

2011



Moorat Sierke Station, c1910. Standing at back from left: Winifred Coullthard with daughter Evelyn, Jessie McKenzie, Kitty Elliott holding baby son Tom, small girl standing in front of them is probably daughter Lorna, Anne Ryan, Sissy Wilson holding son Hubert, Alice Coullthard holding daughter Dulcie, Follie McKenzie, Nellie Driver, Lucy (Primo Charles's wife) Emily Bennett, Sissy James and Frowning Judy. Men in front from left: Peter Frying Pan, Cranky Jack and Milky Billy. Children in front from left after men: Walter Coullthard, Richard Coullthard, May Wilson and Claude Bennett.

Norman D. Temple 1076



MRS. JACKY WITCHETTY, a white woman, shown in this picture with a group of natives, lives as a lubra at Beltana, South Australia. She is believed to be the only white woman to have gone completely native.

White Woman Lives As Lubra in Native Camp

Married at Bourke 25 years ago to her aboriginal lover, Jacky Witchetty, a white woman is still living the life of a lubra in a native camp and refuses to return to civilisation. She is believed to be the only white woman to have gone completely native.

The woman, who was formerly Becky Castleline, of London, is now living at Beltana, South Australia.

Mrs. Witchetty met her husband when she took up station work at Wynbar Station, on the Darling. To the white people in the district her husband was known as Jacky Forbes.

He was a member of the Billidjara tribe.

The woman came to Australia in 1916, when she was 30 years of age. It was necessary to obtain special permission for the wedding, but this was granted.

The magistrate at Bourke officiated, and two policemen acted as witnesses at the ceremony, which was followed by a second wedding service conducted in the rites of the Australian aboriginal.

After this Wynbar, and people. Mrs. of a lubra native camp district. Later the Gale Camp after 18 years are two gone in the Yarnburnt English native dialect on station. Every six Mrs. Witchetty live, the living part of her, of her. This unusual band when scratch was Life with worry, and the high cost of fish, a social and her. The marriage placed on white or declined. then becom Mrs. Witchetty's brothers at the does not been reader



Thesis Title: *White Lives in a Black Community: The lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community*

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Volume Two: Exegetical Essays

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Authors Note

This collection of seven exegetical essays represents the chronological emergence of six primary themes during the writing of the hybrid life writing narrative, *White Lives in a Black Community: The lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community*. These themes – the hermeneutics and politics of postcolonial and hybrid life writing (Introduction), colonial journeys and migrations (Journeying), the meaning and making of a ‘real White Australian’ (Identity), the dynamics host-stranger encounters in the colonial contact zones (Meetings), migrating subjectivities and the theology of incarnation (Transculturations), and the achievement of settler belonging (Belonging) – have emerged from the material itself, as well as being shaped through the discipline of academic conferences and journals exploring these topics for their contemporary relevance to race relations in Australia. My hope is also that exploring these themes contributes to a yet-to-be-had national conversation about decolonisation in Australia, and what that might look like.

The life writing material could have been exegeted for many more fascinating and relevant themes, and perhaps it will beyond this thesis. For instance, gender constructions in Australian contact zones is deserving of attention, as is the role of eidetic landscapes in the shaping of the stories that emerge from those locations, and the crucial role and symbol of water in the Australian outback. Missionary theology is not comprehensively surveyed, nor the developing contrast between Jim Page's theology and that of the UAM although this is paramount to the climax of the narrative. These topics and several others receive a glancing treatment only.

Although the exegetical essays are set in sections which relate directly to sequential chapters of the hybrid life writing narrative, each essay addresses the narrative as a whole, with special reference to the excerpted chapters of the narrative in Volume One which best illustrates and exposes the theme and its implications. For this reason, direct references to lines or paragraphs in the text are scant, with more emphasis on the readers general knowledge of the sweep of the text and the matters it raises, for the historical characters, for its contemporary informants, for its author and for its future and present readership.

Many of these essays have appeared in publications and been presented at conferences. They have been edited for this collection in order to reduce repetition, and arranged to cumulatively build a multifaceted argument for decolonised relationships between Indigenous Australians and white settler Australians. They do not represent stages in an argument, so much as a series of prisms through which this aspiration, and the parable which contains it, may be viewed. Consistent with this, each essay preserves its own list of Works Cited. For ease of reference, however, Endnotes for all essays are in one section at the end of the document.

Section A Part 1: Introduction

Refer to Volume One Section A Life Writing Chapter 1

Exegetical Essay One

‘You are writing a gospel...’: ‘hybrid life writing’ and the lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community.¹

You are writing a Gospel
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say.
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say what is the Gospel
According to you?²

This essay describes the methodology and construction of the postmodern and postcolonial hybrid life-writing text for the project ‘White Lives in a Black Community: the lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community’ in Book One. It argues that the transparent production of hybrid life writing preserves an ‘ethic of decolonisation’ by refusing to collaborate with colonial and hegemonic literary forms that obscure the polyphonic nature of postcolonial history-telling. It also argues that the hybrid life writing genre adopted can be understood as a postcolonial form of ‘gospel’, incorporating ‘parable’ or extended metaphor within which an Australian contextual theology of decolonisation can be discerned. The project is positioned in the tradition of advocacy research,³ in order to engage the contemporary reader in a critical response to Indigenous – non-Indigenous relationships in Australia, and to explore theological and social trajectories for a de-colonised Australia. The major cultural work of the project is to generate public discussion of the notion of decolonisation in Australia, by

suggesting metaphors of the lives of Rebecca Forbes and Jim Page through which to understand its potential implementation and impact.

Sources and Methodology

Life Writing Chapter One Book One demonstrates all four major sources for material for the research: archival documents, historical records, oral history, and autobiographical reflections. Postcolonial considerations with each of these sources is considered later in this essay, along with the production of their re-presentations in the text. Ethics approval was sought to access archives and oral history, utilizing principles of ‘decolonizing methodologies’ and as recommended by the Ethics Committee and Yunggoendi First Nations Centre at Flinders University.⁴

First I approached the Adnyamathanha community councils of four communities – Colebrook Home Quorn, Copley, Nepabunna and Iga Warta – and the family of Daisy Shannon, in person for their support of the project, including incorporating oral history from Adnyamathanha, and archival research into their community’s history (documentation in Appendices). The oral history method would be that followed by the Oral History Association of South Australia, with whom I had received training.⁵

This was granted, and I then applied for permission to access the South Australian State Archives, the Mountford collection in the Mortlock Library SA, and the UAM Archives in Melbourne.

I began approaching individuals I knew through my role as a Uniting Church Minister in the region, or who were recommended to me by others I knew, and explained in writing and verbally the nature and intent of the project. If they were willing to participate, I read through with them

the Consent form (in Appendices), and marked their preferences for the various options within it, and then they signed their permission for the stated conditions and use. Interview times were arranged, and these occurred following a general structure of questioning (see Appendices) and reference to some photographs, and were recorded with Marantz Recording equipment made available by the JB Somerville Oral History collection of the Mortlock Library South Australia. The tapes were copied and one copy sent to the contributor, and the original stored securely in the researchers home, and a further copy deposited in the JB Somerville Oral History Collection as per the consent form conditions. It was made clear that according to copyright legislation of the day, the contributor held copyright of the content of the tape, whereas the researcher held copyright to the artefact of the tape.

The tape contents were transcribed, and edited to preserve speech styles and in the direction of common English conventions for written speech, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the preference of the contributor (see discussion below). Transcripts were sent back to contributors, and followed up with a personal visit to talk about the transcription, make changes and corrections as requested, and then receive their signed permission to use the material in the transcripts in the text for the project (see Appendices for table of consents received and example of hardcopies). In some cases the draft narrative was able to be read by contributors, and their feedback incorporated into later drafts. This process took several years to complete, which was to the benefit of the project and those participating, as they had time to consider their material and the way it was to be used.

Politics of representation and authorial relationship to material and participants.

As Chapter One described, as the researcher and author ‘I was not an objective researcher capturing a moment in history. I had lived with these times and places and people, even while gathering stories of the dead.’⁶ Further, I was a white woman, researching the intersection of white lives with the life of the Adnyamathanha community, including engagement with Indigenous history, culture and community.

The research and its resulting text would be situated within the contested arena of postcolonial representation, and I was painfully conscious that the texts’ representations of Indigenous people and lifestyle would be significantly limited by my limited level of enculturation in Adnyamathanha culture.⁷ The presence of Indigenous characters, and Indigenous source material, approved for use by Indigenous people, mitigates the ‘danger’ this text could pose to Indigenous readers.⁸

In the style of fictocriticism, I sought to make the limitations of textual representations apparent through the text itself as well as through exegesis.⁹ Further, Jackie Huggins had claimed that ongoing significant friendship between white authors and Indigenous subjects is a feature of ‘the best books written about Aboriginals by non-Aboriginals’, and I hoped my ongoing friendships and commitments before and after this project would inject the ethics and accountability to ensure this would be so.¹⁰ My relationships are also foregrounded in the narrative itself. Christine Morris has cautioned against white writers attempting to represent Indigenous cultural practices, and where these are necessary for the development of the narrative, I have sought to foreground the sources, authorial voices and processes of production

of the text to facilitate maximum transparency of the authors speaking position, and the partial nature of any representation.¹¹

Introduction to the Text

Literary form

The thesis is arranged according to the chronological narratives for the key characters, and into seven sequential sections which denote the key issues being explored through both the life writing narrative and the exegetical essays both of which comprise the section. The beginning of each section also introduces, photographs, non-English word lists and brief genealogies relevant to that section.

Chapter One of the narrative demonstrates three of the four literary forms used in the text to convey Jim and Rebecca's lives - autobiographic, biographic, and oral history transcriptions are apparent - and the following chapters will include the fourth literary form of speculative fiction or storytelling in imaginative history.¹² Photographic images are also employed to expand upon the text. The relationship of each of these forms to the source material will be considered in this essay, as 'uses of genres and inventions of self are ethically, morally, socially, politically held to account, and at the heart of ways Australians respond to their unsettled past.'¹³

The arrangement of units within the thesis, and within the life writing chapters themselves, draws on Biblical literary theory of parable, and its concomitant effect of theology that engages the reader with a challenge to action from their immersion in the 'world[s] in front of the text' created by the several voices of the literary forms employed.¹⁴ The parabolic narrative is related to the genre of 'bios', ancient life writing expressed in the Christian scriptures as 'gospel'.¹⁵ This

in turn can be situated within the contemporary genre of life writing described by Marlene Kadar, which allows for hybrid literary forms within the one 'life writing' text.¹⁶

Incorporating exegetical essays as commentary on the life writing narrative and the issues it raises reflects the nature of exegesis in both literature and theology, and particularly the Jewish Midrash tradition of 'in-text' commentary in margins and subsections, discursive of the issues raised in the main narrative.

Plot and characters

The title of the text claims it to be 'the lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community: white lives in a black community'. The text takes a bifocal approach by presenting representations of the primary characters' lives, while also intentionally foregrounding a particular geographical and relational context in which a section of their lives occurred. The narrative in Chapter One deliberately starts with an introduction to key locations in Adnyamathanha country, in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia, an eidetic landscape of rugged ranges rising suddenly from arid plains that was figured as 'Central Australia' and a 'stepping stone to the interior' in the colonial imagination.¹⁷ The narrative in Chapter One also privileges key Adnyamathanha oral history contributors. By intentionally elevating Adnyamathanha community and country from interesting setting for the drama of individual lives, to the status of secondary characters and subjects, the text moves beyond the genre of historical fiction and instead sets out to interrogate the relationship between Anglo colonial settlers and Indigenous communities. The narrative proceeds in the style of a romance: how, when and where will the white subjects meet the 'black community' and their country, and what will happen when they do? Rebecca pursues her goal to marry an Aboriginal man, has a family

with him, is widowed but chooses to remain living with the Adnyamathanha community for the next thirty years until her death. Jim comes to the Adnyamathanha community a missionary during the period of establishing a permanent camp and mission station for the Adnyamathanha. He is well liked by the community, but suicides there six years after his first arrival. Decades later, Rebecca will choose to be buried next to him. Later still, her Adnyamathanha grandchildren will erect a headstone for her describing her as a 'true friend and companion of Adnyamathanha people.'

Subplots

The counterpoints that are immediately apparent between the two individual subjects form several sub plots within the text. Female versus male experiences of incorporation; lay versus clergy; married versus single; professional versus domestic. Both struggle with questions of identity and allegiance; with questions of language and cultural immersion; with where and with whom they belong.

