.D., 1985), p. 9.

<sup>250</sup> Ashworth, p. 5.

<sup>251</sup> Hill, p. 261.

<sup>252</sup> Ashworth, p.14: Ashworth suggests that disaffected Prussian Lutherans fleeing Germany 'retained the use of their own language as well as English for at least fifty years'.

<sup>253</sup> See Appendix 7: Irish Language.

<sup>254</sup> Pauline Rule, 'Irish Women's Experiences in Colonial Victoria,' *Irish Women in Colonial Australia* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998), ed., Trevor McLaughlin, p.139.

is also true that the first wave of Irish settlers were wage-earners rather than landowners: they included among their number ‘ticket-of-leave’ convicts like Thomas Donnelly, the only European man convicted and hanged (1847) for murdering a ‘black’.<sup>255</sup> Eighty-five ‘Irish Orphan Girls’ rapidly ‘married in’ (1855), indentured labourers (male and female) came, and non-Irish husbands with young Irish wives in tow.<sup>256</sup> *Second to None* lists many South-east Irish girls arriving in the colony: in 1858, Edward Leake married an Irish girl; in 1839, Black Byng, Gambier’s first publican, described in Hill as a ‘Yankee Blackfellow’ and a ‘half-cast Nova Scotian’, who rode a prancing white horse, married a young Irish girl; in 1853, William Crouch, later to become one of Mt Gambier’s major benefactors, also married a young Irish girl, Jane Fitzgerald.<sup>257</sup>

Irish girls also arrived under their own steam. In 1873 Michael Horrigan married an Irish girl, Margaret Breen, who had ‘responded to the call for young females, who would be suitable for domestic service, to emigrate’, and who had landed in Port MacDonnell.<sup>258</sup> In the 1860s, Catherine Vail left Ireland by herself, took up employment on a station, and then married Thomas O’Connor. In 1861 or 1862, James Pick married Fanny Margaret Reed, a young Irish woman, who worked as a governess for the Leake family.<sup>259</sup> It is likely that at least, initially, these young Irish women maintained cultural and religious practices.<sup>260</sup> Catholicism, like Aboriginality, tended to be embraced holistically.

These Irish wage earners married into various ethnic groups, skewing perceptions of an Irish presence in the South-east. Settlers from famine-stricken Irish

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<sup>255</sup> Thomas Donnelly is discussed in *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2001) by Robert Foster, Rick Hosking and Amanda Nettelbeck, p. 7.

<sup>256</sup> For discussion of the orphan girls see Eric Richards and Anne Herraman, “‘If She Was to be Hard Up She Would Sooner be Hard Up in a Strange Land Than Where She Would be Known’: Irish Women in Colonial South Australia”, *Irish Women in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998), ed., Trevor McClaughlin, p. 85; Rosemary McCourt, *Tyrone to Tantanoola: The History of Thomas and Ellen McCourt and Descendants 1848–2002* (Mount Gambier: South East Book Promotions, 2002). Further information on the Irish orphans can be found in *A Decent Set of Girls: the Irish Famine Orphans of the ‘Thomas Arbuthnot’: 1849–1850* (Yass: Yass Heritage Project, 1996), by Richard Reid and Cheryl Mongan.

<sup>257</sup> Pam and Brian O’Connor, pp. 89, 124, 141.

<sup>258</sup> Pam and Brian O’Connor, p. 189.

<sup>259</sup> Pam and Brian O’Connor, pp. 223, 232.

<sup>260</sup> How did these young women adapt their practice in the South-east? See Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent and Ennui* (1800; London: Penguin Books, 1992), which documents early nineteenth-century Irish domestic life: the interest of townspeople in plays and playing; the mixing of whiskey punch; the bringing of duty fowls and turkeys to the master; the telling of stories ‘out of face’; and women’s frankness while ‘raking a pot of tea’.

counties were recruited by agents of the South Australian Company and arrived as assisted passengers via other colonies. In 1852, pastoralist John Meredith, despairing due to workers leaving for the goldfields, recruited Martin Lynch from Woodford, County Galway.<sup>261</sup> Garrick Lynch, a character in *Unsettled*, is modelled on this Lynch.

## Historical Settler-Lynches on the South-east Frontier

According to family stories, Martin Lynch, a blacksmith, and his wife Maria Lynch, whose family ran Walsh's Inn in Woodford's High Street, considered themselves to be economic migrants, having sufficient funds to pay for their part of the assisted fare.<sup>262</sup> They landed with three children in Portland, Victoria, on 8 July 1852. South Australia was in the midst of an acute labour-shortage because of the rush to the Victorian fields.<sup>263</sup> The Lynches ignored the lure of gold preferring forty-five pounds per annum and rations on Mingbool Station.<sup>264</sup> Characters in *Unsettled* reflect these circumstances. Rosanna's brother Edwin Lynch sets up a carrying business to capitalise on the movement of goods and stores between the new colonies.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Like the Durack family, the Lynches emigrated from Galway; their village too lay on the edge of the Slieve Aughty Mountains and perhaps they too had fished in Lough Derg. Both families began their Australian lives in slab huts and craved land but the Duracks showed more acumen. See Elizabeth Durack's, *Kings in Grass Castles: Sons in the Saddle* (1959, 1983; Milson's Point, NSW: Bantam Books, Transworld Publishers, 2000).

<sup>262</sup> Shipping records list Martin Lynch's occupation as 'agricultural labourer,' although the family believed him to be a blacksmith, another reason for hypothesising that he tried to position himself as the kind of desirable immigrant being targeted by the SA Government. 'Stockman' was not a term used in immigration advertisements. Eric Richards, 'The Importance of Being Irish in Colonial South Australia,' *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia*, ed. John O'Brien and Paucic Travers (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1991), p. 73: 'most of the assisted migrants were called "labourers" and "domestic servants" but these were labels of convenience necessary to satisfy the recruiting authorities. It is, however, clear that without subsidy these people would have had difficulty leaving Ireland, certainly by the expensive Australian passage, and this may have biased their selection to the less depressed districts of Ireland. The fact that many, perhaps 50 percent, were assisted rather than fully-subsidised...' Scenes set in the inn in Anthony Trollope's *The Kellys and the O'Kellys: or Landlords and Tenants* (1848; Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) were useful in helping me imagine Maria Lynch living and working with her family at Walsh's Inn in Woodford Village. Mrs Kelly runs a genteel establishment, inn, shop and boarding house, but her daughters cut up pennyworth of tobacco and mix dandies of punch. The back rooms of Decclan Walsh's pub in Woodford resembled Trollope's description of Widow O'Kelly's establishment, including the crowd of loafers around the fire — one of them was me.

<sup>263</sup> Spence fictionalises this period in *Clara Morrison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever*. Reduced in circumstances by the death of her parents, her eponymous heroine arrives in Adelaide in the late summer of 1851.

<sup>264</sup> Jean Lynch, 'Martin and Mary Lynch and Their Descendants'[unpaged] unpublished family manuscript, Mount Gambier, May 1973, photocopied transcript in possession of author's family.

<sup>265</sup> Spence explicates this speculative capitalism: gold seekers set off in great numbers; people with enough capital sell goods to miners; and gold stock is brought overland to Adelaide's gold battery.

In oral stories, the Lynches referred to themselves as Irish but at the time of the wreck they had lived in South Australia for seven years. They migrated from Woodford, a village where the Marquis of Clanricarde and Sir John Burke (his uncle and the Lynches' landlord) had administered an aggressive and longstanding depopulation policy with strong links to the South Australia Emigration Society.<sup>266</sup> The *Tuam Herald* of August 1841 praises Clanricarde for giving 'a free passage and £5 on landing to any of his pauper tenantry who choose to emigrate'.<sup>267</sup> Local newspaper articles of 1848 'described how emigration, hitherto mainly confined to the working classes of tradesmen, small farmers and mechanics was now being discussed among the "middle walks of society in Ireland"'.<sup>268</sup> The fact that Lynches paid their share of assisted passages suggests that they might have belonged to these 'middle walks.'

Lynch history led me on two occasions to Ireland to research the impact of famine-straitened circumstances on this Galway family during the 1840–50s.<sup>269</sup> Why

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South Australia hopes miners will reinvest in the nearly bankrupt colony. In another apocryphal tale Adam Lindsay Gordon rode with the gold escort. See Frank Maldon Robb, introduction, *The Poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon* (1912; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1923), p. xxxiv.

<sup>266</sup> Peter Moore, 'Half-Burnt Turf: Selling Emigration from Ireland to South Australia, 1836–1845', *Irish-Australian Studies: Papers Delivered at the Sixth Irish-Australian Conference*, ed., Phillip Bull, Chris McConville and Noel McLachlan (July 1990):115 (Melbourne: La Trobe University, 1991). Moore quotes from several newspapers reporting on controversy over this practice in the Loughrea [neighbouring village of Woodford] area. Concern focused on the large number of people leaving, with particular reference to middle class families who could afford their rent and had not been targeted. See also Marian McDonagh, 'An Early Victorian Scrapbook', *The District of Loughrea, Vol. 1, History: 1791–1918*, ed., Joseph Forde, Christina Cassidy, Paul Manzor, David Ryan (Loughrea, Co. Galway: Loughrea History Project, 2003), pp. 164–6.

<sup>267</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 21 Aug. 1841, cited in McDonagh, pp. 162.

<sup>268</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 12 Aug. 1848, cited in McDonagh, pp. 164.

<sup>269</sup>The availability of so many famine novels — almost a sub-genre, complete with tropes — and the absence of Lynch oral stories on the impact of the famine on their family, made me avoid its direct narration in my novel:

Peter Behrens writes about 1846 west Ireland in *The Law of Dreams* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2006), in gruelling famine-genre style, employing evocative imagery to depict a denuded holocaustian landscape in which dire poverty, inhumane landlords, gruelling family suffering in filthy cabins, desperate hunger-fuelled crime, cruel epidemics, and lacerating dragoon violence become the norm;

Liam O'Flaherty's, *Famine* (c1897; St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), also provides a grim and moving account, and a useful alternative to Anglo-Hibernian versions. O'Flaherty's metatext clearly articulates, especially in dialogue, his hindsight Irish nationalist view of the famine. Infuriated by the English use of the word 'charity' in relation to famine-relief, the parish priest cries out to the doctor and the curate, p.116: 'England takes five million pounds from us every year in rent alone...'; Niall Williams' poetic narrative *The Fall of Light* (London: Picador, Pan Macmillan, 2001) is based on apocryphal tales about the Foley family, told to him by his maternal grandmother, and received critical acclaim.

Robin Haine's, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), offers an alternative view of a well-intentioned English government managing a national disaster.

See also, Trollope's letter 6 April 1850, p. 217, in *Anthony Trollope, The Irish Famine: Six Letters to the Examiner, 1849/1850*, ed., Lance Oliver (London: Silverbridge Press, 198), p. 14. Trollope lived and worked in the west of Ireland and wrote these letters two years before the Lynches emigrated. He

had they left Ireland?<sup>270</sup> Research led to some understanding of the resilience required to migrate, the reasons why, even now, family members might stand together against outsiders.<sup>271</sup> Martin Lynch proved to be an Irishman willing to stand up to authority, even against the law, and he came from an Irish village with a reputation for ‘civil disobedience and disturbance’.<sup>272</sup> A family story has it that while shoeing the horse of an English soldier in the village of Woodford, County Galway, he was offered an English shilling, a traditional way to call-up for military service.<sup>273</sup> He extricated himself by throwing down the shilling. In my novel, Garrick Lynch’s strong sense of justice involves him in secret societies, the shilling story being his reason for migrating.<sup>274</sup>

The Lynches might have seen migration as part of a Woodford tradition, although there is no evidence of family or friendship links in Australia. Perhaps they responded to newspaper reports or to an agent active in the village, targeting

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criticises Irish accounts of the famine because, he claims, he found no evidence of their accuracy when he ‘visited at the worst periods those places which were most afflicted...the Irish press is not proverbial for a strict adherence to the unadorned truth.’ Yet his first novel *The Macdermots of Ballycloran* (1848) could not fail to move readers with its sense of impending disaster, depicting families in freefall and living in the direst poverty.

<sup>270</sup> Population, 1841–1851, Woodford Village, in Michael O’Gorman, *A Pride of Paper Tigers: a History of the Great Hunger in the Scariff Workhouse Union from 1839 to 1853* (Tuamgraney, Co. Clare: East Clare Heritage, 1994), p. 58, shows more significant drops in Woodford’s surrounding Townland population than in the town, where Lynches lived.

Townland	Population:	1841	1851	Trend
Woodford				
Woodford Town		396	379	-26
Townland of Woodford		397	267	-130

<sup>271</sup> Sigrun Meinig, *Witnessing the Past: History and Postcolonialism in Australian Historical Novels* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen, 2004), p. 327, discusses the insular behaviour of ‘the Murphys’ in Rodney Hall’s, *The Yandilli Trilogy* (1994: *The Second Bridegroom* (1991), *The Grisly Wife* (1993), *Captivity Captive* (1988): ‘they do indeed form a society of their own...’; Miriam Dixon, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to the Present* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin Books, Australia, 1994), p. 163, discusses the clannish behaviour of Irish immigrants, both a cause and effect of English racism, acted out in a setting where the wider family network was missing: ‘...Irish residual clan-collectivism...to help provoke and exacerbate English contempt...’

<sup>272</sup> See David Ryan ‘Disaffection and Rebellious Conspiracy in the Loughrea Area: 1791–1804’, *The District of Loughrea: Vol I: History 1791–1918*, p. 11. Lynch oral family stories stress that secret societies should not be spoken about outside the family, perhaps this implies that they are part of their history.

<sup>273</sup> Many instances of this practice can be found in books. See, for example, Joseph O’Connor, *Star of the Sea: Farewell to Old Ireland* (London: Vintage, Random House, 2002).

<sup>274</sup> William Carleton’s story titled ‘Wildgoose Lodge’, *Stories from Carleton: with an Introduction by W.B. Yeats* (cc1830; New York: Lemma Pub. Corp., 1973), in which a Catholic named Lynch refuses to join the Ribbonman and is beaten up, was of great interest me. After Lynch takes his attackers to court, his house is burned down, his children inside. This chilling tale underlines the seriousness of Irish secret societies.

Protestants. Peter Moore suggests that ‘there was administrative bias towards Protestants, though this was probably more a tendency rather than a policy’.<sup>275</sup> The Woodford Catholic Church records confirm the Lynches as parishioners; in 1851, three months before their migration to Australia, they baptised their infant daughter Bridget.<sup>276</sup> Yet shipping records show their religion as Church of England. Had the shipping clerk made a mistake or had Lynches recanted Catholicism? At any rate, by 1854, two years after their arrival in Australia, Lynches had resumed their faith, choosing a Catholic priest to baptise their fourth child, at Dismal Swamp, a pastoral station owned by an Irish family named Sutton.<sup>277</sup> In my novel, Lynches publicly describe themselves as Protestants to enhance their application for assisted passage.

Lynches settled at Mingbool Station, probably in a boundary-riders hut, ten miles from where Gambierton would be founded in 1854, two years after their arrival. In those days most people in the district lived on pastoral station communities. Hill described the town during the 1840s and middle 1850s, as ‘a few scattered buildings in the paddocks around a cave’.<sup>278</sup> Martin — and later his sons — worked as boundary riders on stations in the district. Perhaps working for pastoralist John Meredith of Mingbool Station reminded them of paying rent to Sir John Burke, and of the class system they had hoped to leave behind.<sup>279</sup> Shipping records note that apart from baby Bridget, the family could read but not write; no letters showing homesickness are extant. The grandparents’ generation, those traditional purveyors of the collective and communal memory were left behind; perhaps their absence undermined the retouching and renewing of family stories. Lynches worked hard, built illegal stills and raced horses. They brought a love of irony to the few oral stories which survive.

How were Irish people perceived in South-east settler-society? Archived Meredith letters include disparaging comments about Irish servants, and Irish jokes:

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<sup>275</sup> Moore, ‘Half-Burnt Turf: Selling Emigration from Ireland to South Australia, 1836–1845’.

<sup>276</sup> ‘Lynch Bridget/ Lynch Martin/ Lynch Maria,’ Woodford Baptisms: 1835–1892, Woodford Parish Catholic Church transcript, 11 December 1851.

<sup>277</sup> ‘Lynch, No. 9. Michael of Martin and Mary Lynch Dismal Swamp born 15 Feb. 1854, baptised 22 Jan. 1855. A Registry of Baptisms by Rev. Peter Powell, Mount Gambier District, facs. Mary Mackillop Centre, Penola. Sponsors, Anne and Charles Hayes. Minister, Peter Powell.

<sup>278</sup> Hill, p. 14-15.

<sup>279</sup> Valerie Pakenham, claimed in *The Big House in Ireland* (London: Cassell and Co., 2000), p. 74, that the Lord Clanricarde, nephew of the Lynches’ landlord, was notoriously absent from his estate, and therefore nicknamed Clanrackrent. This moniker sprang from Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* (1800), a tale about absentee landlords. After the Lynch’s arrival in 1852 John Meredith was frequently away in Tasmania and finally sold Mingbool Station, then called Oaklands.

‘Broken eggs – Irish serving woman’.<sup>280</sup> Such attitudes may have changed the way Lynches viewed themselves, and accidents were often retaliatory acts; Rosanna spits in Mrs Ashby’s tea. Parliamentary reports draw attention to David Power, an Irishman who assisted with rescue attempts from the beach at the *Admella* site. Resident magistrate from 1853, Power owned several stations, including Mount Gambier Station. The O’Connors confirm that he offered a five hundred pound reward for a successful rescue attempt.<sup>281</sup> This was the same David Power whom pastoralist Robert Leake referred to (after buying land from him) as “a little greedy Irishman”, yet, when he quit the district three months after the wreck, Power was lauded for his ‘liberality and hospitality’.<sup>282</sup> Deep-seated hostilities lay close to the surface of Gambierton’s society of migrants.

Aspiring South-east Irish settlers — spectators and protagonists, victims of English racism and equally, colonisers of the indigenous *Booandik* — may have felt in the minority. In the early days of settlement, like Cuchulain, they had inhabited a dangerous world in which spearing was a real possibility. Perhaps they felt ashamed of their economic reasons for migration, yet proud to have achieved it. Perhaps they felt liberated and yet repressed by their employers, pioneering but also, in some sense, evicted from Ireland. These binary oppositions both constrained them and gave them economic hope.<sup>283</sup> In *Unsettled*, the Ashbys allude to Irish barbarism similar to that of blacks, but for the Lynch characters, resisting this idea by projecting anxiety onto the *Booandik*, is less compelling than ancestral preoccupations with survival and belonging.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Marion Hammond [Meredith’s sister], letter to John Meredith, 10 Apr. 1851, *John Meredith Summary Record* (1847–1853), State Library of South Australia, PRG: 132.

<sup>281</sup> Pam and Brian O’Connor, p. 55-6.

<sup>282</sup> Leake correspondence, 26 Mar. 1859, cited in Pam and Brian O’Connor, p.57; *The Register*, 8 Nov. 1859.

<sup>283</sup> The vulnerability of tenants to cruel landlords and their agents in many nineteenth-century novels made me realise why owning land had been so important to the Lynch family and to other diasporic Irish people and that they perceived it to be the key to their identity, freedom, and self-esteem. William Carleton’s *The Irish Agent; or The Chronicles of Castle Cumber together with THE PIOUS ASPIRATIONS, PERMISSIONS, VOUCHSAFEMENTS AND OTHER SANCTIFIED PRIVELEGES OF SOLOMON MC SLIME, A RELIGIOUS ATTORNEY* [Valentine McClutchey] (1847; Dublin: James Duffy, 77 Wellington-Quay, MDCCCLIV 1854), quickly drew me into the estate of Castle Cumber where evil characters hold sway — the Reverend Mr Lucre, a rich churchman, Valentine McClutchey, the agent, and Solomon McSlime who protects him. McClutchey manipulates the tenants and his absentee young landlord to benefit himself and his family.

<sup>284</sup> See Tania Dalziell, *Settler Romances and the Australian Girl* (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2004), p.120, for particular reference in the novels of Miles Franklin to the fictiveness of whites and Irish, in relation to Indigenous Other: ‘...race is a means by which to represent and resolve class conflict...’

Australian popular narratives would have class boundaries collapse when station owners and their employees worked side by side, in kitchens or on horseback.<sup>285</sup> Perhaps dusk brought down the class curtain, and workers and their masters retired to separate quarters to drink a different brew.<sup>286</sup> It is well-attested that on one occasion, horse-breaker and poet Adam Lindsay Gordon took deep offence when shown to the servants' quarters. On the other hand, his perception of personal disgrace influenced his migration from Scotland. Perhaps Lynches felt as conflicted as Gordon, the Magistrate and Edward Geoghegan by the disjunctions between cultural beliefs they had about themselves and the way they were defined by others.

In *Unsettled*, Rosanna's invitation to a picnic at Mount Schank underlines her dual position as both female servant and illicit lover. Envious of the men's freedom to explore their physical boundaries by walking around the rim of the volcano, she views them, nevertheless, as Lilliputians. Paul Carter's idea that Australian picnics allowed participants 'to transgress spatial boundaries' and 'licensed the breakdown of social, and even personal, barriers', does not play out for Rosanna.<sup>287</sup> Relegated to child-minding and serving food, she finds herself marginalised; George refuses to openly acknowledge her. This mirrors the absence of Lynches from historical accounts of Mingbool and Mount Schank Station where, doubtless the family was known but deemed unworthy of mention.<sup>288</sup>

### **An Irish Reading of the Wreck of the *Admella***

The *Admella* stories provide an interesting entry point for further speculation about Irish people missing from the historical record, although *Admella* accounts rarely refer to their ethnicity. It is likely that many more Irish people than those referred to in this chapter were part of the *Admella* story.

Miss Bridget Ledwitch, a young Irish woman stranded on deck in her singlet and her nightgown, was the only woman to survive the wreck. James Wood, an Irish

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<sup>285</sup> Nanette Mantle, *Horse and Rider in Australian Legend* (Carelton, Victoria: Miegunyah Press, 2004), p. 52: 'Social distinctions, manifested especially in domestic situations, were either forgotten or subtly altered when groups of men rode together either at station work or in travels through the bush'.

<sup>286</sup> During the late 1880s, Rolf Boldrewood mythologised Australian stockmen, presenting to city readers the ambiguities and careful calibrations of their relationship with their employers.

<sup>287</sup> Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: an Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 156.

<sup>288</sup> John Meredith, letter to George Meredith, [n.d.] *John Meredith Summary Record* (1847–1853), State Library of South Australia, PRG: 132: 'on Monday morning we started (we consists of wife, child, maid and self) arriving at Kalangadoo by two, had luncheon...' Perhaps the maid was a Lynch girl.

passenger, would never reach his property in Ireland to make a home.<sup>289</sup> Soon after the vessel struck the reef he was washed overboard and presumed drowned. An apocryphal story has Donegal bachelor James Whittaker tear up his will and recite its contents, in front of revellers farewelling him before he embarks on the *Admella*, on his way to the Melbourne Sweepstakes. A difficult property settlement ensued, after his drowning — a double irony.<sup>290</sup> Passenger James Magarey, a flour miller and stockholder, who had migrated from a Protestant Scottish Highland colony in County Antrim, Ireland, travelled with several recently purchased champion racehorses, on their way to the Melbourne Sweepstakes.<sup>291</sup> His story became one of the more poignant tragedies; four days after the break up of the vessel, he was swept overboard.<sup>292</sup> Allan Webb, his Irish groom clung to the rigging when the foremast crashed and, like many other passengers, was hurled into the water. He was last seen ‘floating on part of a horse-box, trying to paddle with his hands’.<sup>293</sup>

No doubt many Irish people felt concern for the six racehorses carried in horseboxes on the deck, which were thrown overboard on impact. We know their names: Jupiter, The Barber, three valuable stallions and a champion steeple chaser with the signifying name of Shamrock. Shamrock made it through the surf but, with both hind legs broken, he died on the beach.<sup>294</sup>

An Irish reading of the wreck of the *Admella* could not fail to recognize the distinguished colonist who played an important role in the final rescue: John O’Shannassy (later Sir John), Premier of Victoria, an O’Connellite from Tipperary.<sup>295</sup> O’Shannassy’s role in the rescue narratives must have shattered the Irish loyalty of some South Australian colonists. Garrick Lynch makes this clear in *Unsettled*.

A series of blunders culminating with a false message claiming that all survivors had been rescued meant that an Adelaide rescue boat turned back to Port Adelaide. When prevailed upon to send a lifeboat, Premier O’Shanassy insisted that

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<sup>289</sup> Ian Mudie, *Wreck of the Admella* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1966), p. 39.

<sup>290</sup> See Mary Beard, *The Whittaker Saga: a Story of William and Mary and Their Three Sons* (Adelaide: Mary Beard, Box 36, Lock, 1983), p. 5. Whittaker was a Kapunda businessman, who built the Sir John Franklin Hotel.

<sup>291</sup> This background offers another example of a colonist’s complex ethnicity.

<sup>292</sup> P.W. Vercoe, telegram, *Thomas and Elisabeth Magarey* (Adelaide: Printed by LPH, 1985), p. 100, State Library of South Australia: M 188.V.

<sup>293</sup> Mossman, p. 15.

<sup>294</sup> Mudie, p.125.

<sup>295</sup> Patrick O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia: 1788 to the Present* (1986; Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2000), p. 206.

underwriting the rescue without the consent of Parliament (which was in recess), was unconstitutional. This was described as ‘a wretched act of inhumanity and cold-blooded red-tape-ism.’<sup>296</sup> Another Irishman, Trinity educated Dubliner and South Australia’s governor, Sir Richard Graves Macdonnell sent telegrams requesting aid. A furore erupted in the Adelaide and Melbourne press. Premier O’Shannassy’s name was conspicuously missing from the list of donors on a public subscription covering the cost of additional insurance.<sup>297</sup> He deflected criticism by maintaining that the wreck was the responsibility of the South Australian government, having occurred in their waters. Would Irish colonists have identified with an Irish Premier, as South-easterners or as disgruntled South Australians?<sup>298</sup> In *Unsettled*, Garrick Lynch sees O’Shannassy’s act as betrayal, and puts aside his Irish identity in favour of regional loyalty.

### **Section B: A Postcolonial Apocryphal Story: Booandik Nation**

In apocryphal stories *Booandik* people first became aware of the wreck of the *Admella*. However, they were not once mentioned in official recounts, nor any evidence of their proximity: smoke or sight of campfires onshore. The *Booandik* version remains romantically fused with a subsequent apocryphal story which depends on it. But if *Booandik* men brought white settlers to the beach at Carpenters Rocks, as working members of nearby station communities, their presence is not recorded.<sup>299</sup> Observers and survivors cannot have been color-blind, for they mention a Negro on board the *Admella*. It is uncertain whether *Booandik* versions overlay or interrupt the master story, or negate it in its entirety.

The first written record of *Booandik* discovering the wreck occurs in a 1912 memoir about Adam Lindsay Gordon:

Our dear Gordon was horse-breaking on Livingstone Station, three natives walked up in the night with firesticks – big one ship on rocks – it was

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<sup>296</sup> *Ovens Constitution* cited in Ian Mudie, *Wreck of the Admella* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1966), p. 113.

<sup>297</sup> Mudie, p. 113; Governor MacDonnell chaired the *Admella* Reward and Relief Committee.

<sup>298</sup> Governor MacDonnell was unpopular and considered elitest. See *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A050171b.htm>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2008.

<sup>299</sup> Oral tales of the wreck may survive in *Booandik* families. This was not the case with the four *Booandik* people to whom I have spoken: Ken and his sister, Nancy Jones, Rosalea Millard, and David Moon.

between two rocks that we called the Carpenters, the way the sea broke on it only one mile from the shore...When the blacks took the news in the night it was about twenty six miles, I think our poor natives, [sic] that was on Sunday morning'.<sup>300</sup>

A 1978 Gordon biography repeats this apocryphal story. 'He [Gordon] was horse-breaking at John Livingstone's Curratum Downs station when aborigines walked in at night with fire-sticks and gave them the news: "Big one ship on rocks". Gordon and Livingstone set off ...'<sup>301</sup> Geoffrey Hutton does not source this quotation, which resembles Mrs Lauder's wording. She maintains that not only did Gordon make the ride himself but that 'her brother John, the Jack of the poem, was him.'<sup>302</sup>

Geoffrey Aslin's 1991 version mentions Black Bobby, a shearer from Coolum station: 'It was recorded that Adam Lindsay Gordon called at Carratum Station after the *Admella* disaster and was shown to the scene of the wreck by Bobby', he writes.<sup>303</sup> Could his reference to 'recording' be the retelling of an oral version agreed on by the *Booandik* people? The destruction of their society can not discount a hidden story. If the premise was that Bobby had already visited the wreck, was he first on the scene or simply one of the hundreds of bystanders? *Booandik* people were included in apocryphal recounts as recently as 2003.<sup>304</sup> Moorecke and a nameless stockman have been reinstalled in *Unsettled* to create a new *Admella* narrative.

## Historical Verification

If the story was true — that *Booandik* people discovered the stricken ship on the reef and rode to the nearest station for help — no evidence of an oral version emerged. The loss of oral narratives is not surprising, *Booandik* numbers so decimated by 1900 that R M Gibbs' *A History of South Australia: from Colonial Days to the Present*,

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<sup>300</sup> Edith Humphris and Douglas Sladen, *Adam Lindsay Gordon and His Friend in England and Australia* (London: Constable, 1912), pp. 312-3.

<sup>301</sup> Geoffrey Hutton, *Adam Lindsay Gordon: the Man and the Myth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1978), p. 85.

<sup>302</sup> Humphris and Sladen, p. 312.

<sup>303</sup> G Aslin, *Kongorong from Land to Sea: An Early History* (Millicent, SA: G. Aslin, 1991), p. 30.

<sup>304</sup> Lorraine Day, ed., *Gordon of Dingley Dell: The Life of Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833–1870): Poet and Horseman* (South Australia: Freestyle Publications, 2003).

makes no mention of them, their people presumed to be extinct.<sup>305</sup> In 2000, historian Carol Fort carefully negotiates this loaded subject:

These days, although we respect Lanky Kana, a Boandik man from the Wilchum mob who died in 1904 and who has long been remembered as the last of the Boandik, we also acknowledge that people who count themselves as Boandik and Meitangk are still living in South Australia. Nevertheless, even though they are not extinct, none lives a traditional pre-settlement life.<sup>306</sup>

‘But even though the colonial history of the South East has almost written out the existence of my ancestors’, Irene Watson writes: ‘we are still here. We never left.’<sup>307</sup> Watson does not directly identify as *Booandik* but reinterprets historical accounts of *Tanganekald*, *Meitangk*, *Bunganditj* and *Potaruwutj* lands as those walked by her ancestors. She offered me early encouragement to include Indigenous people in my narrative.

My initial attempt to find local Indigenous people was made through my *Ngarrindjeri* colleague, now deceased, who had *Booandik* relatives. Despite late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century pronouncements about the last ‘full-bloods’ dying out (Christina Smith in 1880, anthropologists Campbell and Noone in 1943, historians, B & P O’Connor (1988), and A.W. Howitt (1904)) oral culture survives in descendents who have married into other Aboriginal groups; like the *Ngarrindjeri*.<sup>308</sup> Mark McKenna’s 2002 work on Indigenous and settler history in the

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<sup>305</sup> R. M. Gibbs, *A History of South Australia: from Colonial Days to the Present* (Kent Town, SA: Peacock Publications for Southern Heritage, 1984), p. 126-132.

<sup>306</sup> Carol Fort, ‘Cutting through South Australia’s Woakwine Range,’ ‘Doing History’ and ‘Understanding’ Cultural Landscapes Symposium, Flinders University, p. 5, 4 Apr. 2009, [http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/humanities/exchange/asri/ucl\\_symp\\_pdf/UCL%20paper%20Carol%20Fort.pdf](http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/humanities/exchange/asri/ucl_symp_pdf/UCL%20paper%20Carol%20Fort.pdf)

<sup>307</sup> See Irene Watson, *Looking at You, Looking at Me: Aboriginal Culture and History of the South-east of South Australia, Volume I*. (Nairne, SA: Dr Irene Watson, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>308</sup> See Christina Smith, preface, *The Booandik Tribe of South Australian Aborigines: A Sketch of their Habits, Customs, Legends and Language. Also: An Account of the Efforts Made by Mr and Mrs James Smith to Christianise and Civilise Them* (Adelaide: E. Spiller, Government Printer, 1880): ‘This once numerous and powerful tribe of the South-Eastern natives is now represented by a miserable remnant, which will in a few years, with the other aboriginal peoples of Southern Australia, have withered away before the new mode of life forced upon them by the advent of European colonists in their midst, assisted too often by the cruelties practised upon them by the early settlers...’; T.D. Campbell and H.V.V. Noone ‘Some Aboriginal Camp Sites in the Woakwine Range Region of the South East of South Australia Records of the South Australian Museum 7 (4) 1943: p. 371-395: ‘our knowledge of the social and material culture of the Buandik people — who occupied most of the SE — is exceedingly scant’, and T.D. Campbell, J.B. Cleland and P.S. Hossfield ‘Aborigines of the South East of South Australia’ (Records of the South Australian Museum 8, 1946), pp. 445-503; Pam and Brian O’Connor, *Second To None: A Story of the Rural Pioneers of Mount Gambier* (Mount Gambier: District Council of

south-east corner of NSW included a discussion of ‘disremembering’ whereby the extinction of full-blood Aborigines, by natural causes, was a rationalisation preferred by settlers to acknowledging the frontier wars.<sup>309</sup> In 2001, Jane Haggis claims ‘full blood’ was a ‘settler marker of authenticity’.<sup>310</sup> This was, of course, racist and misleading. *Booandik* people may now live and work in far flung places, due to their relocation during the implementation of government policies that deliberately set out to disrupt Indigenous societies, by removing mixed-blood children. But if their oral stories about the wreck exist, they have never been recorded outside the community.