The autobiographical voice identifies the author, and through the author, the reader, with the applications of historical themes to contemporary Australian politics of identity and belonging. The subplot exploring the sense of 'estrangement' and 'uncertain self' common in non-Aboriginal Australian writing enable the author to offer the reader a variety of images of belonging through the lives of Rebecca Forbes and Jim Page in the Adnyamathanha community.¹⁸

Theological subplots explored in the parabolic narrative and metaphors from the material expand the notions of identity through solidarity towards 'incarnation', and hybridity as a sanctified state and process of inclusiveness; and examine the implications of acknowledging the

same divine presence in all cultures. Parabolic narratives of ‘meetings’ between cultures in various ‘contact zones’ deliver alternative metaphors beyond colonial tropes of verandahs, frontiers and ‘inside country’, and postcolonial readings of journeys and places throughout the narrative deconstruct colonial theological motifs of exodus, exile, expulsion, and ‘promised lands.’ These themes begin to describe core elements of a theology of decolonisation.

Purpose

The purpose of the text is experiential, pedagogic and political. The theme of the main plot is the personal engagement between English immigrants and indigenous communities, and so suggests a similar personal engagement for the reader, through the text. Fiona Probyn has explored the way in which women readers have identified with emancipated female heroines, and that the dissonance between their imagined literary selves and their lived experience was part of the dynamic for women’s liberation movements. In addition, within the women’s movements, the autobiographical voice of women assumed the authority of eyewitness to women’s experience. Thus female readers readily identified with a female ‘I’ in the text, regardless of the multiplicity of subjectivities the author may actually embody.¹⁹ Through the combination of archival authority, oral eyewitness authority, biography, fiction and autobiography, the reader is able, and invited to, engage with the research material and the researcher/author in order to experience for themselves a relationship with the individual and the communal subjects, and an identification with the author that enables them to ‘see’ the lives and models of interracial relationship as she does.

The purpose of creating an experiential engagement for readers is pedagogic. In the process of forming their own relationship with the subjects through the text, they have learned about

culture and language of Adnyamathanha people, as well as about successful, and not so successful, approaches to positive personal relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Importantly, this story adds another example to the canon of positive stories of reconciled relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians throughout Australia's history since colonisation.

Such a text written at the turn of the twenty-first century cannot and should not avoid political purpose. In the context of contemporary culture and history wars in Australia the nature of relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians during the period of state legitimised oppression of Aboriginal people can serve as challenge or confirmation to players in the debate.²⁰ This text is intended to confirm the existence of positive relationships in that historical era, and hence present a challenge to those who refused to participate in positive and appropriate relationships during that and subsequent eras. This advocacy stance particularly in relation to Adnyamathanha who contributed to the project and are co-creators of the bulk of oral history on which it is largely based, is in the tradition of advocacy anthropology described by Dianne Bell.²¹

The final purpose of the text is to render the subjects familiar and truthfully in the eyes of the Adnyamathanha community who are the primary holders of their stories. The text itself, through the consent forms signed for oral histories, is accountable to members of the Adnyamathanha community. Some Adnyamathanha have elected to be named as co-authors of the text; others as contributors. Three community councils, one family and one group gave support to the project, requesting acknowledgment in the final publication. In many ways, an over riding purpose for the project is to tell the stories in ways that benefit and satisfy the community in which the subjects chose to live and die.

Temporality and production

The text is replete with markers of its own production, in the form of footnotes, authorial comment describing the production of source material, introductions to source material and contributors, and a variety of materials presented in the text including archival documentation, oral history transcription, fictionalised narrative and autobiographical reference. Photographs are also used in each section, to illuminate the subsequent text, and provide another form of evidence for the narratives and arguments being made. Chapter One also introduces the technologies for creating discontinuous temporality in the text, signalled by date and place lines referring to the production of the following piece of text, which unsettles the hegemonic chronology of the biographic subject. This technique draws attention to the act of narrating itself, to the places and times of research, and then the process of selection constructing the text. Such discontinuities ‘will not bear out our own fiction of coherence’ which a long and continuous narrative ordinarily invites, and will preserve the nature of truths in the text, instead of Truth.²²

English, english, transcription and language

The text itself consists of a variety of languages; yet all within a postcolonial discourse in which English controls communication. The text is produced within the double bind of a colonial settler society: hegemony is ceded to English language, while independence is asserted against it through the use of other englishes. Indigenous languages are also used, signifying the cultural gap or silence between this text and the dominance of Empire. However, as Ashcroft et al discuss, the use of variant english or non-English language within a text foregrounds cultural difference at the same time as reinforcing the cultural relativity of the variants to the imperial

standard.²³ Cultural independence in Australia can only be presented in the context of colonisation. Thus within the text a variety of degrees of difference from standard English are experienced by the reader; and a variety of degrees of difficulty in comprehension must be overcome by the reader, illustrating both the subjects own experiences of entering indigenous community, and contemporary postcolonial issues regarding engagement with an Other. While devices within the text and footnotes serve to aid the reader with these difficulties, the experience of the cultural gaps and silences, and the identification with some languages more than others, will serve to locate the reader culturally within the text, and create the experience of cultural engagement and estrangement which is the major theme of the work. Meanings of words unfamiliar to English speakers are given in endnotes.

The fictionalised narrative prose, and archival documents most closely conform with Standard English, creating a confluence between genre, characters, official records and colonialism. For example, fictionalised journal entries describing Rebecca's voyage to Australia serve to underline the colonial endeavour to immigrate and fill Australia with British subjects. Birth and marriage records encode imperial culture on the lives of subjects. The autobiographical voice in the text is presented in Australian vernacular: this foregrounds the nationalist struggle for identity through appreciation of history and orients the primary readership of contemporary white Australians to a personal engagement with the narrative. Where the author elaborates on Rebecca's struggle with Adnyamathanha language, *yura ngarwala*, through a discussion of her own inept attempts at communication, the issue of learning indigenous languages in Australia is raised for the reader while at the same time addressing their own difficulties with indigenous language contained in the text. Voices from oral history transcribed in the text represent a range of englishes, from male bush slang to Aboriginal english. These also bears the marks of editing

from speech to text, further illustration of the power of standard English over national and indigenous articulation. Editing sought to preserve the rhythm, style and content of the recorded speech, while removing extraneous articles ('um', 'er', repeated words and phrases etc) and forming sentences that conformed with standard English for easier reading.

These englishes represent frequently marginalised subjects, and giving them their own voices in the text allows these 'subaltern' voices to speak albeit in mediated ways.²⁴ Oral history is a methodology which has intentionally developed in order that the marginalised can indeed be 'heard to speech', and its incorporation into text, however compromised, is an attempt to 'translate to text'.

Orthography

Where Adnyamathanha language is used in the text, it employs the orthography of its source, as the written form of the language is still being documented, and several variant orthographies exist without consensus for adopting a standardised approach. Rather than becoming politically aligned with any one school of orthography, or attempting to make judgements of the best form from a non-expert position, the text illustrates the ongoing processes of transculturation in language through the use of several orthographies. I know that this decision will be disappointing to some Adnyamathanha who offered to standardise language in the narrative; and that it may also be confusing to some readers.

‘A truly polyphonic text’²⁵

Each of the ‘voices’ in the text – autobiographic, biographic, oral history and speculative fiction/imaginative historical storytelling – conveys a different kind of literature, each with a different kind of ‘truth’. Susan Maushart has written:

History speaks through as many voices as historians have ears to hear. For the voice of experience, we listen to the oral record, richly textured and bright with detail. Archival sources, the voice of authority, speak in more official accents (and are often more telling in what they omit than what they reveal.) Historical evidence is nothing more or less than the testimony of storytellers. Good history begins when we give them voice, and listen...²⁶

All of language is polyvalent,²⁷ but hybrid texts raise particular issues of hermeneutical interpretation. In recent times, hybrid life writing texts have combined a variety of literary forms in the one narrative. Initially, texts like Drusilla Modjeska’s *Poppy* and Brian Matthews *Louisa* drew criticism for blurring categories between biography, fiction and autobiography.²⁸ Their ‘deliberately discontinuous narratives disrupted readerly expectations’, even while making apparent to the reader that the notion of truth is problematical and plural and relative and subjective.²⁹ *Louisa* was criticised as not a biography at all but a fiction of the process of writing or else an autobiography of the author trying to write it³⁰: *Poppy* for not undermining clearly enough the connections between the text and the ‘real’.³¹ Other reviewers read these narratives as self consciously displaying the reflexivity of the authors writing process, which Rowley and others described as ‘metabiography’.³² The ‘splitting’ of Matthews ‘author’ into two characters created both a ‘straight text’ and an ‘alternative text’, and the additional collage of different text types ensured that ‘other voices are not absorbed into his own narrative voice so much as to create a chorus of different voices. It is a truly polyphonic text.’³³ Bronwen Levy found a similar device in *Poppy*, where the autobiographical character, a construction like everything else in the

text, is shown pondering literary forms, saying that biography can't be definitive, and in this way 'allowing for an uncertainty about the status and veracity of all sources.'³⁴

Both Modjeska and Matthews have reflected on the form of their texts. Matthews acknowledges that the relationship between the text and 'real' is '...fraught with representations and versions of truth, but attempting to make truthful representation of experience or a life.'³⁵ Modjeska upheld the distinctions between biography and fiction, describing how biography was 'tethered' to evidence, whereas fiction was not.³⁶ She argued for 'different registers of truth' and claimed that the fictionalised diary entries in *Poppy* 'were truthful because they allowed Poppy's voice to be heard' in a different register to that of the narrator.³⁷

Modjeska and Matthews both commented on the challenge presented by scant factual information on an 'ordinary' (as opposed to extraordinary or famous subject) subject of biography, and the vexed opportunity to use imagination and fiction where evidence collapsed.³⁸ Modjeska writes that she turned to fiction when writing *Poppy* 'because my confidence in evidence collapsed...I pulled at the threads of memory until I found the life, or maybe only the tension in them.'³⁹

Negotiating hybrid texts turns on the in-text ways of guiding the reader in their interpretation of different forms of literature.⁴⁰ Post-modern reflexivity is a technique used by white authors like Stephen Muecke and Margaret Somerville writing about Indigenous subjects. Reflexivity and discontinuous narrative unsettles colonial assumptions of authorial control, and the stability of singular meanings and universal truth. The texts themselves have 'multiple voices', fragmenting the authority of the 'word', as well as allowing an authorial voice to question its own position in the text.⁴¹ Ann Curthoys, reflecting on her own attempts to write history and

personal recollection in this way, sounds a note of caution after her readers experienced confusion about the shifts in historical genre and first to third person narratives.⁴²

The text for this project draws upon these Australian traditions of hybrid life writing, and endorses the transparent intent of metabiographical approaches to constructing representations of lives. Responding to the debates this approach has generated, as the writer I am particularly conscious of the need for in-text guides to interpretation of the various literary forms within the narrative. These take the form of temporal markers of the research and writing project, footnotes for sources, section headers for different voices, and textual cues to trace source, denote type of literary form and the relationship between the parts of the text respectively. These guides are important, since the different literary forms in the text arise from distinct types of sources, reflecting Modjeska's 'different registers of truth'. Historians like Heather Goodall and Susan Maushart, and historical fiction writers like Stephen Kinnane, have adopted these and other practices to achieve transparency in the text and allow the reader access to their own interpretations.⁴³

The Autobiographical Voice

It is no coincidence that each of the primary subjects holds distinct identifications with the author and narrator, who is both a woman like Rebecca, and religious practitioner, like Jim. The experiences of Rebecca and Jim, and the debates set up between them, explore real and personal concerns of the author, while remaining grounded in the research material from which representations of the individual subjects are drawn. Ultimately, the author shares with them both her ethnicity and status as settler/invader in Australia, and as narrator explores questions about white authenticity and belonging through identification and difference between narrator and

primary subjects, and representations of relationships between the author and Adnyamathanha participants in the project.

Feminist biographers have argued for transparency of authorial perspective and Michel Foucault's questioning of the subjectivity of the author have made the presence of the author in the text a site of suspicion in the hermeneutics of interpretation, as well as for the politics of representation.⁴⁴ The author carries the authority to construct the world of the text, but is a fictional and often unacknowledged presence within it. Jacques Lacan has argued the subjectivity of the author only emerges from the intersubjective discourse with the Other, in this case, the anticipated reader.⁴⁵ Positioning the autobiographical 'I' within this text creates 'author' as another secondary character revealed in the narrators voice, and one specifically designed to identify with the white reader who can achieve vicariously, as Fiona Probyn and Paul Ricoeur argue, a 'literary selfhood' that can become the basis for a transformed 'experienced self hood'.⁴⁶

The 'fictions of self-representation' employed by the author in life writing engage with the readers imaginative interpretation of the text to provoke a subplot 'beyond' the text itself.⁴⁷ In this case, the subplot is aimed towards exploring the sense of 'estrangement' and 'uncertain self' present in the 'national theme of alienation' of white Australians from place.⁴⁸ These communal discourses interpret the text for the individual reader so that a variety of meanings of 'white belonging' emerge for the reader through both parables of relationships between the white researcher and Indigenous informants, and in the remembered and constructed lives of Rebecca Forbes and Jim Page in the Adnyamathanha community.⁴⁹

The author as a series of 'I's' in the text allows the exploration of the migratory subjectivities of white subjects in postcolonial texts.⁵⁰ The use of the past tense for this voice contributes to the positioning of the author as reflecting on an already achieved personal journey. In imagined and

intimate colonial relationships, Ann Stoler describes the construction of coloniser's identities through intentional and reflexive influence of colonised people.⁵¹ In Australia, Mick Dodson has argued that the white construction of 'Aboriginality' served the purpose of 'reflecting back to the colonising culture what it wanted or needed to see in itself' hence reflexively constructing whiteness.⁵² Jackie Huggins has written that 'Aborigines and settler Australians are contemporary people with identities which are mutually constituted rather than exclusionary and dissociative.'⁵³ Postcolonial theory has been criticised as 'Western nations attempt[ing] to define and represent themselves in non-imperialist terms' and not relevant to Indigenous experience of continuing colonialism in contemporary discourses.⁵⁴ I agree with these critiques, and also with Cathy Craigie's argument that the term 'postcolonial' only 'fits' for whites.⁵⁵ and I use it as a tool to deconstruct ideas of whiteness, and recognise the intersubjective nature of identity formation.