The apocryphal story is, however, feasible. At the time of the wreck, many *Booandik* people lived in and around the settled areas. By 1851, Leake was using ‘blacks’ to shepherd eighteen thousand of his sheep on Glencoe.<sup>311</sup> In Spence’s *Clara Morrison...* (1854), Reginald’s friend in the Tatiara, has a ‘flock of three thousand [sheep] under a black man and his two wives’.<sup>312</sup> During the 1850s and 1860s, Coola Station near the wreck site comprised an all-local Aboriginal shearing team. ‘Old Kitty Livingstone’ had two sons Long Jimmy and Bobby Livingston,’ Aslin reports, and ‘all took the name of John Livingstone of Curratum Station where the *Admella* rescue operations were coordinated.’<sup>313</sup> Several accounts of settlers described meeting a hundred *Booandik* at a time on their properties. Robert Leake claimed corroborees were less common in the 1860s.<sup>314</sup> But Hill reports evidence of frequent corroborees during a week in June 1863.<sup>315</sup>

Questioned as to why Gordon said practically nothing about the blacks, Mr George Riddoch notes that even in 1865 there were still a good many blacks in the

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Mount Gambier, 1988), p.17-18: ‘Now all that remains of these people is a handful of legends...’ ; A.W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of SE, SA* (1904; Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996) contains minimal information on *Booandik* people.

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<sup>309</sup> Mark McKenna, *Looking For Blackfella’s Point: An Australian History of Place* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>310</sup> Jane Haggis, ‘The Social Memory of a Colonial Frontier’, *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 16.34 (2001), p. 92, footnote 8: ‘it is clear from the historical record that there were a number of Buandig children fostered by white settlers, some of the girls growing up to marry white men. This suggests there would likely be descendents who could claim *Booandik* ancestry.’

<sup>311</sup> James Smith, report to M. Moorhouse, Apr. 1851; The *Booandik* Tribe, pp. 34-34, cited in E.M. Yelland, *The Baron of the Frontier: South Australia — Victoria, Robert Rowland Leake, 1811–1860* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1973), p. 76.

<sup>312</sup> Spence, p. 237.

<sup>313</sup> Aslin, p. 29. No historians have inferred a more negative connotation.

<sup>314</sup> R.R. Leake, letter to C.H. Leake, Frontier House, 23 February 1860, cited in Yelland, p. 158.

<sup>315</sup> Hill, p.101.

Tatiara District’ — north of the wreck site — but that ‘they were fairly civilised, smart, sharp as needles, as docile as whites, ready to do a good day’s work for wages’.<sup>316</sup> While it is likely that Indigenous people camped close to the stations where they found employment, it would not be unusual to find groups travelling and camping throughout the sparsely-settled countryside.

On arrival in 1852, the Lynch family would have encountered *Booandik* people on a regular basis. In *Unsettled* a group camps near the house. As a young girl Rosanna had secretly observed *murpenas* [corroborees].<sup>317</sup> Only a few years before their arrival, *Booandik* people were strong protagonists in wars against settlers. The Arthur Brothers from Mt Schank Station were driven out by them in the late 1840s; their relationship had deteriorated over eighteen months because of sheep spearing, and finally, a shooting altercation over twelve hundred animals.<sup>318</sup> Between 1855 and 1856 the Leake Brothers of Glencoe Station erected ‘Frontier House’ — a ‘large homestead with slits in the walls through which rifles could be used against any likely intruder’.<sup>319</sup> Anne Cameron, a South-east matriarch, testified that ‘the Niggers were not encouraged to frequent the settlements, as they outnumbered the whites by hundreds and were cunning and treacherous.’<sup>320</sup>

Christina Smith, missionary and teacher, used memoir to witness the violent South-east colonisation process, representing the *Booandik* people of the 1840s, as

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<sup>316</sup> George Riddoch, cited in Humphris and Sladen, p. 450.

<sup>317</sup> Rosanna does not sexualise this experience like Elsie in Rosa Praed’s *Outlaw and Lawmaker*; she is younger, unaccompanied by a lover, and by then South-east *Booandik* were wearing European clothes. For discussion about Praed’s representations of Aborigines as ‘essentially Other’ see Len Platt, “‘Altogether Better Bred-Looking’”: Race and Romance in the Australian Novels of Rosa Praed’, *JASAL* Vol. 8, 2008, or Robert Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 39. Dixon argues that Praed’s *Outlaw and Lawmaker* corroboree is staged to provide material for Lady Waverley’s book.

<sup>318</sup> Edward Arthur, diary entry, 10 Jul. 1844, *A Journal of Events: From Melbourne, Port Phillip to Mount Schank, in the District of Adelaide, New Holland, a Distance of 400 miles, Undertaken in 1843 by Messrs Edward and Fortescue Arthur, R.N., With a Flock of 4000 Sheep: also An account of the Difficulties They Experienced During a Sojourn of Twenty Months, Which Ended in the Total Failure of Their Enterprise* (cc1844; Sullivan’s Cove, Hobart: Publisher, 1975), pp. 38-42: ‘Some vague reports of the affair have crept into the local papers, therefore I shall detail particulars, that you may not be misled’.

<sup>319</sup> Hill, pp. 26-9. It is from the Leake family that I take my cue in using the word ‘frontier’ in my novel. See also Yelland, intr., p. i: ‘This house was erected on the site of the first station hut, and named by Mrs R.R. Leake “Frontier House”, her husband was then named “The Baron of the Frontiers”’; p. 121: ‘This Building — Frontier House was built in the Reign of a Great Queen of England, Victoria 1st., in the year of Christ, 1856’.

<sup>320</sup> ‘Anne Cameron’: *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia* (Adelaide: Publishers Limited, 1925–27), by Rodney Cockburn and Dorothy A. Aldersey, pp. 179, 28.

well as their culture and language.<sup>321</sup> She quotes a native guide's witness that *Booandik* were 'shot down like dogs' for killing sheep.<sup>322</sup> The authors of *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory* (2001) suggest that Smith probably omits further details about the Avenue Range Station massacre because James Brown, a local pastoralist and the powerful perpetrator, still lived in the district.<sup>323</sup> Smith was a product of Victorian imperialism and Christian to boot, believing that she eased the dying pillow of her 'sable' friends. She writes with deep compassion making warm if unconventional relationships with the *Booandik*, faithfully recording their language.<sup>324</sup> Heather Carthew fictionalises her Smith great-grandmother, as a good white woman, in two novels, *Twisted Reeds* (1986) and *Reeds in the Wind* (1993).<sup>325</sup>

By the 1850s *Booandik* people *had* been shot at, poisoned and marginalised. Other South Australian Indigenous groups had already taken heavy losses in the decades after first settlement. The severe impact of epidemics on populations with trade routes connected to the east has been documented in western Victoria — and the Adelaide Plains.<sup>326</sup> Many histories represent *Booandik* people in a dismissive or a

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<sup>321</sup> Christina Smith, *The Booandik Tribe of South Australian Aborigines: A Sketch of their Habits, Customs, Legends and Language: Also An Account of the Efforts Made by Mr and Mrs James Smith to Christianise and Civilise Them* (Adelaide: E. Spiller, Government Printer, 1880).

<sup>322</sup> Smith, p. 41.

<sup>323</sup> See Foster, Hosking and Nettelbeck, p. 81, for details of Smith's evasion of the Avenue Range massacre.

<sup>324</sup> Smith, p. 37.

<sup>325</sup> Heather Carthew, *Twisted Reeds* (Millicent, South Australia: H. Carthew, 1986) and *Reeds in the Wind* (Millicent: Heather Carthew, 1993); p. 276, of the latter book, Wergon, Smith's adopted son, dies of consumption. By the conclusion of my novel, Rosanna and Moorecke both show symptoms of tuberculosis.

<sup>326</sup> See Robert Kenny, *The Lamb Enters the Dreaming: Nathanael Pepper & the Ruptured World* (Carlton North, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2007), p. 25; and C.G. Teichmann and C.W. Schurmann, *Outlines of a Grammar, Vocabulary, and Phraseology, of the Aboriginal Language of South Australia: spoken by the natives in and for some distance around Adelaide* (Dresden: Lutheran Missionary Society, 1840), p. 34:

Nguya, s. pustule; the disease of small-pox, from which the aborigines suffered before the Colony was founded. They universally assert that it came from the east, or the Murray tribes, so that it is not at all improbable that that the disease was at first brought among the natives by European settlers on the eastern coast. They have not suffered from it for some years; but about a *dzcennium* [ German decade] ago it was, according to their statement, universal; when it diminished their numbers considerably, and on many left the marks of its ravages, to be seen at this day. They have no remedy against it, except the *nguyapalti*.

See also, Lewis O'Brien and Mary-Anne Gale, *And the Clock Struck Thirteen*. Kent Town (Wakefield Press, 2007), p. 41.

Smallpox certainly came to Kurna people, I'm not denying that, there were pock marks on our people when Europeans arrived here. What I am arguing is that it didn't come down the river. I'm saying it came here to the Adelaide Plains in 1789 via other Indigenous people who came here overland from the east. These people came here because they wanted to talk about the invasion in New South Wales. ... They wanted us to

pathogenetic way, initially as a scourge to be removed, later as barbarous, pesky and endangered, and more often through the 1860s, as troubled souls. Although considered untrustworthy, they were a useful source of cheap labour, particularly during the 1850s when there was a dearth of workers because of the Victorian gold rush.<sup>327</sup>

When the *Admella* finally broke up, Robert Anderson (later to become mayor of Mount Gambier) bought the salvage rights; he and his family camped in the sand hills opposite the wreck where two babies were born in the tent — ‘he is occasionally watched by aborigines’.<sup>328</sup> Aboriginal people could have witnessed earlier shipwrecks, although Fort argues that in winter traditional groups moved inland, thus making the witnessing of shipwrecks much less likely.<sup>329</sup> Like the *Admella*, most ships sank in stormy winter weather.

But by 1859 *Booandik* society had been disrupted, as Smith attests, its remaining healthy members drifting to employment at the stations, or to fringe camps on the edge of townships. Only two *Booandik* people appear in *Unsettled*. The 1861 census records ‘Aborigines’ in the County of Grey at number three-hundred-and thirty-six: one hundred and forty six of them female; one hundred and ninety of them males, eighty of the men employed by settlers.<sup>330</sup> By the time Gordon composed ‘From the Wreck’ in 1868, the *Booandik* population was under severe stress. They make no appearance in his poem but no postcolonial writer can ignore them. A likely reason for their inclusion in apocryphal tales about raising the alarm might relate to ambiguities in popular versions. Allowing them to witness the wreck and raise the

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address these issues, but unfortunately the smallpox beat us, because they brought the disease with them. These Indigenous groups came to try and meet again in 1829, and again they brought the smallpox, so it knocked us over once more. So we had two whacks of smallpox, and that’s why when the colonists landed here in 1836 there were only 700-odd of us Kurna left. Then our population dropped to 300 and before long there were only a handful.

<sup>327</sup> James Smith, report to M. Moorhouse, Protector of Aborigines, Apr. 1851, cited in Smith, pp. 34, 37: ‘...have to inform you that the natives belonging to the Rivoli Bay tribe[Booandik] are all quiet, and most of them usefully employed in one way or another by the settlers. Mr Leake informed me that he has about 18,000 sheep shepherded by the natives at present. At the cattle stations some of the young men are employed as assistants to the stockkeepers’.

<sup>328</sup> Mudie, p. 173.

<sup>329</sup> Fort, p. 6.

<sup>330</sup> ‘Return showing the Number of Aborigines in the Counties and Pastoral Districts of the Colony of South Australia; also the Number of Adults, Children, Sick and Infirm, and Males Employed by the Settlers,’ Census 1861, *South Australian Parliamentary Papers*, Roll No. SA, 3: MICROFORM COLLECTION (1857/1858–1901), Flinders University.

alarm at a nearby station gives buoyancy to apocryphal and heroic rides made by white men.

In 2007, Robert Manne cites Peter Novick's discussion of Maurice Halbwach's ideas about collective memory:

Collective memory 'simplifies; sees events from a single committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes...Typically a collective memory, at least a significant collective memory, is understood to express some eternal or essential truth about the group – usually tragic. A memory once established, comes to define that eternal truth, and along with it, an eternal identity, for the members of the group'.<sup>331</sup>

It is not difficult to imagine *Booandik* people being deployed by white raconteurs. Ross Gibson argues that 'myths of settlement strategically dramatise colonial heroism, thereby muffling tales of persistent tribulation endured by native societies'.<sup>332</sup>

For example, many stories circulated about the Avenue Range massacre (1849), including one in which the perpetrator, James Brown, flees on horseback to Adelaide, swimming the Murray River en-route, to provide himself with an alibi for poisoning, rather than shooting nine Aboriginal people. This dare-devil pioneer act overshadows the murder of Indigenous people and offers another example which serves Gibson's point. Simpson Newland's fictionalisation of this horse ride, in *Paving the Way: a Romance of the Australian Bush* may have added gravitas to a folk tale of the frontier or been the starting point for a new apocryphal story.<sup>333</sup> Either way, the story lost momentum. Authors of *Fatal Collisions...* (2001) suggest that accounts of Brown's involvement in the murders 'circulated until about the turn of the century but were eventually erased from the social memory of black and white'.<sup>334</sup> They also note the influence of the 'pioneer legend' in shaping popular accounts.

An apocryphal story in which Adam Lindsay Gordon raises the alarm about the wreck after a tipoff from *Booandik* people has never been undermined by speculation about his whereabouts at the time of the wreck. Speculation is a feature

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<sup>331</sup> Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, cited in Robert Manne, 'A Turkish Tale: Gallipoli and the Armenian Genocide,' *The Monthly*, Feb. 2007, p. 27.

<sup>332</sup> Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), p.12.

<sup>333</sup> Simpson Newland, *Paving the Way: A Romance of the Australian Bush* (1897; London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd, 1912).

<sup>334</sup> Foster, Hosking and Nettelbeck, p. 93.

of apocrypha. Did the *Booandik* make the tale more colourful and romantic? Were they fitting allies for Gordon — like him, elusive, camping on the outskirts of stations? A solitary man, he would no doubt have encountered them on his long rides between breaking jobs on stations. If their incorporation in other narratives can only be sourced to white people, what was their motivation — guilt-ridden revisionism, or a display of assumed superiority? Perhaps *Booandik* people offered romantic local colour — common enough in nineteenth-century paintings. No evidence has been brought forward. Whether they arrived first at the wreck of the *Admella*, we may never know.

Popular narrating of the so-called ‘extinction’ of *Booandik* people resembles an apocryphal story — those people who migrated or married whites were no longer counted — making their presence imperative in *Unsettled*. The novel attempts to transform these complexities into a new narrative; ducking the apocryphal *Booandik* discovery of the wreck by placing Moorecke in a liminal zone in the sand hills. She alludes to their early witness at the site and has agency enough to rescue the Lynch stallion and ride him to Rosanna. Where were Mr Livingstone’s Aboriginal employees during the real event? In my novel, one takes care of the horses. Moorecke’s husband Jack works as a shearer and they continue to camp on *Booandik* land. She weaves and sells baskets, moves freely around the countryside, and visits friends in Gambierton.<sup>335</sup> While the novel suggests a population under threat from disease and violence, it also depicts *Booandik* adaptation and ingenuity, countering their excision from the record books and their symbolic extinction.

### **Writing ‘Other’, Against the Canon as Metatext — *Unsettled***

No oral Lynch stories include the friendship of an Irish and a *Booandik* girl.<sup>336</sup> Real-life precedents for Irish-Indigenous relationships *have* been documented.<sup>337</sup> The ‘so-

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<sup>335</sup> Robert Foster, Ph D thesis, *An Imaginary Dominion: the Representation and Treatment of Aborigines in South Australia, 1834–1911* (University of Adelaide, Department of History, 1993), p. 238, quotes from the *Border Watch*, 20 Jul. 1862: ‘A few aborigines are to be seen “knocking about” on the Mount; and the sight of the lubras is ludicrous, fluttering in the finest “rags of civilisation”, and fancying themselves as handsome as the Chief of the Feejee Islands...shocking bad hats...top hat... tails... bare feet...’. In *Unsettled* Moorecke appears in the town wearing Mrs Ashby’s gown.

<sup>336</sup> Depicting such a relationship was borne out of a personal and professional wish to acknowledge the *Booandik* people’s dispossession and dispersal: I have researched and taught Indigenous history most of my adult life. From the age of seven, I had Aboriginal friends.

called' extinction of *Booandik* people can be partly attributed to their marrying into station communities, perhaps into Irish families. Many Indigenous Australians have Irish parentage, signified by their Irish names. John Moriarty travelled to County Kerry looking for traces of an Irish father he had never met: Moriarty's mother identifies herself as *Yanyuwa, Mara- Kalkadoon* heritage.<sup>338</sup>

*Unsettled* is not the first to link Irish and Indigenous dispossession.<sup>339</sup> Nor has this connection been confined to Australia. For example, Jane Urquhart's novel *Away* links six generations of fictitious Irish women with Indigenous Canadians, their collective suffering brought about by British colonisation.<sup>340</sup> In the novel, Mary disappears with the *Algonquin* people. Her children narrate her disappearance, and Exodus Crow recounts her time away. After four years a crow foreshadows her return — an ellipsis in the narrative — thereby avoiding the author's appropriating of Indigenous Canadian [*Algonquin*] society. Exodus Crow returns her frozen body to the family and speaks for Irish Mary. Present or dead, her silence is subversive. Her leaving and her staying, actual and metaphysical, represent resistance. In style, Urquhart's *Away* edges more closely towards myth or allegory: 'That is how her mother, the priest, and a handful of other islanders had found her early in the afternoon, surrounded by cabbages and teapots, asleep in the arms of a dead young

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<sup>337</sup> See Bob Reese, 'The Irish and the Aborigines,' *Irish Australian Studies: Papers Delivered at the Ninth Irish-Australian Conference Galway, April 1997* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 2000), ed. Tadhg Foley and Fiona Bateman, p. 193: 'The first and most important fact about the Irish-Aboriginal connection is the remarkable number of Aboriginal people in eastern Australia who have Irish family names...Lois O'Donoghue...Pat and Mick Dodson...Gary Foley... Irish family names also feature prominently in Aboriginal artistic and literary achievement...John Moriarty, Lionel Fogarty...' Reece's paper (a revised version of his conference paper) goes on to pose the question: 'Was there a natural rapport between two colonised and dispossessed groups, both of whom came from closely-knit tribal societies in which the relationship with land was of primary importance and cultural traditions were transmitted through story, song and dance?' He explores this position finding some evidence for his hypothesis, and some ironies.

See also Edward Watts, abstract, 'in your head you are not defeated: the Irish in Aboriginal literature', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 26.n1 (August 1991), 33 (16): 'Jack Davis and Eric Willmot, Australian aboriginal authors, have both written works that link Irish and aboriginal culture. These works run counter to current practice of depicting white culture versus black culture... Davis's play "Kullark" and Willmot's novel "Pemulwuy: The Rainbow Warrior" both depict historical instances of groups marginalized by the British, finding value in each other's culture.' Many examples can be found of Aboriginal and Irish historical relationships.

<sup>338</sup> John Moriarty with Evan McHugh, prologue, *Saltwater Fella* (Victoria: Viking, Penguin Books, 2000): pp. 2-3.

<sup>339</sup> See references to Ann Clancy's, *The Wild Colonial Girl* (1996), Chapter VI of this exegesis.

<sup>340</sup> Jane Urquhart, *Away* (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) Like Deirdre, an apocryphal Irish heroine, Mary dies of sorrow for her homeland. Her daughter falls in love with a patriot and then betrays him: point and counterpoint, irony upon irony. Diana Wallace sees escape and political intervention as a spur for women to write historical fiction. See *The Woman's Historical Novel: British Writers, 1900-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 2.

sailor.’<sup>341</sup> Urquat uses magic realism to transport her Irish protagonist away from patriarchal restraints. She writes about sorrow as a trace; she shows its circularity, beginning and ending her novel with an Irish descendent.

*Unsettled*’s plot has some circularity, and follows Urquat’s pattern in linking Indigenous and Irish colonial status. Whether Rosanna and Moorecke’s historical prototypes knew each other or not *Unsettled* imagines their story. Omission from hegemonic constructions — gendered, class-ridden and racialised — of the South-east frontier links Irish and *Booandik* women. Rosanna’s role as fallen woman mimics the colonisation of black women: she is forbidden to speak her language, she works for the white woman, she is the butt of racist jokes and impregnated by a married white house-guest. Spiritually disconnected from their homeland, Rosanna’s family, like Moorecke’s, have fled. They take comfort in alcohol and isolation. English squatters have the jump on them.

*Unsettled* raises questions common to *Booandik* and Irish young women about race and gender, offering them a shared recuperative space, albeit one undermined by the unstable power relationship they have with men in general and Mr Ashby in particular. Intertextual references link stories about power, pride and patriarchy.<sup>342</sup> Rosanna’s and Moorecke’s affective responses to the actions of their men and to nineteenth-century patriarchy may, superficially, be judged as passive, even as they move freely across the land, and through the bush. Shaping their group identity and survival depends on caring for children and men, on resisting racial stereotyping, and on avoiding racism.

Lacanian critic Jennifer Rutherford casts doubt on literary interpretations of shared Irish and Indigenous colonial consciousness, with particular reference to Tim Winton’s *The Riders*:

The mythologised history of Ireland, heavy with emotive and dramatic character, but deprived of any real historical actuality [Rutherford does not specifically refer to apocryphal tales], is drawn into analogy with a compressed narrative of Aboriginal dispossession, colonisation and genocide drained of both historical and emotional content and registering only as a sub-plot, an ancillary tale of lesser suffering. The Irish narrative

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<sup>341</sup> Urquhart, *Away*, p. 11. Urquat’s text also makes reference to Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Lady Gregory, and the poet Oisín.

<sup>342</sup> See Chapter II: Edward Geoghegan and *The Hibernian Father* for more detailed discussion.

subsumes that of the “lesser” story of Aboriginal dispossession, re forging a new narrative in which Irish dispossession assumes many of the features of Aboriginal dispossession.<sup>343</sup>

My novel can be read in the light of Rutherford’s criticism of Winton’s *The Riders* as a ‘compressed narrative of Aboriginal dispossession, colonisation and genocide’, pleading literary twenty-first-century conventions when writing racial ‘Other’.<sup>344</sup> It is to be hoped that its Irish story does not subsume the Indigenous one, nor overplay the similarities between their complex national narratives. Metaphor and metonym mute violent famine and massacre sub-texts in *Unsettled*, reminding readers that the narrative says one thing while meaning another.<sup>345</sup> Metatexts underline *Booandik* and Irish subaltern status.

Questions of authority in representing ‘Other’ in metatexts can become the elephant in the room during discussions about postcolonial novels and their exegeses. Some supervisors advise candidates to be bold and shoot the metatext — to just write their story. Others advise them to back away from it in the novel, firing a few carefully chosen bullets to wing it in the exegesis. Creative Writing academics struggle to control their elephants when researching across so many fields: history, anthropology, psychology and cultural theory.<sup>346</sup>

In a 2008 article in *TEXT*, Creative Writing academic Paul Dawson, traces the late twentieth-century development of university creative writing programs in which teachers learned to ‘interrogate their own practice...drawing from a range of fields: poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, identity politics and postcolonialism, to linguistics and cognitive science’.<sup>347</sup> In addition, reading, writing and thinking in diverse ways produces creative material as well as interrogating it. In 2004, Paul Carter had emphasised the primacy of the creative project believing that ‘the discourse of creative research — or material thinking — is likely to be occasional, genetically

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<sup>343</sup> Jennifer Rutherford, ‘The Irish Conceit: Ireland and the New Australian Nationalism’, *Ireland and Australia, 1798–1998: Studies in Culture, Identity and Migration* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 2000), p. 197.

<sup>344</sup> Rutherford, ‘The Irish Conceit: Ireland and the New Australian Nationalism’, p. 197.

<sup>345</sup> See, for example, ‘Unsettled’ Chapter XIX: George Sutherland and The Kangaroo Hunt.

<sup>346</sup> My particular problems in locating cultural custodians of *Booandik* history related to their ‘presumed extinction’ and my lack of community links.

<sup>347</sup> Paul Dawson, ‘Creative writing and postmodern interdisciplinarity,’ *TEXT*, vol. 12, no., 1, 2008, 20 Mar. 2009, <http://www.textjournal.com.au/April2008/dawson.htm>. Dawson begins with D.G. Myers, *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* (1996)

disrespectful and promiscuous, and localised'.<sup>348</sup> Writers can be disingenuous in snatching up material that might prove useful to their plot.

But if the demands of the exegesis drove my Indigenous characters into the bush, it fitted my metanarrative about cultural appropriation; after all, I am an Australian of South-east Anglo-Scottish descent — also a privileged beneficiary of *Booandik* dispossession; writing an Irish story belonging to my husband's family — a triple irony. Who could protect all these people from my pen? Poorly integrated metatext, labelled commentary, by Genette, can draw fire, for the Ph D writer of idealistic texts. He accuses Proust of allowing the narrator in *À la recherche du temps perdu* (who resembled that author's auto-didact self) to disturb 'the traditional equilibrium of novelistic form' precipitating 'an invasion of the story by the commentary'.<sup>349</sup>

Acutely conscious of this danger, I tried to control metatext in dialogue and interior monologue, by blunting didacticism, particularly in relation to the discourse of race, and by using discursive rather than definitive language. Lynch characters might make remarks about 'savages', reflecting temporal attitudes, but they do not politicise race; Rosanna tries to protect Moorecke from the Ashbys but makes no attempt to proselytise. Perhaps this will not satisfy a contemporary reader, who might prefer a more uncomfortable text, which explicitly disturbs nineteenth-century historical and cultural beliefs. This exegesis makes a plea for readers to contextualise the 1859 reconstruction of events in *Unsettled*, and the constraints of balancing fact with fiction.

The novel tries to balance implicit and explicit information (which Roland Barthe calls 'indices'), hoping that its narrative 'says less than it knows,' often making 'known more than it says'.<sup>350</sup> The importance of acknowledging *Booandik* sovereignty over southern South Australia and western Victoria, their sites of memory, and their naming, deterred me from appropriating their Dreaming stories for my novel. Where possible, figurative language creates mood and character, and foreshadows.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Paul Carter, *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research* (Carleton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2004), p. 9.

<sup>349</sup> Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1009/P III, 882), referred to in Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1967–1968; Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990) trans. *Nouveau discours du récit*, pp. 258-9.

<sup>350</sup> Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: an Essay in Method* (1966-9; 1972; Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), trans. Jane E. Lewin, foreword, Jonathan Culler, trans. *Nouveau discours du récit*, p. 198, quoting Roland Barthes, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' /

'Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits,' *Communications*, 8, NLH, 6 [Winter 1975], p. 237-272.

<sup>351</sup> See Chapter VI: Architextuality, Genre, Literary Fiction.

Strategic metaphors carry the dispossession of *Booandik* and Irish people, on the wings of bats during seasonal migrations; a *claddagh* brooch, Lucifer and bats, act as motifs.

The narrative does not focalise through Moorecke. Representation of *Booandik* culture comes through dialogue relating to knowledge of land. For Moorecke to take a pedagogic role, delivering culture — mediated by her creator — would undermine the artistic purpose of the novel and could cause offence. Consultation with *Booandik* people — still continuing — allows me, in a limited way, to show without telling some aspects of *Booandik* culture. It is to be hoped that future readers interested in the metatext of *Unsettled* will do their own research with the support of *Booandik* people.

The novel alludes to violence — threats by Mr Ashby, and the murder of Moorecke's mother — yet makes no attempt to reconstruct murder or massacre. Temerity in creating *Booandik* characters was tempered by the implications of leaving them out of an 1852–1863 frontier novel. The dilemma of my intentions and possible reader interpretations is discussed in an article in *TEXT* (2006).<sup>352</sup> Moorecke and Jack challenge Mr Ashby's refusal to employ them, by *trespassing* on their own land.<sup>353</sup> They hunt *his* game, approach *his* home, and camp at traditional places until he drives them off. Allowing him to evict them underlines their dispossession, as does Lynch's desire and assisted right to legally purchase land.<sup>354</sup> Hierarchical racism is implicit in colonialism.

Increasingly, university ethics committees demand a conversation between writer/researchers and Indigenous stakeholders, offering as a consequence opportunities for mutual learning: the grace and generosity of Indigenous people being

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<sup>352</sup> See Appendix: Approval Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee, Flinders University, July 2008, <http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/info-for-researchers/ethics/committees/social-behavioural.cfm> ; Gay Lynch, 'Fiction Writing: Theft or Weft,' *TEXT*, vol. 9, no. 1, April, 2005, accessed 26 Sept. 2006, <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april05/lynch.htm>; and Appendix 6: *Booandik* Language.

<sup>353</sup> Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: an Essay in Spatial History*, p.158: 'Reconstructing the spatial history of settlement has implications, not only for the myth of the pioneer, but also for the associated myth of the 'frontier'... Essentially the frontier is usually conceived of as a line, a line continually pushed forward (or back) by heroic frontiersmen, the pioneers.' By 1859 the South-east frontier is almost settled and the *Booandik* have begun to reoccupy the town space, as a place of sustenance and protection.

<sup>354</sup> *Booandik* people also honour boundaries and lines which usually following natural features of the land. Often on the move, they pay respect to, trade along, carry out cultural exchanges on and sometimes fight over these territorial boundaries. Carter claims that it is the act of naming places which determines their historical significance. For this reason acknowledgement will be made in my novel of *Booandik* peoples' knowledge of landscape, and my mindfulness of how significant sites are named and respected.

the salvation of Ph D candidates backing up their fictional elephants.<sup>355</sup> This exegesis suggests that answers to complicated questions raised by creative writing academics during their collaborations with Indigenous custodians of subject cultures cross faculty lines. Paul Dawson argues that ‘it is more productive to conceive of a discipline not as a body of knowledge but as a flexible set of methodologies organised around a series of recurring questions,’ and that creative writing is ‘most productively conceived as a distinct, theoretically informed, *pedagogy* that occupies a space within multiple (and themselves permeable) disciplines such as English, cultural studies, media and communication, film and theatre studies, and the creative arts’.<sup>356</sup> Wherever creative writers hunt for answers, they transgress.

As the writer of an explicitly transtextual novel that draws on apocryphal tales incorporating Indigenous subjects I must make my intentions and authorial authority clear. *Booandik* people can not be written out or written in to new *Admella* stories, without collaboration and self-reflexive practice across a range of disciplines. New texts have the potential for reinscription in family and regional collective memory.

### ***Section C: Archetypal Exiled Sons, Apocryphal Story: Adam Lindsay Gordon***

Alerted by two *Booandik* riders, poet, horse rider, tragic early suicide, Adam Lindsay Gordon — in some versions with an unnamed Irish companion — rides to the Gambierton telegraph station to break the news about the *Admella*. The telling and retelling of this apocryphal story exploits Australian colonial motifs — heroic rider, loyal horse, wild seas and shipwrecks — perhaps for the purpose of selling books and, more subtly, to create a regional and romantic hero.<sup>357</sup> The Gordon stories rely on a tip-off from *Booandik* people, which has already been discussed.

Their survival in South East collective memory suggests something of Gordon’s apocryphal stature as well as making obvious the implicit contradictions in

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<sup>355</sup> Nor does the word sorry have to be extracted like a rotten tooth, as Prime Minister Rudd has demonstrated.

<sup>356</sup> Dawson, p.10.

<sup>357</sup> Heroic rider and loyal horse motifs can also be seen in Simpson Newland’s *Paving the Way* (1897). Lucifer, the Lynches’ horse in my novel, is emblematic of Rosanna’s colonial adventures. In real life, Lucifer served mares around the district because of his strength and courage. *Unsettled* romanticises wild rides.

oral stories. In real life, Gordon worked with Martin Lynch and his oldest son on South-east pastoral stations; he lived a short ride from them on the cliffs of Port MacDonnell. Racing histories reveal that he competed against Lynches in steeplechases.<sup>358</sup> As a result, Gordon appears as a minor character in my novel, but if the Lynches were among rescuers on the beach, might he not also have been present? Apocryphal tales about Gordon remain potent, even now, with their shifting cargo of tropes — wild colonial rider, estranged father and exilic son, absent women, suicide.<sup>359</sup> It is well-attested that some of these narratives can be contested. Only E.M. Yelland’s account mentions Gordon’s presence at the *Admella* site: ‘Helping at the scene of the wreck on shore were David Power, from Mount Gambier, John Livingstone, Adam Lindsay Gordon, Scarvell...’<sup>360</sup> He only offers a footnote to Gordon’s poem, in which the rider is not clearly identified. Had Gordon been present, he had made no contribution significant enough for journalists to enquire his name or else, his reputation as reckless rider and poet had not developed sufficient weight. This was the case for many unnamed rescuers.