'Decolonisation' is a further discourse in which to explore white subjectivities. Peculiar to Australia and a handful of other colonised countries, 'decolonisation' refers not so much to Franz Fanon's programme of forcing the colonisers to depart, as to 'peeling back the layers' deposited by colonialism and 'unmaking the regimes of violence'⁵⁶ in order that indigenous and non-indigenous Australians can relate to each other without the scaffolding of colonial power relations, and in ways that affirm the self representations of indigenous people as acts of freedom from colonisation.⁵⁷ In these processes of decolonisation, intersubjectivities will be remade in new ways.⁵⁸

The Biographic Voice

The biographic voice in the text borrows heavily from the modern ‘voice of God’ tradition, which assumes authority on the basis of quasi-scientific ‘evidence’. It is this voice which carries forward verified oral history evidence, as well as presenting information from written archival sources. It is written in the past tense, emphasising the established nature of the evidence presented. Both forms of ‘evidence’ achieve their authority through the hegemony of the written archive. More recently, the archive itself has been interrogated as a site of selective and biased constructions of history, both in the material itself, as well as its selection and arrangement. Foucault’s postmodern critique demonstrates however, that the effacement of authorship popular in 18th century scientific discourse, in favour of demonstrable systematic knowledge, is not altogether acceptable in literature. Authority should not be taken at face value, but the name appended to the text should either be interrogated, or else ignored altogether in preference for dealing with the text as text, rather than authorised. Modern biography spans both literature and what Bain Atwood has labelled ‘History’, which like science, assumes ‘a radical disjunction between past and present...[that the past is] unchanging and unchangeable.’ Its evidence should be ‘reproducible, and if there is sufficient of it, the singular ‘truth’ of a life can be captured.’⁵⁹ This approach assumes a unity of coherence and objectivity in authorship that renders interpretation of authorial voice irrelevant.⁶⁰ Atwood contrasts this with oral history and autobiography, both of which assume that ‘the past as an object of knowledge is only known through the present’ and are ‘always concerned with the meaning of historical reality for us, now’ elevating the role of author to contemporary commentator.⁶¹ Postmodern and feminist biography has argued that the author of biography ‘must draw attention to the politics of its own speaking position’, and when representing silenced or marginalized ones, become the facilitator of these

alternative voices.⁶² Rather than search for the underlying coherence of character in the subject tried by the ‘historical tides’ and ‘fateful ironies’ they encounter, postmodern biographers are conscious of Stephen Crites argument that experience is never directly accessible, but is represented through interpretive narratives human beings make of it in order to construct unified identity.⁶³ A biographic narrative is ‘a selection of details to prove a thesis or present a life according to the writers taste’ but where these ‘details’ are ‘tethered’ in reality.⁶⁴

As a postmodern text, the authority of the biographic voice in this text is constantly relativised by markers of its own production, the advocacy position of the narrator, and especially by the presence of indigenous knowledges and voices given primary authority through oral history.⁶⁵

Oral history

This material presented in the text is from subjective and involved eyewitness accounts or recounted sayings which have currency in the Adnyamathanha community. While each person was interviewed on their own, they were in effect participating in ‘collective recall’, which most writers acknowledge as being a highly political and contested process.⁶⁶ It recognises that:

different social groups, categories and collectives, each with its own past, will surely have different social memories that shape and are shaped by their own intersubjectivity. Every memory, as personal as it may be... exists through its relation with what has been shared with others: language, idiom, events and everything that shapes the society of which individuals are a part.⁶⁷

In addition, the sharing of knowledge in Aboriginal societies includes the permissions and constraints of kinship relationships to those related to the knowledge. This means that the oral material for this project is produced out of relationships between the interviewee and their Adnymathanha community and their experience as Adnymathanha people; and their relationship with me. Further, in recounting Aboriginal experiences of colonialism, literary analyst Ann

Brewster describes memory as a ‘living experience of the past, regenerated through stories’ and for the purpose of maintaining, and developing cultural identity.⁶⁸ In a very real way, oral histories for this project participate in the creation of intersubjectivities for all those involved: the contributor, their community, the interviewer and the reader.⁶⁹

The credibility of oral history as ‘evidence’ for historical narratives has been strongly contested in recent times.⁷⁰ In defence, oral history advocates have claimed that the ‘credibility of oral evidence lies not in its fact but its subjective truth’ and that oral history is a present account, about the past, rather than an account of the past.⁷¹ Oral histories have been framed as ‘giv[ing] the full picture by filling in the other side of the (written) account’, and enabling previously silenced subjects to ‘tell their own story’.⁷² Indigenous and feminist researchers have argued for the validity of oral history of oppressed or silenced subjects where its importance ‘lie[s] not in its adherence to facts but rather... [at the points] where imagination, symbolism, [and] desire are evident, and by seeking to work with these ‘errors’ on the basis that they can sometimes reveal more than factually correct accounts’.⁷³ Oral history, then, is about making meaning from history, rather than accounts of events, and judging it as ‘inaccurate’ misunderstands the nature of its truth.⁷⁴ Thompson has also argued that the polyphonous voices of oral history ‘to a much greater extent than most sources it allows the original multiplicity of standpoints to be recreated.’⁷⁵ Frequently, oral history material is threaded together in speculative fashion to create historical fiction;⁷⁶ while at the same time conveying contemporary issues and desires of those making the oral histories.⁷⁷

Indigenous writers make even stronger claims that oral history represents an ‘Indigenous epistemology, where past, present and future are rolled into the one expression of a living culture.’⁷⁸ As a project engaging with Indigenous history, the ‘voices’ of Indigenous oral history

in this text are privileged according to Indigenous claims for prioritising orality as an epistemology of history against the hegemony of literary ‘evidence’.⁷⁹ At times these epistemologies are juxtaposed, exposing the ‘seams’ of the text and the various registers of ‘truth’ apparent through contrapuntal reading of these sources.⁸⁰

The transcription, editing and presentation of indigenous oral history engages sharply with debates in the politics of indigenous representation by non-indigenous researchers and authors.⁸¹ Peter Read argues that writing indigenous spoken text into Standard English from an Aboriginal English, is itself already a translation, and in *Long Time Olden Time* he opted to preserve Aboriginal English, but delete most interviewer interventions.⁸² Even in his biography of Charles Perkins, Read resisted synthesising inconsistencies in the recorded interviews.⁸³ Stephen Muecke has also followed this approach of minimal editing, declaring himself an ‘informed scribe’ in his work with Paddy Roe, which produced a text arranged on the page to represent the rhythms of Paddy’s speech.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Margaret Somerville’s collaborative work with indigenous oral history, similarly minimally edited, resulted in one of her co-authors withdrawing from the project, complaining she did not want to be represented on the transcript as sounding like ‘an old black gin’.⁸⁵ Somerville read this as her co-authors struggle for acceptance on the terms of Standard English, and preferred to publish using the Aboriginal English text.

I was aware of a similar experience with a previous researcher in the Adnyamathanha community, and resolved to translate and edit my oral histories according to the style preferred by my collaborators, who overwhelmingly made the choice to edit in the direction of Standard English. This practice risks obscuring the editing process for readers who might easily imagine there had been none.⁸⁶ To mitigate this risk, the polyphonous text is also written in a variety of

languages: Standard English, transcribed englishes ranging from male bush slang to Aboriginal english, and *yura ngawala*, the indigenous language of the Adnyamathanha people.⁸⁷

Ashcroft et al have argued that the use of variant englishes or languages within a text foregrounds cultural difference at the same time as reinforcing the cultural relativity of the variants to the imperial standard.⁸⁸ Consequently, the text I am producing is an artefact of postcolonialism, and forces the reader to engage with a variety of degrees of difference from Standard English and a variety of degrees of difficulty in comprehension. While devices within the text and footnotes serve to aid these difficulties, the experience of the cultural gaps and silences, and the identification with some languages more than others, will serve to locate the reader culturally within the text, and create the experience of cultural engagement and estrangement which is the major theme of the work.

The Voice of Speculative Fiction

Speculative and fictionalised sections are often introduced where material is scant, as discussed above. Kate Grenville, writing historical fiction, claimed her writing enabled an interpretation of human behaviour in history that was richer and more nuanced than was possible writing History. Mark McKenna, an historian, disagreed, replying that fiction could not achieve sufficient accuracy.⁸⁹ The speculative fiction of this text is a response to all three points, in seeking to address the 'gaps' in the oral and archival records, in humanising the characters in the historical drama, and in preserving accuracy through close references to sources supporting the fictional construction. Despite this, fiction is still 'fictional': I do not know what conversation passed between Becky and Jack, nor what letters Jim might have written, and yet dialogue and letters feature in the speculative fiction sections. In *Daisy Bates in the Desert*, Julia Blackburn similarly

employs imagination 'to recreate the imperfectly attainable past.'⁹⁰ While Modjeska's invented 'journal' for *Poppy* drew criticism, Blackburn's reviewers were enchanted:

At first I was annoyed by this invention, wanting to know whether the fiction was based on Bates' letters and diaries or simply imagined; I wanted to know where the seams and the cracks were; I wanted footnotes. After a while I didn't care. Blackburn swept me away in the poetry of her language, the beauty of her vision, the integrity of her imagination. I suspended disbelief, as I think most readers will, ceasing to care about the distinction between fact and imagination. I believed I was entering the consciousness of Daisy Bates and seeing the world through her eyes.⁹¹

Blackburn is praised for 'bringing Bate's voice to us' in a first person fictional narrative and her blurring of the lines between fact and fiction resonates with the subjects known status as a liar.⁹²

The conceit of fiction is that the reader feels they know it all, whereas history is only ever partial, and mysterious.⁹³ A further conceit of this text is the use of the present tense for this voice, creating the sense of a screenplay coming to life before their eyes, and reducing the temporal distance between the reader and the historical characters. Present tense places the reader within the field of action. Recognising that speculative fiction in this text fills in the mysteries of history to create coherence in the development of the plot and characters, I still 'want [] footnotes' to facilitate the readers access to assessing the historical status of the story while at the same time hoping this literary form will enable the reader to position themselves within Jim and Rebecca's world. It is for this reason that the present tense is used in the fiction sections, because it represents the hope and impossibility of the readers immersion in history simultaneously.

'Genre' and critical practice.

A hybrid life writing text.

'Life Writing' as a genre has been described as 'the playground for new relationships within the text and between genres, blending languages and dialects too.'⁹⁴ It is the literary genre capable of

incorporating the range of ‘voices’ in this text into one narrative. In contemporary literary theory, genre is not conceived as a set of inflexible conventions for deciphering a text, but rather clues to the reader of the type of text and how to interpret its meaning. In response, the reader continues to develop their sense of the breadth and adaptation of the genre as the work moves to and beyond the limits and expectations set up by the acknowledged genre.⁹⁵ Life writing exploits this flexibility, being:

texts that are written by an author who does not continuously write about someone else, and who does not pretend to be absent from the [black,brown or white] text himself/herself. Life writing is a way of seeing...it anticipates the reader's determination on the text, the reader's colour, class, and gender, and pleasure in an imperfect and always evolving hermeneutic - classical, traditional or post-modern.⁹⁶

Kerryn Goldsworthy has observed Marlene Kadar's ‘definition’ is ‘a term coined precisely in order to signify defiance of attempts at generic classification’, and thus is capable of encompassing personal genres like letters and diaries, but also ‘metafiction’, as well as the more closely related forms of biography, history, ‘bios’, autobiography, memoir, testimonio, and creative non fiction.⁹⁷ Naming this text as ‘hybrid life writing’ signals the migration of literary form inherent in life writing, as the interpenetrations of the four literary forms create new conjunctions in the narration of the several lives foregrounded in the text.

The range of literary forms included in the ‘life writing’ ‘genre’ unsettles conventional interpretations of ‘truth’ and authenticity of a text, and refocuses attention on the source material and processes of production of the texts themselves. By unsettling conventional literary codes, the genre of life writing also admits texts and modes of truth previously marginalised, such as women's writing, private writing, and non-literate forms of narrating lives.⁹⁸ For these reasons, ‘life writing’ as opposed to more narrowly defined and homogenous genres of biography or historical fiction, is the most appropriate genre for this present text. In many ways, the content

matter of this project, in both its themes and its sources, have called forth this textual form for its presentation.

Gospel as subgenre of Life Writing

The Biblical literary form of ‘gospel’ also shares many characteristics of the present work, and likewise is located within the ancient Greco-Roman literary genre of *bios*, or Lives, which lie mid way on the genre continuum between history, and eulogy, and with a relationship to rhetoric, polemic and encomium.⁹⁹ As such, they can be considered as a form of Kadar’s ‘Life writing’. ‘Gospel’ comes from an old English rendering of the Greek ‘*evangelion*’, often interpreted as ‘good news’ and referring to the ‘content of the Christian revelation, the glad tidings of redemption.’¹⁰⁰ It came to be the word used to describe books which set forth the life of Jesus Christ as both the content and speaker of Christian revelation.

Despite the 4th century Christian apologist Justin Martyr calling the Biblical gospels ‘memoirs’, it was only in the latter part of the C20th that gospels were admitted as a form of literature. Overbeck and Dibelius, amongst others, judged them non-literary because he believed they did not conform to the ancient Greek or Roman forms of *bios*.¹⁰¹ Wilhelm Lund, however, was able to comprehensively show they did reflect semitic literary forms, such as chiasmus – an arrangement of units in inverted parallelisms - common in the Old Testament.¹⁰² Written in the language of empire, Greek, the gospels never the less retained literary forms indigenous to the cultural forms of the primarily Jewish early Christians.¹⁰³ The gospels were already a hybrid cultural production: how appropriate for my current project.

Rudolph Bultmann argued that the Biblical ‘Gospels’ were a completely new form of literary genre, and not related to biography, because it failed to conform to modern biography

conventions. Western biography seeks to create a narrative unity of psychological development and achievement from childhood to adulthood of the subject. In contrast, the Biblical Gospels contained very little developmental information on their primary subject, Jesus, and scant interest in his personality or psychological development. In *bios*, however, character is built up indirectly and, according to Aristotle, is ‘revealed by the person’s words and deeds...Actions are signs of character’.¹⁰⁴ Their *bios* becomes an account of their life's doings, rather than analysis of their personality, or formative influences. It is fundamentally a ‘show don’t tell’ approach to representing a lived life. In the ancient West, authority for such texts was vested foremost in eye witness accounts, memory and oral traditions rather than knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Importantly, *bios* often focused on the features of the subject’s death ‘since in this crisis the hero reveals his true character, gives his definitive teaching or does his greatest deed.’¹⁰⁶

Early twentieth century form criticism of the New Testament Gospels focused attention on the individual units of oral and folk traditions within the narrative, their arrangement considered no more than ‘strung together like pearls on a string’ and so barely considered works of literature.¹⁰⁷ Redaction critics like Norman Perrin later argued that ‘the collection, arrangement, editing and modification of traditional material, and ... the composition of new material’ within a Gospel revealed ‘the theological motivation of an author’ and so could be considered literary creations and subject to literary criticism.¹⁰⁸ Further, literary critics have dismissed the possibility of a completely novel generic form of literature, arguing that without known relationships to familiar forms, there is no shared set of expectations possible between author and reader.¹⁰⁹

Examples of *bios* contemporary to the Gospels share features such as dominant focus on one (human) subject, scant attention to early life and influences, symbolic representations of birth and death of the subject, use of literary units and diverse sources and ‘creative reconstructions’ to

cover gaps in these sources, as well as apologetic, polemic and didactic purposes of the text.¹¹⁰

On the basis of these similarities, Richard Burridge argues persuasively that the synoptic Gospels can be considered as an ancient form of life writing.¹¹¹ Further, the choice of *bios* as foundational literature for early Christianity has had the hermeneutical consequence of the centrality of the life of Jesus, not just his philosophy, in the emerging religion and especially in its preaching and kerygma.¹¹²

A gospel also carries specifically theological intent as a life narrative. Narrative theologians make the claim that humans experience their lives as narratives¹¹³, and that the early Christians choice of *bios* as a genre for expressing their theology – that is, a narrative of a life – indicates the suitability of narratives of human lives as a genre for knowing something of the life of incarnate God.¹¹⁴ Since Athanasius adapted the pagan literary form for writing lives of the heroes to create the pattern for Christian hagiography in his writing *The life of Antony*, theologians have considered the lives of individuals a source of theological reflection.¹¹⁵ Writing ‘Lives’ has been a dominant literary tradition in Western Christianity, with many treatments of the development of autobiography and biography citing St Augustine, and the Lives of Saints as early precursors to modern genres of autobiography and biography.¹¹⁶ While the style of these writings tends to be more reflective and attendant to internal states than the Biblical Gospels, more recent claims for biography and autobiography as vehicles for Christian theology continue the tradition of writing lives in order to exemplify, teach and argue for Christian theology and Christian lifestyle.¹¹⁷ For example, Jon Sobrino described the life of Oscar Romero as a ‘gospel...A piece of good news from God to the poor of this world.’¹¹⁸

Beyond Western Christianity, many emerging theologies from the Third World, and Asia, use stories from life – historical events, biographical narratives, folk stories, religious and cultural

stories from Indigenous cultures – to argue for new understandings of Christian religion emerging from lived experience in these places.¹¹⁹ Telling theology in life writing privileges non-dominant cultural life experiences and seeks to discern a theology in the terms of that life experience.¹²⁰ Because narrative is a form to which an audience relates their own lived experience, the hermeneutic of a life story operates not only on the subject but also on the audience, inviting them to link their life narrative with the text.¹²¹

Constructing and interpreting the present text as ‘Gospel’ is suitable at a number of points. Evidence of childhood, formative influences, and internal psychological dispositions is scant for Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes. The units of tradition that mediate their stories are recollections, memorabilia, and memories, oral histories, anecdotes, photographs, glosses in government records, and for Jim, articles written for a lay readership of a missionary magazine. Sources primarily describe actions and activities, rather than internal motivations. As a researcher, I have come to know the subjects through their words and deeds, and especially through their deaths. The lives of Jim and Rebecca continue to be remembered within the Adnyamathanha community as markers of reconciliation, decolonisation and positive cross-cultural relationships that offer historical and contemporary critique of other interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. This is ‘good news’ for Adnyamathanha, a ‘revelation’ of Christian doctrines of reconciliation and incarnation, and potentially redemptive for readers who allow their subjectivities to migrate into hybrid states through relationships with the text.

Parable as form and sub-genre

This gospel text is further interpreted by the literary form of ‘parable’ used to structure units within the text, as well as an organising principle for the whole narrative. Parabolic structure

frequently creates a chiasmus, pairing contextual frames before and after the central revelation of the unit, both to emphasise the central point, as well as presenting an intentional framework in which to interpret it. In their original form, Jesus' parables are characterised by being 'history-like', stories related to history but which ignore contemporary distinctions between history and fiction.¹²² They are stories and images drawn from life to urge listeners (often opponents) to urgent and decisive action.¹²³ While the parables of Jesus in the Gospels can be variously categorised, all are designed to compel their hearers to make a decision and take urgent action in the face of the imminent crisis in world view.¹²⁴ Jesus parables are embedded in narrative context, along with folk legends, poems, holy writing, and authorial commentary, with the whole piece of literature formed as a 'gospel.'¹²⁵ In fact 'Gospel' may have developed as a context for parabolic units, in some cases with the effect of domesticating more radical interpretations, ensuring they would be interpreted within the human life story of Jesus, and not as abstract philosophic principles.¹²⁶ The tendency to 'explain' and so authorise a particular reading of a parable has been resisted in the current text. Parable and story can be seen as primary sites for theology.

Biblical literary critics hold parable as the prime pedagogical tool used by Jesus, and a literary form designed to generate new insight by the juxtaposing of divinity within mundane real life experience.¹²⁷ Sallie McFague has demonstrated that a parable is an extended form of metaphor, and can be expressed in poetry, novel and biographic forms. She argues for a 'metaphoric theology', where new ways of perceiving God arise through the parable, rather than distilled from it.¹²⁸ 'Metaphors don't 'have' a message, they are the message.'¹²⁹ Parables as extended metaphors require the reader to 'think through them' rather than abstract concepts away from

images. In this way, parables open up thinking and possibilities, rather than close them down into a predetermined interpretation.¹³⁰

John Dominic Crossan claims the parabolic form ‘subverts’ the known world, by inverting readers expectations in the juxtaposition of unfamiliar elements, for instance, the creator of the universe with a widow sweeping for a single coin.¹³¹ Where a myth seeks to reconcile elements of a world, a parable ir-reconciles them, and instead creates a ‘dark interval’ between the known world and alternative worlds, where ‘God has room to move.’¹³² Parables are not allegories or illustrations creating direct correspondence between elements already familiar to the reader.¹³³ Parables enter the reader’s world, only to ‘shatter the deep structure of our accepted world and thereby render clear and evident to us the relativity of story itself.’¹³⁴ Stories of Jim and Rebecca, which place white subjectivities within Indigenous relationships, create such a parabolic juxtaposition which subverts Manichean categories of colonial identity. In the ‘interval’ that opens up in the colonial paradigm, new intersubjectivities have room to take shape and become incarnated.

Conclusion

The text ‘*The lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha community: White lives in a Black community*’ is a piece of polyphonic postcolonial life writing that is as hybrid in its construction as are the subjectivities of its characters. Framed as a parabolic gospel, it carries the juxtapositions of contrapuntal readings of colonial and decolonised relationships which become the sites of revelation for a theology of decolonisation. Doing theology by telling and writing stories is not a new theological method. Denham Grierson claims that since the narrative-symbolic form was the original mode in which God was apprehended, then poetic and non-

rational forms of theology need to be restored to Christian discourse.¹³⁵ Further, the uncanny juxtapositions of contrapuntal texts in postcolonial discourse create the dynamic of metaphor, where the slippages between unfamiliar elements create what John Dominic Crossan has called ‘the dark interval’, the space of possibility, when the assumptions of the old world are shattered and the new configurations not yet known, within which ‘God has room to move’.¹³⁶ In the polyphonous voices of postcolonial life writing texts, Biblical literary forms of parable and gospel can be appropriated to deliver new and liberative intersubjectivities to guide a readership into decolonised identities and decolonising practices. Paul Ricoeur has argued that parabolic texts, including Biblical material, are potentially revelatory not because they have deposits of inspired truth, but because they ‘enact a productive clash’ between the world of text and world of reader.¹³⁷

This text seeks to create such a ‘productive clash’ between the worlds Jim and Rebecca, and to some extent myself, inhabit with Adnyamathanha people, and the assumed world of the reader where national reconciliation let alone decolonisation in Australia is still to be achieved. Indeed, during the period of this project, the Australian government has instituted further ‘Interventions’ into the private and corporate lives of Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory. Norm Habel has concluded that ‘The way to the soul of Australia, it seems to me, is a pilgrimage back through the landscape, through the stories, through suppressed memories to sites of resistance and suffering, the silent sacred places in Australia’s history.’¹³⁸ This text is one such pilgrimage, as is this parable:

It was told to me, and other whitefellas around a campfire one night, by my Adnyamathanha friend Terry Coulthard at Iga Warta, an Adnyamathanha cultural tourism center in the Flinders Ranges. We were waiting for the damper to cook in the coals. He told the story of Mt Lyndhurst,

a big giant of a fellow, and when he lay down and died there, all the people came and cut out a piece of his tongue, and when they ate it, they all had different languages, and so they all spread out to different areas then, some even as far away as England. 'So', said Terry, looking around the group, 'you being here, it's like you're just coming back home.' And then the damper was ready and we all took some and ate it, smeared with *uti* jam and cream.

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Section A Part 2: Journeys

Refer to Volume One Section A Life Writing Chapter 2

Exegesis Essay Two

White journeys to black country: Biblical Journeying to Australia.¹³⁹

An exegesis of the metaphor of journey, through Biblical motifs and colonial migrations.