The real rider, Peter Black, was named in all official reports (Samuel Mossman, the *Adelaide Register*, ‘Parliamentary Report on the *Admella*’, 1860). The widely accepted consensus among newspapers and most historians is that some time after impact and the loss of the *Admella*’s lifeboat Leach and Knapman, two crewmen, constructed a makeshift raft from the mizzen boom, managed to get ashore and struggled on foot along the coast to the lighthouse at Cape Northumberland. Black, a nearby station owner, made the historic ride to Mount Gambier. ‘He arrived there at three in the afternoon and went straight to the post office, after a ride that was to inspire Adam Lindsay Gordon to write the poem “From the Wreck”, which is loosely – very loosely – founded on Black’s ride’, insists Mudie.<sup>361</sup> Neville Bonney

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<sup>358</sup> See Appendix 8: Lynch Family.

<sup>359</sup> Adam Lindsay Gordon, ‘Whisperings in Wattle-Boughs’, Robb, p. 59:

Oh, tell me, father mine, ere the good ship cross’d the  
brine,

On the gangway one mute hand-grip we exchanged,  
Do you, past the grave, employ, for your stubborn  
reckless boy,

Those petitions that in life were ne’er estranged

<sup>360</sup> Yelland, p.150: ‘His epic poem — “From the Wreck” records the ride to seek aid from Curratum to Mount Gambier, after news of the wreck was sent from the Cape Northumberland Lighthouse’.

<sup>361</sup> Mudie, p.67.

concur with this version.<sup>362</sup> A mare's nest of material published on Gordon's life and, in particular, on this issue, makes research challenging.

### **Literary Transformation: Gordon's Poem**

Gordon's version of the story subsumes Black's, for three reasons. Nine years after the wreck, in 1870, the same year he committed suicide, he published his poem 'From the Wreck', a seemingly authentic retelling of the heroic ride on a well-known station horse. It proved a catalyst for renewed speculation about the *Admella* narratives. While Gordon appears in my novel set in 1859, his poem, published in 1870, obviously does not. Perhaps the poem worked directly on the unconscious memories of local people who, taken by its apparent authenticity, or not understanding the idea of narrative voice, accepted the narrator's assertion that he rode to the telegraph office. Why did Gordon not clarify this issue at the time of publication? Did he remove the final stanza to avoid more ambiguity or to promote speculation?

There are songs yet unsung, there are tales yet untold  
Concerning yon wreck that must baffle my pen...<sup>363</sup>

References to the poem's local names and landmarks tapped into community cultural memory; the wreck of the *Admella* was a locus for extraordinary heroism, and became part of Australia's national story. Not only did the poem trigger memories of the event — too many to list — but its text was examined with forensic enthusiasm. Brian O'Connor refers to a Stockdale [J. H Stockdale, Lake Hawden Station in Robe District] horse, 'Lady Blanche', as the mare, which fell dead beneath its rider Charles Mullaly, one of the apocryphal horsemen carrying the news of the *Admella* wreck. The poem provoked a storm of criticism from people who believed the route taken by the poem's narrator to be incorrect.<sup>364</sup>

The poem's narrative also resonates with Magarey family history. When news broke of his father's death on the *Admella*, James Magarey's son William galloped towards the family home to comfort his sister in Geelong. Between Hamilton and

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<sup>362</sup> Neville Bonney, *Carpenter Rocks and Beyond*, (Millicent, South Australia: Neville Bonney, 1987), p. 42.

<sup>363</sup> The deleted lines have been published in many biographies including, C.F. McCrae's, *Adam Lindsay Gordon* (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1968), p. 49.

<sup>364</sup> Brian O'Connor, *Personalities in Pink Coats* (Mount Gambier: Mount Gambier Hunt Club). [n.d.]

Portland his borrowed horse dropped dead beneath him.<sup>365</sup> While it has never been suggested, perhaps this accident was the model for the death of the horse in Gordon's poem 'From the Wreck.'

In rhythm and in form, Gordon's poem resembles Browning's 'How They brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix', of which Gordon was known to be fond.<sup>366</sup> Mudie includes Gordon's poem in his book but dismisses it as an illegitimate recount of true events.<sup>367</sup> He delineates points of difference between the route the rider took and the lack of a moon in the poem, for example, a full moon lit the eerie weeklong *Admella* tableau. Disagreement about the veracity of Gordon's poem continues to this day. It seems likely that memories of people close to Gordon were sought to create publicity to increase sales of reprints of his books. Quotations were frequently taken from a 1912 newspaper interview with Gordon's wife — she had met him in 1859 — and in which, forty-two years after his death, she reminisced about their life together: 'He was always ready to do what he could to help others, and it was he who rode from the wreck of the *Admella* to the nearest township, just as he describes in his poem "The Ride from the Wreck"'.<sup>368</sup> Notes on the poem in the 1912 anthology, *Poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon*, written by Gordon's friend Frank Maldon Robb, refer to the poem as 'a reminiscence of Gordon's life in the Mount Gambier district', but make no specific claims for its authenticity as a personal retelling of the ride from the *Admella*.<sup>369</sup>

Another flurry of discussion began in 1922 precipitating editorial correspondence in newspapers. A.T. Saunders quotes from a new book, which I have

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<sup>365</sup> P.W. Vercoe, *Thomas and Elisabeth Magarey* (Adelaide: Printed by LPH Adelaide, 1985), p. 103. State Library of S.A. Archives: Magarey Family Summary Record (1856–1932), PRG 343.

<sup>366</sup> Robb, ed. p. xcvi: 'Much independent and external evidence exists of Gordon's love for and study of the great poet [Browning] of the nineteenth century'; p. vi: 'there are three entire poems in which the most striking correspondence between the poets [Browning and Gordon] makes itself felt. The first and best known of these is that between Gordon's ride "From the Wreck" and Browning's "How we Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix"'.  
<sup>367</sup> Mudie, p.167: 'Three chapters of Crawford Vaughn's novel, *Come Back in Wattle Time* [sic], are founded on the misconception; and even in the Proceedings of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society (Vol. 21, p. 126) ... The story is, however, absurd. Gordon, it seems, was horsebreaking at Robe at the time; no contemporary reference speaks of him as even being present on the beach during the week of the wreck ... nobody, it seems, questioned Germein and Black's story that Black made the ride; and Gordon is said (Advertiser [sic] 16/2/1957, p. 4.) never to have described himself as having carried the news of the wreck'.

<sup>368</sup> Maggie Low, *Adelaide Register* 23 March 1912.

<sup>369</sup> Robb, notes, p. 379.

been unable to identify from the archived newspaper cutting.<sup>370</sup> His dismissal of Gordon's presence at the wreck was succinct. 'The foregoing is absurdly inaccurate.' Mr R. J. Holbrook, whose uncle perished in the wreck, concurs: 'I agree with Mr A.T. Saunders that Gordon's poem "From the Wreck" does not relate an actual experience. Gordon was a lugubrious kind of person, and probably twanged the lyre in order to describe what might have occurred had he been there'.<sup>371</sup> C.F. McCrae's 1968 biography of Gordon also threw the story out: 'a legend long persisted...his widow said so in 1912. Harry Stockdale said so in some pencilled notes which he set down in 1923. But it cannot be so...'<sup>372</sup> He suggests 'Gordon's position as an Australian poet has been due in no small degree to cultural lobbying, through Gordon societies, memorial plaques, pilgrimages...'<sup>373</sup> Nevertheless, the story of a local rider maintained its momentum, demonstrating its energy, riding into collective memory, whipped along by gifted raconteurs.

Common words and phrases — 'big ship on rocks', 'firesticks' — used in 1912, 1922, 1923 and subsequent accounts appear to draw on Mrs Lauder's letters. Geoffrey Hutton continues in this vein in 1996 with borrowed anecdotes, albeit accompanied by a disclaimer in his foreword that he did not wish to overload 'the narrative with references.'<sup>374</sup> This is the stuff of apocrypha. Repetition of key elements maintains the story's inertia. 'What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality...myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it things lose the memory that they once were made', asserts French theorist, Roland Barthes.<sup>375</sup> Apocryphal stories also work this way, the details of their invention overtaken by reconstructed community memories.

In the 1980s Brian O'Connor revived the tale, abandoning Gordon and substituting an Irish stockman (Charles Mullally) who appeared in several versions

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<sup>370</sup> A.T. Saunders, letter, n.d., *Admella* papers, D3118F: 'On Sunday, August 7, 1859, three aborigines with firesticks came to Livingstone's Station, having travelled twenty miles with the news that was to astonish Australia. "Big one ship sit down on rocks", said the aborigines when they had roused the station people. "Where?" asked Gordon, "Carpenters Rocks," said the aborigines, and gave also various details. Gordon and Alec McPherson were picked out as best riders to race into Mount Gambier with the news'. The book may have been an Australian edition of *The Poems of Adam Lindsay Gordon* (Edinburgh; London: Foulis, TN, 1922), notes, Hugh Anderson.

<sup>371</sup> R.J. Holbrook, letter, n.d. *Admella* papers, hand-written citation, State Library of South Australia: D3118f.

<sup>372</sup> McCrae, p. 50.

<sup>373</sup> McCrae's, p. 140.

<sup>374</sup> Hutton, p. 11.

<sup>375</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957; London, Great Britain: Random House, 1993), p. 142.

including Robert Stockdale's.<sup>376</sup> Lorraine Day's biography, *Gordon of Dingley Dell...*(2003) took an each-way bet arguing that while the official Peter Black version of the ride to the telegraph station stood, Gordon and 'Charlie Jack Mullally' ... also set off for Mount Gambier.<sup>377</sup> Her version contains other apocryphal narrative elements, including *Booandik* people. She offers no evidence for these inclusions. Familiar quotations lack in-text citation. The book contains a limited bibliography but no footnotes. Day's Author's Notes claim that she 'compiled and edited', rather than wrote the book. Extraordinarily, she not only invents a new version of the tale but fails to mention any of the persuasive arguments against Gordon's inclusion in the larger *Admella* story. Perhaps it can only be concluded that the 'encouragement and support' offered by caretakers at Dingley Dell — Gordon's cottage, now tourist site — and the impulse to create a text for tourists, albeit apocryphal, drove her conclusions, echoing Barthes' view that in myth, reality only needs to be signified. Apocryphal stories feature economic manipulation.

It is not difficult to imagine reasons for apocryphal stories attaching themselves to Gordon. It must be argued that they provide yet another example of the way people have always vicariously tapped into iconic stories: in the same way that more Victorians than seemed likely, or even possible, claimed to have sheltered Peter Lalor after the failed Eureka Stockade.<sup>378</sup> In much the same way, forty-seven years after the *Admella* sank (1907), Bridget Ledwith, the only woman rescued from the *Admella*, emerged from obscurity to defend her identity against a Mrs Willoughby, who described herself 'as the first white girl to have been born in South Australia...and a survivor of the *Admella*,' a tale she furnished with artefacts and inferences of cannibalism.<sup>379</sup>

These stories about raising the alarm retain their fluidity and potency (are still told) in South East cultural memory. Barthes claims that 'a myth ripens because it spreads.'<sup>380</sup> Apocryphal stories share this characteristic when employed for similar

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<sup>376</sup> Brian O'Connor, *Personalities in Pink Coats*; p. 19; 'Robert Stockdale', ed. Rodney Cockburn, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia* (Adelaide: Publishers Limited, 1925–27), p. 39.

<sup>377</sup> Day, p.125.

<sup>378</sup> Anne Beggs Sunter, 'The Apotheosis of Peter Lalor: Myth, Meaning and Memory in History' *Remembered Nations, Imagined Republics: proceedings of the Twelfth Irish-Australian Conference Galway June 2002 Australian Journal of Irish Studies: Volume 4: Special Issue*, pp. 94-104.

<sup>379</sup> Mudie, p. 162.

<sup>380</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 149.

reasons: community identity, publication, tourism, and in the face of major events — joyful speculation — a form of history which cannot be dismissed.

### ***Section D: Lynch Family Apocryphal Story: Martin Lynch and the Admella***

It has already been mentioned that over several generations Lynches told an apocryphal story in which Martin Lynch arrived at the beach beside the *Admella*, amongst the first party of rescuers.<sup>381</sup> Although not known outside the family it makes no claims which disturb official versions nor solicits any obvious political or economic benefit. While the Lynch story can not be verified, reports and fictionalised accounts of the wreck allow a space for it.

Hundreds of horsemen arrived from surrounding stations, keeping vigil over the distressed boat with bonfires, prayers, and grand schemes to defeat the raging sea and snatch the passengers.<sup>382</sup> Many of them camped for six or seven days.<sup>383</sup> On the third morning, two officers from the Telegraph Station and five others made their way to the wreck. On the way they were joined by another group that included a magistrate, a doctor, and a police trooper. They discussed fetching a boat, a small kind of wherry, from the lighthouse. At the time, Martin Lynch worked at Mount Schank Station. In Mudie's account of the rescue the manager of Mount Schank Station, 'who *is on* the beach', immediately sent a message to his station for horses and a dray to go to the lighthouse and bring the boat to the shore opposite the Carpenters.<sup>384</sup> Lynch *could* have been with his workmates. Apart from the station owner, Mr Fisher, the men remain nameless. If their ethnicity was important it was overshadowed by their identity as South-east men. Reports consistently describe the horsemen on the beach as members of the 'rescue party', 'watchers on the shore', 'a

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<sup>381</sup> Jean Lynch, 'Martin and Mary Lynch and their Descendents'.

<sup>382</sup> Mudie, p.72; Mossman, p. 35.

<sup>383</sup> George Bamford [Tarpeena farmer], unsourced account (1864) in E.M. Yelland, *The Baron of the Frontier: South Australia — Victoria, Robert Rowland Leake, 1811–1860* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1973), p. 155.

<sup>384</sup> Mudie, p. 72.

group of nineteen men' and 'station men' rather than by their ethnicity.<sup>385</sup> They are 'wealthy settlers,' 'hospitable settlers' and 'a gallant band.'<sup>386</sup>

Nineteenth-century imperialist idealism focused on a new colonial and national identity. The small population of South-east colonists numbered less than eight hundred, mostly living on station runs. Several days' journey on horseback from Adelaide, a ride through swamps and desert, they had few services, no newspapers or railways, and few or poor roads. They felt genuine disaffection with their capital. Settled from the east the region had historical relationships with the squatter dominated Portland market. MacDonnell Bay had moorings for only one ship, mail ran bi-weekly and there was no Circuit Court. Historian Peter Rymill concludes in 2001 that with the 'insurgence of commerce, the building of roads, or rather the lack thereof, was a salient political issue and led to a significant separation movement.' According to K.K. O'Donoghue 'in spite of a greatly expanded revenue from land sales in the South-east after 1857, the South Australian government made no appreciable increase in its allocation of funds to the Mount Gambier area until 1861'.<sup>387</sup> Within two years (1861) simmering tensions led to a public proposal for secession: the 'Colony of Princeland', taking in South-east South Australia and western Victoria.<sup>388</sup>

It is not difficult to imagine Irish immigrants like the Lynches, previously represented by an absentee landlord in a distant London Parliament, feeling real aggravation over the South Australian Government's failure to assist sufferers on a ship wrecked between two colonies. By June 1861, a Mount Gambier news editor articulated this: 'we conceive that the duty of the inhabitants of the South-east District and Mt Gambier in particular is to agitate for public improvements and to give the government no rest until it has done a measure of justice to this locality'.<sup>389</sup>

The Lynches' apocryphal tale is humble and it seems reasonable to accept it, Martin's absence from *Admella* archives unremarkable. While it is possible that he

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<sup>385</sup> Mudie, pp. 71-95.

<sup>386</sup> Mossman, pp. 33, 135.

<sup>387</sup> K.K. O'Donoghue, *West Victorian Separation Movement the 1860s Call for Secession* (Warnabool, Victoria: Warnabool Institute Press, 1984), p. xviii: 'This movement came to nothing because South-easterners were afraid that they would lose money they had already invested in the South Australian Legislature and that body made some inadequate but conciliatory offers'.

<sup>388</sup> Peter Rymill, 'The Political Issues Affecting Early South Eastern Representatives in Parliament and Their Response to Them,' *Exploring the Anatomy of a Region: The South east of South Australia*, (Mount Gambier: South East Book Promotions, 2001), p. 42.

<sup>389</sup> *Border Watch*, 7 Jun.1861, cited in Fort, p.10.

told the story for self-aggrandisement to shoulder-in on a local event that had national coverage, no dissent has been registered in the family. The story was told and renewed. Increased time since the event could consign the story to oblivion. Lynch played no role in the discovery of the wreck or raising the alarm, even in family lore, tempting though it might be for a novelist to have him piggy-back on the Gordon apocryphal tale, turning historical fiction into fantasy.

Why not beef up the Lynch family's role at the *Admella* site? Barthes' *Mythologies* (1956) focuses mainly on capitalist myths, but argues that 'any myth with some degree of generality is in fact ambiguous, because it represents the very humanity of those who, having nothing, have borrowed it'.<sup>390</sup> Gordon's nameless Irish riding companion, present in some versions could have been Martin Lynch. Apocryphal stories feature instabilities. While I elected not to do this *Unsettled* creates a new *Admella* tale placing Lynches in the foreground.

### **Literary Transformation: *Unsettled***

Barthes' suggestion that '[T]he best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an *artificial myth*' — it can also be applied to apocrypha — justifies writing *Unsettled* as a means of questioning apocryphal Lynch tales.<sup>391</sup> *Unsettled* brings an Irish girl to the beach beside the *Admella*.<sup>392</sup> Rosanna and her Indigenous friend witness the full horror of the wreck, Moorecke bravely catching Lucifer after the wreck and riding him home. On the first occasion, Rosanna leaves the beach at her father's insistence but surreptitiously returns over many nights. She passes Adam Lindsay Gordon on the bridle path to the Carpenters; in having her do so I have knowingly retouched an enduring apocryphal strand of the *Admella* narratives, perhaps renewing speculation. Rosanna's wild rides between her home and Carpenters Rocks, and in a race while pregnant, underline her physical courage. Horse and rider motifs are common in settler novels. Ellen Kelly's horsemanship in Peter Carey's novel *The True History of the Kelly Gang* provides an exemplary model.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies* p. 157.

<sup>391</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 135.

<sup>392</sup> The wreck of the *Admella* has already been discussed as climax of my novel's plot and the rescue of the passengers as signifier of South-east courage in adversity.

<sup>393</sup> Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000) and 'Unsettled', share tropes of Irish settler novels: trouble with the police, cattle-duffing, prison sentences, the craving for land, and alcohol abuse.

Garrick Lynch, Rosanna's father in *Unsettled*, and a fictionalised Martin Lynch, rides with Mount Schank station men to bring a dray and supplies to the beach, tends bonfires, and helps make hopeless plans to rescue passengers. Deep-seated but fragmented stories and memories of rural Ireland may have been disturbed by new apocryphal heroic and anti-heroic narratives: those of horses and boats, on the frontier and on the sea. The reader can only be privy to his thoughts through dialogue — the *Admella* chapters focalise through Rosanna.

The wreck narratives omit several points of view; it is only in the popular Gordon narratives coalescing mainly around the testimony of women (his biographer, his wife) that Indigenous people appear. Not once, in all the recounting of rides and attempted sea rescues, are women mentioned; nor were they mentioned in relation to preparing and bringing station food and supplies, or as spectators, on the beach. South-east men on horseback disseminated *Admella* tales throughout the station communities. White men dominate the *Admella* narratives. Land ownership, vocation and office bearing obfuscate South-east women in historical records, including the *Admella* narratives. Nameless Mrs Lynch, wife of Martin, was later eulogised as an 'Old Colonist' and a good mother...<sup>394</sup> Kay Schaffer refers to this diminution of women as subjects in *Women and the Bush...* (1988).<sup>395</sup> Such representations marginalise the experiences of many, but particularly female members of small Irish families on the frontier.<sup>396</sup> *Unsettled* brings two girls, Rosanna and Moorecke, to the

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Mrs Lynch's husband is away with cattle, like Mrs Kelly's. Both women raise their regularly fatherless clutch of children on tales of Cuchulain and, more importantly, Irish heroines of old, for example, p. 26: 'there was many such women they was queens they was hot blooded not careful they would fight a fight and take a king into their marriage bed', says Ellen Kelly, and on p. 173: 'My daughter please understand I am displaying your great uncles in a bad light they was wild and often shicker they thieved and fought and abused me cruelly but you must also remember your ancestors would not kowtow to no one and this were a fine rare thing in a colony made specifically to have poor men bow down to their gaolers'. Lynch and Kellys believe in ancestral memory.

<sup>394</sup> Maria Lynch, obituary, 'Death of an Old Colonist', *Border Watch*, 17 November 1897, in author's possession [unpaged], microfilm copy, State Library South Australia: 'Mrs Lynch, who was of a quiet unassuming manner, brought up her children in a very creditable manner, and the family are highly respected by all who know them. The last wish of Mrs Lynch was that she should be buried in the Mount with her husband, and her sons granted her request...' Her eulogy acknowledged that she owned land, however briefly, after her husband's death: 'Mr Lynch took up a small cattle station in the Hundred of Caroline. After Mr Lynch's death there Mrs Lynch sold the place and went to live with her son William, who had taken up land with his brother Michael near Nhill.'

<sup>395</sup> Kay Schaffer, *Women in the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Cambridge, England; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 63: 'They appear as daughters, lovers, wives and mothers in relationships to men. That is, they are (always) already spoken for'.

<sup>396</sup> In Miles Franklin's *All that Swagger* (Sydney, London: Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1943), Johanna, the Delacey matriarch is portrayed as homebound, pretentious, proud and materialistic, while her husband

sandhills overlooking the beach, underlining their role as spectators, in an alternative history.

## **Conclusion**

The increasing distance between the event and the argument, archives well raked over, witnesses dead, the memories of their descendents distorted or fading — the trail long cold, in the Lynches' case — makes new revelations unlikely. But who is to say that it will not happen: a new eye, a family document found, a kaleidoscope of colourful facts shifting and settling into a new pattern; this is the work of historians and writers of historical fiction.

The artificial framing of its subjects, the illusion of their connection, and the static quality of a composition capturing people on the move limits the meaning of an Irish snapshot of the *Admella* tragedy and of the South-east. The perceived absence of local Irish people from pre-1859 South-east history could be construed as apocryphal, for their hidden stories sit outside master narratives. To anyone but his family Martin Lynch played a minor role in assisting with rescue work on the beach. Although his story is apocryphal I have done my best to show that it was feasible: modest, and worth preserving in family history.

South-east apocryphal stories allowed settlers to tell alternative stories about an event they were affected by — 'the canon' being too grand a concept for newspaper journalism — at public houses and race meetings, at stock sales and at commemorations. Gordon and his apocryphal riding companions, some Irish, adhered to and demolished epic *Admella* stories reported in newspapers. Real-life Lynches, like the characters in *Unsettled*, probably shared their *Admella* experiences at the kitchen table, at racetracks and over *poteen* at Miss Kitty's *sibín*.<sup>397</sup>

If apocryphal stories must be retold and popularly accepted to be renewed, what can be made of these discontinuous alternative narratives persisting for one hundred and fifty years after the wreck event? Only traces of the real events,

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cavorts around the countryside. On the other hand, Della and Claire Margaret, who show spunk and intelligence and ride thoroughbreds at an early age, resist or delay marriage — historically they might have found themselves in poverty — but Franklin allows them to become successful settler women, running their own show.

<sup>397</sup> Kitty Temple owned a *sibín* (shebeen) at Caveton, near the Lynches' house, and was renamed Lallah, in *Unsettled*.

fragments, were adequately copied and stored for the reference of scholars and lawyers: official transcripts of autopsies, reports and ceremonies, medals and commemorations, newspapers letters and articles – archival storage and later, microfilm, rendering them less ephemeral. Some eyewitnesses moved, traumatised by the event perhaps, wrote their own stories, some of which survived and were discovered at their deaths. Not one provided new answers; perhaps new stories will be recovered.

Will the 2009 sesquicentenary commemoration breathe new life into apocryphal stories outlined in this chapter or leave them behind?<sup>398</sup> The story of *Unsettled* offers an alternative *Admella* narrative, potentially apocryphal, and renews an old one. It validates the experiences of a small Irish family on the frontier of South-east South Australia, speculates over their relationship with *Booandik* people, and plugs a gap in Lynches' collective memory.

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<sup>398</sup> See *Admella* 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, August 2009, <http://www.admella.org.au/reading.aspx>. 18 Oct. 2008.

## **Chapter IV: Apocryphal Stories in Historical Fiction: Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* and *Searching for the Secret River***

Introduction

### **Apocryphal Story 1: Solomon Wiseman, Murderer**

Section A: Hidden Story with Enduring Elements

Section B: Acceptance in Popular Memory

Section C: Archetypal Elements

Section D: Refuses Historical Verification

Section E: Speculation

Section F: Literary Transformation

### **Apocryphal Story 2: An Alternative History of the River Hawkesbury Settlement**

Section A: Writing Against the Canon

Section B: Hidden Story

Section C: Speculation

Section D: Enduring Elements, Archetypal Drama

Section E: Acceptance in Popular Memory

Section F: Refuses Historical Verification

Section G: Political Manipulation

Section H: Literary Transformation

Section I: Establishment in Australia's National Collective Memory

Section J: Economic Manipulation

Conclusion

### ***Introduction***

Kate Grenville's impulse to write her nineteenth-century settler novel *The Secret River* (2006) came from a slight apocryphal story passed through three generations of her

mother's paternal family.<sup>399</sup> Her companion book, *Searching for the Secret River* (2007), explains how this story resisted her attempts to turn it into fiction.<sup>400</sup> In the process of writing *SR*, Grenville replaced the first apocryphal story with another, a metatext in which she attempts to reconcile her beneficiary privilege as the descendent of a Hawkesbury River settler, against the presumed dispossession of Indigenous landowners by her settler-ancestor Samuel Wiseman. The absence of direct accounts of the settlement at Wiseman's Landing where he 'took up' land may result in her novel becoming an apocryphal story and therefore part of local collective memory.

This chapter argues that Grenville mobilises apocryphal stories in two ways: employing and discarding a family apocryphal story; and creating an alternative history of the Hawkesbury River settlement that is potentially apocryphal. Both these narratives involve oral family history. It is my conjecture that Grenville revives a hidden story of Australian settlement representing it as self-consciously brutal, built on a massacre of Indigenous people. Whether or not *SR* finds its place in Australian collective memory, its reception exposes points of tension between historical fiction writers and historians. At the time of writing, she challenged accepted conservative views and writings about the dispossession of traditional landowners. Only time will tell whether her book further erodes the cultural value previously attributed to fiction, or becomes a watershed for the way Australians view their history. Grenville's great yarn about settlement is confronting.

*SFSR* functions in at least three ways. In a 2006 review, Delia Falconer argues that Grenville's text 'falls somewhere between an extended festival paper ... and an in-depth discussion of the drafting process' and notes that Grenville submitted an earlier version as a doctoral thesis.<sup>401</sup> Each of these functions allows her deployment and production of apocryphal stories. As an example of an exegesis it provides a helpful model for Creative Writing Ph Ds, highlighting the difficulties of researching historical fiction, although this published version re-edited by Text invites comparison with the original manuscript.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (Melbourne: the Text Publishing Company, 2005). Hereafter these two books will predominantly be referred to as *SR* and *SFSR*.

<sup>400</sup> Kate Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River* (Melbourne: the Text Publishing Company, 2006).

<sup>401</sup> Delia Falconer, 'The Getting of Wisdom', *The Age: Book Reviews*. 1 Sept. 2006, pp. 1-2, 20 Feb. 2009, <http://www.theage.com.au/news/book-reviews/searching-for-the-secret-river/2006/09/01/1156817081050.html>.

<sup>402</sup> Kate Grenville, home-page, <http://www.users.bigpond.com/kgrenville/>. Accessed 7 Jan. 2008: '*SFSR* is a memoir... "I wanted to leave a record of my own process, so that others might not have to re-invent

In a 2007 paper, I used French theorist Gerard Genettes's functions of preface, as outlined in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987) (*Seuils*), to discuss the way *SFSR* acts as a delayed or later preface for *SFSR*.<sup>403</sup> Nigel Krauth and Jeri Kroll had already suggested that exegeses accompanying creative writing theses resemble traditional prefaces.<sup>404</sup> Analysing the *SR* as apocryphal oral family history and in national collective memory, further clarifies its cultural and literary context. This chapter focuses on the ways *SFSR* explicates the contradictions and anxieties embodied in Grenville's fictional text, rather than on the text itself, and her shaping of apocryphal narratives in particular times. Recent contretemps over the credibility of Australian historical fiction make an investigation of apocryphal stories a timely exercise.

## **Apocryphal Story 1: Solomon Wiseman, Murderer**

### **Section A: Hidden Story with Enduring Elements**

Grenville's initial inspiration for *The Secret River* was an apocryphal oral family tale about her ancestor Solomon Wiseman; like most apocryphal tales it incorporates irreducible elements. The story had been passed down through the generations, 'from Granny Davis, through Granny Maunder and Auntie Rose' and through Grenville's mother who 'always used exactly the same phrases each time she told it...'<sup>405</sup> Wiseman might have killed his first wife by throwing her down the stairs. If Grenville was keen to establish the genesis of her story it was to this part that she returned. It was 'the best bit of the story...A dramatic death in the family...the idea of a ghost... and most uncomfortable, a murderer for a great-great, great grandfather...'<sup>406</sup> And it was this drama rather than the dull primary documents she found about Wiseman's

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the wheel"... events and characters in the novel are adapted from the historical record. These things really did happen on our frontier, even if at a slightly different time and in a different place'.

<sup>403</sup> See Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1930; Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), trans. Jane E. Lewin; Gay Lynch 'New Preface: Historical Fiction Writers Explicate Their Practice' (2007 AAWP Conference, Refereed Stream).

<http://creative.canberra.edu.au/aawp/>

<sup>404</sup> Nigel Krauth, 'The Preface as Exegesis', *TEXT* Vol. 6 No 1 Apr. 2002, accessed 24 Feb., 2009, <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april02/krauth.htm>; and Jeri Kroll, 'The Exegesis and the Gentle Reader', *TEXT*, *Special Issue* 3 Apr. 2004, accessed 24 Feb. 2009,

<http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue3/kroll.htm>

<sup>405</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 17.

<sup>406</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 6.

life, which captured her imagination as a storyteller: ‘all those petitions and letters about importing this, that and the other weren’t especially dramatic’.<sup>407</sup>

## **Section B: Acceptance in Popular Memory**

The Wiseman story belongs to Grenville’s family collective memory. Such tales, violent, dramatic, and easily remembered have visceral pull. They raise questions about the role of apocryphal stories in family memories and identity formation. How should murder be spoken about within a family? No reference has been made in reviews or interviews to negotiations with family members, apart from Grenville’s mother, who is portrayed as supportive of her daughter’s Hawkesbury project and a keen proponent of this first apocryphal tale, habitually retouching key elements in her narrative. How does she feel about the published companion text expanding the tale of a single murder into taking part in a massacre?

## **Section C: Archetypal Elements**

Apocryphal stories, often based on archetypal dramas, make their tellers and retellers, uncomfortable, tapping into their conflicted collective unconscious. Stories about husbands killing wives — uxoricide — have resonance. While part of Grenville fears the Wiseman story is true and that her ancestor was a bastard, another part of her wishes to engage with him, to understand him. As a novelist she decides to take him on, unwittingly enlarging the reader’s sympathy for him, and at the same time, the people he betrays: his wife, dead at the bottom of the stairs, and later the Aboriginal people he evicts and, she hypothesises, possibly murders. The circumstances outlined in the apocryphal story about his wife’s death rouse her curiosity *and* undermine her confidence in him. Although there is no space to discuss it here, Grenville is interested in manipulating postcolonial constructions apart from race. Domestic violence is a feminist issue.

## **Section D: Refuses Historical Verification**

The fact that Grenville found no historical evidence to support the apocryphal story doesn’t make it untrue. But until it *is* substantiated, it remains apocryphal. Grenville

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<sup>407</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 81.

discovers some ‘actual’ historical documents: Solomon Wiseman’s letters, including one in a ‘grovelling tone’ to his brother-in-law, ‘straining after the grand phrase’ and with ‘elaborate strings of sentences’.<sup>408</sup> She dislikes him: awkward, if he is to be her subject. How will readers engage with her protagonist, if she can not? After reading more letters she becomes resigned to fictionalising him. ‘I was starting to get a feel for him. Irascible, defensive, unyielding,’ and ‘Wiseman swam in and out of focus, now a good man, now a bad one. Now an innocent man unjustly accused, now a scoundrel’.<sup>409</sup>

### **Section E: Speculation**

Speculation is a feature of apocryphal stories. Grenville believes in it. In *SFSR* she speculates about *why* Wiseman might have killed his wife, hypothesising that his marriage ‘wasn’t a love match, but a cold blooded bit of self improvement’, or because the new Mrs Wiseman had been an old love with whom he reunited.<sup>410</sup> References on her website explain how she speculates in her most recent novel *The Lieutenant* (2008): ‘I speculated about characters, taking what was known about them as a starting-point but imagining beyond what was recorded...As a novelist I have latitude to speculate, to add, to omit, to guess and even to invent’.<sup>411</sup> Grenville’s most controversial speculation relates to the second meaning of apocryphal. It seems that even within her family no one minded her speculation about Samuel Wiseman murdering his wife but, his killing of Indigenous people had wider ramifications, resounding in Australia’s collective memory, as we shall see.