Introduction

Rebecca completed her journey from the metropolitan centre of Empire to the ‘antipodes’, like so many other colonial English immigrants. Like them, she expected a new life, work, perhaps wealth and, being single, a marriage partner and family. This is what Sylvie Brady described to me as the ‘white way’: ‘Her Mum and Dad said, like white way, to send them off when they’re grown.’¹⁴⁰ Several commentators have examined this ‘white way’ of journeys of colonisation to Australia in relation to the Biblical tropes of Expulsion from Eden, Exile and Exodus, employed to justify settler belonging, create myths of origins for the new nation, and imaginatively shape colonial journeys to and within Australia.¹⁴¹

Life writing about Jim and Rebecca’s migrations necessarily forms its narratives around these tropes also.¹⁴² However, unlike many others, Rebecca carries an ‘ambition’ for her new life to be bound up with an Aboriginal husband, his people, and his culture. Jim’s missionary calling will likewise immerse him in the lives of Aboriginal people. This essay will argue that for Rebecca

and Jim, their journeys to Australia, and then from its coast to its inland, undermine colonial interpretations of journeys as Exodus, Exile or Expulsion, and instead find metaphors of embrace and homecoming in journeying to Adnyamathanha country and community. As Sylvie concluded, '[Mrs Forbes] never wanted to come back. She said 'My husband he brought me here to his people and that's my people now.''¹⁴³ Their narratives function like parables, undermining the worldview shared with their readers, so that a new narrative might emerge, building on alternative Biblical tropes that support journeys into decolonising co-existence for settlers in Australia.¹⁴⁴

Narrative 1: Expulsion

What might it have been that Rebecca, and later Jim, imagined they were doing migrating to Australia? Simon Ryan argues that Europeans approached Australia with well-established preconceptions: it was 'hell', a 'second creation' and cursed wilderness.¹⁴⁵ Unlike the liberating Exodus motif adopted by America and read back against England and Native American peoples,¹⁴⁶ the Australian settlement/invasion experience owed 'more to a myth of Expulsion' where England remained Eden, the King represented God, and convicts were sinners doomed to toil and death in a harsh and hostile environment.¹⁴⁷ Immigrant narratives also shared this sense of being 'sent away' described by Kerry Goldsworthy as a barely suppressed sense of betrayal and shame beneath a patina of optimism and adventure.¹⁴⁸ The same contradiction of grief, shame and opportunity is suggested in the final verse of Milton's seventeenth century and imperial version of Adam and Eve's expulsion:

Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon; [645]

The World was all before them, where to choose
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,
Through Eden took thir solitarie way.¹⁴⁹

Adam and Eve and the uncharted space that is ‘not-Eden’, are sites of both lack, and opportunity. Mary Louise Pratt’s treatment of colonial travel suggests that ideas of lack and opportunity in colonial immigrants as well as colonial lands was held together by the notion of ‘improvement’ reflected in self-reflexive journal writing and study, as well as notions of improving the land, and the indigenous inhabitants.¹⁵⁰ Shipboard advice for the period underscores this point:

To the Promised Land

Shipboard is your place of study. Consider every hour valuable, and diligently employ it in reading or meditation...In ancient times, those who went down to the sea in ships might no doubt have seen great wonders in the deep, for everything was then new, and before the art of printing ...the information of mankind was very limited; but tempera mutantur—for neither the Penny Encyclopaedia nor Chambers' Information for the People was then known.¹⁵¹

Kerryn Goldsworthy argues that this trip to Australia can be understood as a time of transformation of identity as well as intellect. Emigrants leave the borders of countries, the limits of family, and even the familiar boundaries of their skin as they live intimately with strangers in newly structured communities on a voyage to a new life. They are not just in transition, but are a ‘transitional being’; they are not just ‘on the border but [...] the border itself.’¹⁵²

This sense of a voluntary and decisive exile from all that is familiar, into an unknown identity and place, is similar to Celtic notions of pilgrimage, where the pilgrim, for penitence, or asceticism, or devotion, takes Abraham’s call to ‘Leave your own country, your kin, and your father’s house’ as their own to find a new country, new family, and new home wherever God leads them.¹⁵³

However, the reflexive process of shipboard journalling reveals that experiences of new landscapes and sublime experiences were ‘captured’ in the familiar and often religious languages of ‘home’, participating in the spread of colonial hegemony by codifying the new world in terms of similarities and differences to the old.¹⁵⁴ Further, the ‘memory of the culture’ of origin is ‘transported as [the culture] was at the time of migration...[and] enacted in the new country’ in areas superficially similar to the old country, creating a ghetto effect.¹⁵⁵ An Anglo-Australian version of the spatial ghetto is described by journalist CEW Bean at the turn of the century:

That country [beyond a 400-mile circle from coast]...though it makes up the inside of Australia, they call the ‘outside’ country, because the center of Australia is uninhabited, and this is the country which is on the farthest outskirts of civilisation.¹⁵⁶

More subtly, others have argued for the ‘double act of assertion and denial’ performed by ethnic minorities¹⁵⁷, as they engage in the process of ‘transculturation’, described as:

how subjugated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for.¹⁵⁸

Hinted at in this discussion of transformation through journey is the requirement for the one undergoing transformation to be a minority within the domain of a cultural ‘Other’. It is unlikely English immigrants like Jim and Rebecca experienced this in Federation Sydney, and yet that is where their migrations take them: Rebecca living in the suburb of Leichhardt, and working as a cook at the Deaf Dumb and Blind Institute, and Jim as a student at Reverend Barnett’s Bible College in Croydon.

I suggest that colonial emigration from England to Australia alone did not effect significant cultural or personal transformation, but implied a partial reworking of identity which reaffirmed the language and memory of culture of origin which migrated with them, rather than a

‘transition’ effected by transformative influences of the country and its Indigenous peoples on migrants.¹⁵⁹ Rebecca Castledine migrated in 1908 as a single woman in her thirties, lying about her age by some ten years, and travelling amongst a large contingent of single women in their early twenties, responding to government schemes offering passage for female domestics. She had been orphaned a decade earlier and her siblings dispersed. Rebecca made an extremely short sojourn in Brisbane before making her way back to ‘inside country’ to live at Leichhardt, Sydney and work as cook and housekeeper at Parramatta Road’s Deaf and Dumb institute. Whatever her initial intention, she made a transition in geography, but little else.

In Veronica Brady’s terms, Rebecca failed to ‘break the [colonial] mirror’ that could only reflect England and themselves in everything they saw. The ‘weird melancholy’ settlers thought they saw in the Australian landscape, was in fact their internal condition: they had left the old country, but they hadn’t left it behind; they lived in the new country, but they had not allowed themselves to be embraced by it.¹⁶⁰ Brady, Anne Curthoys and Deborah Bird Rose all argue that this sense of ambiguous rupture from origins created a trauma and anxiety still palpable in Australian society, and expressed particularly in settler racism and anxieties about becoming homeless once more.¹⁶¹ The narrative of Expulsion stops short of articulating a new ‘home’ from within the simulacra of the old Home.

Perhaps, on the coastal borders of the country, colonial settlers remained as a liminal border themselves, a site of potential transformation, but still looking back at the fiery gates of Eden and weeping.

Narrative 2: Exile

This kind of colonial experience of immigration, then, can best be called an experience of Exile. 'Exile' is a polysemic and polyvocal term, often conflated with the trope of expulsion and exodus to denote being away from a place thought of as 'home'.¹⁶² Edward Said defines a more particular use, describing Exile as an 'unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place.'¹⁶³ Speaking as a Palestinian, upon whose country modern Israel continues to transpose its ancient narratives of return to a homeland, he says an exile must remain sceptical of invitations to find a new belonging; an exile knows that homes are always provisional; that the creation of a new world to rule is only a compensation for the 'disorienting loss'. An obsession with the 'indefinitely postponed drama of return' denies the finality of exile, and expresses the belief that Paradise can be regained.¹⁶⁴ 'Improving' a new world to resemble the old one, or pining for return to the old one, are two reflexes to the experience of exile, but both deny the reality which is an inability to return.¹⁶⁵

This colonial settler double bind is reflected in the ambiguity of colonial and federated Australian dual citizenship: despite being antipodean, Henry Parkes assured the nation: "The crimson thread of kinship runs through us all. Even the native-born Australians are Britons, as much as men born within the cities of London and Glasgow."¹⁶⁶ Post-colonial concepts of mimicry of the metropolis, and 'othering' of the indigenous express the unresolved position of the settler in exile, not belonging in any integrated way in either place.¹⁶⁷ Anxiety about white settler belonging continues to 'haunt' white Australians, from the politics of Native Title to autobiographical interrogations of connection to country, history and community.¹⁶⁸ Attempts to articulate a non-indigenous indigeneity, or re-enact dispossession metaphorically or in legislation, belie a profoundly unsettled occupancy of white Australians. Rose describes Australia as 'wounded space' for its settlers, who yearn for healing and completion.¹⁶⁹

In theological discourse, the Exile is a series of events in the 6th BCE during which the remaining Jewish kingdom of Judah is defeated by the Babylonian Empire, and its ruling elite removed to imprisonment or forced exile in Babylon. When Babylon is defeated by the Persian Empire almost fifty years later, the Babylonian ruler Cyrus frees those held in exile and they are able to return. Many texts of the Hebrew Scriptures are composed or redacted to address this experience: some envisage return; others the inability to return. The Joshua traditions reappropriate the Exodus and Abraham narratives and cast them as stories of conquest of the land, creating an ideological basis for repossession of the land after exile.¹⁷⁰ The books of Esther, and Tobit, reinforce opposite responses to exile: Esther being a story about making exile your home, and Tobit one of constantly maintaining hope of return.¹⁷¹ The book of Ezra takes up the re-establishment of the temple cult and national unity through racial purity. The book of Ruth appears as a parable to Ezra's reforms, by reminding the nation of King David's mixed ancestry, and offering an alternative model of belonging through loyalty and kinship not envisaged in land and law based responses to exile.¹⁷² Ruth, the Moabite woman, and widow to an Israelite sojourning in her country, says to her Israelite mother-in-law who is preparing to return to Bethlehem:

Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. I will die where you die and be buried beside you. May the Lord punish me if we are ever separated, even by death. (Ruth 1:16b, 17)¹⁷³

She will marry an Israelite kinsman, and their child will be a direct ancestor of King David.

Michael Goonan has claimed that in Australia as in the Bible narratives, the spiritual task of exile is to find a home and a sense of the divine even in the place of exile.¹⁷⁴ The diverse and conflicted Biblical responses to this shows this to be no simple matter. In addition, the

contemporary privileging of the return and/or ‘rebuild a ‘pure’ nation’ narratives from amongst these various texts reflect the agendas of both colonial acquisition of land, and of post World War Two Zionism, and marginalises narratives of further migration and peaceful and inclusive routes to belonging.¹⁷⁵

Narrative 3: Exodus

Jim Page, a single man in his twenties in 1928, was trained to be a missionary to Australian Aborigines at Rev Barnett's Bible College in Croydon, Sydney. Evangelical, monogenist and asserting the ‘universal brotherhood of man’, his mission would have been understood as ‘improving the natives’: morally, spiritually and physically.¹⁷⁶ This was posed as a kind of exile by Kipling on the eve of the twentieth century:

Take up the white man's burden -
Send forth the best ye breed -
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' needs;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild -
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.¹⁷⁷

However, missionaries like Jim conformed in fact and imagination, more with the narrative of exploration, which understood itself in terms of Exodus, and in particular with the latter ‘conquest’ narratives, prompting Ann Curthoys to describe the Australian appropriation of this biblical motif a ‘truncated Exodus’.¹⁷⁸ Without the impetus of liberation assumed in the Exodus tradition, explorers, driven by a sense of divine calling and under protection of divine Providence, became colonialisms ‘seeing man’, seeking out promontories from which to survey

and name their ‘promised land’, and claim its exploitable resources for king and country.¹⁷⁹

Indigenous inhabitants throughout empire were cast as Canaanites:

land is for man not wild beast or brutish savages...God gave it to me and my posterity...we are warranted by this direction of Joshua, to destroy wilful and convicted Idolaters, rather than let them live, if by no other means they can be reclaimed.¹⁸⁰

Jim’s first assignment as an apprentice missionary of the Australian Aborigines Mission, included shouldering the ‘white man’s burden’ during a six month camel expedition into the Petermann and Musgrave Ranges of Central Australia.¹⁸¹ Jim’s reflections on that trip reported in articles to the *United Aborigines Mission Messenger* magazine, suggest that Jim discovered something more than irredeemable ‘Canaanites’ during that that journey inland.

In Jim’s travels in the interior he had found ‘natives’ ‘untouched by civilisation’ were more ‘moral’ than those who had come into contact with the vices, and not the virtues, of whites, and that these ‘morals’ were sustained by tribal law.¹⁸²

From my observation of the natives in the Mann, Musgrave Ranges, I could see that these [‘wise laws that governed the tribal life of the old aborigines’] were being kept, otherwise the result would have been disastrous.¹⁸³

Later, when Jim is stationed at Nepabunna, he is remembered as saying:

But Page said things to my people: he made a comment to the Adnyamathanha people saying that “You people got your own God, like you worship a God, and I worship the same God as you do, but only you do it in a different way. You have your ceremonies, and you do dances for your God, on this land, earth and so on”. James Page knew that they were worshipping the same God and we always say ‘Arra- wathanha’, [meaning] ‘the person up there, looking down’.¹⁸⁴

He encouraged the men of Nepabunna to hold on to their traditional Law, and continued to argue against establishing settled missions on the basis that they disrupt traditional life.¹⁸⁵

When the establishment of Nepabunna mission is literally described in the Messenger magazine (probably by the UAM secretary) as an exodus from oppression, the Adnyamathanha

are placed in the role of Israelites, God's beneficence channelled by Mr Roy Thomas of Balcanoona Pastoral Co., and Nepabunna as the promised land.¹⁸⁶ Jim Page has been described as 'like Moses' by Adnyamathanha, moving with the community from the last traditional camping ground at *Minerawuta* to the site given for Nepabunna. Norm Habel has argued that the Abraham charter narratives of Genesis 11-23 offer an immigrant ideology which interpret Israel's presence in the Promised Land as a respectful guest of a host with whom they engage according to the ways of the host culture.¹⁸⁷ Within the Exodus tradition, Moses can also be read in this way: Moses, while a Hebrew, was brought up as an Egyptian, within the royal household. He flees after killing a man – for beating a Hebrew worker – marries a Midianite woman, receives council from her priestly Midianite father Jethro, and eventually returns to act as spokesperson for the Hebrews to Pharaoh. He belongs in several cultures, and chooses to advocate for those being oppressed.

Like many explorers in Australia discovered of their imagined destinations, Nepabunna as a 'promised land' did not flow with milk and honey. The letter Ted Coulthard has Rebecca write for him to the 'Protector of Abo', outlines the shortcomings of basic essentials such as water, and rations.¹⁸⁸ Like Moses on the threshold of the Promised Land, Jim died before adequate water was found to secure occupancy of the site. His suicide in 1935 is variously accounted for by despair, misbehaviour, or imminent transfer from the community. Adnyamathanha believe that because Jim suicided at Nepabunna during a visit from the mail truck, he ensured that members of the community could not be accused of his death. Some Adnyamathanha interpret his death that 'he didn't want to leave us', and in suiciding, ensured he never would.

An Exodus trope which privileges conquest narratives and is used to justify dispossession of Indigenous peoples cannot be sustained from the fragments of Jim's life available to us.¹⁸⁹

Adnyamathanha use of the Moses motif for Jim directs the narrative to a paradigm of liberation from dispossession by pastoralists, and to Jim's role as white advocate in solidarity with Adnyamathanha. Nepabunna is positioned as neither a place of lack, nor a promised land brimming with opportunity, but an artefact that both reflects and resists colonialism. It remains Adnyamathanha *yata* (country).

Conclusion

Chapter Three of the life writing narrative shows Becky doing domestic work in the institutions of the antipodean metropolis of Sydney, hugging the east coast of the continent. Even the relative 'frontier' of Brisbane was too strange from the world she had left behind. Expelled, exiled or on exodus from her past, she, like so many others, has not yet untethered herself from an imagined and British 'home' to receive the welcome of her host country and its people.

Later she will describe herself as 'a wanderer at heart', and become 'anxious to see the country', as Jim had. Like Jim's inverted exodus, Becky will leave the continents 'verandah' for the 'outside' country of Australia's 'inland' and will finally discover not a promised land to claim, but her hosts ready to welcome her into their home.¹⁹⁰

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Section B: Identity

Refer to Volume One Section B Life Writing Chapter 5

Exegesis Essay Three

‘White Woman Lives as a Lubra in Native Camp’: representations of shared space.¹⁹¹

Sharing Space

The life of Rebecca Forbes is an ‘event under description’ that can only be thought about through the ways it has been reported and described.¹⁹² Reports of her life by white Australians reveal their interest in her as a white woman ‘sharing space’ in an Aboriginal community through her marriage to a man of full Aboriginal descent and her subsequent ‘home’ with his community for the rest of her life. This essay explores representations made of Rebecca’s life in a newspaper article found pasted into an anthropologist’s field journals, which illustrates public constructions of Rebecca’s life, both in its content, and context. The representation of Rebecca in her oldest grandchild’s oral history recordings creates a dialectic in this study of ‘shared space’. Through interrogation of Rebecca’s successful sharing of space with Aboriginal people, and through the process of conducting research in a cross cultural context, this essay seeks to understand appropriate ways for non-Aboriginal Australians and Aboriginal Australians to ‘share space’ together and discover the identities which are born in the process.

Warriner B. Tindale 1076



MRS. JACKY WITCHETTY, a white woman, shown in this picture with a group of natives, lives as a lubra at Beltana, South Australia. She is believed to be the only white woman to have gone completely native.

White Woman Lives As Lubra in Native Camp

Married at Bourke 25 years ago to her aboriginal lover, Jacky Witchetty, a white woman is still living the life of a lubra in a native camp and refuses to return to civilisation. She is believed to be the only white woman to have gone completely native.

The woman, who was formerly Becky Castledine, of London, is now living at Beltana, South Australia.

Mrs. Witchetty met her husband when she took up station work at Wynbar Station, on the Darling. To the white people in the district her husband was known as Jacky Forbes, champion horsebreaker and a fencer.

He was a member of the Billidana tribe.

The woman came to Australia in 1916, when she was 20 years of age. It was necessary to obtain special permission for the wedding, but this was granted.

The magistrate at Bourke officiated, and two policemen acted as witnesses at the ceremony, which was followed by a second wedding service conducted in the rites of the Australian aboriginal.

After this wedding the couple left Wynbar, and went to live with Jacky's people. Mrs. Witchetty lived the life of a lubra with her husband at the native camp at Yandama in this district.

Later they moved to Ram Paddock Gate Camp (S.A.), where Jacky died after 18 years of married life. There are two sons, both of whom were born in the Yandama-camp. They speak fluent English, in addition to several native dialects. The sons are working on stations.

Ever since the death of Jacky, Mrs. Witchetty has continued to live the life of a native lubra, taking part in all tribal rites, corroborees, etc.

This unusual woman had to destroy all possessions and articles of her husband when he died. Even his photograph was burnt.

Life with the natives is free from worry, and if she returned to civilisation she would have the worries of rent, high cost of living, and would establish a social barrier between herself and her people, she says.

The magistrate wrote to her advising that if she had her name placed on the roll she could draw white woman's rations, but she declined, stating that she would then become unpopular in the camp.

Mrs. Witchetty has a family of brothers and sisters in England, but she does not write to them. She is a keen reader of detective fiction.

From SA Museum Archives

AA 338/1/15/2

Tindales Journal

2

pp 759- END

1938-39

The Article

The newspaper article ‘White woman lives as a lubra in Native Camp’ was pasted into the 1938-9 Field Journal of Norman Tindale, the South Australian Museum’s ethnologist. It had been clipped of its dateline and other identifiers. Tindale was accompanied on the fourteen month, 16,000 mile Field Trip by anthropologist Dr JB Birdsell of Harvard, and their respective wives.¹⁹³ Their purposes included observations by Tindale of the adaptations of ‘half castes’ into ‘white community life’, ‘biological research on problems of race mixture’ to be analyse mathematically, and inquiries about women’s lives by their wives.¹⁹⁴ An article about a woman’s racially mixed marriage, ‘half-caste’ sons, and widowed life amongst an Aboriginal community would seem an ideal study for the Field Trip.

The summary below the headline read:

‘Married at Bourke 25 years ago to her Aboriginal lover, Jacky Witchetty, a white woman is still living the life of a lubra in a native camp and refuses to return to civilisation. She is believed to be the only white woman to have gone completely native.’¹⁹⁵

The article describes Rebecca Forbes’ emigration from England, the circumstances of her marriage, and her life in ‘a native camp’ at Beltana, in the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia. ‘Adv c 1940’ handwritten on the cutting, is the only clue to the article’s origins, and suggests its retrospective inclusion in the Journal. The text names Yandama, west of Tibooburra, as ‘in this district’, and adds the specifier ‘(S.A.)’ to the location of the Ram Paddock Gate camp, suggesting a north-western NSW origin of publication. The Field Trip party visited neither

Beltana, nor Tibooburra. The presence of the clipping in the Journal suggests it held anthropological interest; if that is so, why did Tindale make no further comment upon it?

Representing cross-cultural relationships

Two years before the Trip, the Heads of Aboriginal Departments had proposed the ‘absorption’ of mixed descent people into European society; in 1938, another anthropologist, AP Elkin, had coined a term for such a process – assimilation – that would soon find its way into legislation and common race ideology. Birdsell’s tentative field conclusions in 1939 ‘indicated that there was no reason biologically why the absorption of the hybrid Australian into the white population should not occur.’¹⁹⁶ South Australia passed *the Aborigines Act Amendment Act, (1939)*, which broadened definitions of Aboriginality to include all those of Aboriginal descent, but also included a process for gaining exemption from the Act.¹⁹⁷ The legislative process of assimilation encouraged the movement from Aboriginal identity and lifestyle, to white or European identity and lifestyle. It said nothing about a white person choosing to adopt an Aboriginal lifestyle and identity. Similarly, when Birdsell claimed that ‘that if every Aboriginal in Australia, including full bloods, were crossed once with a white, both the Aboriginal and half caste problem would tend to disappear’,¹⁹⁸ the unstated assumption of colonial eugenic theories was that the whites involved in this equation would be men, partnered to Aboriginal women.¹⁹⁹ Belief in the hierarchy of races, coupled with patriarchy, rendered women available to be partnered by their sexual ‘superior’ of the same or ‘higher’ race. A white woman partnered by a black man was inconceivable within this grid of ideology.

Applications of legislative responses were highly specific to gender as well as race, although this was not always specified in its wording. Some states outlawed marriages or permanent relationships between full descent Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people;²⁰⁰ others allowed marriage but not cohabitation;²⁰¹ and in others people of full Aboriginal descent could only marry others of similar descent. In outback South Australia, local legends were being born of white men being arrested for cohabiting with Aboriginal women ‘on the smell of a gin’, after police sniffed their bedclothes.²⁰² Largely white men abandoned their Aboriginal women partners rather than be convicted, or married. White women who married or had sexual relationships with Aboriginal men received different treatment: such relationships considered perversion.²⁰³ Rape was assumed, unless strenuously asserted otherwise.²⁰⁴

The earliest recorded case in Australia involved a teenage girl who declared her love for a young Aboriginal man, and vowed to marry him when she was old enough. She left home to give birth to their child, but was found by local authorities and returned to her father.²⁰⁵ She was considered deviant, and her lover portrayed as passive. Official records do not vilify the couple, however scholars of interracial sexual relationships in Australia and North America suggest that ‘forbearance for that which is not approved’ - ‘tolerance’ - best describes official public response to interracial marriages, although private responses may be more extreme.²⁰⁶ In Pre-civil war America white women involved in sexual relationships with Afro-American men were assumed to be depraved or of low class, and their lovers passive.²⁰⁷ Following the Franchise, racist propaganda developed the perjorative term ‘miscegenation’ to describe interracial relationships, and portrayed black men as the active agents in relationships with white women, often with connotations of violence and rape. White women were typecast as passive and vulnerable victims, requiring white men to protect them. By the turn of the century, some interracial

marriages between white women and educated and professional class Native American men and some Afro-American men had become acceptable indications of ‘absorption of white culture.’²⁰⁸

In Australia Aboriginal men represented very little threat to white male-dominated settler society. Neither did they generally have access to education or middle class status. Nearly all historical cases of marriage or sexual relationship between European women and Aboriginal men described the woman as deviant or of low class, and the men as passive.

The most infamous case of interracial marriage between a white woman and Aboriginal man in Australia is that of Jimmy Governor and Ethel Page, married in Gulgong, New South Wales, in 1898. Ethel was young and pregnant; Jimmy a hard working mixed descent man who had been raised on an Aboriginal Mission station with notions of becoming ‘absorbed’ into white society. Despite Ethel’s parents support of the marriage, Ethel was so severely verbally abused at the local Gulgong Show that after Jimmy complained, police required a printed apology be made in the local paper.²⁰⁹ Not long after this affair, Ethel’s parents moved from the district, and Ethel and Jimmy moved out of town to work on the Mawbey property. The women of the household reputedly said to Ethel ‘any white woman who married a blackfellow was not fit to live, and ought to be dead.’²¹⁰ Jimmy murdered the Mawbey women in 1900, and claimed as his reason that ‘Mrs Mawbey was saying things about my wife. She say white woman no good marry blackfellow.’²¹¹ While some commentators argue Jimmy’s actions were motivated by frustrated attempts at social mobility through employment, evidence considered by this author suggests extreme and provocative attitudes towards the Governors interracial marriage were also influential.²¹² Jimmy’s actions were far from passive: media portrayed his violence, and represented Ethel as vulnerable, weak and poor.

‘I am only a poor white girl and I haven’t much education. White men don’t care about having poor wives, and no white man ever asked me to marry him. Jimmy was the only man ever asked me to marry him.’²¹³

Newspapers described Ethel as 'plain', although Court proceedings describe her as ‘anything but unprepossessing in appearance’.²¹⁴ Allegations that the second child she was carrying was not Jimmy’s were further aspersions on her character. During her brief marriage to an Aboriginal man, Ethel was represented as deviant; poor, low class, uneducated, unattractive and immoral. ‘Toleration’ in Australia came at a price.