### **Section F: Literary Transformation**

As a writer incorporating apocryphal tales into a nineteenth-century settler novel I engaged with Grenville’s primary and secondary texts with interest. Being privy to her complex negotiations with history and story proved valuable. Authorial ontology directly and subconsciously shapes historical fiction narratives. Creative writers hold onto shards of story, engaging their readers’ sympathy for characters that seem to deserve it least. *SR* did not begin as a fiction project, as Grenville explains: ‘I thought

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<sup>408</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 84.

<sup>409</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 87, 88.

<sup>410</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 67, 176-177.

<sup>411</sup> Grenville Home Page. <http://www.users.bigpond.com/kgrenville/>. 7 Jan. 2008.

there might be a non-fiction book of some kind in the material – perhaps something like a biography of Wiseman and a portrait of his times. I didn't know what, if anything, I'd find, or whether there would be enough interest for a book'.<sup>412</sup> A dearth of primary resources and the need for 'more elbow room,' provides the catalyst for her shift to fiction.

In the way of most historical novelists, Grenville's attitude to history is entangled with her instinct for making art. A strand from the past drives the research of her novel: 'my ship was anchored to the past by ropes of story'.<sup>413</sup> She scours Sydney Mitchell Library records for 'the slightest hint that Jane Wiseman's illness might have lingered because she was pushed downstairs by her husband....some tiny thread to start tugging on'.<sup>414</sup> Alas 'no clues'. 'I found myself leaping to fill in the blanks,' she confides: 'I had to remind myself that, although this was a good story, that's all it was: a story I'd made up out of almost nothing'.<sup>415</sup>

And so, eventually, Grenville acknowledges this tension and relinquishes her family apocryphal tale — it has no traction; it bogs her narrative — and she finds a better one.<sup>416</sup> Exciting research discoveries might have saved it but, alas, she makes none. She takes the decision of an experienced writer who knows story: 'kill your darlings...I saw exactly what I needed to do. It was so simple. Get rid of William and Sophia Warner. Cut them out, kill them off'.<sup>417</sup> The first apocryphal story is abandoned long before it becomes an issue of truth. Is it because apocryphal texts have been contested that they develop surprising resilience, or despite of it? What will become of this one? Faithfully retold by Grenville's mother, with all its enduring elements, it had outlived its usefulness. Perhaps it will lie dormant now for generations.

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<sup>412</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 14.

<sup>413</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 17.

<sup>414</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 81.

<sup>415</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 87, 88.

<sup>416</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 179.

<sup>417</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 181.

## ***Apocryphal Story 2: An Alternative History of the Hawkesbury***

### **Section A: Writing against the Canon**

‘Canon’ and ‘canonical’ have several applications in a twenty-first century context. In this chapter, the terms refer to ‘literary works regarded as significant by the literary establishment’.<sup>418</sup> I take this to include history. James Ley criticises the loose application of the word ‘canon’, in a new book about Australian fiction.<sup>419</sup> For the sake of argument I hope that readers will accept my broad usage without more detailed qualification.

The survival of apocryphal texts — oral and written — depends on their temporal and political context. Apocryphal stories and historical fictions articulate and realise the spirit of their time of writing — often capturing a zeitgeist — aligning themselves with politics, including resistance, and with national cultural identities. Grenville wished to transform a political moment into narrative truth. She is a product and a protagonist of her times, imagining herself as writing against the canon: writing fiction, yet in some essential way, truth, about the dispossession and massacre of Indigenous people, at a time when Aboriginal Reconciliation has stalled.

Positioning her protagonist, William Thornhill, as an agonised white settler modelled on her ancestor Samuel Wiseman, she refuses to focalise her story through Indigenous characters — a postcolonial convention — but nevertheless, represents their adaptive and organised custodianship of the land. Her imagining of settler events along the Hawkesbury River revives them in public imagination after years of silence, and thus transforms them during a period of Australian government when black-arm-bandism is strongly contested. ‘By and large he had never considered them to be bad men. And yet their lives, like his, had somehow brought them to this: waiting for the tide to turn, so they could go and do what only the worst men would do’ reveals Thornhill’s metatextual inner monologue.<sup>420</sup> Grenville writes back to canonic history in which settlers simply defended themselves: Thornhill, like the Magistrate of Galway is highly conscious of his paternal role.

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<sup>418</sup> “Canon”: *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1997 edition 1.

<sup>419</sup> Ley, James, ‘Coping With the Hangover’, rev. of Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman’s *After the Celebration: Australian Fiction: 1989–2007* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009), ‘A2, Saturday’, *The Age*, 24 Jan. 2009.

<sup>420</sup> Grenville, *The Secret River*, p. 300.

## Section B: Hidden Story

Had the *SR*'s plot and metatext grown from stories suppressed in hegemonic accounts of settlement? Can we consider *SR* in the same company as religious apocrypha containing ahistorical, mysterious and esoteric stories that espoused greater truths, previously hidden from the populace? The irony of its dissemination as an award-winning novel, then, as a casualty of the history wars undermines *and* underlines its potency as purveyor of a secret story. Many Australians had never previously considered settlement as invasion.<sup>421</sup> Grenville's version of these events was further mysticised by critics, politicians and historians labelling it as spurious and heretical, a criticism commonly associated with religious apocryphal narratives.

Simpson Newland's version of the Avenue Range massacre in South-east South Australia (1848) reflects the constraints his society imposed on him, whereby he fictionalised real events, not yet written about, and covered up.<sup>422</sup> *Paving the Way* was published in 1897 and, according to his preface, was romance:

As, in a work on Australian pioneer life such as this purports to be, it might be difficult to present bare facts in an acceptable form to the general public, my object has been to blend truth and fiction in a connected narrative. That it partakes largely of a romance is certain, but the incidents, though so romantic, are mainly authentic; for these lives have been lived and these deaths have been died.<sup>423</sup>

His book deploys Gothic tropes — an obsession with blood and breeding, inheritance and family stains — but the metatext is critical of settler behaviour.<sup>424</sup> Grenville may not have expected public disapprobation. Newland was acutely

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<sup>421</sup> On the other hand, students like me had been writing papers in the 1970s on massacres and murders at first contact. See Robert Manne, introduction, *The Dreaming & Other Essays by W.E.H. Stanner* (Black Inc Agenda, 2009), which quotes Stanner's description of apologetic Australian history writing which "sticks out like a foot from a shallow grave"; in 1968 Stanner was invited to give the ABC Boyer Lectures. Excerpt: *Weekend Australian*, 14-15 Mar. 2009, p. 21.

<sup>422</sup> He fictionalises several historical events: the 1840 shipwreck of the brig, *Maria*, and a massacre of its passengers; the subsequent dispensing of justice during which two innocent Ngarrindjeri men were hung; the kidnapping of Aboriginal women by Kangaroo Island sealers; frontier battles between squatters overland cattle from Sydney and groups of as many as three hundred Indigenous landowners; as well as the Avenue Range Station murders.

<sup>423</sup> Newland, preface.

<sup>424</sup> See Newland, p. 64: 'the white man was the personification of ruthless, all absorbing power,' and that the 'darkest stain on Australia's fair fame is her treatment of the aboriginal race'; and p. 121: "And that's all that will be publicly known about how we settle Australia," said Grant, somewhat bitterly. "We piously shut our eyes to the big slaughters, and cry aloud in horror if a squatter or drover, in defence of his life or property, kills a single nigger."

conscious of it: 'I have endeavoured to wound as few susceptibilities and tread on as few toes as possible. The time has not yet arrived in the life of Australia when the historian or novelist can write with an untrammelled pen' his preface offers.<sup>425</sup> Indigenous oral testimonies recorded within ten years of the event indict his perpetrator. Was the pre-Federation climate in which Newland told his massacre story more hostile than the pre-National Reconciliation black arm-band climate in which Grenville told hers? However, both books sold well. Perhaps they will endure — apocryphal stories at the heart of each.

During the years leading up to the 1988 bicentenary of the first landing [the invasion] narratives sprang up in which warriors like Pemulwuy were transformed into resistance fighters or worthy enemies in a war over land. Historian Mark McKenna believes in the 'survival and power of stories' in which settlers on the NSW coast claim to have 'shot the lot', seeing the reasons for their retelling as more interesting than their historical validity: 'a grasping of what happened on the frontier'.<sup>426</sup> Such stories were told on all the frontiers of 'settled' Australia. Don Watson relates just such a story about an 1843 massacre purportedly perpetrated by Scottish Highlanders who migrated to Australia after the Highland Clearances and settled in the Gippsland area of Victoria. 'Everyone in Gippsland knew of the massacre, and it remained a part of folk memory', he contends.<sup>427</sup> Historian Amanda Nettlebeck notes that in 1840s South Australian settler memoirs 'this aspect of the foundation story is ambivalently represented, phrased in a way which, on the one hand, openly admits of violence against Aboriginal people as an inevitable feature of frontier life and, on the other hand, sustains myth that violence was rare'.<sup>428</sup> Apocryphal stories proliferate in oral family histories. In some cases, no doubt, the discovery of massacre sites with attendant weapons and skeletal wounds negated these stories' apocryphal status.

Adam Gall sees Grenville's writing on this subject as a more subtle form of imperialism and that she is 'producing, at best, an account of regrettable excess, a

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<sup>425</sup> Newland, preface.

<sup>426</sup> He sees these retellings 'as a grasping of what happened on the frontier'. See McKenna, 'Writing the Past', *Australian Financial Review*, 16 Dec. 2005, and *Looking For Blackfella's Point: An Australian History of Place*.

<sup>427</sup> Don Watson, *Caledonia Australis: Scottish Highlanders on the Frontier of Australia* (Sydney: William Collins Pty. Ltd, 1984), p. 167. The site of the massacre referred to is Warrigal Creek

<sup>428</sup> Amanda Nettlebeck, 'South Australian Settler Memoirs', *Scatterlings of Empire* (St Lucia, Queensland University Press, 2001), ed. Wilfred Prest and Graham Tulloch, p. 100.

humanitarian critique of colonialism'.<sup>429</sup> He sees her negotiation of the taking / taking up position as the crux of her thesis and suggests an alternative and equally valid reading: 'the situation from the perspective of the frontier, a position which suggests that the transformation of the "good settler" is underwritten by a sublimated version of the same possessive logic'.<sup>430</sup> For the most part, Grenville's 'take' precipitated arguments between white people, many with a vested interest. Indigenous voices were notably silent during the worst days of the Grenville/history controversy. Journalists, academics and fiction writers, all stakeholders in the knowledge industry, weighed in. Perhaps Grenville was a pawn in a larger game. Apocryphal stories frequently attach themselves to conflict and contradiction.

In depicting the final violent scene in *SR* Grenville draws on popular stories about a massacre near but not on her ancestor's land. Having few witnesses, frontier stories have a curious slipperiness, and frequently depend on oral transmission through the families of perpetrators and victims. Grenville's Wiseman's Landing narrative, if it exists, belongs to the ancestors of people with whom she collaborated. She admires the grace and generosity of their descendents. We do not know how Dharug elders, Auntie Edna Watson and John Gallard, feel about her interpretation of their shared history — now that they have told her stories handed down to them, of 'boys thrown into the river to die'.<sup>431</sup> Perhaps hidden stories about Wiseman's Landing will remain so. Grenville's original apocryphal tale did not include the massacre. In true apocryphal fashion, she borrows, extrapolates and speculates. 'The historical account of the Waterloo Creek [nearby] massacre gave me details and phrases to create an episode in which Aboriginal people are ambushed and killed.'<sup>432</sup>

### **Section C: Speculation**

If Grenville hoped to create new apocrypha — not only could her ancestor have murdered his wife, she speculates but it was possible, likely even that he killed Indigenous people to secure the new territory he annexed.<sup>433</sup> This speculation outlined

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<sup>429</sup> Adam Gall, 'Taking/Taking Up: Recognition and the Frontier in Grenville's *The Secret River*', *JASAL Special Issue* (2008), *The Colonial Present: Australian Writing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 102.

<sup>430</sup> Gall, p. 102.

<sup>431</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 131.

<sup>432</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 162.

<sup>433</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 120: 'Shortly before Wiseman arrived on the river, the *Gazette's* reports of "outrages" and "atrocities" increased...' she says, and then surmises 'it was

in *SFSR* attracts historians' ire. Her initial motivation in exploring a family story about her great grandfather is subsumed by her increasing sense of guilt in relation to the dispossession of all Indigenous people. Her speculation about the reasons for this guilt lead her to acknowledge her complicity in frontier violence, at least as privileged beneficiary, and her urgent need for witness in the form of a reconciliatory text.

The adroit image of a war as headache offers the inexperienced history reader some penetration of the frontier issue. 'Aboriginal people attacked settlers; settlers and soldiers attacked back. Not every day, not every week. But on and off, like a headache'.<sup>434</sup> In a disarming way, Grenville aligns herself with ignorant readers: 'No one told me about this kind of violence on the Hawkesbury'.<sup>435</sup> She justifies her inclusion of a massacre and her attachment of it to her family by documenting the open warfare between settlers and Aboriginal people in the Hawkesbury area where her ancestors lived; similarly the theft of crops: 'These things didn't happen to Wiseman, of course, but they'd happened only ten years earlier and a few kilometres from where they *could* have happened to him'.<sup>436</sup>

Grenville's strategic positioning could be read as an act of sacrifice during which she offers her ancestral family's integrity to appease and resolve her conflicted feelings about Indigenous dispossession, reshaping national collective memory, but was she disingenuous? Apart from historians' concerns about veracity, this raises questions about the role of apocryphal stories in constructing family memories and identity formation. Speculation is a strong feature of apocryphal tales, but how do Grenville's cousins feel, her elderly aunts, for instance, about their family being implicated in a massacre which may never have happened?

## **Section D: Enduring Common Elements, Archetypal Drama**

Grenville was not retelling a local tale, but applying a paradigm: and surely, if some accounts of massacres had been suppressed, her family might have been involved in one too. Apocryphal stories frequently take up traditional narratives: men killing their sons, women sacrificing themselves for great causes, wars over land. While she

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becoming less important to fill in the blanks of that specific story. Another story was taking over...if you wanted to put it in one word, you'd say there'd been a war'.

<sup>434</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 113.

<sup>435</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 116.

<sup>436</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 119.

considers herself to be writing fiction, and against the historical canon, she believes in her story of the Hawkesbury settlement as a broader truth from which readers will draw enduring understandings. ‘After 200 years of denying our history or whitewashing it, as a nation we are finally willing to look it in the eye’, she tells a 2008 interviewer.<sup>437</sup>

Whether her fictional truth gathers enough gravitas to enter the Australian historical canon will hinge on diverse and complex factors including the ongoing effect of the 2007 apology to the stolen children generation, new historical research, and whether schools and universities take up the text. In the absence of an alternative it is likely that elements of the story will adhere to historical accounts. In fifty or a hundred years readers, including her descendents on both sides, may accept Grenville’s speculation that her family massacred Indigenous people to secure the theft of land near Wiseman’s Landing.

## **Section E: Acceptance in Popular Memory**

Grenville wrote *SR* while at university. University ethics committees vet proposals involving Indigenous subjects; collaboration must be evident and transparent, following protocols and guidelines which recognise Indigenous sovereignty and custodianship over popular stories which can surprise and shock. Contemporary literary conventions for representing Indigenous characters would prefer them minor characters; that they should not be exoticised or exploited in vicarious sexual or violent narratives, and that writers should not appropriate their point-of-view. ‘I had always known I wasn’t going to try to enter the consciousness of the Aboriginal characters,’ she insists.<sup>438</sup> Was the image of the chained Indigenous woman in *SR* discussed by an ethics committee or left to the candidate? *SFSR* contains no specific deliberations about the depiction of rape and other violent episodes in the novel, although Grenville found their writing difficult: ‘These scenes of violence were the most difficult I had ever written...I had to steel myself to get them done’.<sup>439</sup>

Grenville does not shirk the difficult parts of settler history. Indeed, they become the main purpose of her tale. Their transmission as part of a national tale

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<sup>437</sup> Kate Grenville, interview with Susan Errington, *Wet Ink: the Magazine of New Writing*, 12. p. 39 (2008), ed., Phillip Edmonds and Dominique Wilson, p. 39.

<sup>438</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 193.

<sup>439</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 162.

becomes imperative to her. ‘Collective stories have to be more dynamic than private ones because they have more work to do,’ argues historian Inga Clendinnen but, ‘they must represent the proper relationship within families, between genders, classes or nations, which in societies like ours, and nowadays everywhere else, are always changing’.<sup>440</sup> And this is what Grenville sets out to do, within her temporal ontological political context.

In keeping with this mission, she does not see herself as writing literary fiction. She disdains the genre. She wants to reach the masses. *The Secret River* won a swag of literary awards; it won the Commonwealth Prize for Literature and was short-listed for the Mann Booker Prize — both signifiers of literary fiction excellence — but Kate Grenville claims in the 2008 interview with Susan Errington that she hopes ‘people who aren’t interested in highly “literary fiction” will read and enjoy’ her books; furthermore, the best thing about the book’s success is that it ‘seems to have escaped the “literary” ghetto’.<sup>441</sup> Historian Robert Murray is in agreement, seeing the *SR* as ‘readable middle-brow historical fiction. There is a lot of good imaginative writing, character development and close observation of detail, though it slips in and out of cliché and melodrama, with a touch of Mills and Boon’.<sup>442</sup> Examples have been given in my earlier paper, of the way Grenville uses language in *SFSR* to appeal to a broader rather than a university-educated audience.

Grenville’s four-page dedicated chapter in which she indirectly spoke to historians, positions her as an uninformed member of the public, and is reasonable in tone, conciliatory, deferential even. ‘The historians quoted document after document... they were a revelation’, and ‘The historians drew a complex, nuanced picture of those times’.<sup>443</sup>

*SFSR* explicates the metatext of *SR* and her motivations for writing it. In the 2008 interview she comments that ‘historical fiction gives people who will never read history a chance to think about the issues history raises’.<sup>444</sup> Her clearly stated aim is to shock the wider-reading Australian public and, in doing so, inform them about their history.

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<sup>440</sup> Inga Clendinnen, ‘The History Question: Who Owns the Past’ *Quarterly Essay*: Issue 23, 2006, p. 39.

<sup>441</sup> Grenville, in Errington, p. 38.

<sup>442</sup> Robert Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, *Quadrant*, no. 435, 51:4 (2007), Ed. P.P. McGuinness, p. 68.

<sup>443</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 123, 125.

<sup>444</sup> Grenville, interview with Errington, p. 38.

## Section F: Refuses Historical Verification

Grenville was not renewing a story told by or about her grandfather securing land on the banks of the Hawkesbury; apparently there had been none.<sup>445</sup> Her mother believes that ‘by the time Wiseman had arrived there, they’d all gone’ and yet, when her daughter visits the family home it resembles a fortress, bringing a flood of bloody images to mind.<sup>446</sup> Unable to find more concrete historical evidence for her story — ‘in the hundreds of pages about Wiseman, there was absolute silence on the matter of the original inhabitants’ — she can only surmise, perhaps correctly, that he *was* involved in a frontier battle like the one at Waterloo Creek.<sup>447</sup>

Robert Murray, co-author of *Dharug and Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Mary’s to 1860* (1988), finds her representation of a massacre contrived and improbable, her depiction of rural vigilantes more closely resembling difficult-to-prove clichéd and apocryphal stories of the late nineteenth-century.<sup>448</sup> He discusses rain, and the name for corn, and reprisals. Her depiction of settler clashes with the *Dharug* occur at the wrong historical time, he suggests. They were already settled, he argues and, furthermore, the arrival of a large lugger intent on a dawn raid would not have taken them by surprise. The idea of taking six heads home in a bag ‘seems to draw on and misrepresent three quite different episodes’.<sup>449</sup> Murray’s essay questions how closely novelists should stick to history. He finds ‘it irritating and disappointing when a novel departs from a record ‘he is familiar with’.<sup>450</sup> He concedes that while the *SR* massacre incident is implausible, Grenville ‘pulls out the dramatic bits of the record over about fifty years and a wider area and concentrates them into one or two

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<sup>445</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 161-2: ‘Wiseman...comes into conflict with the Aboriginal people... For that last part, I couldn’t draw on my great-great-great-grandfather, since there’d been no information about that part of his life.’

<sup>446</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 97, 104.

<sup>447</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 95.

<sup>448</sup> Robert Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, *Quadrant*. No. 435. 51:4 (2007), Ed. P.P. McGuinness, p. 67.

<sup>449</sup> Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, p. 68.

<sup>450</sup> Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, p. 67.

years — 1813–1814 — in one section of the Hawkesbury that was remote then and is still so’ and that ‘guesstimation’ is part of what novelists do.<sup>451</sup>

Grenville does not discuss the ‘unreliability’ of some historical documents, and the confounding lack of agreement between historians on some issues. Her concerns lie with the frustrating lack of evidence pertinent to her apocryphal family tales. Perhaps for this reason, as Murray suggests, she fictionalises historical incidents, for example, one in which Governor Phillip slaps an Indigenous man. And she borrows ‘details and phrases’ from the Waterloo Creek massacre to create its fictional counterpart.<sup>452</sup> It is clear she believes that historical fiction writers take liberties with dates and times and details imperative to the framing and mechanics of their plots, and her aim, later stated, was for *SFSR* to make this process transparent.<sup>453</sup> This proves a sticking point for historian readers.

## Section G: Political Manipulation

*SR* arrived in the thick of a street fight about who could write history and for whom. It is well into chapter two of *Searching for the Secret River* before she relates the story of the Walk for Reconciliation, across Sydney Harbour Bridge, in the year 2000. I do not say this in a critical way, for the production of a novel is not unlike theatre; once done, the conscious and subconscious research, rehearsal and performance have a way of shifting in the artist’s mind. Historical fiction writing, like oral apocrypha, has always been dialogic, public and reproductive.

Like many artists, Grenville experiences a moment of epiphany: during the Sydney Harbour Bridge walk for Aboriginal Reconciliation she makes eye-contact with an Indigenous woman and shares ‘one of those moments of intensity...we smiled, held each other’s gaze, until it sent a sudden blade of cold into my warm inner glow’.<sup>454</sup> Immediately, she knows that what she was doing on the bridge on a Saturday is inextricably connected to her ancestor’s story, in her creative work. Her moral imagination and her sharpening commitment to Indigenous reconciliation drive her

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<sup>451</sup> Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, p. 67.

<sup>452</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 162.

<sup>453</sup> Grenville, Kate, ‘The History Question: Response’ *Quarterly Essay: Bipolar Nation: How to Win the 2007 Election*: Issue 25, 2007. p. 71.

<sup>454</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 13.

towards a new apocryphal story. ‘What I had to do was cross the hard way, through the deep water of our history,’ she claims.<sup>455</sup>

## Section H: Literary Transformation

Grenville regards the building of historical character as a creative enactment, a trick, rather than a definitive impersonation. Characters have fictional identities. She uses her acknowledgements to *SR* to make her declaration about its fictiveness.

One of my ancestors gave me the basis for certain details in the early life of William Thornhill, and other characters share some qualities with historical figures. All the people within these pages, however, are works of fiction.<sup>456</sup>

In each section of *SFSR* Grenville’s characters, mainly Wiseman and his Indigenous neighbours, refuse to stay put and roam at will between the chapters. This is not necessarily a problem. It merely allows the reader a peep-hole view of the writer grappling with her task, as she tries to handle its lumpy shifting shape, half-listening to clamouring voices at the window, hoping to ignore them long enough, to complete her creative task. Contracts of fiction evident in the prefaces to *SR* and *SFSR* make her authorial intentions more transparent, but, nevertheless, notions about veracity and methodology further fuel historians’ criticism.

Increasingly research is seen as critical but historical fiction conventions suggest that scholarship should be lightly worn. Grenville’s careful family research in Sydney and London archives is well documented in *SFSR*. Good intentions and research questions change, it seems, as art takes over. Neither *SR* nor *SFSR* contains a bibliography. Sniffing out her story she researches like many writers, as if following tracks or scats: ‘one book led to another...academic books, anthropological, local histories’.<sup>457</sup> In Part Three she visits the Kimberley region in Western Australia, in an effort to closely observe the physical presence of semi-traditional Indigenous people and make decisions about her characters: should they speak, how did they walk, how authentic should their dialogue be, and so on? A massacre recount told to her in which Aboriginal bodies were burnt — alive in the memory of women the same age as her grandmother — helps her decide to remove *Dharug* dialogue from her novel.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 13.

<sup>456</sup> Grenville, *The Secret River*, p. 336.

<sup>457</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 127.

<sup>458</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, pp. 197-8.

Despite this — and ‘Aborigines are well observed in outward detail’ — Murray believes them to be ‘cardboard cut-outs mainly there to suit the story’.<sup>459</sup>

She also uses the free association of images common in dreams, or films, believing the most important artefact to be the finished book.<sup>460</sup> *SFSR* outlines her research by praxis, her way of furnishing *SR* with everyday experiential historical detail. She makes lamps and studies tools, seeing landscape in an eidetic way as she camps alone on the banks of the Hawkesbury, handling stones and discovering grinding grooves. Has Grenville transformed a settler-tale or made one up? She considered herself to be writing a historical novel. ‘History is a lot more than facts and fiction is a lot more than entertainment’, she argues, three years later.<sup>461</sup> Has her self-reflection exposed any more than muscular leap-frogging, over experiential research, and primary documents, in her pursuit of fictional truth? ‘On the one hand, I was shameless in rifling through research for anything I could use, wrenching it out of its place and adapting it for my own purposes,’ she admits, but on the other, ‘I was trying to be faithful to the shape of the historical record, and the meaning of all those events that historians had written about. What I was writing wasn’t real, but it was as true as I could make it’.<sup>462</sup>

The search for esoteric truth is like renewable energy to apocrypha. *SR*’s place as goad to national conscience allows it to grow in importance; the details of squabbles about its inauthenticity may yet wither away. It seems clear from Grenville’s commitment to her writerly process that she regards herself as a novelist — a purveyor of well-researched tales — rather than an empirical historian writing a family novel. Fiction first needs to be engaging.

## **Section I: Establishment in Australia’s National Collective Memory**

While Grenville may be committed to the idea that writing fiction entitles her to artistic licence in the way that she interprets facts, some historians and critics considered her explanations in *SFSR* for doing so audacious. Perhaps she satirises herself in *The Lieutenant* (2008): ‘It was foreign to Rooke, the idea of taking the real

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<sup>459</sup> Murray, ‘Hollywood on the Hawkesbury’, p. 68. Even well researched historical novels, rob Indigenous characters of agency, when they avoid focalising narrative through them. Such conventions are a cleft stick.

<sup>460</sup> Kate Grenville, Adr. ‘Writers and Their Worlds Seminar’, Flinders University, 27 Jul. 2006.

<sup>461</sup> Grenville, interview with Errington, p. 39.

<sup>462</sup> Grenville, *Searching For the Secret River*, p. 191.

world as nothing more than raw material' intuitively the scientist, about Silk, the writer.<sup>463</sup> Nevertheless, her perceived attitude offends more than her trespass on the historians' patch. While criticism is couched in deferential terms ('Kate Grenville is one of the best of our fiction writers'), it is apparent that some critics and historians consider that Grenville has got above herself.<sup>464</sup> Had that been her intention, or had she been caught like many writers, defending a 'throwaway line'?<sup>465</sup> In any event, she is caught in crossfire.

*The Secret River* was much lauded. But Grenville's reference, on radio, to the history wars, suggesting that a 'novelist can stand up on a stepladder and look down at this' inflamed debate about historical fiction writing.<sup>466</sup> The act of taking on her ancestor's hypothetical imperialism led her into new territory and into the history wars. Journalist Stella Clarke summarises historian Mark McKenna's 2005 essay suggesting he believes, 'that she's out of line: as a novelist she can't help but join conservative politicians in peddling sloppy "comfort history", and she should lay off claims to ascendancy'.<sup>467</sup> Clarke misrepresents him McKenna claims; in fact, he says that 'Grenville 'elevates *fiction* [emphasis added] to a position of interpretive power over and above that of history'.<sup>468</sup>

McKenna's concern with the history wars in general and Grenville in particular is that 'historians have lost much of their earlier cultural authority' as a result: 'When the public witness historians at war, they no longer trust historians as storytellers'.<sup>469</sup> The volley of stones pitched at the house of Grenville was brought about, in the first place, by their reasonable fears and righteous indignation about historians' place in Australia's new identity, and in the second place, because of the perceived attitudes of historical fiction writers to historians and history. Such arguments cluster around ideas about whose story should be told and by whom?

Who can deny historians' anger about their conflicted place in Australia's cultural identity production? In 2006 historian Inga Clendinnen claims that 'novelists

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<sup>463</sup> Kate Grenville, *The Lieutenant* (Melbourne: Text Publishing), 2009, p. 47.

<sup>464</sup> John Hirst, 'Forget Modern Views When Bringing up the Past', *The Australian* 20 Mar. (2006): 11.

<sup>465</sup> Grenville, interview with Errington, p. 39.

<sup>466</sup> Ramona Koval, interview, 'Kate Grenville', 'Books and Writing: Radio National.' 17 Jul. 2005. Transcript <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/bwriting/stories/s1414510.htm>

<sup>467</sup> Mark McKenna, quoted in Stella Clarke, 'Havoc in the History House', *The Weekend Australian* Edition 5: Review, 4 Mar. 2006, p. 110.

<sup>468</sup> Mark McKenna, 'Writing the Past', p. 2.

<sup>469</sup> McKenna, 'Writing the Past', p. 1.

have been doing their best to bump historians off the track'.<sup>470</sup> She is on the look-out for historical fiction writers who show attitude ('exuberant confidence', 'insouciant exploitation of fragments of the past'), lack historical professionalism ('the collapsing of time', 'opportunistic transpositions, and elisions') and show off their subjective petticoats.<sup>471</sup> She published a *Quarterly Essay* (2006) on the topic, which reviewer James Bradley reads in 2008 as 'a savage critique' of the *SR*, and 'cannot imagine how bruising the experience must have been for Grenville'.<sup>472</sup> Grenville responded in the following issue. The opening of Clendinnen's 'Response to Correspondence', 'I'm sorry Kate Grenville feels misrepresented,' is loaded with irony.<sup>473</sup> And if there was any doubt about the seriousness of Clendinnen's intent, it could be removed by reading the first few sentences of a book review in *The Monthly*: 'Lately I have been pursuing novelists [Norman Mailer] who seem to think they are writing near-enough history, when in fact they are making it up,' she challenges.<sup>474</sup>

Grenville's unwillingness to focalise her story through Indigenous characters incites criticism from Clendinnen who seems to think that Grenville wants to eat her corn and her yam daisies too. While Grenville refuses an Indigenous point-of-view, Clendinnen remarks that she, nevertheless, 'felt no such inhibition' in taking up that of a white settler man.<sup>475</sup> Grenville wishes to present the consciousness of subaltern man — Sir Walter Scott would approve of this — working with and against the sentiments of his times. But Clendinnen claims that this is what present-day writers cannot do successfully — enter the consciousness of nineteenth-century characters: 'that apart from the material differences between centuries the cocoon of physical security in which we live might be our greatest barrier to understanding how it was for other people of other times, or how it is for people in other places now...'.<sup>476</sup>

Grenville does not deal with the topic of Aboriginal representation in her original acknowledgements to *SR*. She explicates it at great length in *SFSR*, but judiciously avoids her specific treatment of an Indigenous massacre. While yet wishing to convey the agency of her Indigenous characters, she recognises the

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<sup>470</sup> Clendinnen, *Quarterly Essay*: Issue 23, 2006.

<sup>471</sup> Clendinnen, *Quarterly Essay*: Issue 25, 2006: pp. 73, 77, 76; Issue 23: pp. 16.

<sup>472</sup> James Bradley, rev. 'Accommodating the Past', Kate Grenville's *The Lieutenant* (2008), *ABR*, Oct. 2008: 24.

<sup>473</sup> Inga Clendinnen, 'The History Question: Response to Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay: Bipolar Nation: How to Win the 2007 Election* Issue 25 (2007): p. 73.

<sup>474</sup> Inga Clendinnen, 'Lost in the Woods', *The Monthly*. Apr. 2007, p. 48.

<sup>475</sup> Clendinnen, *Quarterly Essay*: Issue 23, 2006, p. 23.

<sup>476</sup> Clendinnen, *Quarterly Essay*: Issue 23, 2006, pp. 25-6.

difficulty of mediating the unspeakable cruelties inflicted upon them, employing the observations and interpretations of a male white-settler narrator. At the close of the 2007 Sydney Writers' Festival panel Clendinnen concedes 'fictional truths' but her consistent message to Grenville might be: stay behind your lines and you won't get hurt.<sup>477</sup>

By necessity this chapter's focus on Grenville's employment of apocryphal stories condenses the discursive complexities of the history wars. It is difficult to accurately delineate historians' responses in relation to the provocative subtext of *SR*, the fall-out from Grenville's step ladder analogy, and her rationalisation of frontier history, in *SFSR*. Clendinnen and Grenville continue to ply their trades with Text Publishing, both continuing, in their different ways, to augment Australia's collective cultural memory.

## **Section J: Economic Manipulation**

Fiction-writing of any kind tends to be commercial. Stories must sell and tell. Although the historian knows how hard it is to be published, how difficult it is to sell books, non-fiction lists outnumber their literary counterparts in volume and growth; perhaps during war, history comes to the fore.<sup>478</sup> Although it might be a dodge for fiction writers to say that they need to make a living therefore, they must move on from historians and their arguments, the traditional privileging of literary fiction at writers' festivals and Kate Grenville's choice of subject matter brings her to the attention of historians.

Furthermore, while *SR* is written simultaneously with *SFSR*, it is clear that publication of the latter hinges on the wonderful commercial success of the former. It is fair to assume that a publisher of Michael Heywood's standing saw Grenville's book, not only as a potential earner, but as a timely contribution to national conversations about Australian history, and that his editing reflected a wish to invite as many mainstream readers as possible. Apocryphal stories can be discursive, attempts

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<sup>477</sup> Inga Clendinnen, panel, 'Making a Fiction of History', Sydney Writers' Festival (2007).

<sup>478</sup> See Jeremy Fisher quoting ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics): 'Sales of the nonfiction category, which covers cookbooks, self-help, and a diverse range of other subjects, is increasing. This is supported by data from Nielsen Bookscan which shows that nonfiction titles make up 53% of the market for books while fiction makes up 28% and children's book make up 18% (note 30). Non-fiction books, both Australian and imported, were worth 59% of general content sales in 2003-04'. See Nielsen BookScan data for more detailed distribution of data.

at mediation, or can open fire on a hostile public. Popular apocryphal stories thrive on renovation; Grenville's story sold.

## **Conclusion**

Whether Grenville's narrative enters popular and local memory, and spawns new retellings, may also depend on the resistance of historians. It challenges canonical views of Australian history. If a massacre denotes archetypal conflict — landownership and the patriarchy, why not? — then *SFSR* tells a familiar and universal story; lack of local antecedents may smooth its entry into popular collective memory. Even so, it may never be verified as history because it has been invented by a privileged beneficiary of Indigenous dispossession who may, after all, have nothing to atone for.

Grenville's original family apocryphal tale has now been transformed from oral story to printed page; it has been dismissed and subsumed by a more dramatic tale. The *SR* has the potential to endure as a new apocryphal story, gaining popular acceptance in collective memory. Murray believes the *SR* is 'all most people will ever know about a particular situation.'<sup>479</sup>

Grenville's book has been memorialised as an important book: an award-winner *and* an artefact of contention; its high sales bringing it popularity and status. We can speculate about *SR*'s capacity to be renewed within a national consciousness anxious about its history. Perhaps Murray is right and when more strident voices die down this alternative history of the Hawkesbury River settlement will remain; an indictment of Grenville's and our national collective and symbolic guilt? Memory is invariably constructed and thus potentially apocryphal. *The Secret River* may endure, like the story of the Magistrate of Galway.

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<sup>479</sup> Robert Murray, 'Hollywood on the Hawkesbury', p. 67.

## Chapter V: Architextuality, Genre, the Australian Fiction Tradition

Introduction

Section A: Literary Fiction

Section B: Popular Historical Fiction

Section C: Historical Fiction

Historical Verification

Contract of Fiction

Apocryphal Stories and Collective Memory

Political and Economic Manipulation

Conclusion

### ***Introduction***

At first glance, where does a contemporary Australian novel set in 1859 belong — in the company of Irish diasporic novels from Canada and the United States, with adventure, historical fiction or popular romance books? While *Unsettled* is not highly stylised, or intellectual, its language aspires to be original and its plot might be considered popular. A poor postcolonial cousin, it is more pared down in style and nowhere near as erudite as the 1850s Hiberno-Irish or Irish canon. Does it resemble contemporary literary fiction, its consciousness informed by twenty-first-century postcolonial theory? Its incorporation of minor historical characters and historical events might make it best described as historical fiction. Can Rosanna remain an Irish-settler girl seven years after her arrival on the frontier? *Unsettled* resembles family saga but doesn't entirely fit, its focus being only on one generation. Superficially, its narrative resembles popular adventure romance, patterned on the falling of an Irish girl for a stranger outside her class. Like Feemy Macdermot in Anthony Trollope's *The*

*Macdermots of Ballycloran*, Rosanna wants to get married and leave home.<sup>480</sup> But for less conventional reasons she wants to read a play about her family and become an actress. Pregnancy, abandonment and tragedy result, a suitable climax for a realist nineteenth-century novel.

The narrative of *Unsettled* works with and against all these models. Despite her powerlessness, Rosanna's painful process of individuation dominates the action, evicting apocryphal sub-strands centred on men and their exiled sons.<sup>481</sup> The novel asks the reader to accept patriarchal nineteenth-century assumptions that shape the plot — about permissions, seduction and care of children — to consider the heroine's response to archetypal dramas in an Australian setting, and antecedents in other texts. Written in third person selective omniscient the novel narrative alternately focalises through Skelly and Rosanna; the reader is not privy to all Rosanna's intimate thoughts, allowing narrative surprises important to a frontier adventure novel. Rosanna, based on an historical Lynch girl, hopes her naïve but strategic love for George will take her away from home. That some facts are already known is a difficulty in historical fiction. Whatever its genre, *Unsettled* is a novel of resistance as well as resignation. Historical facts and creative writing intersect creating tension.

## **Section A: Literary Fiction**

Psychological depth, figurative language — metaphors and similes, symbols and synecdoche, hyperbole and personification — ideas and literary truths mark literary fiction. In so far as writers write books that they might enjoy reading themselves, I have paid attention to these criteria; although they may not be universally agreed upon as intrinsic to literary or creative writing, nor perfectly executed in *Unsettled*. This section focuses on metaphor as one example of figurative writing and a significant marker of literary fiction.

Not all new novels described as literary fiction feature complex metaphoric writing.<sup>482</sup> As a caveat to this argument, literary fiction should be considered foremost as a marketing term for a genre that shows great fluidity and, as we have heard from

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<sup>480</sup> Anthony Trollope, *The MacDermots of Ballycloran* (1847; London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, nd).

<sup>481</sup> In *All That Swagger* (1943), Miles Franklin mainly focalises her narrative through Danny, the Delacy patriarch but intermittently, through Della and Clare, and other feisty female relatives.

<sup>482</sup> See Christos Tsiolkas, *The Slap* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2008), short listed for the 2009 Miles Franklin Award.

Kate Grenville in Chapter IV, some authors disdain the label.<sup>483</sup> But the work of authors already established in the literary field will be labelled such even as it traverses genre boundaries.

Figurative language, especially metaphors — similes at their most reduced — acts as one useful marker of literary fiction: for aesthetic reasons, describing and evoking place and character; and as conceits conveying ideas about subject and theme, the latter inevitably tied up with creative writers' quests to connect disparate ideas and create new knowledge. Metaphors demonstrate how robust language can be, how it continues to innovate and renovate: yesterday's new metaphor becomes today's cliché.<sup>484</sup> *Unsettled's* figurative language evokes South-east landscape — sky and water and birds — and conveys metatexts about race and migration. In employing these two functions of metaphor, my novel may belong in literary fiction.

First let's look at the importance of metaphor in Australian literary fiction genre. While there is no space to analyse in detail the figurative language of nominees of the Miles Franklin Award (intended by its founder to reward writers' original depictions of Australian life), books employing complex figurative language tend to dominate its short lists. Consider the five novels short listed for the 2008 award: the richly evocative and metaphoric *Fern Tattoo* by David Brooks; *The Time We Have Taken* by Stephen Carroll, with its inventive metaphors for suburban life; *Love Without Hope* by Rodney Hall in which figurative language flags an incarceration metatext; *Sorry*, Gail Jones' poetic novel; and *Landscape of Farewell* by Alex Miller, which showcases redolent landscapes. Books by writers Richard Flanagan, Tim Winton, Louis Nowra and Murray Bail long listed for the 2009 Miles Franklin Award, similarly make evident their creators' mastery of metaphor. Genre books have rarely been chosen, perhaps unfairly, for this award which has become a marker of literary fiction excellence. Those most constrained by their genre, intent on fitting a market niche, engage readers with clichés and stereotypes.

However, general literary market trends towards a 'pared down' language style, preferred by many critics and perhaps the Australian reading public, might suggest themselves as counterpoints to my argument. Increasingly, in the past five

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<sup>483</sup> Errington, interview with Grenville, p. 38.

<sup>484</sup> Clichés can more commonly be found in popular fiction. But a case can always be made for metaphors in dialogue reflecting and satirising complex and diverse Australian voices. Working with and against conventions of genre-fiction does not preclude fresh metaphors and original ideas.

years perhaps, ‘pared-down prose’ has been praised and privileged in literary reviews until the labels ‘pared down’ and ‘pared back’, ‘clean’ and ‘spare’ have become clichés. Let one example suffice: ‘This is a book,’ says reviewer, Sophie Gee, of Julia Leigh’s *Disquiet*, ‘that carries no fat at all... the book must work through the power of spare, precise prose’.<sup>485</sup> Peter Rose, editor of the *Australian Book Review (ABR)* — a magazine which showcases important Australian literary fiction and non-fiction — agrees that there is an attitudinal trend towards spare writing but, he argues, this doesn’t directly translate to an absence of metaphor.<sup>486</sup>

Metaphorical *excess* has always been criticised — trying too hard, over-polishing, straining credibility, inconsistency, and the clashing of images and ideas.<sup>487</sup> Gail Jones’s use of metaphor in *Sorry* (2007) attracted some criticism.<sup>488</sup> Perhaps unconstrained by genre conventions, literary fiction writers take more risks, when using overarching themes and conceits. Critics may be harder on literary writers because awards and reviews bring them to public attention.<sup>489</sup> But purple prose is more commonly found in popular fiction, as I will show in the next section of this chapter.

Successful, newly emergent Melbourne writer Nam Le’s satirical take on the employment of metaphors in university creative writing novels does not preclude arguments about their importance as signifiers of literary fiction.<sup>490</sup> Indeed, Le, a

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<sup>485</sup> Sophie Gee, ‘The Shivers in Slivers’, review in *The Age*, A2, 12 Apr. 2008. For more examples, see Gay Lynch, ‘Metaphor as New Knowledge’, AAWP Conference, ‘Creativity and Uncertainty’, 27-29 Nov. 2008, ed. Donna Lee Brien and Lucy Neave, <http://aawp.org.au/creativity-and-uncertainty-papers>.

<sup>486</sup> Peter Rose, *ABR* office conversation with Gay Lynch, Flinders University, 14 Oct. 2008.

<sup>487</sup> Terri Hawkes, *Metaphor* (London, Methuen & Co Ltd, 1972), p. 31, lists seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century complaints about the use of metaphor, including his citation for Samuel Parker who, in 1670, ‘advocated an Act of Parliament forbidding the use of “fulsome and luscious” metaphors; see also Geordie Williamson, ‘Interest Dulled by a Purple Swirl’, review of Michael Meehan’s *Deception*, in *Weekend Australian*: 4 Oct. 2008, p. 11: ‘what divides a brilliant performance from a magisterial one is nerve enough to embrace simplicity’ and concludes that Meehan’s ‘climax is lost in a swirling cloud of purple prose’.

<sup>488</sup> Hunt, Kathy (2007). ‘Poor Excuse for Art’ in *Weekend Australian*, Review, 16-17 June, p. 13: ‘...some of her sentences bordering on the unintelligible: “her hands were ample gadgets”, “the nerves ceremonious”...’

<sup>489</sup> For further examples, see Gay Lynch, ‘Metaphor as New Knowledge’, AAWP Conference, *Creativity and Uncertainty*, 27-29 Nov. 2008, ed. Donna Lee Brien and Lucy Neave, <http://aawp.org.au/creativity-and-uncertainty-papers>.

<sup>490</sup> See how Nam Le, most recently a member of the Iowa Creative Writing community, parodies creative writing schools’ ideas about metaphor, in the first story of his anthology, *The Boat* (Camberwell, Victoria: Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Books, 2008), p. 8, employing a meta-fictive conversation between an ‘ethnic creative writer’ and his friend. One remarks: “It’s full of description...”, and “as long as there’s an interesting image or metaphor once in every *this* much text...” He held out his thumb and forefinger to indicate half a page...He implies that postgraduate creative writers offer sporadic metaphors as anachronisms, as tokens to their teachers and examiners?

master metaphoriser, is considered a writer of literary fiction that crosses several genres. Paul Ricoeur's argument that metaphors can be more than evocation and more than rhetoric, that they can signify deep thinking and the creation of new knowledge can be productively applied to literary fiction writing.<sup>491</sup> It is easy to see why university creative writers might attempt literary fiction, hoping to add to their field's body of knowledge.

In 2006, Malcolm Knox suggested *originality* as a more useful marker for a book's artistic merit and that 'artful' writing was not exclusively found in literary fiction but across genres.<sup>492</sup> Originality, he argues, encompasses expression, knowledge, and direct experience.<sup>493</sup> While I readily concede this point, literary fiction stories frequently concern themselves with more than plot, encompassing national as well as personal stories. They transform experience. Metatexts vital to creative writing research can be particularly well served by metaphor in literary fiction.

Metaphor is the literary fiction writer's attempt to create a truthful unity between reality and description. It can provide another strategy for 'show, don't tell', organizing and expanding the reader's understanding, offering meaning at several levels. Metaphoric ideas often come from pre-conscious patterning; from the jangle and slide of ideas in the pathways of the brain — dictionaries contain no metaphors.<sup>494</sup> They offer intelligible and coherent secondary solutions to questions raised in literary fiction. Genette quotes Marcel Proust in relation to the subject of metaphor in fiction:

Thus metaphor is not an ornament, but the necessary instrument for a recovery, through style, of the vision of essence, because it is the stylistic equivalent of the psychological experience of involuntary memory, which

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His character makes wry comment that 'you can't tell if the language is spare because the author intended it that way, or because he didn't have the vocab'. University creative writers are frequently accused of overwrought language, as well as ... stark pretentious prose.

<sup>491</sup> See Gay Lynch, 'Metaphor as New Knowledge', AAWP Conference, *Creativity and Uncertainty*, 27-29 Nov. 2008, Ed. Donna Lee Brien and Lucy Neave, <http://aawp.org.au/creativity-and-uncertainty->

<sup>492</sup> Using the depiction of birds in books by four successful writers he illustrated his point that vivid images bring readers close to truths of physical and symbolic nature, doing much more than formulaic scene-setting. Malcolm Knox, 'Fiction as Reality Check,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 Jan. 2006.

<sup>493</sup> Malcolm Knox, 'Fiction as Reality Check', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 Jan. 2006: 'formulaic writing... is entirely grounded in other writing. This is what cliché is — writing that mimics other writing.' Where does this leave Northrop Fry's view that art should resemble art, not life?

<sup>494</sup> See Kevin Brophy, *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing* (1998), *Explorations in Creative Writing* (2003); and for discussion on Creativity see Brophy, 'The Ph D and Original Thinking: what does poetry have to do with it?', Working paper, *What is Creativity*, 12<sup>th</sup> AAWP Conference, 21-23 Nov. 2007, <http://creative.canberra.edu.au/aawp/> .

See also Jeri Kroll, 'Creativity, Craft and the Canon: Unpacking the Cult (ure) of the Workshop,' *What is Creativity?* 12<sup>th</sup> AAWP Conference, Refereed section, 21-23 Nov. 2008. 4 Apr. 2009. [http://creative.canberra.edu.au/aawp/conference\\_proceedings.html](http://creative.canberra.edu.au/aawp/conference_proceedings.html)

alone, by bringing together two sensations separated by time, is able to release their *common essence* through the *miracle of an analogy*...<sup>495</sup>

Metaphors digress from the main narrative in subtle ways, conveying vivid images, new ideas, and insights into character; they foreshadow events and create mood. In my novel, Rosanna's employer lies ill in bed — 'Mrs Ashby's face is pale and piteous — peevish, Rosanna thinks, like a survivor from a shipwreck, bobbing on the surface of her high bed, in a froth of white quilts' — and this image conveys her plight as captive and terrified white woman. It also foreshadows the wreck of the *Admella*.

Metaphorical references to the flight of bats and people, Irish and *Booandik*, should alert readers to my novel's metatext but they must make their own interpretation of the precipitation of events. Perhaps they will understand more than the characters about the significance of *Booandik* people silently vacating a racecourse scene, a hindsight allusion to their presumed extinction. The culling of kangaroos should remind them of massacre subtexts without directly experiencing one in the narrative. *Unsettled* focuses on migration as a response to subjugation, although it implies historical violence. Its metaphors for migration expand the space in which the Lynch girl manoeuvres, whilst addressing complex questions about justice and survival. Pragmatic Moorecke comes and goes like the bats, in concert with patterns of weather and human aggression, taking back from the white man a goose, a robe, a friendship. *Unsettled* resolutely presents the idea that in an enterprising way colonised people maintain a sense of homeland by moving to safer places as bats migrate, like Irish seasonal workers come and go to England and the continent, returning when conditions improve. Bats might be territorial, but they have returned to cleaned-up South East caves, previously used as farm dumps. This paradigm, of seasonal migration as adaptation, and eventual return allows my characters limited agency and strongly links *Booandik* with Irish people, particularly Lynches and playwright Edward Geoghegan.

Consciously or sub-consciously, metaphor helps readers to make logical and fanciful leaps. Sigrun Meinig argues that Peter Carey uses metaphor in this suggestive

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<sup>495</sup> Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, III: 879; 7: 139, three vol. Pleiade edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1955–1956) and to the seven volume translation by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Andreas Meyer (vol. 7) published by Vintage Books (New York: Random House, 1970), cited in Genette, *Figures of Discourse*, p. 204.

way in *Oscar and Lucinda* (1989): ‘in such a self-conscious story of history the metaphorical processes, and not the clearly patterned, imposed order of historical facts, fulfils the task of offering an understanding of the past.’<sup>496</sup> *Unsettled* employs metaphor as metatext and to evoke its setting. Whether its characters have psychological depth, or its plot surprises, will depend on each reader’s response. There is no space to analyse these other markers of literary fiction. Like *poteen* my novel was distilled on common land, from melancholy Irish stories, and whether it will be sold on as literary fiction or drunk within the family is yet to be determined.

### **Section B: Popular Historical Fiction**

Publishing and marketing promote books as popular or literary, but in each case products can be diverse. *Unsettled* may evade my literary intentions, inclining more towards popular romantic adventure or popular historical fiction; its primary impulse is story. Popular fiction is conventionally more likely than literary fiction to offer a driving plot, less complex characters, clichéd or genre-determined language, more words — often more than five hundred pages of them — and overt violence and sexuality. Yet many books resist such tagging.

Knox, puzzling over the difference between popular and literary fiction, offers Shane Maloney as an example of an Australian writer who showcases ‘conservative hallmarks of popular culture,’ but in a line by line analysis, writes with ‘transformative power’.<sup>497</sup> He finds original writing encapsulated in Maloney’s generic character studies and plots. Exhaustive lists could be made of books considered popular fiction in their day, that are now considered canonical. Influenced by marketing, mobile twenty-first century readers read across the range of class, gender and race divides, changing their tastes and alliances for diverse reasons. There is nothing new about the mutability of texts in open markets.

F.R. Leavis’s and Q.D. Leavis’s argument, John Docker suggests, that ‘the mass of people saturate themselves in popular fiction, unvaryingly crude and vulgar, because their lives in the contemporary world are emotionally desolate and empty, deprived of the finer values of the non-industrial past’ is only one attempt to reduce

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<sup>496</sup> Meinig, p. 185. Carey’s novel metamorphosises journeys into darkness, the shattering of false identities symbolised by glass, the doubling of Australia’s hopeful future with its dirty past.

<sup>497</sup> Knox, ‘Fiction as Reality Check’. He examines the treatment of birds in four successful novels to tease out his argument.

mass popular culture to fundamentals.<sup>498</sup> Rosanna reads for this reason, because she sees her life as desolate and empty. She reads Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope, writers seen then as popular, now canonical. Docker hopes that Derrida's stress on 'undecidability of meaning' might restore 'complexity, contradiction, difficulty, density, mystery' to mass culture texts.<sup>499</sup> He does not see the consumption of culture as restricted by class or sociology but follows 'post-New Left social theory'.<sup>500</sup> During the 1850s and 1860s the highly autodidactic and cultured settlers attending the Mount Gambier Institute library for books and social intercourse might agree.

Let us move on to popular historical novels. Diana Wallace argues that 'women's historical novels' predated Scott's classical historical novels and had their roots in the Gothic historical novel or romance.<sup>501</sup> As a South Australian country schoolgirl dependent on a monthly goods train for books from the public library, I read popular as well as classical texts. Perhaps taste and preference evolves because I have no memory of the prose style of Jean Plaidy whose historical novels I devoured in my teens and yet, according to Diana Wallace in *The Woman's Historical Novel* (2005), it is 'bland with short paragraphs and relatively simple sentence construction. There is virtually no figurative language, very little description...'<sup>502</sup>

Wallace also casts doubt on my hindsight belief that I read Plaidy's books for historical interest: 'Plaidy's texts are remarkably lacking in real detail of the culture, beliefs, morals and manners of their chosen periods...'<sup>503</sup> But it has long been argued that popular fiction has been more significant in raising awareness than specialist texts on important historical events and trends. Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936), which I also read in my teens, provides a good example of a popular text which informed large numbers of readers about history — ante-bellum America.

A psychoanalytic analysis of women's fiction preferences would reveal complex reasons for their choice of popular historical fiction. The role of fantasy in

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<sup>498</sup> Docker, p. 133.

<sup>499</sup> Docker, p. 134.

<sup>500</sup> Docker, p. 161. He quotes John Fiske's *Understanding Popular Culture* (Boston: Unwin, Hyman, 1989), suggesting that 'rather various individuals belong to different popular formations at different times, and as "active agents" therefore enjoy fluid "nomadic subjectivities", capable of adopting, alternately or simultaneously, contradictory positions. Because of such social differences, popular texts have also a "polysemic openness, hospitable to different readings", pp. 11, 23, 27, 47, ix, 4-5, 18, 19, 25, 28, 45, 35, 44, 54, 46, 49, 64, 24-5, 30.

<sup>501</sup> Diana Wallace, *The Woman's Historical Novel: British Writers, 1900-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>502</sup> Wallace, pp. 136-7.

<sup>503</sup> Wallace, pp. 136-7.

Gothic and romantic historical fiction may reflect readers' wish to vicariously enjoy ravishment and captivity without their dangers, and the empowerment that comes from characters' ingenuous intelligence, which frequently results in upward social mobility. Alongside canonical literary texts like *Lorna Doone* (1869), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Catriona* (1893), *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), and *A Little Bush Maid* (1910), I read Plaidy — who offered bodice-ripping romance, and the dangerous intrigues of the Scottish and French court. Georgette Heyer and Barbara Cartland describe Regency Rakes, carriage accidents, eloping to Gretna Green, grand tours of Italy and finding a man with an income, and Daphne Du Maurier and Victoria Holt (Plaidy's pen name) terrified me. Catherine Cookson offered aspirational regional heroines who dragged themselves to the top of the pile.

Wallace argues that 'what links together these often very disparate novels is their use of an historical setting in order to explore issues of gender, and a desire to rewrite history from a point of view that centralises women's concerns.'<sup>504</sup> Had my enjoyment related to reading texts that insisted on women's right to be independent and break free — to have rights over their bodies and their children — that became the building blocks of my feminism? She claims that in family sagas with geographical specificity, even within dysfunctional family relationships, 'the repetition of family patterns through the generations suggests their universality'.<sup>505</sup> Perhaps this is where negative criticism of popular historical fiction arises, in that historical settings are often superfluous to themes of love and family, presumed only to be of interest to women. *Unsettled* takes up similar themes: depicting Rosanna lusting after freedom, against a backdrop of male privilege and pride, but later sacrificing an adventurous life to protect her child. Had it not been for my dependence on historical records, perhaps she would have become an actress.

Examining all the ways that popular and literary fiction traverse market boundaries is beyond the scope of this exegesis. However, critics might consider *A Far Country* (2000) by John Fletcher and *The Wild Colonial Girl* (1996) by Ann Clancy to be examples of historical fiction novels and therefore, worthy of discussion. They share common characteristics: great length (Clancy, 700 pages and Fletcher

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<sup>504</sup> Wallace, p. 5.

<sup>505</sup> Wallace, p. 159. In this instance, she refers to the Gothic novels Victoria Holt — *Penmarric* (1971), *Chashelmara* (1974). As a teenager I was a devotee of these novels and through reading them learned a great deal about Gothic English mansions, hereditary illnesses, and surviving captivity in a dangerous marriage.

518), energetic plots, racial discourse, and graphic and heightened sexual language. Both make concessions to twenty-first-century hindsight to create feisty female settler heroines, independent women who eventually, take possession of large South Australian land holdings. This section briefly measures these two books against three identifiers of popular Australian historical fiction: treatment of sex and gender, racial discourse and language style.

## Treatment of Sex and Gender

Clancy keeps the action moving, focalising her narrative through Kate O'Mara, an Irish Earl Grey orphan who aspires to marry a rich man.<sup>506</sup> The importance of a woman's independent income is a theme in nineteenth-century literature. Kate wants to go to the goldfields and make her fortune, as does Rosanna in *Unsettled*. In real life one of the Lynch girls followed her older brother to the goldfields at Murchison, in Western Australia.<sup>507</sup> Fletcher's widow owns and runs a pastoral station. This is feasible for Rosanna but not the focus of *Unsettled*.<sup>508</sup>

Clancy and Fletcher's novels, like mine, contain explicit sexuality, a feature of contemporary romance.<sup>509</sup> Bouncing between several points of view Clancy eroticises her female protagonist bathing naked in the River Light, en-route to her first job. The gaze of her employer, a station-owner, inevitably results in seduction and pregnancy, mirroring the outcomes for Rosanna in my novel.<sup>510</sup> But Clancy has her character finally turn the tables on the cad — telegraphed from the beginning — making her

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<sup>506</sup> A so-called Irish orphan appears in 'Unsettled'. For another account of the orphans read, Reid and Mongan.

<sup>507</sup> Dennis Lynch, photograph, cc 1890s: Patrick Lynch and his family stand before a makeshift hut in the Murchison goldfields — earthen chimney, dirt floor and sapling framework — a copy is in the author's possession.

<sup>508</sup> In true romance style, Rosanna could have fallen in love with the owner of a pastoral station, married and lived out her life in different circumstances, but she is based on an historical character. Myrtle Lynch, a fourth-generation Lynch girl did, in fact, marry a pastoralist.

<sup>509</sup> The mechanics of a good 'docking procedure' is considered vital for modern romance writing: see Anne Gracie (President of the Romance Writers of Australia), 'Jennifer Byrne Presents Sex and Romance', *First Tuesday Book Club*, ABC, 24 Jun. 2008, transcript, 10 Sep. 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/firsttuesday/s2231573.htm>.

<sup>510</sup> Ann Clancy, *The Wild Colonial Girl* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 1996), p. 107: Kate O'Mara's inner monologue, 'She swirled her arms about her, revelling in the satin feel of the water over her breasts and belly...', bounces into James Carmichael's, p. 108: 'he had never seen a white woman bathing naked in a stream. And he had never seen any woman bathe with such total lack of self-consciousness, glorying in the sensations of the wild...he couldn't understand how it could have escaped his attention that she was so desirable, her innocence so beautifully highlighted by her passionate, wilful nature. He realised that Kate was no longer the half-starved Irish waif of his first impression, but a girl ripening into a ravishing woman.'

wealthy and powerful in her own right.<sup>511</sup> Her explicit depictions of sexuality with the right man adhere to clichéd romance writing style: ‘All control, all caution was thrown to the wind. Their kiss was hungry, desperate and urgent. Their needs, finally let loose, burnt like a volcano...her trembling fingers closed around his manhood, revelling in the sensation of the soft velvet-covered hardness’.<sup>512</sup> Clancy far surpasses Michael Meehan’s purple prose reminding us of the tough criticism handed out to writers of literary fiction.

Fletcher also orchestrates a swelling crescendo for his characters — simultaneous orgasm — in heightened language. ‘He came together with her, a tension indescribable, a rendering, a fulfilment beyond expectation or dreaming....Alison...It was the distillation of life, a pulse quivering in her sundered loins. The beginning called to the future’.<sup>513</sup> This earth-moving scene makes it clear to the reader that this partner will become her ‘significant other’. In *Unsettled*, Rosanna concludes that the actor must love her because of the liberties he takes, but the pleasures of their love-making become supplementary to negotiations over the Lynch play and her brother’s horse, and her dream of escaping her drab existence.

Fletcher depicts his nineteenth-century woman’s economic need to find a husband overruling her natural passions. His realist twenty-first century marital rape pays literal homage to the bodice-ripping violence of popular historical romances:

He backhanded her again, much harder, and threw her backwards across the bed. He followed, hands ripping at her bodice. It tore open. Her breasts lolled. She sensed him delving at his breeches, her mouth opened to scream, he hit her again. She felt him wrench at her garments, to him, followed by a ripping agony as he filled her.<sup>514</sup>

Both these extracts can be set against Peter Behrens writing about urgent sex in his Irish famine novel considered literary fiction: ‘She undressed him roughly, hauling his shirt over his head, tearing buttons from his trousers, dragging the trousers off his legs, grasping his prick with her fist, kissing the anguished tip of it’.<sup>515</sup> Use of the

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<sup>511</sup> Ann Clancy, *The Wild Colonial Girl* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 1996), p. 100: ‘You’re a beautiful young woman, desirable, spirited and utterly irresistible to any man. But it doesn’t mean he’ll want to marry you. The upper class English don’t marry Irish orphans. They have other uses for them!’

<sup>512</sup> Clancy, pp. 409-10, 413.

<sup>513</sup> John Fletcher, *A Far Country* (Milsons Point, NSW: Random House Australia, 2000), p. 306.

<sup>514</sup> Fletcher, p. 399.

<sup>515</sup> Behrens, *The Law of Dreams*, p. 351.

word ‘anguished’ shifts perspective away from traditional phallogentric sexuality, allowing the woman agency and compassion.

## Language Style

Descriptive language, clichéd metaphors and racial stereotypes often mark popular fiction. Clancy initially uses idiomatic Irish accents to establish ethnicity but does not persist with them: ‘to be sure’; ‘Tis; Jaysus and Mary;’ ‘twas’; ‘Grand, is it’; ‘poor old Ireland’; and ‘we survived the hunger.’<sup>516</sup> But her descriptions of ‘a lovely person,’ with ‘warm velvety brown hair,’ eyes ‘large and soft,’ and a ‘round and homely face’ may not satisfy lovers of figurative language.<sup>517</sup> Nor will her prosaic accounts of gum trees, orchards and market gardens. Unlike much popular fiction Clancy writes plain prose, without the usual thicket of adverbs and adjectives, and wild ejaculations, and nary more than a simple metaphor in sight — the exception being during sex scenes. Fletcher’s target audience enjoy more similes and metaphors, some of them clichés: ‘the surface of the rock is smooth as glass...I cling, tight as a limpet’.<sup>518</sup> Action is paramount.

## Racial Discourse

*The Wild Colonial Girl* is set on the northern frontier of South Australia, a dangerous place, even in the 1850s; Fletcher’s *A Far Country*, opens on Yorke Peninsula, in an earlier period.<sup>519</sup> The treatment of Indigenous characters and settler history reflects Australia’s changing political mood during the period these two books were written. Targeting a mass audience does not preclude popular writers from creating characters with conciliatory attitudes to Indigenous land rights and post-contact history. Clancy consults Indigenous people, thanking Pearl McKenzie and family, and Cliff and Vince Coulthard ‘for their willingness to share their knowledge of the culture and history of

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<sup>516</sup> Clancy, *The Wild Colonial Girl*, pp. 3, 11.

<sup>517</sup> Clancy, p. 5.

<sup>518</sup> Fletcher, *A Far Country*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>519</sup> While it is uncertain when the word ‘frontier’ was first used Clancy and Fletcher both use it in their narratives, making them pertinent comparative texts for my South Australian settler novel. See Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster, *In the Name of the Law: William Willshire and the Policing of the Australian Frontier* (Kent Town, S. Aust.: Wakefield Press, 2007). See reference to Robert Leake’s Frontier House, in Chapter III of this exegesis: p. 101.

the *Adnyamathanha* people of the Flinders Ranges.’<sup>520</sup> But Fletcher makes no note of a similar collaboration and assumes full authority for his use of Indigenous culture and language in his Author’s Notes.<sup>521</sup>

Class issues, romantic love, and Clancy’s passion for Indigenous land rights lie at the heart of her novel and she makes direct connections between colonised Irish at home and Indigenous South Australians: ‘Tis what they said about Ireland too,’ says Kate, about food handouts increasing dependency.<sup>522</sup> Explaining why Irish orphans can’t provide skills needed to work on stations, the superintendent of the depot explains that ‘most of them are peasants’; the domestic skills of the orphan girls have been heavily debated in twentieth-century diasporic studies.<sup>523</sup> Clancy’s message is direct and didactic. Racism is a major subject of the novel. Images as bleak and darkly Gothic as those portrayed in paintings of the times, convey famine Ireland to the reader: landscape denuded of trees; people dying in ditches; workhouse beatings; sickness and fever; and sexual favours offered and taken for the price of ‘moth-eaten blankets.’<sup>524</sup> The connections between Irish and Indigenous women under duress in Ireland and Australia seem clear.<sup>525</sup>

Authors of *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory* (2001), argue that Clancy suggests ‘violence between the settlers and the *Yura* was exacerbated by the absence of European women’.<sup>526</sup> Living on a northern pastoral station, O’Mara looks to the traditional landowner women for company; she learns *Adnyamathanha* language, observes their taboos, and accepts their advice about women’s business.<sup>527</sup> Without subsuming *Adnyamathanha*’s agency — they take the

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<sup>520</sup> Clancy, acknowledgements, p.vii: ‘I used the *Adnyamathanha English Dictionary* by Pearl McKenzie and John McIntee as a reference for *Adnyamathanha* language.’