Another case involving another Ethel occurred the following year in Northern Queensland at the Anglican mission of Yarrabah. Ethel’s brother, the missionary Ernest Gribble responded by forcing Ethel to marry a co-worker instead of her lover, Fred Wondunna. Ethel’s husband died not long afterwards, and she reunited with Fred. By 1907 Ethel was pregnant, but Gribble refused to marry the couple. Ethel and Fred fled to Sydney, and found a Congregationalist minister to married them. Gribbles biographer notes:

At the beginning of the twentieth century, marriage to an Aboriginal man meant Ethel would be denounced as a whore and a disgrace to her sex and race. She would become a pariah, ostracised forever from polite society. Ethel dismissed these objections.²¹⁵

In 1927, the Australian Board of Mission (ABM) still held that marriage between a ‘white girl’ and a ‘coloured man’ was ‘eccentric and utterly unsuitable ... and we can safely say that such a marriage would be regarded with entire disapproval and regret by the vast majority of missionaries.’²¹⁶ A bitter irony to this case is that while Ethel was pregnant and arguing with her brother for the validity of her wish to marry Fred, Gribble himself was engaged in an illicit affair with a young Aboriginal woman at Yarrabah mission named Janie Brown (previously Jeanie Forbes). Gribble went on to receive awards for his service to Aborigines; Ethel’s love was

interpreted as the result of a nervous breakdown, her marriage eccentric, and herself a whore. Her existence was erased from ABM records.

Such were the experiences of, and attitudes towards, marriages between white women and Aboriginal men when Rebecca immigrated to Australia. According to the article in Tindale's journal, Rebecca's own marriage required special permission. Official 'tolerance' is evidenced by a presiding magistrate and two policemen as witnesses. Unofficial attitudes could be expected to cast Rebecca as sexually deviant, poor, low class, uneducated, or lacking in an effective white male to control her choices, and Jack as a passive partner. Rebecca was not the role model for 'white community life' which social anthropologist Tindale was so keen to promote to 'half-caste's'²¹⁷ nor does she tally with Birdsell's gendered strategies to achieve a 'white Australia' through assimilation. Even contemporary scholarship concludes relationships like Rebecca and Jack's continue to be 'obscured and erased in most considerations of interracial relationships in Australia'²¹⁸ and that Rebecca's 'determination to marry an Aboriginal man and have his children was too difficult to digest'²¹⁹ and so women like her remain 'unfathomable creature[s]'.²²⁰ Tindale, Birdsell and their wives could not interpret the article they found, and certainly their sexist eugenics had no use of her story, although its presence here shows they could not ignore it either.

Representations of white women amongst Indigenous people: captivity narratives or 'good whitefella Missus'?

The newspaper clipping itself employs another trope applicable to aberrant white women: it claims, twice, that she is 'the only white woman to have gone completely native.' She has become a 'wild white woman'. Kate Darian-Smith draws on the narrative of Rebecca's life by

author Ernestine Hill,²²¹ describing it as an inverted captivity narrative.²²² Captivity narratives were a popular literary genre in the nineteenth century in England and its colonies. They ‘provided Europeans with imaginative models through which to respond to the perceived threats of interracial intimacy and the inversion of racially based colonial structures of power.’ White women, symbols of both civilisation and white male property, were constructed as objects of desire for violent and powerful black men who sought to ‘capture’ them. These narratives functioned to maintain racial segregation and white dominance in situations of white minority on the frontier.²²³ Captivity narratives support the claim that ‘Theories of race were also covert theories of desire’ and become sites to explore the colonial obsession with the imagined Other.²²⁴ They made much of the material condition of captivity: nakedness, dirt that disguised true skin colour, lack of soap and domestic utensils.²²⁵ These markers of ‘wildness’, combined with threats of sexual intercourse between captor and captive, were hallmarks of the genre, drawing on the ancient images of savages in the European imagination.²²⁶ These were the sorts of narratives that sold thousands of books, and newspapers.

Yet the article in the *Journal* is free of any details of Rebecca’s material condition that conform to the captivity genre. Its most judgemental reference to Aboriginal practice reads: ‘This unusual woman had to destroy all possessions and articles of her husband when he died. Even his photograph was burnt.’ It even explains Rebecca’s ‘refus[al] to return to civilisation’ rationally: ‘she would have the worries of rent, high cost of living, and would establish a social barrier between herself and her people’. After the headline, there are no textual markers of captivity. Despite the headline editor’s hopes, the reporter cannot portray Rebecca as ‘wild’, or ‘Other’ in her lifestyle and concerns. Nor do other commentators. In 1938 a UAM tract by Margery West

describes Rebecca as ‘one of the most interesting characters one meets in this native camp’, with her hut kept ‘spick and span’.²²⁷ Rebecca’s obituary in the UAM monthly magazine read:

It is with regret that we mention the death of Mrs R Forbes, for many years a resident among the people of this tribe. It was Mrs Forbes who first wrote to the SA Council requesting that Missionaries be sent to work among these people. It was our privilege to minister to this very old lady, particularly in her last days and hours, and she witnessed to the fact that she was trusting Christ as her personal Saviour²²⁸

The most radical claim made for Rebecca in the article regards her identity. She is named throughout as Mrs ‘Witchetty’, emphasising Aboriginal rather than European names. She took part in ‘all tribal rites, corroborees etc’. Rebecca is quoted saying she didn’t want any barriers between ‘herself and her people’. The term ‘lubra’ itself implies a complete identification between Rebecca and Aboriginal people. The article begins and ends with references to Rebecca’s English heritage: that she came from London, but no longer writes to her family in England. The article describes a transformation and migration of identity through allegiance, while retaining sufficient markers of whiteness in appearance, style of articulation, and lifestyle concerns to engage reporter and readers sympathetically.

Hill’s narrative of Rebecca’s life tackles the issue of identity even more directly. Hill quotes Rebecca as saying: ‘If, as they say, a wife always takes her husbands nationality, I am an Australian, actually the only real white Australian there is.’²²⁹ Hill was writing in the midst of a national debate to amend the *British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act (1914)* to enable British born women to apply to retain their nationality on marriage to an ‘alien’ husband.²³⁰ Despite advocacy to enable Rebecca to once again claim her British nationality, she chooses to retain that of her husband, and by doing so, to create a new category of identity in which her relationships with others were grounded.

Hill account was based on an interview she conducted at Rebecca's home at Nepabunna in 1932, and published first in Sydney's *The Sunday Guardian Sun* on December 18th 1932, and later in her famous book of travel writing *The Great Australian Loneliness*, in 1937, under the heading '[The] Strange Case of Mrs Widgety [Witchetty]'.²³¹ The article in Tindale's Journal may have been based on Hill's work, as it follows the same narrative, but differs markedly in its voice, language, spelling and detail. It lacks the prurient overtones of Hill, which serve to activate the reader's curiosity in colonial desire. In the article Tindale found, Rebecca has 'gone native' in a remarkably civilised way, in contrast to the sensationalised language in Hill's articles.²³² Hill was concerned to record emblematic 'Others' encountered in her own travels.²³³ She describes Rebecca's life as a 'strange' and 'astounding human document in the annals of the Australian Outback.'²³⁴ Hill uses Daisy Bates as a template, and a foil, to interpreting Rebecca. Daisy, the epitome of the 'good whitefella Missus' motif, also transgresses racial boundaries by being 'constantly among the natives'; yet importantly, she could not 'exist in a blacks camp'.²³⁵ The 'good whitefella Missus', articulated by Aeneas Gunn in *The Little Black Princess*,²³⁶ sees the white woman refusing to impose 'the white man's burden' of forcing the colonised into imitations of the colonisers culture and habits.²³⁷ Daisy Bates as the 'Good whitefella Missus' had anthropological rather than assimilationist concerns and advocated segregation as protection from sexual contact by white men, encouraged continuation of traditional cultural practises, and consciously refused to impose her own Christian religion on Aboriginal people²³⁸ But boundaries between camp life, and personal life, were rigidly maintained: 'Each day Bates would dress formally and cross into the Aboriginal world.'²³⁹ Other white women who received the title, like missionary Annie Lock, were also at pains to demonstrate where they drew their boundaries.

Vivian Turner of the UAM, defended Lock against the allegation she had claimed she 'would be happy to marry a black':²⁴⁰

'Her lone condition make it imperative that she keep her name above slander so one of her first actions on going to a new camp is to take one or more native girls to be her companions, giving them the protection of her care, while they give her the protection of their presence, from any calumny that her solitude might have provoked. A boundary is set around her camp beyond which a black man might not intrude. Not that she distrusts the Aboriginal, but she does distrust the imputations of the whites.'²⁴¹

Despite the comparison Hill invites, Rebecca Forbes conformed to very little of the 'good fella missus' legend. She did offer some services to the community:

'I do their little bit of writing now and then, about donkeys and jobs and supplies; my mustard plasters are very popular when they're cold sick, and at baby time I'm the head serang.'²⁴²

She made no attempt to change the cultural ways of the community in which she lived, and had even encouraged her sons to participate in its cultural life and language. But she did not disperse rations; she collected them along with everyone else. She had no special relationship with the other whites, the missionaries who live nearby. Her relations, with whom she was photographed in the newspaper articles, are black, not white. Most importantly, she shares her private dwelling with her Aboriginal son and, earlier, with her Aboriginal husband. M.E. McGuire comments that in a century of writing, Rebecca is the only woman who has broken the taboo of placing herself without barriers under the black male gaze, and that Hill was 'bewildered' by this choice.²⁴³

Rebecca continues to elude her biographers. They cannot portray her as sexually deviant, disempowered poor, captive, wild, or even a 'Good Fella Missus'. The best they can do is represent Rebecca as claiming for herself a new identity, which goes beyond the common social constructions. She is a 'white ... lubra', 'the only real white Australian there is.' This claim was not a device created by the journalists to solve their problem. Oral history sources independently verify that Rebecca herself made this claim:

And I said to her one day - she was sitting in her hut having her cup of tea - and she said something, and I said
'Oh here comes the pommy blood to the foreground, oh stubborn!' you know.
'I'm not! I'm an Australian! I'm an Australian Aboriginal, I'm not a pom!' (said with force)
She set me right in no uncertain terms. But I mean I wasn't being disrespectful, I was just being smart, you could call it.
An Australian Aboriginal?
She always classed herself as one of the mission people.²⁴⁴

Representation of Rebecca in newspaper photograph: 'white lubra'

The photograph accompanying the article in Tindale's journal is another attempt to interpret Rebecca's life. Four figures are lined up, from tallest to shortest. The three males, all Aboriginal, wear hats, shirts, coats, and trousers, and the man and older boy are perhaps smoking clay pipes. The man's clothes are dark grey; the boys' are middling grey. Rebecca is the second tallest figure in the photograph. She has a pale face, wears a hat with a brim, a white dress and a long pale coat over it. 'Going native' is not represented by an unkempt appearance! The man and the youngest boy are holding spears and boomerangs, although one Adnyamathanha man doubts they are Adnyamathanha artefacts, but look more like artefacts from Central Australia. This, along with the arrangement according to height and colours of clothing, suggest a directed pose has been struck, but not one conforming to general constructions of photographs of Aboriginal people at exhibitions earlier last century, where 'natives' would be posed wearing skins and portraying a hunting expedition or family-around-the-campfire scene, or else in portraiture vignette, a decontextualised head and shoulders on plain background, the subject sad and melancholy, considering their fate.²⁴⁵ Neither does the photo conform to assimilationist protocols: they are not posed in front of furniture, the woman seated safely inside. This photograph is taken outside. The white person present is not the tallest or central in the frame, nor the Aboriginal company kneeling in front of them, or to the side, or in the background. The

photo is an icon of shared space: white and black, tall and short, European clothes and Aboriginal artefacts, all in an outback outdoor setting. Perhaps the photographer and journalist were at a loss to depict this woman and her family within the colonial discourses available. Perhaps we are seeing in this image and article a new juxtaposition of symbols, which illustrates the novel concept 'white lubra'.

There are intriguing mysteries in this photograph. While the representation of the image is reasonably clear, the identities of the elements within it are not. The subtitle of the photo suggests Rebecca lives in the camp at Beltana. Her son and daughter-in-law did live there, but probably not until after 1940. Family can't remember her leaving Nepabunna to visit Beltana even then. Nepabunna is the more likely setting for both the photo and location mentioned in the article. Perhaps the journalist did not travel to interview Rebecca at all, and simply picked the nearest town on the map. Nepabunna mission may have declined to support the article, finding the presence of a white woman in their Aboriginal mission camp hard to explain. Perhaps the reporter attempted to shift her location, so that sharing of physical space with the Aboriginal community was not so stark as to be in one of the places reserved for Aborigines only (under white supervision). Rebecca's granddaughter does not recognise the Aboriginal people with her, although an Adnyamathanha elder believes them to be Jack Forbes, and Rebecca's two sons.²⁴⁶ If this were the case, the photograph must have been taken much earlier, before Jack died around 1931, and while her sons were still young boys. At least it seems certain that the woman is Rebecca. The confusion over the identities underlines the main point: the photo accompanies the article not because it is a pictorial record of the interview, but because it represents the way the article wishes to construct the image, and symbol, that Rebecca becomes. Rebecca is shown amongst those she calls 'her people', those to whom she belongs.