<sup>521</sup> Fletcher, p. 519: ‘The scattering of the Narungga was so complete that few traces remain of their language or culture. The ceremonies described are based on aboriginal ceremonies but no-one can say with certainty whether the beliefs and customs I have attributed to the Narungga people belonged to them or not’; he recounts a ‘dreamtime legend’ with no acknowledgement of its source. This might cause offence to Narungga custodians, and is surprising in a publication dated 2000.

<sup>522</sup> Clancy, p. 114. See also p. 247: ‘It reminded Kate of Ireland in so many ways. The English had invaded Ireland, seizing the land and renting it back to the Irish... When the tenants could not pay, they were evicted. The land that had been theirs was no longer theirs. Anything taken from the land by the peasants was considered poached or stolen... She had always been one for championing the underdog. Slowly and surely she was beginning to see things through the eyes of the *Yuras*. What she saw was not pretty.’ For discussion about Irish Indigenous colonial status see Chapter III of this exegesis.

<sup>523</sup> Clancy, p. 29. See, for instance, Richards and Herraman, ed., McClaughlin, p. 90.

<sup>524</sup> Clancy, pp. 2-5.

<sup>525</sup> See Jennifer Rutherford’s argument against this analogy in Chapter IV.

<sup>526</sup> Foster, Hosking and Nettlebeck, p. 113.

<sup>527</sup> Integrating a living *Adnyamathanha* language may seem less problematic than my use of *Booandik* language in *Unsettled*, but such inclusions require careful negotiations with language custodians.

rescue and enculturation role — Clancy provides her heroine with child care and relaunches her in settler society. *Unsettled*'s narrative flashes back to an early scene in which an exchange of language between Rosanna and Moorecke subverts traditional 'settler/ teacher' stereotypes. The Irish girl struggles to correctly make *Booandik* sounds. Moorecke speaks English well.

Drawing on the diary of pastoralist J.F. Haywood Clancy furnishes details for an incident in which O'Mara kills an overseer and prevents a massacre of *Yura* people. Her hindsight seeks to right old wrongs. Fletcher declines postcolonial conventions and enters the consciousness of Mura, his Indigenous character, also allowing a totally omniscient narrator to interrupt his thoughts, mediating *Narungga* language and cultural information for the reader: 'Mura awoke to darkness and the sound of the wind. In the language of the *Narungga* people *mura* meant hand. ... Mura was fourteen now, his mother had been dead eight years and he had little recollection of her.'<sup>528</sup> Mura teaches Jason Hallam, a shipwrecked white boy, *Narungga* language. Mura initially introduces key *Narungga* words but within a few pages of discourse time — weeks in real time — Jason is proficient in the language. The story is then focalised through him and the reader is expected to effect a double translation.

For most of the subsequent narrative Mura speaks in perfect English sentences, which the reader is expected to accept as *Narungga* language, fully understood by Jason.<sup>529</sup> However, when both young men work at the Burra Burra mines, Fletcher asks the reader to make more adjustments. Mura speaks a mixture of perfect, portentous English, alternating with a kind of pigeon: 'a friend of mine is come. Walpina' and 'Walpina bring messages.'<sup>530</sup> Fletcher's representation of his characters' language during open frontier warfare, and in a situation where power transactions soon favour the dominant language of the imperialist aggressors, is effective, and was interesting to me in determining Moorecke's speech. He reinforces the technical difficulties of taking up an Indigenous point of view, and honouring it within a genre which prides itself on action and drama.

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Clancy worked with Pearl McKenzie, the co-author (also John McIntee) of the *Adnyamathanha English Dictionary*. Pregnant and abandoned by the English station owner, who tries to marry her off to a hutkeeper — the perpetrator of a massacre of Aboriginal men, women and children — Kate flees with her *Adnyamathanha* friends, to their sacred place, after an episode of frontier violence in which she kills the hutkeeper. Insubordinate, no more than an inconvenience to be settled, she uses violence to survive. At Elatina she learns to live off the land, including fire-stick farming, and gives birth to her son.

<sup>528</sup> Fletcher, p. 24.

<sup>529</sup> Fletcher, pp. 95-97.

<sup>530</sup> Fletcher, p. 346.

Fletcher uses more evocative and descriptive language than Clancy, which is primarily ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’, but he vicariously depicts white male desire for Indigenous women, making many references to the nakedness of *Narungga* people: ‘He was absolutely naked’, ‘...the other was young: pert breasts, bouncing buttocks... “Could do with a bit of that”...’<sup>531</sup> Popular fiction features racial exoticisation. However, he focalises the violent dispossession of *Narungga* people from their land, through several characters. From the beginning, Asta, a widowed settler woman, acknowledges the sovereignty of *Narungga* people over their land, but believes them unworthy of it. Her justification for dispossession relates to her civilising role: ‘This is not our country...If we bring civilisation, if we make things better here than they were before, good. *That* is our justification. But if we do not we have no business to be here at all.’<sup>532</sup> Blake Gallagher, the anti-hero, believes that ‘the blacks were vermin. He would shoot them as cheerfully as he would a pack of rats. It was his duty to do it.’<sup>533</sup> The pervasiveness of this attitude amongst settlers culminates in a massacre, which includes the killing of women and small children, at the *Narungga* camp. Afterwards the bodies are burnt. Fletcher writes the massacre in alternating short paragraphs from an Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspective.<sup>534</sup>

Throughout the narrative imperialistic attitudes of whites intermingle with *Narungga* assertions. When Jason queries the *Narungga* proffering of leafy twigs, suggesting that whites will not recognise it as a sign of peace, Nantariltarra, an elder, retorts, ‘It is *our* custom. They wish to stay here, let them learn our ways.’<sup>535</sup> Fletcher’s representation of *Narungga* representative government shows *Narungga* people asserting sovereignty over their land. He uses italics to directly insert the dreaming story of Winda the owl into the narrative, labelling it ‘legend’ in his Author’s Notes. He makes no mention of specific collaboration with *Narungga* people in relation to this story, or of permission to retell it.<sup>536</sup>

*Unsettled* shares some of the tropes of these popular fictions: seduction and betrayal; overt sexuality; racism against Indigenous people; and implicit violence. Clancy’s and Fletcher’s popular narratives develop over a longer historical time period, encompassing traditional Indigenous life, settler wars, and fringe-dwelling.

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<sup>531</sup> Fletcher, pp. 54, 86.

<sup>532</sup> Fletcher, p. 120.

<sup>533</sup> Fletcher, p. 159.

<sup>534</sup> Fletcher, pp. 166-167.

<sup>535</sup> Fletcher, *A Far Country*, p. 133.

<sup>536</sup> Fletcher, *A Far Country*, p. 519.

Both these books deserve more detailed analysis but provide some points of comparison with *Unsettled* as examples of works of mainstream popular fiction. No evidence suggests that Fletcher based his history on apocryphal tales but Clancy uses remnants from her great grandmother's life drawn from oral family history.

### **Section C: Historical Fiction**

According to Cicero, Herodotus, the Father of History, was also the purveyor of 'countless tall tales' now believed to be apocryphal or outright lies.<sup>537</sup> Such tales shape national and regional identities. Historical fiction is often defined by the presence of real-life historical characters. *Unsettled* interprets historical events through the imaginaries of reconstructed real-life people who have fallen through the cracks of South-east South Australian history and who lie four generations from its author's consciousness. For many reasons it can be read as historical fiction as easily as it can as popular and literary fiction.

Diana Wallace argues that writing historical fiction brings a certain freedom, and is "historical" in four senses: 'in its use of a particular period for its fictional setting; in its engagement with the historical moment (social, cultural, political and national) of its writing; in its relation to the personal life history of the writer herself; and in its relation to literary history, most obvious in the intertextual use of earlier texts.'<sup>538</sup> This exegesis addresses each of these four senses. Set in 1859, near Gambierton (since renamed), the novel is a regional tale in which working-class men and women take centre stage. It re-imagines Lynch ancestors, as well as those of traditional land-owners, both barely present in extant records. Informed by readings of texts about Irish settler-girls, it also incorporates Irish and Australian apocryphal stories.

Marxist historian György Lukács claimed that the historical novel rose at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Sir Walter Scott allowed his eponymous narrator in *Waverly: Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, to orient the narrative perspective. Its

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<sup>537</sup> Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* (Sydney, New South Wales: University of NSW Press, 2006), p. 13.

<sup>538</sup> Wallace, introduction, p. 4.

readers see how historical events affect the lives of ordinary people.<sup>539</sup> Scott's protagonist demonstrates how, for most civilians, everyday life continues despite the sweep of great historical events, including war, and that their efforts to have basic needs met overrides political certainties.<sup>540</sup> The presence of historical figures was of equal importance in Scott's novels. Genette also attributes the invention of the historical novel to Scott who, he believed, disavowed being restricted by the genre, every novel, being historical in some sense.<sup>541</sup>

Australian historians Ann Curthoys and John Docker suggested in 2006 that Lukács privileging of Scott's position as historical novelist over women writers of the eighteenth century was encouraged by male critics and reviewers, and was unduly deferential to his masculinity. Lukács view has since been discounted by feminist critical scholars.<sup>542</sup> Scott validated novel-writing and novel-reading as masculine pursuits and yet Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan, regional and female writers, had led the way.<sup>543</sup> Nineteenth-century novels and their audiences had changed.<sup>544</sup> Ina Ferris, writing in 1991, considered that *Waverly* brought 'history writing and the novel into a new relationship' ushering in the realist novel.<sup>545</sup>

Lukács shared Scott's view that despite its contradictions and transitions history is progressive. A.S. Byatt takes a broader view in *On Histories and Stories*:

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<sup>539</sup> György Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (1936/1937; London: Merlin Press, 1962), trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell, p. 34: '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.'

<sup>540</sup> *Waverly*, a young Englishman, briefly joins the Highlanders in battle, for emotional reasons — his attraction to Flora, family loyalty, and his ability to see their point-of-view — and despite his rational allegiance with the Whigs.

<sup>541</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*... pp. 226-227.

<sup>542</sup> Curthoys and Docker, pp. 67-8.

<sup>543</sup> Scott claimed indebtedness to Edgeworth, but later distanced himself. See Sir Walter Scott, preface (1929), *Waverly: Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814; USA: Signet Classics, 1964), pp. 16-17: 'The first [circumstance for retrieving his manuscript from storage] was the extended and well-merited fame of Miss Edgeworth... without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact, which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country of the same kind with that which Miss Edgeworth so fortunately achieved for Ireland ...' *Castle Rackrent* (1800) concertinaed Ireland's colonial relationship with England, using the playful voices of Thady, the Rackrents' family retainer, and an editor who invades the narrative. If her male characters overshadow the resilience of female characters in difficult economic circumstances, it may have been her concession to the times, allowing her access to a literary respectability controlled by men. Her father's role as lobbyist is relevant; ironically she wrote *Castle Rackrent* with little interference. A feminist reading of the novel would recognise the stoicism of the incarcerated Jewess, and Judy's pragmatism.

<sup>544</sup> Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverly Novels* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 33, cites examples of reviewers alarmed that 'novels have begun to encroach on the territory of more serious discourses'.

<sup>545</sup> Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverly Novels*, pp. 195, 197.

*Selected Essays* (2001) arguing that history is cyclical and polyphonic, as well as linear and progressive; independent and inter-textual. She makes an impassioned plea for the revival of small tales.<sup>546</sup> Byatt believes that historical fiction was written for intellectual *and* aesthetic reasons. The exclusion of women from male historical narratives has been a major impetus for feminist re-writing of history in postcolonial novels. *Unsettled*, a smaller family story set against a larger history of the South-east, was partly begun for this reason.

Wallace sees the absence of women from hegemonic histories as compounded by prejudice against women historical fiction-writers, arguing that ‘they have been critically dismissed, or, perhaps worse, ignored because they have been perceived as nostalgic, escapist, irrelevant or simply “trash”’.<sup>547</sup> She advances the notion that women wrote historical fiction across a range of genres and that the relegation of their oeuvres to “high-brow/low-brow” came about for reasons other than the quality of their texts.<sup>548</sup> Women’s historical fiction can be both political and escapist: *Unsettled* fits these criteria.

How far writers must look back before being considered to write historical fiction has become a vexed question. Two of Charles Dickens’s novels, now considered historical, were written in his present, *A Tale of Two Cities* (c1859) and *Barnaby Rudge* (c1841) being exceptions. Scott’s *Waverly: Or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since*, set after the rebellion of 1745, set a precedent, now generally accepted, of narrating events sixty years — roughly three generations — before the author’s time. Accounts of events where no first-hand observers survive require research and imagination.<sup>549</sup> In 1998, Margaret Atwood also linked historical fiction with consciousness — authorial.

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<sup>546</sup> A.S. Byatt, *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays* (London: Vintage, Random House, 2001), p. 170: ‘There is a difference between these great portentous histories and the proliferation of small tales that are handed on, like gifts, like objects for delight and contemplation’.

<sup>547</sup> Wallace, p. 227.

<sup>548</sup> Wallace offered me a detailed analysis of many historical fictions that I had read early in my candidature, while I explored the range of options open to me as a postcolonial writer: for example books by Jeannette Winterson and Rose Tremain. A.S. Byatt’s *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays* (2000) highlights discussion about circular stories, and new and old ways of telling story, including the use of polyphony, which proved useful as I wavered between myth and apocrypha.

<sup>549</sup> Scott acknowledges the difficulties of writing about societies in transition long after people in the present generation can remember events. See, Sir Walter Scott, *A Postscript Which Should Have Been a Preface, Waverly: Or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814; USA: Signet Classics, 1964), p. 512: ‘There is no European nation which, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland. The effects of the insurrection of 1745...the total eradication of the Jacobite party, which, averse to intermingle with the English, or adopt their customs, long continued to pride themselves upon maintaining ancient Scottish manners and customs – commenced this innovation.’ Scott sees the changes as gradual but progressive.

Focussing on memory, collective and individual, she asserts that anything written before the time at which the novel-writer came to consciousness could be considered historical.<sup>550</sup>

But in 2006, Inga Clendinnen claimed that present-day writers could not successfully enter the consciousness of nineteenth-century characters.<sup>551</sup> Historical fiction writers acknowledge this difficulty, as well as that of hindsight, the need for vigilant examination of temporal attitudes and values, and to be conscious of anachronisms.<sup>552</sup> Eight years before, Atwood had teased out ‘the conundrum, for history and individual memory alike, and therefore for fiction too: How do we *know* we know what we think we know?’<sup>553</sup> Some historical fiction writers deliberately play with historical consciousness, either of the subject time, or of contemporary times. The need to interrogate the past to understand the present and change the future is a recurring theme and it applies to *Unsettled*.<sup>554</sup>

## Historical Verification

Like purveyors of apocryphal stories, historical fiction writers have always entered a contested and very public space, and they frequently employ para-texts — notes, dedications, acknowledgements, bibliographies, and so on — to explain their departures from canonical texts to readers including critics. In 1972, Gerard Genette argued that modern prefaces [in which he includes afterwords and author’s notes] concern themselves predominantly with ‘themes of how’: the genesis of the novel, including sources; the choice of public; comments upon the title; contracts of fiction;

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<sup>550</sup> Margaret Atwood. ‘In Search of Alias Grace: On Writing Canadian Historical Fiction.’ *The American Historical Review*, vol. 103. 5 (1998): p. 1510, 15 Apr., 2008, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2649966>.

<sup>551</sup> Inga Clendinnen, *Quarterly Essay*: 23 (2006), pp. 25-6: ‘...I hope I demonstrated in *Dancing With Strangers* that with patience, attentiveness and sufficient testing of the ground it is possible to penetrate a little distance.’ See discussion about this issue in Chapter IV.

<sup>552</sup> See Geraldine Brooks, *Year of Wonders* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2003), p.309. Brooks notes the difficulty of knowing that rat death accompanied plague and yet needing her 1666 characters to be ignorant of this fact. Rat death may seem more achievable than conveying the historical nuances of race, gender and class.

<sup>553</sup> Atwood, p. 1505.

<sup>554</sup> Christopher Koch, Author’s Note, *Out of Ireland* (Sydney: Transworld Publishers, 1999), pp. 704-6: ‘...the enigmas of the past (present) are often understood by descending into the past; and this is the progression which my dual narrative wishes the reader to follow.’

Lindsay Simpson, Author’s Note, *The Curer of Souls* (Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Vintage Books, Random House, 2006), p.343: ‘Fiction can also reconfigure the archives and reshape the lived experiences of actual characters within the hybrid possibilities offered by a contemporary lens.’

*statements of intent* [italics added]; genre definitions and various dodges.<sup>555</sup> Each of these themes illuminates the bedevilled choices made by contemporary writers of historical fiction, but especially those who want to write their story against the grain.<sup>556</sup> Why do we use historical settings; how rigorous is our research methodology; how do we decide when to depart from history; what do we invent and why?

Prefaces, like this exegesis, attempt to placate diverse audiences — family and friends, casual and critical readers, historians and other custodians of national culture, mentors and examiners — at the same time, posit their intent against the conventions of History and English Literature. Chapter IV of this exegesis suggests that Kate Grenville used her preface to lay bare *her* writerly intent — the most important function of a preface, according to Genette — revealing that she works both with and against historical fiction genre.<sup>557</sup> Not all Australian historical fiction writers or indeed, writers, preface their work.<sup>558</sup> Most entirely dispense with prefatory paratexts, preferring afterwords following the main text; some publish only brief acknowledgements, thanking people to whom they are indebted, and barely alluding to the historical and writerly processes that produced their novels.<sup>559</sup>

Alternatively, Lindsay Simpson's Author's Notes for her novel *The Curer of Souls* stretch to eleven pages, followed by four pages of acknowledgements, in which she makes a pre-emptive attack on perennial criticisms made of historical fiction writers. At the same time she openly admits that her construction of character and events departs from other historical accounts. Perhaps this honest diligence was a direct result of the reduction of a larger work; in fact, her Creative Writing Ph D.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, p. 209.

<sup>556</sup> If post-modern historical fiction writers thought to play with preface, Laurence Sterne has come before them, manoeuvring his into the heart of *Tristram Shandy*. Laurence Sterne, preface, *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67; London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 174: '...when I sat down, my intent was to write a good book...'

<sup>557</sup> Genette, introduction, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, p.221. He conflates Afterwords and Prefaces, arguing that they function in the same way.

<sup>558</sup> Gay Lynch, 'Performative Anxieties in the Preface: The Historical Writer as Cheerful Whore,' ASAL Conference, University of Queensland, 1-3 July, 2007. Reading the prefaces of forty-five recent Australian historical fictions, as an entry point for the fictions they mediate, supported the difficult decisions I needed to make in order to rewrite historical events in a creative but ethical way.

<sup>559</sup> These historical fictions do not: James Bradley (*The Resurrectionists*, 2006), Tom Gilling (*The Sooterkin*, 1999), Rosalie Hann (*The Summer of Mount Hope*, 2005), Christopher Koch (*The Memory Room*, 2007), Alex Miller (*Journey into Stone Country*, 2002, and *Landscape of Farewell*, 2007) and Jessica White (*A Curious Intimacy*, 2007).

<sup>560</sup> That historical research appeals to people involved in creative writing programs has been suggested by many literary critics, including Malcolm Knox, 'Stories in the Wrong Tense,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, Spectrum, 8 December 2001, p. 9. Diana Wallace believes that 'by the 1980s, feminist activism was under threat from a conservative anti-feminist backlash. But despite, or perhaps because of this,

Historical fiction-writing conventions suggest that scholarship should be lightly worn. Scott's admiration for Edgeworth related, in part, to her avoidance of excessive historical and ethnic clutter.<sup>561</sup> And historical fiction writers have always expected to be criticised for their representation of people and events, and for their depiction of the historical milieu in which their novel is set.<sup>562</sup> Ina Ferris discusses a 'particular form of intertextual anxiety symptomatic of historical fiction (that is its problematic relationship to the authoritative discourse of history).'<sup>563</sup> It is for this reason perhaps that authors include bibliographies as credentials.<sup>564</sup> Some do not: Richard Flanagan's narrator in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) gives voice to a metafictional exposé of violence committed against Indigenous Tasmanians but no historical references.<sup>565</sup> His afterword, taken from the Colonial Secretary's letters, may or may not have been constructed.<sup>566</sup> *Wanting* (2008), his more recent book, set during the same period of history, directs readers to a website containing historical background.<sup>567</sup>

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"women's history" had moved into the academy and there was a boom in feminist publishing led by presses like Virago and the Women's Press.' See, p. 177.

<sup>561</sup> Sir Walter Scott, 'A Postscript Which Should Have Been a Preface', p. 514: 'It has been my object to describe these persons, not by a caricatured and exaggerated use of the national dialect, but by their habits, manners and feelings; so as in some distant degree to emulate the admirable Irish portraits drawn by Miss Edgeworth...'

<sup>562</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon: Daily Life in a Vanished Australia* (Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin Books, 2003), provided me with a well-indexed and useful reference for everyday accoutrements, although I tried to avoid excessive description. For many readers, tedious interpretative description of domestic paraphernalia can slow the narrative of historical novels. Sigrun Meinig, argues in *Witnessing the Past: History and Postcolonialism in Australian Historical Novels*, pp. 59-61, that obsessive description of objects, signifies western materiality, and commodity fetishism. For the same reason I have paid scant attention to Rosanna's work as maid at the Big House. This decision was not intended to devalue women's work any more than my deliberate ignoring of Father and Edwin's skills with cattle might be seen as downplaying stock work.

<sup>563</sup> Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverly Novels*, p. 11.

<sup>564</sup> Prefaces to all these books contain them: Christine Ballint, *The Salt Letters* (1999); Geraldine Brooks, *March* (2006); Peter Carey, *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000); Michelle de Kretser, *The Hamilton Case* (2004); Anne-Marie Jagose, *Slow Water* (2003); Gail Jones *Sixty Lights* (2004), and *Black Mirror* (2002); Christopher Koch, *Out of Ireland* (1999); Roger McDonald, *The Ballad of Desmond Kale* (2005) and *Mr Darwin's Shooter* (1999); and Lindsay Simpson, *The Curer of Souls* (2006).

<sup>565</sup> Richard Flanagan, *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001; Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2002), p. 372: 'I am William Buelow Gould, sloe-souled, green-eyed, gap-toothed, shaggy-haired & grizzle-gutted, & though my paintings be even poorer than my looks...believe me when I tell you that I will try to show you everything, mad & cracked & bad as it was...I'll make the mark my way, be buggered if I won't & I know I'll be damned if I do & like no other has.'

<sup>566</sup> Richard Flanagan, afterword, *Gould's Book of Fish*, p. 447: From the Colonial Secretary's correspondence file, 5 Apr. 1831 (Archives of Tasmania), 'Gould, William Buelow, prisoner number 873645; aliases Sid Hammet, "the Surgeon", Jorgen Jorgenson, Capois Death, Pobjoy, "the Commandant"; identifying marks tattoo above left breast, red anchor with blue wings, legend "Love & Liberty"; absconded Sarah Island, 29 February 1831. Drowned attempting escape.'

<sup>567</sup> Richard Flanagan, *Wanting* (Milton's Point, NSW: Random House, Australia, 2008); *Wanting*, Richard Flanagan, website, 12 Jan. 2009, <http://www.richardflanaganwanting.com.au/notes.aspx>.

Few historical fictions achieve closure and nor will *Unsettled*, a re-inscription of an Indigenous and Irish-settler woman, and their menfolk, missing from texts about South-east South Australia.<sup>568</sup> Historical fiction demands verification; but it is, invariably, discursive.

## Enduring Common Elements in Fiction

Apocryphal stories sit comfortably in historical fiction. Declarations in the preface, ‘professing a work’s fictiveness’ can make engagement between reader and writer more transparent, creating a conspiratorial but artificial distance between historical events and the novel’s representation of them.<sup>569</sup> Historical Lynch family members have been renamed in *Unsettled*.<sup>570</sup> Nevertheless, several characters sprang from real people.<sup>571</sup> The few known facts about Patrick and Michael, two Lynch settler-brothers were conflated to create Edwin Lynch in my novel. Rosanna is almost entirely imagined, apart from the borrowing of a small historical fragment from the public record: a Lynch girl’s ride on her brother’s horse Lucifer in a ladies’ race in the mid-1870s.<sup>572</sup>

A mother raising her daughter’s illegitimate child along with her own brood was common enough in the nineteenth century; an unsubstantiated story suggests this happened in the second generation of Australian Irish Lynches and made it more comfortable for me to create Rosanna’s pregnancy in *Unsettled*. There is no evidence

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<sup>568</sup> Wallace, p. 177: Wallace believes the ‘impetus towards the historical novel can be linked closely to the project of recovering women’s history, rather than deconstruction of history associated with male authors...’

<sup>569</sup> Genette, introduction, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, p.215, for example, see Koch, Author’s Note, p. 704-6: ‘If I am seen to have taken a liberty in drawing on the real Young Irishmen to create my imaginary creatures, I can only ask indulgence, and point out that this sort of liberty is a time-honoured tradition in the novel’; and Kym Scott, Acknowledgements, *Benang: From the Heart*, p. 497: ‘This is a work of fiction even though some of the characters are based on real people and its landscape on real land’.

<sup>570</sup> The subterfuge of fiction can disguise the factual base of primary research and may be necessary, to ensure the book’s safe passage onto the street. See Rebe Taylor, Author’s Note, *Unearthed: The Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2002): ‘protecting people’s identities has sometimes meant changing, or not including source material that could easily disclose someone’s identity’; Brian Castro, *Shanghai Dancing* (Newcastle: Giramondo, 2003), advertised as a fictional autobiography yet, see acknowledgements, p. 449: ‘this is a work of fiction. All characters are products of the author’s imagination and should not be identified with any persons living or dead.’

<sup>571</sup> See Appendix 7: Acknowledgements, Family.

<sup>572</sup> B.J. O’Connor, *From Barrier Rise: The History of Horse Racing in the S.E. of S.A.* (Mount Gambier: B.J. O’Connor, 1995). Lucifer is also mentioned on page 56 in relation to ‘a mid-1870s meeting at a course known as Prior’s paddock at Gambier West.’ The meeting included a ladies’ race, won by Miss J. McCorquindale on *Rugged Jack*. She defeated Miss Lynch riding *Lucifer*, which rode a later race on the programme, when ridden by his owner’.

that this happened in the first generation diasporic Lynch family. No records suggest reasons for sisters Mary and Bridget remaining at home with their parents until they died (Mary at aged sixty-four and Bridget at forty-four). It can only be assumed by their absence from church and school records that they worked at home on the family farm.<sup>573</sup> *Unsettled*'s imagining of settler-Lynches does not constitute historical truth, but fiction, knitted from known and unsubstantiated fragments of Lynch family narratives, into an 1859 time-frame.<sup>574</sup>

## Speculation and Collective Memory

The recreation of historical figures from historical letters and documents, or oral tales particularly those with apocryphal status, beloved in collective memory, can be an intuitive but unreliable process even for historians.<sup>575</sup> Some characters of my research belong to the public record: in particular, Adam Lindsay Gordon, Father Tenison Woods, shipwreck survivors, playwrights, writers, and Indigenous people who have already suffered so much loss. Moorecke and her husband Jack share some of the life circumstances of Mooreckey and Johnny Caboo, *Booandik* people from the Nelson River area, who were written about by Christina Smith.<sup>576</sup> The lives of these historical figures feasibly impacted on the settler-Lynches.<sup>577</sup>

The difficult attribution of personality traits to historical figures is a theme of prefaces. Novelists *and* historians construct and shape the identities of their historical subjects. Genette's 'themes of how' particularly genesis and intent, frequently focus on this construction. Is it the speculative leap made by novelists shaping character to service plot, which undermines their confidence? Is it the binding of historical sources to experiential research, which creates tension? Early drafts of *Unsettled* contained a sexual liaison between Rosanna and Adam Lindsay Gordon.<sup>578</sup> This was abandoned

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<sup>573</sup> No family records of these daughters are extant; research in Nhill, Victoria, continues. The scarcity of information about 'the Ryan women of Galong', who never married or reproduced and, 'who took no visible public role in the running of the extensive landholdings' suggests Malcolm Campbell in *The Kingdom of the Ryans: the Irish in Southwest New South Wales: 1816-1890* (Sydney: UNWS, 1997), p. 129, that spinster Irish women remaining at home was common.

<sup>574</sup> See Appendix 8: Acknowledgements, Lynch Family.

<sup>575</sup> See Maurice Halbwach's, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>576</sup> Smith, pp. 77-80. The close resemblance between their names is deliberate but provisional and one of the subjects of my discussions with *Booandik* cultural custodians.

<sup>577</sup> See Gay Lynch, 'Fiction Writing: Theft or Weft', *TEXT*. 9. 1. Apr. 2005.

24 Feb. 2009. <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april05/lynch.htm>

<sup>578</sup> Gordon openly admitted his interest in good-looking girls. See Adam Lindsay Gordon, letter to Charley Walker, Penola, Nov. 1854, p. 413: 'you remember my speaking in my last or last but one of a

for three reasons: its explication would make the novel longer and more complex; it could detract from Rosanna's relationship with the actor; and the book's main themes of Lynch patriarchal name and identity could be subsumed by one of a young woman's awakening sexuality.

*Unsettled* runs the risk of relegating major events backstage. The wreck of the *Admella*, for instance, confined to two chapters, has a devastating affect on Rosanna's life and even more so on its passengers, but is focalised through a young woman's consciousness, rather than historical figures associated with the wreck story. Official and apocryphal stories of the wreck present a limited range of characters.<sup>579</sup> *Unsettled* brings in new ones, previously present only in Lynch family stories. A conversation between Rosanna and her father, who is among the men on the beach and has wider access to information, broadens the readers' understanding of colonial politics, showing how major events impact on the lives of ordinary people.

Characters can be overworked in historical periods and places, with small casts.<sup>580</sup> Disagreement amongst historians can confound the historical fiction writer, for example, the whereabouts of Adam Lindsay Gordon during the week of the wreck of the *Admella* may never be known.<sup>581</sup> In the light of contradictory apocryphal stories, should *Booandik* people be present at the wreck?<sup>582</sup> *Unsettled* makes room for them, as minor characters, speculating on the likelihood of station workers accompanying their employers to the beach.

Like apocryphal stories, historical documents can be misleading and inadequate.<sup>583</sup> Simpson describes her close readings of the diaries (edited and original) of the three historical figures on which she bases her main characters. 'Apart from the

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good-looking girl whom my companion and I both fancied a bit. ...I certainly tried it on strong but without success; not that I meant Matrimony'; and Penola, Oct. 1855, Humphris and Sladen, p. 417: 'to cut it short I was rather indiscreet in some things...'

<sup>579</sup> See Chapter III of this exegesis.

<sup>580</sup> Van Diemen's Land commissariat, Thomas Lempriere, is fictionalised quite differently in the novels of Richard Flanagan, Matthew Kneale, and Lindsay Simpson. See Richard Flanagan, *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001); Matthew Kneale, *English Passengers* (2000); Lindsay Simpson, *The Curer of Souls* (2006). Chief Protector of Aborigines, A.O. Neville, is fictionalised differently by Kym Scott and Doris Pilkington. See Garimara Doris Pilkington, *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2002); Kym Scott, *Benang: From the Heart* (1999).

<sup>581</sup> Delia Falconer, *The Lost Thoughts of Soldiers* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2005), p.145: 'Debate rages to this day over whether Benteen ought to have — or indeed, could have — obeyed Custer's note to "Bring Pacs."'

<sup>582</sup> See Chapter III of this exegesis.

<sup>583</sup> See Maria Edgeworth's preface to *Castle Rackrent and Ennui*, p. 61: 'of the numbers who study, or at least who read history, how few derive any advantage from their labours! ...Besides, there is much uncertainty even in the best authenticated ancient or modern histories'.

perceived insincerity of this form, I struggled with the fact that all three diaries were tampered with after their authors' deaths...burnt... scattered...pages torn out, sometimes a hundred at a time... copies were then corrected and edited...errors and deliberate omissions were made by an official in London...'<sup>584</sup> Her preface underlines her unwillingness to be misled. And yet, she creates, perhaps outrageously from an historian's perspective, two main characters, by conflating historical figures.<sup>585</sup> General paucity of information about Lynch makes errors difficult to discern and therefore of less public significance.

Poet Adam Lindsay Gordon and the Roman Catholic priest Father Tenison Woods appear in *Unsettled* and are named. Gordon and Woods belong to South-east South Australia's collective memory, and for this reason the novel follows Sir Walter Scott's lead in keeping their characters minor.<sup>586</sup> Anthony Trollope discusses the poetry and horsemanship of A.L. Gordon in a piece of travel writing written when he visited Gambierton, which he calls Gambier-Town, in 1872. After reading *Bush Ballads, or Galloping Rhymes* he was 'struck by their energy' enough to be convinced 'of the man's genius,' but found little evidence of a literary world in Gambierton:

there was but scanty [sic] allusion to other matters, except to racing, and to the melancholy, thoughtful, solitary, heart-eating life which a bushman lives...as a steeplechase rider he was well known in Melbourne; but few seem to have heard of him as a poet.<sup>587</sup>

Trollope's observation of Gambierton folk as preoccupied with horse racing strengthens the reminiscences of Michael Lynch, from which Edwin's character in *Unsettled* is partly drawn. He claims that he knew Gordon well, in his role as a competitor and as an official for local racing and hunt clubs. Gordon is also the subject of two novels and several biographies; all were written after he became famous for poetry, horsemanship and his suicide.<sup>588</sup> Thus, Gordon still belongs in South-east cultural memory. Present day South East citizens and Australia's literary

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<sup>584</sup> Lindsay Simpson, Author's Note, p. 341.

<sup>585</sup> Simpson, Author's Note, p. 343: 'She (Lydia Franklin) is loosely based on a composite of Sir John Franklin's daughter, Eleanor, and Sophy Cracroft' and Sir John Franklin's 'fictional character is a composite of Sir John Franklin and Lieutenant Governor-General George Arthur'.

<sup>586</sup> Lukács, p. 45.

<sup>587</sup> Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* (1873; London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), p. 219.

<sup>588</sup> H.J. Samuel & Enid Moodie Heddle, *Boy on a Horse: the Story of Adam Lindsay Gordon* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1957); Crawford Vaughn, *Come Back in Wattle Time: the Dramatic Story of Adam Lindsay Gordon* (Sydney: Frank Johnson, Magpie series, 1942). See also, Peter Goldsworthy, *Everything I Knew: A Novel* (Camberwell, Victoria: Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Books, 2008), p. 49, in which Miss Peach compares Gordon's poetry unfavourably to that of John Shaw Neilson's.

establishment might accept a fantasy about a national poet but that would be a different book.<sup>589</sup>

Beloved by his settler parishioners, Julian Tenison Woods is the subject of a biography by Mary MacKillop; more recently, a novel about MacKillop's girlhood has appeared.<sup>590</sup> Neither Gordon nor Woods has direct descendents; the former lost a child in its infancy, a factor heavily contributing to his depression and suicide and the latter, as far as we know, never had children. Using their names was less confronting than using the names of historical characters with many descendents and perhaps, vested interests — name and property — to protect. Woods's letters to MacKillop, his young Scottish mentee, show him to have been generous and gently tolerant of her sensitivities.<sup>591</sup> Thus, my depiction of his kindness to Rosanna and Skelly seems feasible in *Unsettled*. He offers solutions to their problems which neither of them takes up: Skelly dies before he can enter the priesthood under Woods's patronage and Rosanna loses her opportunity to teach, after conceiving the actor's child. Young, charismatic, handsome, amusing and erudite, the real Father Woods endeared himself to Catholic parishioners, a role he plays in my novel.

An author's depiction of history, if popular, can displace lost accounts and become apocryphal. Lack of fidelity to historical place and time can be dismissed for artistic or architectural purpose. Main action in *Unsettled* takes place in the vicinity of Tillers Road near Racecourse Bay, Port MacDonnell, where the Lynches bought land in 1866, instead of at a boundary-rider's hut on Mingbool Station north of Gambierton, where they originally settled. This alleviated some problems and created others; it facilitated the reordering of family events, but readers might wrongly assume that Lynches lived on Mount Schank Station in 1859, although by then, Martin worked there.

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<sup>589</sup> See Nigel Krauth's fictional conciliation with a national poet's history in the prologue to *Matilda My Darling* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), p. viii: 'The following is my imagined account of events. Things may not have happened this way... Yet I have not been hard on Bartie...' [Banjo Patterson].

<sup>590</sup> Pamela Freeman, *The Black Dress: Mary MacKillop's Early Years* (Fitzroy, Victoria: Black Dog Books, 2005).

<sup>591</sup> Father Tenison Woods, letter to Mary MacKillop, 11 Jul. 1865, cited in Isobel Hepburn, *No Ordinary Man: Life and Letters of Julian E. Tenison Woods* (Wanganui [N.Z.]: Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, 1979), p. 96:

'My Dear Mary,  
I think I have told you about 100 times that if I have too much to do, and cannot write, you mustn't think that I'm in a huff...'

Many 1860 events transferred quite happily into 1859: the Lynch girl coming second in a horse race; the establishment of her brother's carrying business and his subsequent arrest for debt. However, the fact that the Mount Gambier jail was not built until 1866 meant that Edwin had to serve his sentence in Guichen Bay or Adelaide. Pastoral visits from Father Woods and the proximity of Adam Lindsay Gordon — then relatively unknown as a poet, but increasingly developing a reputation for steeplechasing — were true to date, as were details borrowed from the lives of station owners, John Meredith and his wife Maria. Difficulties usually arose when I was absorbed in writing fiction. Historical fiction-writers often abandon history to serve dramatic or architectural purpose; they can cover their tracks or admit it. Perhaps historians keep them honest.<sup>592</sup> Genette considers historical novels give rise to 'more disavowing stances' and conflict between their authors and historians than necessary.<sup>593</sup>

## Political Manipulation

Apocryphal stories and historical fictions articulate and realise the spirit of their time of writing — capturing a zeitgeist — aligning with politics and national identities.<sup>594</sup> Kym Scott's Aboriginal Protector A.O. Neville, in *Benang...*, for instance, inevitably connects with 'Sorry-business'.<sup>595</sup> Great historical moments, ends of millennia with their failed ideals and new terrors, become imperatives for historical fiction writers and often feature in their prefaces. Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* is set during the era of the Act of Union (1800), when Ireland lost her Parliament and Catholics their civil rights. Simpson Newland's *Paving the Way* (1893) arrives on the eve of Australian Federation (1900). Gail Jones and Kate Grenville write in the wake of Australia's failed attempt at Aboriginal Reconciliation (2000).<sup>596</sup> Consider post 9/11

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<sup>592</sup> See Appendix 9, Acknowledgements, Historians.

<sup>593</sup> Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, p. 227.

<sup>594</sup> See Chapter IV of this exegesis.

<sup>595</sup> Kym Scott, *Benang: from the Heart*, p.497; Scott writes openly about his paraphrasing of historical documents and newspapers: 'Neville's part of the dialogue pp. 38-40 is not literal but is based upon his letters in the file of a member of my family and phrases and attitudes occurring elsewhere in his writings...'

<sup>596</sup> Gail Jones, Acknowledgements, *Sorry* (North Sydney NSW: Random House, 2007), pp. 216-218: 'This text is written in the hope that further native title grants will be offered in the spirit of reconciliation and in gratitude for all that Indigenous Australians have given to others in their country.'

novels preoccupied with history, war and terror: Janette Turner Hospital's, for instance.<sup>597</sup>

Chapter III of this exegesis outlines the political implications of the wreck of the *Admella*, how they impinged on South-east settlers and indirectly, on the characters of *Unsettled*. Postcolonial, my novel foregrounds characters whose historical role has been minor, unsubstantiated, invisible or diminished. Margaret Atwood reminds us of the importance of writing about difficult things, forgotten or repressed. Mathinna, Simpson's Indigenous character in *The Curer of Souls* (2006), is silent; Jones's character in *Sorry* (2007) is rendered speechless. A powerful paper could be written on white writers who ventriloquise Indigenous subjects in sympathetic and confronting ways.<sup>598</sup>

During the 1990s, Tanya Dalziell, Robert Dixon, Fiona Giles, Susan Magarey, Kay Schaffer and Susan Sheridan wrote about authorial treatments of settler girl protagonists in popular, now canonical, late nineteenth-century texts. *Unsettled* is a twenty-first century novel set in 1859; its protagonist, a settler girl. Critics considered that at the time of publication Dalziell broke ground in analysing links between romance and ethnography, in selected texts.<sup>599</sup> She probed the ambiguities of writers representing settler girls' experience of both privilege and powerlessness, in relation to gender, class and race. Privilege has become a potent accusation levelled at good white women negotiating relationships with Indigenous women, and particularly applies to those writing historical fiction set on the Australian frontier.<sup>600</sup>

Arguments about privilege have been expanded to encompass complicity, a theme addressed at the 2007 ASAL annual conference, by plenary speaker Mark Sanders from New York University.<sup>601</sup> It was taken up by other speakers at the

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<sup>597</sup> See Janette Turner Hospital, *Orpheus Lost* (Sydney: Fourth Estate, Harper Collins, 2007) and *Due Preparations for the Plague* (Sydney: Fourth Estate, Harper Collins, 2003).

<sup>598</sup> Alex Miller, *Landscape of Farewell*, (Crow's Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2007). Miller fictionalises a female Indigenous academic, and uses 'massacre' as metonym, to dance between his protagonist's academic interest in violent German history and, his channelling of an Indigenous elder's dreaming story in which his ancestor was the perpetrator.

<sup>599</sup> Dalziell, *Settler Romances and the Australian Girl* (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2004); Anna Garretson, rev., *Settler Romances and the Australian Girl*, by Tanya Dalziell, *JAS Review of Books*, 28 Apr. 2008, <http://www.api-network.com/cgi-bin/reviews/jrbview.cgi?n=192069420X&issue=31>; and Susan Sheridan, rev., 'Tanya Dalziell, *Settler Romances and The Australian Girl*', *JASAL*: 5. (2006).

<sup>600</sup> Aileen Moreton Robinson, *Talkin' Up To The White Woman: Indigenous Women And Feminism* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2000), p. xx: '...white middle-class woman's privilege is tied to colonisation and the dispossession of Indigenous people'.

<sup>601</sup> See Mark Sanders, 'Miscegenations: Race, Culture, Phantasy', *JASAL*, Special Issue 2008: The Colonial Present: Australian Writing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', p. 30. Sanders poses the question: 'If genre

conference and is the subject of Kate Grenville's *Searching for the Secret River*.<sup>602</sup> The idea of complicity underlines the impossibility of shedding twenty-first century prejudice and privilege long enough to write an Irish settler novel. Fiction resists geographical borders. Like camp followers, writers pitch their tents at historical battle sites, chase ambulances and ancestors, call at the setting off points of refugees and immigrants.<sup>603</sup> Harm minimisation may be the best a writer can hope for when blundering into foreign or disputed historical territory.

*Unsettled* has been influenced by the politics of its author's time. Perhaps it is not satirical enough to be declared pastiche, despite its tropes — fallen Irish girl, good white woman, hard-drinking father, silent native, wild son. While the *Admella* chapters do not take up the apocryphal stories of *Booandik* people and Gordon raising the alarm, they address Indigenous extinction narratives, the presence of South-east Irish colonists, and Martin Lynch's place among the rescuers on the beach. If it is accepted by descendent Lynches, who lack historical alternatives or any interest in pursuing them it may, in a limited way, perhaps within the family, become apocryphal. Nevertheless, it fits historical fiction genre.

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fiction and film — melodrama, fairy tale, and so forth — bring phantasy on stage, the metafictional manipulation of genre affords ways of demonstrating how that rendering visible may itself be complicit in an unacknowledged phantasy of mastery.'

<sup>602</sup> See Chapter V of this exegesis.

<sup>603</sup> While Falconer's author's note recounts her appropriations and adaptations, it gives no indication of her motivations for writing about 1898 Georgia, USA; Brooks won the Pulitzer Prize for *March*, writing beyond the ending, or was it thickening up the middle, of an American historical classic; Lian Hearn, set *Across the Nightingale Floor* (Sydney: Hodder Australia, 2002) (now the Otori series), in an imaginary country' resembling medieval Japan; Research for *Unsettled* led me to Ireland.

## Conclusion

While reading academic Nigel Krauth's take on 'the academic novel' in *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy*, my mind left the page to begin redrafting the conclusion to this exegesis.<sup>604</sup> Such is the nature of the Creative Writing Ph D that after the hardest research work is done a kind of slippage occurs between the two modes of thinking and writing — exegesis and creative work — whereby thinking in one mode frees the logical processes of the other. Perhaps it is the kind of unconscious thinking which scaffolds all creative work needing only the right moment for the building to commence. The fluidity of the unconscious mind can be both dispiriting and exciting. When disciplined academic writing is required, a lush passage of sexual imagery arrives, or a plot solution in which you have little faith but which may be the best you can imagine in some recess of your mind. And when happily rewriting a crucial scene in the novel, an idea for the restructuring of a chapter somewhere else buzzes in, refusing to be swatted.

Gerard Genette considers rethinking and rereading in different modes part of dialectical process and was not above criticising himself.<sup>605</sup> Like apocryphal stories, creative work thrives on renovation. Will Genette's ideas about novelistic structure endure like good apocryphal stories? What would a Frenchman know about Irish or *Booandik* people? But *I* was doing the work on realising *them*. Genette has not written much about apocryphal stories, although he pays some attention to apocryphal prefaces. He suggests that in the case of an apocryphal story without a paratext, the reader is 'not supposed to identify in it the doubleness of its authorial agent'.<sup>606</sup> Apocryphal stories pop up everywhere, but there's not much interest in prising them open; most of them exist for a purpose. Religion lays down apocryphal stories, renovates them, repackages them — their traces long lost. Apocryphal stories attract creative writers like me who want to dig up stories that already exist, like turf; then we watch them flare, creating new truths out of possible lies.

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<sup>604</sup> Nigel Krauth, 'The Novel and the Academic Novel', *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy* (Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters Limited, 2008), ed., Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll, pp. 10-20.

<sup>605</sup> Gerard Genette, preamble, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, p. 9; and, 153: 'No doubt I exaggerate, and unquestionably I paid too little attention to these psychological effects...'

<sup>606</sup> Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, p. 146.

Once an apocryphal story has been historically verified it can no longer *be* apocryphal. On the one hand, the discovery of Edward Geoghegan's end-story was a satisfying culmination to research; on the other, I had invested considerable energy in writing about him as an apocryphal figure. Now he has been truly laid to rest, along with my imaginings of him publishing a novel, producing plays in California or living on a South Sea island. He materialised too late to take up more space in *my* novel. So what of all my musings, my readings of novels of similar genres, my delving in foreign fields, my interest in Genette's five kinds of transtextuality? How does a Ph D novel sit in its twenty-first-century context? Will all the tropes of cultural theory lose their potency and be overtaken by new ones in post-postcolonial Australia?<sup>607</sup> Is *Unsettled* just a pastiche of apocryphal stories re-narratised?

I have probed *Unsettled* for evidence of vulgar parody — Moorecke stealing the goose, perhaps — mock-heroic motifs — Rosanna setting off for the goldfields, falling off her horse and becoming a maid at the Big House, perhaps — noble tragedy — Skelly's yearning to live a better life and dying a prosaic death, perhaps — satire on courtship rituals, whereby Rosanna has her way with George to acquire the play and conventional sex and pregnancy result — and forgery — Geoghegan's hypothetical stealing of the apocryphal story from Reverend Groves. I hope my characters appear complex rather than caricatured — the text neither imitative nor satirical — and the allusions to apocryphal stories discursive rather than mechanical.

This exegesis focuses on two meanings for apocryphal stories: as unauthentic stories, relevant only to family identity formation; and as grand yarns, reconstructing the collective memories of region and nation, transformed in historical fiction. Literary critics accept the renewal of apocryphal stories, historically verifiable or not. Historians too, enjoy the tweaking of national conscience but aver novelists' perceived poor research methodology, their tricky subterfuges and their sleights of hand. And this was why I found Genette's work useful: he was interested in how writers craft their work; how they pull off the grand allusion of real and narrative time; how their

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<sup>607</sup> Michelle Cahill, editorial, *Poetry Without Borders: a National Poetry Week Event*, September 2, 07 (Warners Bay, NSW: Picaro Press, 2007), p. 9: 'Perhaps then, our imaginary communities are as real as they are symbolic; a place of dialogue between subjectivity and culture; a place where questions about how we move from our past homogenised identity to a more invigorated, culturally complex one, may be considered.'

metatexts operate beneath the surface of their plots; how they use paratext to negotiate a correct reading.

Apocryphal stories discussed in the five chapters of this exegesis grew from earlier narratives, both oral and written. I have discussed their genesis, the temporalities they inhabited, and their transformations. They coalesce in *Unsettled*. My imagining and embellishment of history may make the narrative about Rosanna and Skelly Lynch apocryphal, even while it echoes stories remembered through several lifetimes by elderly Lynch men. Is this why Lynch women's tales were lost, because they were told by men? This new amalgam of apocryphal stories, partly based on historical fact, partly imagined, partly ontological may suffice until future Lynch generations find new information or renewed narrative energy to tell the stories afresh. Chapter I defers to the scholarly work of Father James Mitchell that makes new discoveries about the Magistrate of Galway unlikely; but stranger things have happened. *Ngarrindjeri* stories telling of large sea fish, far larger than could be imagined belonging to that species of *mullowe* now, have been exonerated by the recent excavations of giant head bones in middens. The Magistrate of Galway has been held up as an exemplary tale and as a reference point for discussions about capital punishment. It encapsulates archetypal conflict between men and their sons. It relegates women to the margins, ignoring their compassionate and reasonable voices.

My thesis that the apocryphal Magistrate of Galway narratives resonate with those of Cuchulain and other Irish heroes, as well as with those of Jesus and Abraham, may stand up over time. In any case, the Magistrate haunts *Unsettled*, demanding that Rosanna and her brother Skelly measure themselves against the energies and determinations of Lynch patriarchs, as they strive to find their place away from their homeland.

Edward Geoghegan, an incarcerated, profligate and exiled son, took up the magistrate's story to great acclaim in 1840s Sydney. The reconstruction of his life from failed medical student, to failed playwright approaches the apocryphal but is not. My research unearthed ambiguities which I shared with Janette Pelosi. She resumed her digging and struck gold. Like Martin Lynch, Geoghegan's death transformed him into an 'old colonial' who would be sadly missed.<sup>608</sup> An obituary respectfully refers to him as Doctor Geoghegan, the recipient of several degrees in Paris, as well as a

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<sup>608</sup> Geoghegan, obituary.

‘forcible writer’ with a ‘great penchant for the stage.’<sup>609</sup> Of Geoghegan, convict, forger, failed writer, he leaves no trace in Singleton. His play lives on in *Unsettled*, however limited and ephemeral its publication.

The *Admella* wreck, a main event, resembles famine disaster relief on a smaller scale: supplies fail to reach the passengers who die like flies; the distant government makes mistakes. Ignoring the consensus of official narratives (newspaper, Government reports) many people seek to graft their stories onto it. Collective memory has a way of overlaying bad experiences but new crises often resonate with old injustices — absentee landlords and Irish politicians perhaps. The *Booandik* people, on whom Gordon’s story depends, were unwitting allies reduced to one line — ‘big ship on rocks’. Gordon apocryphal stories drew in the Lynches, assisting them to remember their own. Martin Lynch’s early presence on the beach — family apocryphal story and likely true — cements in *Unsettled*, evicting fantastic and affirmative fictional alternatives contemplated by this author, in which a *Booandik* girl and her Irish-settler friend save the day.

Does Kate Grenville background ‘Joan’ in *The Secret River*, a realist novel benefiting from hindsight, to privilege her questing after a fallen son?<sup>610</sup> For isn’t it Sal who in a moment of epiphany says ‘*You never told me. You never said...They was here...Their grannies and their great grannies*’.<sup>611</sup> And it is her husband who takes up his gun because ‘Unless the blacks were settled, Sal would leave Thornhill’s Point’.<sup>612</sup> Grenville discards family lore to create a new story incorporating the details of a nearby massacre. She writes, like me, as a white woman, a beneficiary and somehow complicit in the dispossession of Indigenous people. Analysing *Searching for the Secret River* as exegesis/preface allows just consideration of the perils of writing historical fiction, particularly when consciously creating potential apocryphal narratives.

Will *The Secret River* sustain itself as an apocryphal and reconciliatory text? If it does, Grenville might well be surprised, after so much resistance from the custodians of national collective memory. While speculative, her motivations for depicting a frontier massacre lay equally with fiction-making. If she wished to create a

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<sup>609</sup> Geoghegan, obituary.

<sup>610</sup> Kate Grenville, *Joan Makes History* (St. Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 1988).

<sup>611</sup> Grenville, *The Secret River*, p. 288.

<sup>612</sup> Grenville, *The Secret River*, p. 298.

pastiche of postcolonial, genealogical, historical fiction and settler texts, how does she feel about it now? ‘The true *pasticheur* wants to be recognised — and appreciated — as such,’ insists Genette, ‘the author of an apocryphal text does not. His [her] goal is to *disappear*’.<sup>613</sup> Grenville has moved on — “*The Secret River* was really about two cultures coming to a point where the possibility of a conversation came to an end. Whereas *The Lieutenant* (2008) is about those same two cultures coming together and a conversation opening up...” Now she has plans to go back again.<sup>614</sup> Perhaps the smoke which enveloped her during the History Wars will have blown away by the time she publishes her next family story enabling it to peacefully enter Australia’s national memory.

I began this exegesis with my novel’s hypotext, the Magistrate of Galway, followed by its hypertext, *The Hibernian Father*. The play and several nineteenth-century novels operate intertextually in *Unsettled*, interacting with metatexts on race, class and gender — postcolonial preoccupations. My novel belongs, architextually, to historical fiction, a traditional purveyor of apocryphal tales. My argument that apocryphal stories have the ability to revive and resume after periods of apparent dormancy, to transform themselves over time, to function as instructive or allegorical tools, to suffer political, economic and religious manipulation, to keep faith with key elements which refuse reduction and have a common genesis in archetypal dramas is, in my novel and in this exegesis, I hope, generative. Whether *Unsettled* endures can only be decided by capricious collective memory. The employment of family and national apocryphal stories as a basis for an Australian Irish-settler novel aspires to be original or, at least, like Rosanna — based on a Lynch girl who fell through an historical gap leaving little trace — a fresh performance.

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<sup>613</sup> Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982; Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky First edition (1982), p. 161.

<sup>614</sup> Catherine Keenan, profile on Kate Grenville, ‘A Historical Balancing Act’, A2, *The Age*, 20 Sept. 2008, pp. 24-5: ‘[H]er mother left her lots of family stories, not just the one about Solomon Wiseman that turned into *The Secret River*. She’s very keen to tell a woman’s story from that period. “So, no, nothing will stop me”’.

## Appendices

### ***Appendix 1: Attributed Works of Edward Geoghegan***

For references to attributions [in parenthesis] to Geoghegan's authorship see Colonial Secretary's Correspondence. Indexes On-Line: Plays Submitted to Colonial Secretary for Approval Prior to Being Performed, <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/guides-and-finding-aids/colonial-secretarys-correspondence-guide/letters-received/plays-submitted-for-approval/?searchterm=colonial%20secretary%20plays%20submitted>. 10 Feb. 2008.<sup>615</sup>

*The Hibernian Father: A tragedy in five acts* [by Edward Geoghegan], submitted for approval by William Knight, performed at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, on 6 May 1844 (Play enclosure to 44/3673; covering letter 44/3673 with 52/4057 in [4/3078]; play at [SZ55]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558).

*The Currency Lass or My Native Girl*. Operetta in two acts by the Author of 'The Hibernian Father' [Edward Geoghegan], submitted for approval by William Knight, performed at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney on 27 May 1844 (Play enclosure to 44/4164; covering letter 44/4164 in [4/2653.5]; play at [SZ51 A & B]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 29, and photocopy at City COD108).

*The Jew of Dresden or A Husband's Vengeance*. A tragedy in three acts by the author of 'The Hibernian Father', 'Currency Lass', 'Royal Masquer' [Edward Geoghegan]. With letters to the Colonial Secretary dated 16 Sep. 1846 and 2 Sep. 1852 (Archival stray - originals formerly in possession of Mr G. Johnson; originals in Mitchell Library MSS 5311. Photocopy in Mitchell Library at [A4043]; microfilm copy ML Reel FM3/236. Further letter 52/5556 in [4/3112]).

*Lafitte The Pirate or The Ocean Scourge: A nautical drama in three acts*, by Patrick Riley, comedian, 1845 [adaptation by Edward Geoghegan], performed as Lafitte the Pirate, or *The Outlaws of Barritaria*, Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 24 November 1845 (Play enclosure to 45/6126; covering letters 45/6126 and 45/7895 in [4/2695.3]; play at [SZ58]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558).

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<sup>615</sup> See also, for example, Rees, fn. 5, p. 39: *Lafitte the Pirate or The Ocean Scourge*: 'The authorship is ascribed to P. Riley [actor]... but the play is written out in Geoghegan's very recognisable handwriting and perhaps he "improved it" as he went along'.

*The Last Days of Pompeii: A drama in three acts* [adaptation by Edward Geoghegan], presented by John Lazar, performed as *The Last Days of Pompeii*, or *Nydia the Blind Girl*, Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 29 July 1844 (Play enclosure to 44/8626; covering letters 44/5543 with 44/8626 in [4/2653.6]; play at [SZ59 A, B & C]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558).

*Ravenswood: A tragic drama in three acts*, by Francis Nesbitt [attributed to Edward Geoghegan], Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 1843, adapted from Sir Walter Scott's novel 'The Bride of Lammermoor', performed at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 13 February 1843 (Covering letter not found; play at [SZ57]; microfilm copy of play SR Reel 2558).

## **Appendix 2: Dramatis Personae, *The Hibernian Father***

*Walter Lynch: A wealthy Merchant & Warden of Galway*

*Oscar Lynch: His Son.*

*Alonzo Develasquez: A young Spaniard*

*Rupert D'Arcy: A pirate disguised as Father Oswald.*

*Martin Blake: A principal Burgher of Galway.*

*Michael, Edward and Robert: Young Citizens of Galway and friends of Oscar.*

*Gerald: Attendant of Oscar*

*Carroll: an old fisherman*

*Bernard and Roderick: Pirates and Confederates of Rupert D'Arcy.*

*Burgesses, Sailors, Guards, Guests*

*Anastasia: Ward of Walter Lynch, betrothed to Oscar.*

*Noma: Wife of Gerald.*

## Appendix 3: Ethics Clearance

Flinders University and Southern Adelaide Health Service  
**SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
Room 105, Registry Building, Flinders University,  
GPO Box 2100, ADELAIDE SA 5001  
Phone: (08) 8201 5962  
Email: [sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au](mailto:sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au)

**MODIFICATION APPROVAL NOTICE**

Principal Researcher:

Address:

Project Title:

Project No.:  Approval Expiry Date:

I refer to your application for a modification of the above project that has been approved previously.

I am pleased to inform you that the Chairperson has approved your request for an extension of ethics approval to 31 December 2009.

**Reminder:** The next report to the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee is due on **5 August 2010** or when the project is completed, whichever is the soonest.



Sandy Huxtable  
Secretary  
Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee  
16 December 2008

cc: Prof Jeri Kroll, Department of English Creative Writing & Australian Studies, School of Humanities  
A/Prof Richard Hosking, Department of English

## **Appendix 4: Booandik Custodian, Ken Jones**

Jones has lived near Port MacDonnell for most of his life.<sup>616</sup> He knows ‘his country’ like the back of his hand, but his family had been disrupted by Australian Federal Government policies. Only as an adult has he discovered and embraced his Aboriginal heritage. Perhaps his deep understanding and love of the sea and land around the Port MacDonnell area, particularly Racecourse Bay, the setting for several scenes in my novel, then made sense to him.

For many years he worked as a lobster fisherman. In addition, he was employed as a project officer to write reports for the District Council of Grant and the Port MacDonnell Landcare/Coastcare group. His reports include maps and detailed monthly observations of thirty-two natural habitats in this council area, with specific reference to weather, sand dune erosion, unusual sightings, sea bird populations, and seasonal events. I was particularly interested in his work on Racecourse Bay. He has conducted interviews with senior lobster fishermen and coastal dwellers regarding beach access, coastal vegetation, historic sites, snake numbers, wombat colonies and wedge-tail eagle nesting sites.<sup>617</sup>

Jones is a marvellous resource for checking — by email or phone — the transposition of historical information about land and seascape into my novel. For example, during an early discussion about eels he told me that *Booandik* people hung smoked eels from trees along the shore. I bought a smoked eel and ate it, discovering that most of the flesh was at the tail end (although not at the tip which can be dry), and that the head end contained a great deal of thick bone. Negotiating the backbone is part of the eel-eating experience. Eels make good tucker, and are relatively portable should one wish to take one home to hang from the cross pieces of one’s *ngoorlah* [hut]. *Booandik* people smoked eels over coals strewn with leaves and placed at the base of stringy bark trees. They sprinkled them with rock-salt gathered from pools of water along the shore, then pierced them with a sharp stick to allow the smoke to enter between the skin and folds of flesh. Hung vertically for two days they were turned once — part of the curing process — to allow the eel oil to seep to the head end. Ducks can be smoked in the same way.

After email and telephone exchanges, Jones offered to ‘show me his country’ the next time I visited Port MacDonnell to research my novel. On several previous occasions I had rented a small bungalow on the foreshore within easy reach of Lynch’s land, Racecourse Bay,

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<sup>616</sup> Mary-Anne Gale, a colleague who had been writing resource material for *Ngarrindjeri* curricula introduced me to Ken’s nephew, David Moon, who, in turn, introduced me to his uncle.

<sup>617</sup> Ken Jones, *District Council of Grant and the Port MacDonnell Landcare/ Coastcare Group Monthly Reports* (No. 01 Sep. 1998 – 8 Oct. 1999). Ken’s publications can be purchased at the District Council of Grant offices, 324 Commercial Street West, Mount Gambier, or at its branch office corner of Charles and Meylin Streets, Port MacDonnell.

Carpenters Rocks, Mount Schank and Mount Gambier. Jones and I met at the fish and chip chop and set off in his four-wheeled drive vehicle to explore significant *Booandik* sites. He is a knowledgeable custodian of his land. I have been fortunate to meet many Indigenous people like Jones, who have a generosity of spirit, as well as a passion to share their culture, despite the historical difficulties of their relationships with white people.

He stopped several times along the coast to allow me to observe natural things at close hand. It was interesting to note the many plants common to those growing in *Ngarrindjeri* lands that connect with those of the *Meintangk* and *Booandik*.<sup>618</sup> He had a wealth of stories from his childhood of lobster-scruffing, eel-dabbing, green-lipped mussel gathering, diving for whelks, and spearing squid for cray-bait. He told alarming tales of ferocious conga-eels, their heads as big as dogs', attacking people and snatching lobsters from their hands, and he disabused me of some initial errors in my narrative: the surf is far too rough for cockles; oysters can be found at Carpenters Rocks but not at Port MacDonnell.

We fed fish to pelicans gathered on the beach. We observed white-faced herons, large mountain-ducks camouflaged by rocks, and crested terns at close range; Jones led me through the sand hills to gather bower spinach and inspect the tracks of large snakes (copper-heads can be two metres long) on sandy paths. The eerie sound of the flightless bristle-bird — *reeor*, *reeor*, *reeor* — rose from a burial site, some distance from middens. While pointing out Dreaming sites, Jones told stories, including one about a girl named *Ngara* and a petrified forest, actually visible in the shallow water of the bay. He fairly reminded me that the story belonged to *Booandik* people and could not be published. Stories about Mar, the gang-gang cockatoo, have been published in educational booklets used in South Australian schools.

While not all the animal subjects of my novel arrived on cue, Jones provided a wealth of information about their whereabouts and numbers: I had probably seen a bandicoot, rather than a spotted quoll, near the Princess Margaret Caves; fiery crabs, which run around in little circles, can be found but not blue-swimmers; and fresh-water eels can be caught in ponds. *Booandik* people traditionally threaded sharp bone through dangling worms and waited until an unfortunate eel latched on, its introverted jaw ensuring its capture. They sanded their hands to prevent the eels leaping back into the water. Small lobsters walk out onto the rocks at Racecourse Bay and can be pulled out just with fingers and steamed over fires on the beach. Jones gathers reef mussels, periwinkles, green whelks, cockles and limpets along the coast.

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<sup>618</sup> See also Neville Bonney's *Native Plant Uses of Southern South Australia* (Naracoorte: SEBP, 1994), illus., Anne Miles.

## Appendix 5: Booandik Language

My wish to include remnants of *Booandik* language in my novel, for authenticity and as a mark of respect, was initially intuitive, but research proved the Lynches and the Indigenous characters' exchange of language an historical likelihood. An extract from pastoralist, Harry Leake's letters confirmed my decision: 'There was a considerable number of blacks about, and at first we had great difficulty in understanding each other, but we soon overcame this, and in a short time (we) could speak and understand a good deal of *Booandik*, they likewise picking up our language very quickly'.<sup>619</sup>

South-east missionary, Christina Smith (1847–1866), noting the fragility of a *Booandik* population inundated by violence, sickness and, she suggests, infanticide, decided that the task of recording language was urgent. 'The aborigines themselves are fully conscious of the decline of their race, and lament it bitterly, and many of the more intelligent of them have often requested the authoress not to allow them to be forgotten,' she records in the authentic authorial preface to her book.<sup>620</sup> She acknowledges the assistance of her friends and family: 'To her son, Mr Duncan Stewart, formerly native interpreter in the district, she returns her warmest thanks, for compiling the extensive vocabulary of the *Booandik* dialect that concludes her work'.<sup>621</sup> The third section of her book is subtitled: Structure of the Language of the Booandik Tribe — Relationships — Songs.<sup>622</sup> While this dictionary provides an invaluable resource, taking language from it requires careful consideration.

The reduction of *Booandik* language to a pidgin chorus — 'big ship on rocks...firesticks' — in versions of the apocryphal *Admella* tale; the hurt compounded by rendering Indigenous people silent or invisible in some novels; Australia's Federation directives to assimilate mixed-blood children, and stamp out Indigenous languages; and the inadmissibility of accepting, without question, history recorded by white missionaries, make the subject potentially explosive. The Australian Government's apology to Indigenous people, in 2008, reified fraught and perennial questions about the restoration of Indigenous languages.

Alexis Wright, who won the 2007 Miles Franklin prize, uses the authentic contemporary syntax and intonation of Gulf country Aboriginal language groups, showcasing their energy and intelligence, their wit and humour to tell her award-winning story, *Carpentaria*.<sup>623</sup> She wishes to have her book read and enjoyed by Aboriginal people on their

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<sup>619</sup> Harry Leake, *The Border Watch*, 1 April 1903. This article is extracted in E.M. Yelland, *The Baron of the Frontier: South Australia — Victoria, Robert Rowland Leake, 1811–1860*, p. 83.

<sup>620</sup> Smith, p. iv.

<sup>621</sup> Smith, p. iv.

<sup>622</sup> Smith, p. 123.

<sup>623</sup> Alexis Wright, *Carpentaria* (Artarmon, NSW: Giramondo, 2006).

land. This is not an option open to the average ‘white fullah’, particularly in a situation where an Indigenous group’s culture has been so compromised. Using traces of nineteenth-century *Booandik* and Irish language, without first spending a lifetime researching them, challenged me. No one would pretend that writing dialogue for nineteenth-century Indigenous/settler exchanges would be simple.

My introduction to David Moon, presently working on a *Booandik* language project, and his agreement to vet *Booandik* language used in my narrative — a process still continuing — makes me more hopeful that I can avoid offence and show respect for a language re-emerging, if not living.<sup>624</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> See Appendix 4: Application to Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee for permission to collaborate with *Booandik* cultural custodians of language and land.

## Appendix 6: Gaelic Language

Some global assertions can and should be made about Gaelic language in *Unsettled*, but footnoting in-text instances of Irish cadence, intonation, or idiom would be a massive task. Reading Nineteenth Century Irish Literature immersed me in a range of regional idioms, as well as Hiberno-English, providing rich and enjoyable digressions. The mellifluous speech of Irish people I met on field trips offered more diversity.<sup>625</sup> Not wishing my characters to emulate the verbal tics of stereotypical Paddies — ‘to be shure’ and ‘begorrah’ — I was surprised to find that the story came to me in an Irish accent. Public readings of draft-chapters saw me, within a minute, taking on an Irish accent.

Irish Australian scholar, Dymphna Lonergan, proved to be a valuable resource, informing my decisions about the novel’s narration and dialogue. While she does not read much fiction she has maintained her native speech and has spent the last ten years researching Irish traces in English language, including Australian placenames. Lonergan’s Masters’ thesis ‘The Significance of Irish-Gaelic in Anglo-Irish Writing: 1800–1989’ proved helpful, as did her work on Irish words in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.<sup>626</sup> Lonergan’s book *Sounds Irish: The Irish Language in Australia* revealed that more Australian vernacular than we realise derives from Irish language.<sup>627</sup> Lonergan’s work convinced me of the likelihood that the settler Lynch family spoke a Connaught dialect at home, along with English.<sup>628</sup> Early language dilemmas focused on the need to limit Irish inflection to dialogue, rather than let it permeate the entire narrative. In the final drafts, Irish speech, applied as non-satirical pastiche — a sign of authenticity, flattery rather than parody — was also written out and replaced with plain English.

Lonergan’s major concerns with the language in my novel lay with her uncertainty about the social class of its Irish characters, who were loosely based on Martin and Maria Lynch; she noted that their speech moved between literary and colloquial Irish. This had

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<sup>625</sup> Irish cadence and syntax can be irresistible to researching writers. See Carol Lefevre, *If You Were Mine* (North Sydney: Random House, 2008), p. 185: ‘Ah, they will so’; Acknowledgements, p. 311: ‘Many thanks to Noreen Vereker, who text-messaged friends to check colloquial language in Ireland...’ Adelaide University Ph D candidate, Lefevre also made a field trip to Ireland to research her novel’s contemporary scenes.

<sup>626</sup> Dymphna Lonergan, ‘The Significance of Irish-Gaelic in Anglo-Irish Writing: 1800–1989’, diss., Flinders University, 1993, pp. 101-106.

<sup>627</sup> Dymphna Lonergan, *Sounds Irish: The Irish Language in Australia* (Adelaide: Lythrum Press, 2004).

<sup>628</sup> Lonergan, *Sounds Irish: The Irish Language in Australia*, p. 6. This was reinforced by reading *My Story* by Peter O’Leary (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1970), trans. Cyril T. O’Ceirín’s, p. 167: ‘Contemporary accounts indicate that, immediately prior to the famine, upwards of 90% of the country was Irish-speaking.’

partly occurred because I was uncertain about the historical Lynches' class origins: Mary, a publican's daughter, Martin, a blacksmith for the English garrison. How had they spoken?

Their absence from Australian extant church and school records indicates that they kept to themselves, and that although they could speak and read English, they probably spoke Gaelic at home. Mount Gambier local historian, Ann Ashworth suggests that disaffected Prussian Lutherans fleeing Germany 'retained the use of their own language as well as English for at least fifty years'.<sup>629</sup> It seemed reasonable to assume that Irish people too, retained language, custom and culture, and that these would be reinforced by Irish-speaking priests. Tarpeena (twenty kilometres from the Lynches) publican, Laurence Egan, for instance, had 'fluency in the Gaelic and Erse tongues, an extensive knowledge of Irish history,' and had been educated at Trinity College Dublin.<sup>630</sup>

Furthermore, I wished to portray the Lynches like their descendents, a dark but gregarious family who enjoyed verbal gymnastics, poetry, newspapers and books. I hope that I have been faithful to Loreto Todd's view in *The Language of Irish Literature* (1989) that 'there is a great deal of talk about talk...' in Irish stories.<sup>631</sup> Using Irish idiomatic speech in dialogue could undermine the literary allusion that Gaelic language spoken by my characters has been translated into English. As an Australian attempting a hybrid novel with Irish-Australian characters, nine years settled in the colonies, I was challenged. Letters home to Ireland, can offer idiomatic clues, but contemporary Lynches had none in their possession.<sup>632</sup> Lonergan suggested that giving them some key words and phrases might settle their dialogue. I endeavoured to do this.

Several minor dilemmas presented themselves about whether to borrow from language research or simply allow the story to infiltrate my consciousness. Many Irish words had regional meanings and spellings; *spalpeen*, for instance, which I used as a term of abuse, could mean 'migratory labourer'. Todd gives many examples of emblematic Irish speech: the use of 'for' for 'because,' the use of the reflexive pronoun 'myself' instead of 'me', and the use of the word 'after' to indicate a recently performed action: 'I'm after seeing him.'<sup>633</sup> Most of these speech patterns were relinquished in my novel. I had noticed unwillingness in Irish people to use the word 'no', preferring more positive or passive responses: 'well, I'll not be doing that', 'the answer to that question would be...'. Allowing Skelly, the youngest son, to berate himself as a 'useless *boccah*', an expression used by characters in William Carleton novels, needed checking. Lonergan felt that in some regions the term may have been very

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<sup>629</sup> Ashworth, p. 14.

<sup>630</sup> Pam and Brian O'Connor, p. 147.

<sup>631</sup> Loreto Todd, *The Language of Irish Literature* (London: Macmillan Education, 1989) ed., N.F. Blake, p. 82.

<sup>632</sup> David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1995) made useful and entertaining reading.

<sup>633</sup> Todd, pp. 41-45.

abusive. I found a reference in which its usage related to disability, which fitted Skelly's haemophilia. Wishing to signify Skelly's normal adolescence, I played with his obsession with breasts (*cíochanna*) and girl's bottoms (*toin*). Eventually, I introduced the Irish word for penis (*boddagh*), and its diminutive (*bod*). On several occasions I used *arragh* as a term of frustration or uncertainty, or an interjection — *ah* — which literally means 'was it.'

The presence of other Irish people in the Gambierton district contributed to the construction of my plot: an Irish woman and her father who ran a *shebeen* a few minutes horse-ride from the Lynch's purchased land, for instance.<sup>634</sup> I used *gombeen* to refer to a money-lender who works at Port MacDonnell and exploits Edwin, the oldest Lynch son in my novel.<sup>635</sup>

Anthony Trollope's representations of conversations between family-owners of the Dunmore Inn, in his novel *The Kellys and the O'Kellys or Landlords and Tenants*, provided a helpful model for the lower and middleclass patterns of speech of a publican family. While Trollope wasn't Irish, he was known to be an excellent mimic and at that time had been living and working in Ireland. But contemporary historical fiction must speak first and foremost to its audience of twenty-first century readers. Antiquated speech patterns can alienate some readers. A strong case can be made for plain prose acting as a vehicle for historical concerns rather than as a highly contrived archive of speech patterns; subtle hints of Irish syntax and expression can be further enlivened by italicised Gaelic words and phrases conveying cadence and mood, rather than by attempts to imitate Hiberno-English constructions found in nineteenth-century texts, including letters.

Niall Williams, my Irish mentor, suggested reading Indigenous nineteenth-century Irish writers. I had no wish to offend Irish people by making my Irish settler family sound 'hokey'. Williams was correct in assuming that I had read primarily Anglo-Irish writers, William Carleton, being the exception.<sup>636</sup> Andrew Carpenter makes a point which plays out in Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*: 'I find a constant and pervasive sense of authorial doubt and questioning in Anglo-Irish literature...most often resolved in a mode of writing which may broadly be called *ironic*...'.<sup>637</sup> Edgeworth's Thady and his son Jason verge on sly. Carpenter asserts that 'an Englishman's book on Ireland may give the setting, the characters, the situation, a good idea of place and space; but it does not, nearly always, lack the peculiar

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<sup>634</sup> 'Shebeen,' *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, 2003 ed., p. 984.

<sup>635</sup> 'Gombeen,' *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, 2003 ed., p. 448.

<sup>636</sup> Williams added the novels and short stories of Walter Macken and Liam O'Flaherty to my reading list.

<sup>637</sup> Andrew Carpenter ed., 'Double Vision in Anglo-Irish Literature', *Place, Personality and the Irish Writer* (Gerrards Cross, Great Britain: Colin Smythe, 1977), p. 174.

tension of a book which springs from the Irish consciousness'.<sup>638</sup> Reading Macken and O'Flaherty reinforced this idea for me.

Todd suggested that while 'peasant' vernacular may underlie Irish popular speech, Irish writers like Brian Friels use of English reflects Irish constructions '...it is a planned artefact rather than a spontaneous transcription.' Friel's character, Hugh, in *Translations*, says Irish 'is a rich language, Lieutenant, full of the mythologies of fantasy and hope and self-deception — a syntax opulent with tomorrows. It is our response to mud cabins and a diet of potatoes'.<sup>639</sup> The empathy of an Australian writer could not approach this. I hoped that my childhood experiences of South East landscape would compensate.

Irish writers have absorbed the nuances of historical and national speech, something impossible for an Anglo-Celtic descendent hoping that her story will subsume any glaring linguistic errors, and allow the modern reader to suspend their disbelief. Idiomatic speech initially enabled me to maintain the energy levels of my characters' speech, but later it was to be hoped that sufficient evidence of their ethnicity now pervaded the text for me to abandon it.

Lonergan and Williams commented on my choice of English names for characters. The selection of names can be whimsical or traditional, and Woodford's complex demographic origins included refugee northern county linen-makers, third-generation Welsh iron miners, Indigenous Catholic Irish, and French extracted landowners from the Clan of Ricarde (Clanricarde). Martin Lynch's maternal line descends from Galway Spaniards. Although I had not used the Lynch family's actual names I had chosen names I thought equivalent. They had given English names to several of their children. The Lynch father, a fictionalised Martin Lynch, underwent several unsatisfactory name changes, until I finally chose Garrick from a list of 1850s Woodford names. Questions about the authenticity of Rosanna's name were laid to rest when I heard about an Australian friend's two nineteenth-century Irish grandmothers, both named Rosanna.

Todd speaks of three great obsessions in Irish literature: sex, sin and the soil; all important themes of my Australian Irish-settler novel. My sprinkling of Irish words, like holy water — some metonyms for Irish stories and cultural memories — signifies the Lynch's bilingual status.

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<sup>638</sup> Andrew Carpenter ed., p. 174.

<sup>639</sup> Brian Friels, *Translations* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981) quoted in Todd, p. 82. Consider also Glorvina in Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806; London: Pandora Press, Routledge & Kegan, 1986), p. 82: 'no adequate version of an Irish poem can be given; for the peculiar construction of the Irish language, the felicity of its epithets, and force of its expression, bid defiance to all translation'.

## Appendix 7: Acknowledgements, Lynch Family

Authors frequently use prefaces to acknowledge family links with characters and subjects of their narrative.<sup>640</sup> Lack of information about Lynch ancestors allowed me freedom to imagine them, but using their surname brought rapid self-examination. Whose rights should take precedent — family or author? Progenitive women like me must take their place amongst patriarchal and matriarchal branches of their husband's family tree. 'Fiction Writing: Theft or Weft,' addresses the issue of 'writing family other'.<sup>641</sup>

Is it safer to write about the living or the dead? Is it better to negotiate directly with family or by stealth? How well should I know myself, my multiple selves — as family member, fiction-writer, revisionist historian, social justice activist — before embarking on such a project?<sup>642</sup> Have I projected unconscious self-serving ideas about truth on my subjects? It is likely so. Have I more responsibility to truth or to family? Writing about others changes the balance of power. Perhaps family won't want their secrets aired in public — real ones or those made up by me, or by them for me. But untruthful narratives can be as powerful as truthful ones. Criticism of historical fiction relates most often to authority and factual accuracy.<sup>643</sup>

Attending workshops on Life Writing alleviated some personal inhibitions about transforming family memories and inventing incidents to fill historical gaps. Reading extracts from the work of Susannah Radstone and other Life Writing and Memory theorists, helped me to see that late twentieth-century anxieties about historical loss and national identity had provoked a nostalgia industry, including, at its worst, historically commodified fetishism and a

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<sup>640</sup> Thomas Keneally, *The Great Shame* (Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Random House, 1998), p. xiii: 'It is this Hugh Larkin from whom my wife and daughters are descended'; Teri Janke, preface, *Butterfly Song* (Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin Books, 2005): '...a work of fiction, but in writing it I have been guided by my family history' and '[T]he story of the poinciana woman was told to me by my uncles'; Christopher Koch, author's note, p. 704: 'John Mitchell... shares his name and ancestry with a great-uncle of mine of the same period, an Anglo-Irish gentleman who never came to Van Diemen's Land, but emigrated instead to America, and of whom no more was heard'; Danielle Wood, acknowledgements, *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2003), p. 336: '[T]he character of Captain William Westwood is modelled on my great-great-grandfather Captain William Hawkins' and 'the character of Charlie Westwood was inspired by his grandson, my grandfather, Alan Hawkins. All other characters are fictional'.

<sup>641</sup> Gay Lynch, 'Fiction Writing: Theft or Weft'.

<sup>642</sup> Jones, acknowledgements, *Sorry*, p. 216-218: 'My family share, or don't share, my own early memories of Broome; in both cases they have been the source of wonderful conversations and the endlessly involving pleasures of nostalgia'.

<sup>643</sup> Helen Demidenko, Author's Note, *The Hand That Signed the Paper* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1994), p. 6, does not directly allude to her attempt to represent the anti-Semitic consciousness of Ukrainian characters. 'What follows is a work of fiction... Nonetheless it would be ridiculous to pretend that this book is unhistorical: I have used historical events and people where necessary throughout the text', she admits. Her preface doesn't mention the sin for which she is hung: misrepresentation of her authorial authority.

memory industry in academia. Memories could be actively produced but were not always reliable.

I did not have much material about the Lynch family or poor lost Edward Geoghegan. ‘The scantiness of materials is indeed a formidable difficulty’, writes Sterne’s Laurence Templeton to Reverend Dryasdust. But I took great heart from David Malouf’s gleeful view in the afterword of his novel *An Imaginary Life* that a paucity of historical resources can be liberating.<sup>644</sup> Where records intermittently failed to document her novel’s subject family history, Sarah Hays made the decision to remain, in *Skins*, ‘true to what is generally thought to have been the fates of all the Newell family members’.<sup>645</sup> And in *Unsettled* I adhered to this principle, in my dealings with Lynch history.

Although I never met Mrs Jean Lynch of Mount Gambier, I am indebted to her genealogical work on the original Lynch Irish-settler family of Martin and Mary/Maria Lynch, which she published in a booklet for their descendents.<sup>646</sup> Photocopies of her handwritten transcriptions of a record labelled ‘The Public Library [illegible] Lib, A Section L’ relating to the arrival in Gambierton of Martin and Maria Lynch had been circulated amongst Lynch family members.<sup>647</sup> Her research led me and other Lynch family members to Woodford, Ireland, hoping to access archival records. Jean died thirty years before I embarked on this project.

Many members of the third generation of this Lynch family remember Alfred Lynch and his wife Gwendoline Rowlings, Alfred being the sixth son of Patrick Lynch and Bridget Collins, and the grandson of Martin and Maria. Apocryphal stories also attached themselves to Alfred, a larger-than-life character, but cannot be included in this Ph D research. I am, nevertheless, grateful to Brian Lynch junior and senior, Jean Lynch’s son, Dennis, Wilfred Lynch, and his partner Sadie Boyce, for the interest they showed in my investigations of the original Australian Irish-settler family.

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<sup>644</sup> David Malouf, *An Imaginary Life*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979), p. 154: ‘We know very little about the life of Ovid, and it is this absence of fact that has made him useful as the central figure of my narrative and allowed me the liberty of free invention, since what I want to write was neither historical fiction or biography, but a fiction with its roots in possible event’.

<sup>645</sup> Sarah Hays, *Skins* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), p. 223: ‘A note on characters and sources’ cites references to the Newell family in the *Dictionary of Western Australians: 1829–1850; Volume 1: Early Settlers*, explaining her methodology.

<sup>646</sup> Jean Lynch, ‘Martin and Mary Lynch and Their Descendents’. Mary/Maria Lynch is named differently in various historical documents. In this appendix I use Maria, the earliest reference, taken from the Woodford Catholic Church records. Chapters on settler-Lynches refer to her as Mary, abiding by her eulogy and Jean Lynch’s booklet.

<sup>647</sup> Jean Lynch, ‘Martin and Mary Lynch and Their Descendents’:

Mary & Martin Lynch arrived from County Galway in Ireland in 1852, 23<sup>rd</sup> March & left Plymouth and arrived Portland 8<sup>th</sup> July as assisted immigrants. This family as ass. immms. [sic] Were [sic] employed by Mr John Meredith of Mt Gambier at 45 pounds per annum and rations. They came in the Emma Eugenia, a 383 ton barque. They had 3 children, Patrick aged 8, Mary, aged 6 and Bridget, an infant. Martin, Mary & Patrick could all read. Martin was an agricultural labourer & was 29, Mary was 31.

Over more than fifty years, Dawn (Jo) Lynch, my mother-in-law, kept Lynch history alive, producing with the help of her third son, Martin, family photograph albums that included photos of Martin Lynch, the Woodford patriarch. Dennis Lynch kindly allowed me access to his mother's photo album, where I found several late nineteenth-century photographs of Maria Lynch and of the extended Lynch family, who lived at Nhill, Victoria, and later, at the Murchison gold-fields in Western Australia.<sup>648</sup> He descends from William Lynch, the only member of the original settler-family who returned to Mount Gambier after farming in Nhill.<sup>649</sup> Anthony Trollope remarks on this back and forth movement in *Australia and New Zealand* which he wrote after he visited the village of 'Gambier-Town' in 1873, comparing it agreeably to an English village of 'the best class.' He refers to 'farmers from Gambier-Town who had gone across the border into Victoria, tempted by the terms whereby free-selectors were allowed to buy land'.<sup>650</sup> Patrick, William and Michael Lynch bought land in Nhill. On a subsequent trip Trollope heard 'that men were going back'. In fact, William Lynch returned to Mt Gambier and Patrick and his family moved on to Murchison, Western Australia.

Dennis has vivid memories of holidaying with the lively Nhill Lynches who rode, shot game, and noisily made him welcome.<sup>651</sup> His mother's album also contains newspaper photocopies of Lynch obituaries. After the death of her husband, Martin, in 1884, Maria Lynch and her two daughters, Mary and Bridget, made their way to Nhill to join their son and brother, Michael Lynch, a horse-rider of repute, who competed in steeplechases against Adam Lindsay Gordon. Michael became Clerk of the Course at the Nhill Racing Club. Lucifer, the Lynch's famous entire, was ridden by another rider, named Davis, in the inaugural Mount Gambier hunt, held in 1873, and M. (Michael) Lynch is noted as one of the nineteen people responsible for that club's existence.<sup>652</sup> Some time during the late 1870s or the 1880s, Patrick

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<sup>648</sup> Gay Lynch, field journal, 20 Jul., 2004: 'I find this quite extraordinary and demur over cups of tea for at least an hour. Perhaps I am afraid to take responsibility for this ephemeral link with the past, for it is priceless, and despite the paucity of our relationship he seems instinctively to trust me... When Dennis and my husband touch on family eccentricities there is a flash of recognition, and although there is no chest beating or backslapping they guffaw together like homecoming apes. "That's a Lynch for you," they say. They make jokes about tempers lost, years of sullen silences, and drinking far too much. They touch lightly on the dark side then dance away, and I can see that they are warming to each other, that they feel themselves one kind of Lynch and not another'.

<sup>649</sup> Jean Lynch: 'He took up land near Nhill, Victoria and farmed with indifferent success for about twenty years, when he finally moved to Allendale near Port MacDonnell'.

<sup>650</sup> Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>651</sup> Gay Lynch, field journal, 20 Jul., 2004: 'When he was a child his father took him to visit the Nhill Lynches who were descendents of Michael and William. "They were a wild lot", he says. He and his father were taken duck shooting on a swamp, and he remembers the guns and the shouting when the boat capsized, and they landed in the water'.

<sup>652</sup> Brian O'Connor, *Personalities in Pink Coats: History of the Mount Gambier Hunt Club*, p. 11: 'Those who rode that day were R.M. Gardiner, Sir Robert Helpmann's grandfather on "Maribou," J. Frew on "Sultan", J. Davis on "Lucifer", Sgt. Berley on "Extinguisher", P.A. Vyner on "Darkie", R. Murray on "Wonderscript", F. Harris on "Sarawak", C.A. Bolte on "Stockings", Adam Fartch, the Huntsman, on "Casterton", John Kearney on "Cadger", J. Tyler on "Dandy Jim", George Carter on "The Friar" and John Locke on "Poppet"; also on p. 11: 'During the two years this club was in

Lynch, Martin and Maria's oldest son, took members of his extended family, including his sister, to Beverly/Murchison in Western Australia.<sup>653</sup>

I made contact by phone with other distant members of the Lynch family including Mr Bill Lynch of Mount Gambier, Mr John Lynch of Nhill and, while attending a Perth conference, Mrs Shirley Joyce, of Claremont, Western Australia. My location in country South Australia, and the age and ill health of many of these elderly members of the Lynch family, made continuing conversations a challenge. An important family friend, Nancy Elvish, had recently passed away.

I am grateful for the generosity of Lynch family members — Martin Lynch senior, Brian Lynch junior and senior, Justin Lynch and his wife Paula, Kate Lynch, and Helen Lynch — for reading a middle-draft of *Unsettled*.

## Oral Family Anecdotes

Circulation of family photographs during the 1980s, combined with my work as a member of local history associations in country South Australia, meant that family elders occasionally chatted to me about the few remnant Lynch stories of the settler generation.

Before he left Ireland, Martin Lynch was employed as a blacksmith in Woodford village. A British soldier threw down an English shilling while Martin shod his horse. Picking up the shilling during this customary practice obliged young men to enlist. Martin scorned the shilling, choosing rather to immigrate to Australia.<sup>654</sup> After a lively Saturday night in the town several Lynch boys returned home late to their farm in Nhill. The following morning a policeman arrived on horseback and was greeted by their father, Patrick Lynch. The policeman related the boys' adventures from the previous night and followed this with a comment that 'you Irish are nothing but trouble.' Patrick replied, 'Get off your "hoss" and say that'. The policeman immediately turned his horse and without pressing charges rode back to town.<sup>655</sup> Lynches in Western Australia built a still and produced fine muscat.<sup>656</sup> Lynches drove

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existence many people were involved including Frank Davison, Phil Williams, Ben Davis, M. Lynch, A. F. Lawrie, Park Laurie, James Crow, Alex Laurie, Abe Gardiner, J. Ormsby, J.A. Ellery, F. Meischel, D. Buckley, M. McKinnon, F. Harris, H. Simpson, Gavin Gardiner, Tommy Wheeler and Sam Lindsay'.

<sup>653</sup> Jean Lynch, 'Martin and Mary Lynch and Their Descendents': 'He was born about 1844 in Woodford, County Galway, Ireland. Emigration on 08 July 1852 in Portland, Victoria [sic]. He married Bridget Collins. They were married on 06 Feb 1869 in Mount Gambier, South Australia. Residence on 10 Jan 1915 in Beverly, Western Australian. He died 1920. Occupation was Boundary Rider, Mount Schank Station'.

<sup>654</sup> Brian Lynch (senior) related this story in family conversations. See Appendix 1: Field Trip, Woodford, for information on my attempts to locate blacksmiths' shops.

<sup>655</sup> Brian Lynch (senior) related this story in family conversations.

<sup>656</sup> Wilfred Lynch related this story in family conversations.

a mob of cattle to Queensland.<sup>657</sup> Michael Lynch knew Adam Lindsay Gordon.<sup>658</sup> <sup>659</sup> Martin Lynch was in the first party of horses and riders to arrive on the wreck scene.<sup>660</sup>

Where could I test the veracity of these stories? Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone argue in *Contested Pasts...* (2003) that memory can act as counterbalance; it can offer 'a mode of thinking about the past that allows history to acknowledge its imaginary dimension, its own implication in fantasy and the constructedness of narratives'.<sup>661</sup> They caution that accessing memory alone can be problematic. Memories should not be conflated with history. Where it may have been more fun to have a happier ending, perhaps a wedding, I was mindful of Rachel du Plessis's thesis about writing beyond the ending, as well as thickening up the middle.<sup>662</sup> Rosanna's persistent cough foreshadows her early death.<sup>663</sup>

Genealogy is painstaking work. While I was strategic in choosing conferences in Australia and in Ireland with proximity to Lynch sites of interest, and made phone calls to old family friends and distant relatives on the basis of suggestions about possible sources of information, the task demanded far more time than I had, and was generally unproductive. Poring over micro-fiche and hand sorting dusty documents was interesting but slow.<sup>664</sup> One small discovery could buoy me up (and there were a few), but had to be weighed against the academic work I had set myself for the Ph D.

Researching family history continually throws up new lines of investigation. The importance of viewing primary documents and questioning all references in secondary works

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<sup>657</sup> This story was told to me by Wilfred Lynch and as far as I know is unsubstantiated. However, it is interesting to note that when vast tracts of land were owned by a privileged few and were largely unfenced, liberating scrub cattle was common practice and the cause of many colonial convictions for cattle-theft. Edwin is accused of this in my novel.

<sup>658</sup> Michael Lynch, eulogy, *Border Watch*, 3 April, 1948, in author's possession [unpaged], microfilm copy, State Library South Australia: 'He was well known to Adam Lindsay Gordon'. It seems highly likely that Lynch knew Gordon. In 1867 he resigned from parliament, returning to live at Dingley Dell, where he was only five minute ride from land Martin Lynch acquired in 1866. There may have been some contact at local race meetings, for example, the Boxing Day 1867 meeting, held on a course two and a half miles southeast of Allendale, or in 1868 at the Prince Albert Races held near MacDonnell Bay, mentioned in Brian O'Connor, *From Barrier Rise: The History of Horse Racing in the S.E. of S.A.*, pp. 13,138.

<sup>659</sup> It is wild speculation to have Martin Lynch, who could read but not write, listening to Gordon's poetry, while they rested between jobs. Onus of proof in the writing of fiction lies with showing that something *could* have happened. I make a case for two dark men who share employers and attend race meetings, enjoying the solace of words. Many fourth and fifth generation Australian Lynchs love literature.

<sup>660</sup> See Chapter III of this exegesis.

<sup>661</sup> Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, introduction, *Contested Pasts: the Politics of Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 9.

<sup>662</sup> Rachel du Plessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

<sup>663</sup> One of the members of the Lynch extended family, who read a late draft of the novel, wished a happier outcome for his ancestor; another was surprised that I was writing fiction after so much research.

<sup>664</sup> Beginning my research now rather than in 2004 would have saved me a great deal of time. More and more historical records have been scanned and now appear on-line; nevertheless, many Irish documents were burnt in the Dublin fire of 1916.

cannot be underestimated, but researching fiction by praxis, as well as in a conventional disciplinary way, brings its own demands. Furthermore, a Ph D is a finite project. Tapping deeper into Lynch family networks, and speaking to the children and children's children of people who knew Lynches, might have produced more fascinating material. Time and resources defeated me. This work must be left to future Lynches. Martin Alfred Lynch's words chasten: 'memory is for enjoyment, not for service'.<sup>665</sup>

This research adds several new pieces of information to the Lynch archives. As a creative writer, teacher and researcher, rather than the family genealogist, what do I owe the living and what do I owe the dead? This project does not constitute pure memory and makes no attempt to displace preferred Lynch identities. In improvising ancestral voices it attempts to unify Lynch stories, particularly the apocryphal, and offer an alternative history.

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<sup>665</sup> Martin Lynch: private archives, notes in author's possession. Lack of interest in memories must be respected and can indicate the suppression of difficult life experiences or ill health. Such things can discourage participation in family history projects.

## **Appendix 8: Historian and Archivist**

### **Pam O'Connor, South East Historian**

I gratefully acknowledge South East historian Pam O'Connor, who read two drafts of *Unsettled* and picked up small but important anachronisms. I thought it likely that a young Irish man like Rosanna's oldest brother would frequent Miss Kitty's *síbin* (shebeen), a ten-minute horse ride from his home, and I am sure that he did. But I had changed the time-frame to fit events into 1859, and it hadn't opened until the mid or late 1860s; renaming Kitty Lallah seemed the best solution.

On one occasion, Lynches met the neighbouring Suttons on the wrong pastoral boundary. Furthermore, I sent the Ashbys to lunch at the National Bank Manager's house a few months before the bank opened. I described horses crossing creeks; the South-east was covered with low lying water, but had few creeks. I entered Rosanna in a Lady's Bracelet race; in this case I had done the research and forgotten what I had learned — that only men competed in this event, the bracelet being donated by a lady. O'Connor offered invaluable advice; she was interested in my research because of her passion for South East history.

On 16 May 2008 O'Connor presented a paper and I read a draft chapter at *Oireachtas* during South Australian History Week. We will likely maintain contact to discuss our shared interest in South-east history.

### **Janette Pelosi, Archivist**

Janette Pelosi, Project Archivist, Copying and Digitisation, State Records NSW, offered expert assistance in relation to research on Edward Geoghegan, and an enthusiastic collaboration ensued. In 2004, Pelosi's 2002 article on Edward Geoghegan led me to a microfilm of three of his handwritten play manuscripts, including *The Hibernian Father*, housed in the NSW Archives.<sup>666</sup> Reading the play and my subsequent interest in its author crystallised my ideas about using apocryphal stories intertextually in a creative project.

In May 2008, near the end of my candidature, I emailed Janette Pelosi to update a link to her *MARGIN* article, asking her whether she retained any interest in Edward Geoghegan. I offered her my suspicions that he and his friend Francis Nesbitt had lied about their Trinity College *alma mater* and that Geoghegan might be the relative of a Trinity apothecary and not a medical student at all. I emailed her my research on Geoghegan, and

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<sup>666</sup> Pelosi; Geoghegan, *The Irish Father* [*The Hibernian Father*].

eventually, a late draft of Chapter II of my exegesis. Subsequently, she made several new discoveries of importance to Australian theatre history.

I suggested that she update her *MARGIN* article on Geoghegan, while I finished my Ph D submission. We might then co-write a paper for the 2010 Irish-Australian Studies Conference, or for a Creative Writing journal. I encouraged her to approach Currency Press, a subsidiary of NSW Press, with a proposal for a book project written by her on Geoghegan. I read her abstract for a conference paper about plays mentioned in the Colonial Secretary's Letters (1826–1852). Our collaboration made me realise the importance of ethics when working within the knowledge community. Pelosi's curiosity, professional work skills, and generosity combined to demonstrate how scholarly communities work best.

Pelosi posted and emailed documents and letters, some new, some previously viewed by me on microfilm. I lent her a copy of Geoghegan's only published play, *The Currency Lass or My Native Girl: a Musical Play in Two Acts* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1976) ed., Roger Covell, and its accompanying essay. She quickly vacuumed up newly digitised historical information which advanced our mutual quest. I visited her website. She googled me and purchased my 2006 novel *Cleanskin* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press). In September 2008 she won a money prize for a municipal history competition, which she plans to use in 2009 to do further research on Geoghegan in Ireland. She is a meticulous and experienced archivist with a professional interest in the accurate citation of NSW Archives documents. Any mistakes in the transcription of archival records are mine alone.

## **Peter Kuch, Irish Studies**

Peter Kuch offered early encouragement at the 13<sup>th</sup> Irish Australian Conference (2004) in Melbourne, where we first discussed Edward Geoghegan. During the time that he was head of Irish Studies at the University of NSW, we shared a panel on convict theatre at the 14<sup>th</sup> Irish Australian Conference in Cork and he offered useful feedback on a paper on *The Hibernian Father*. Since then we have discussed Geoghegan and he has read Chapter II of my exegesis. I have now introduced him to Pelosi, should he wish to work with her researching other convict playwrights. Pelosi and I hope to present our findings at a New Zealand Irish Studies conference convened by Kuch in 2010.<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> Kuch is the inaugural Eamon Cleary Professor of Irish Studies at the University of Otago, New Zealand. He is also an Australian reader for *Irish Literary Studies* in the United States.

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