A Hermeneutics of Solidarity.

The discourses available to twentieth century European journalists to describe interracial relationships could not be applied adequately to Rebecca Forbes. These discourses created a 'Self and Other' binary based on constructions of racial hierarchies, themselves scaffolding expressing nineteenth century ideologies of the superiority of European and white 'races' over other 'races'. In this context, cultural hybridity was not explored beyond the sexualised and repressed motifs of 'colonial desire', nor was its exploration encouraged because the language of such investigation would undermine the hierarchical racial relationship that were crucial to the colonial project. It was not possible to articulate Rebecca's life in terms of both her British heritage and her Aboriginal family and community; nor in her case was it possible to adequately describe her life in terms of only one or the other. That was the struggle for her would-be biographers in the mid-twentieth century.

For this author, the struggle to write Rebecca's biography are two-fold: both to capture the meanings of her life in the contexts in which they were lived, as well as interpreting these into the contemporary context where discourses of postcolonialism offer ways to explore the hybrid nature of her life. In the process, the hybrid nature of the author's own speaking position becomes apparent: not researcher or friend, but both, and bound by the ethics of both. The research does not represent a moment of curiosity that will pass, along with its relationships, but a commitment to ongoing relationship with the Adnyamathanha community with whom Rebecca chose to live out her life. The author is white, in a postcolonial society, but is challenged to make choices of solidarity with an Aboriginal community. Dianne Bell describes her 'advocacy anthropology' in similar terms:

‘... the negotiations around what can be used and what can’t; and around who wants to be included and under what conditions; in addition to driving from community to community, chasing down obscure references, getting access to tapes, photographs and special collections - these are all time intensive and at times extremely frustrating...but as I get to know people better, as they visit my place and I theirs, as we chat on the phone, go shopping, work through photographs and documents together, we move beyond that. The work begins to feel more and more like participant -observation field work and I want to keep going.’²⁴⁷

In the wake of severe criticism from the academic indigenous community, Bell describes the development of relationships that in turn change the type of research she engages in, and leads to increasing commitment on her part both to the extremely controversial project, and the community she engages with. She does not go so far to use the word ‘friendship’, but the overtly partisan stance she takes in her work (well backed by the evidence she presents) belies a commitment to those she describes as having become partners, financially as well as in other ways, of the joint venture that her book represents.

A number of Aboriginal biographers have also had ‘hybrid’ relationships with their research subjects, and the communities who give witness to these lives. Stephen Kinnane²⁴⁸ and Sally Morgan²⁴⁹, amongst others, are both grandchildren and academics, and their writings foreground both these roles and the relationships these entail with the places and people who inform the research. For non-Aboriginal authors like Bell and myself, the issue is not the fact of hybrid status, but negotiating the development of hybrid relationships. The challenge of Rebecca’s life is that perhaps it is only through such relationships and the change to solidarities they entail, that those of European descent in Australia can truly belong, and be ‘real white Australians.’²⁵⁰

In the end, the authors of the article preserved in Tindale’s journal described Rebecca as they found her, and as the accompanying photographs suggest: a fairly ordinary white woman, who chose to locate herself totally within an Aboriginal community. That choice is not an expression of an eccentric personality or dire circumstances, but, as her grand daughter suggests, a

deliberate and conscious quest formed even before she left England's shores; and then a deep loyalty to her husband, and their community.

Representations of Rebecca in Family Memory: Granny

The memories of Granny, which are held by the family, do not represent her as unusual, or strange. She was a woman who made deliberate life choices: 'My grandmother Rebecca reckoned, if she meets her first Aboriginal man she's going to marry one. I think she done that! Yes, so she knew what she was coming out for.'²⁵¹ Portrayed as having forsaken her English family of origin in the newspaper article some 60 years ago, Rebecca has recently been memorialised as a woman held deep in the bosom of her extended family in Australia. After much conversation over wording with a family friend, an English immigrant himself, Rebecca's grand daughter showed me the final words she had chosen for the plaque erected at her grave site earlier this year:

In loving memory of Rebecca Forbes nee Castledine. Born Bow England 1876.

Died Nepabunna 1959.

Loving wife of Jack Witchetty Forbes, fond mother of John and Raymond, mother in law of Joyce, dearest grandmother of Daisy, Daniel and Darryl and loving great and great great grandmother.

Peacefully sleeping. A true friend and companion of the Adnyamathanha.²⁵²



The family friend had been intrigued with Rebecca's story since reading *The Great Australian Loneliness*, as his own grandmother was of the same age and origins, but had chosen to stay in England. He included an extra line when he ordered the plaque: 'From the Land where time begins to the timeless land', a reference to Rebecca's origins in the heart of the old City of London, in the shadow of the Greenwich Observatory, from where time, and latitude were measured throughout the world. This extra line on the plaque represents a journey from civilisation, to wilderness. Rebecca's family however, represent her as deeply embedded in a loving and beloved family and community. As her grand daughter Daisy Shannon recalled:

[Rebecca] had two sons. She married with the Aboriginal stockman there from Winbar station. She worked at the deaf and dumb orphanage at Sydney there, she was the cook, and when that closed down, and she had to get another job, she went to the station. She must have been just a housemaid there. There were a lot of Aboriginal people working there and she

must have met one of them like, my grandfather, and on this marriage certificate here, old grandfather Forbes was a widower.

I'm wondering myself if he had more children before Rebecca. I know Rebecca had two sons, like one, John - John Tilcha - and she called the other one Raymond, like at Yandama, because Uncle Ray born at Yandama... And my father was born in Tilcha, after then she named him there, John Tilcha

She had two sons and I don't know why they kept moving, you know moving down. That time they got to Nepabunna there, and the old fellow must have been really old, and must have got sick there, and he passed away. And she went on with the Aboriginal people, stayed on.

... Yes she stayed.²⁵³

Rebecca wrote weekly to her daughter-in-law (all letters were burnt when she died), packed trunks for each of her grandchildren for when she died, crocheted rugs for them using a hook made from bicycle spokes, and had a say in the naming of her only grand daughter after Daisy Bates. Her grandson remembers her writing to her sisters in England. Rebecca told her grandchildren about the King and Queen in England, and about snow, and about her trip to Australia on the boat, where she peeled potatoes. Her grand daughter showed me a letter in Rebecca's hand, written for Adnyamathanha man Ted Coulthard, to the 'Protector of Abo' in December 1930 as negotiations were under way between the mission and pastoralists for a permanent location for the Adnyamathanha community. Rebecca's family is proud of the role they understand Rebecca played in the eventual securing of a permanent camp for the community. Rebecca's grandchildren also commented on Rebecca's Christian faith: her regular attendance at worship, her friendship with the first UAM missionary, and her children's attendance at Sunday school.

Representations in oral history: in black and white.

Gertie Johnson, an Adnyamathanha elder, remembers when Rebecca arrived:

When she come in, she [had] got married, [and] got her two boys.

The two boys grew up here, [at] Mt Serle. We all went to Ram Paddock Gate and stayed there. She used to deliver the babies [for] all these aborigine [women]. She used to get up in the night time and deliver it. She was really good help for the people. They taught her a lot of other [things]. Yes, she was good woman - a white woman - to come and stay with us... He [Jack Forbes] went away and he told the people he's going to go away and marry the white woman. And they told him 'Nah you wouldn't get a white woman', see. But he did get one, [and] he bought her with the two kids. And she was a good woman and she used to tell them 'This is my people, I lived around with them'.²⁵⁴

Rebecca fitted into the community life well, keeping peace with everyone, and not being highly distinguishable from other women in the camp, apart from her Cockney accent. She remained living in her original dwelling at Nepabunna while the rest of the community gradually shifted closer to the mission houses. She was visited by others on their way to the creek, and went out with the women collecting bush tucker. She went to the missionary's store on Saturdays for her rations like everyone else, and to church on Sundays. She wore the same style dresses as other women of the camp, long like Daisy Bates, but with well-darned black stockings. She never threw away shoes, and gathered quite a collection. She liked living on her own, with time for reading the newspapers the missionaries passed on to her, and writing letters. She always had a whole wall stacked with wood she collected for the fire that she cooked over near the door of her hut. She gave vegemite water soup to hungry children at her door; others remember wishing she'd offer them a bit of her 'lump of cake and cup of tea', as she called it. She was grateful when other families bought her a rabbit or two, and she loved kangaroo tail cooked in the coals when her son and daughter-in-law and grandchildren came to visit. When her boys went through initiation, she took part as a mother, although her boys' aunts also performed some roles for her, which they understood she had not been trained to do. All mention her midwifery and nursing skills. As she became older, she is remembered as 'a nice old lady'. Some remember being scared of her, because she threatened to chase cheeky children away with a stick with wire at the

end of it. Others remember that if they were ‘cheeky’ to her, she would threaten to tell their parents.

These recollections, while positive, are not remarkable. Interviewees did not think it was odd for a white woman to be living in the community: she fitted in, married the right way, and was just always there, they said. Some felt she should have been buried in the Mathari cemetery, as that was her moiety; others thought it appropriate she was buried next to the other *udnyu* (white person), Mr. Page. None thought she should have been buried elsewhere than Nepabunna. Rebecca’s ‘whiteness’ was not a dominant interpretive lens for her shared domestic and community life amongst the Adnyamathanha: ‘She grown up with us, was one of us.’²⁵⁵

Non-Adnyamathanha interviewees recall her as ‘shy’, or a person they knew about but never met. The then postmistress from Copley, the nearest rail town to Nepabunna, recalled that Mrs. Forbes might be the subject of gossip as locals came to pick up their mail, although she only remembers seeing her once, around 1926, when she herself was still a girl living at the Copley Pub: ‘I can remember her coming in when her two sons were small. She stayed at the hotel ...and she seemed very shy, very shy, and I can remember the room she was in and all.’²⁵⁶ Rebecca was said to dislike having her photo taken, and to avoid white people such as anthropologists, when they came into camp. Her marriage is cast as an impetus mistake, after which there was no going back:

When [Rebecca] took her annual leave, she went into Louth and Jacky – Witchetty Jack was his Aboriginal name or Jacky Forbes when he took that name – caught up with her in there and they went on a bender, and gave the policeman a pound to be their best man when they got married the next day.²⁵⁷

The impression given is of a lonely, reclusive, even embarrassed person who could no longer face other white people. One anecdote from a long-term resident of the Flinders seems to undermine such an impression:

One time, some men from the station were going looking for Jack Witchetty, to do some work...They went up to their camp and asked for 'Witchetty'. 'That'll be Mr. Forbes' she said to them! No white man ever called him 'Mr. Forbes' in his life!

Her determination in her choice of family is expressed by a very old Barkinji woman in Wilcannia in the sixties who remembered: 'That white woman cut me out!' in the competition for Jack Forbes affection.²⁵⁸ The son of the manager on Winbar station said: 'She could never understand why her family shouldn't be as good as any other'.²⁵⁹

Memory as representation

While historic documents like the news clipping freeze in time particular representations of Rebecca and the private relationships which constitute her public identity, memory continually evolves through the conscious and unconscious process of selection, minimisation, and exaggeration that creates a coherent narrative of a life to fit the individual or community's current need. It is, says Salmon Rushdie, a kind of truth because it creates its own reality.²⁶⁰

Authors like Drusilla Modjeska and Inga Clendinnen who deal with their own memories in the genre of 'memoir' both acknowledge that memory 'warps' over time, and that fiction is a viable method to deal with the gaps in memory to build a coherent narrative.²⁶¹ Researchers who rely on the memory of others through recording oral history tend to be more rigorous in their approach to truth and memory. Oral history recordings capture individual and community memory at a particular moment in its development, and render them an historic record open to the same tests of veracity that all historical documents must undergo to determine how likely

they are to be describing an actual event. Is it eyewitness or second hand account? Is it corroborated by other independent sources? Is it a form of myth or folklore? Beyond evidence of 'fact', oral history has its own inherent truth as social meaning of its time and place, representing subjective truth which is itself a valid historical record.²⁶² By developing a representation of the daily life of Rebecca Forbes based on oral histories, the author is consciously building an image of the social meaning Rebecca held to those who continue to remember her. To Adnyamathanha people recording their oral history, Rebecca is an ordinary member of their community life, an appreciated participant in their history. To European people recording their memories about her, she is a perplexing mystery that begs some explanation. To her family, she is a granny to be proud of, for the choices she made.

Concluding Representation: an ordinary woman.

Representations of Rebecca through the sources considered in this paper lead to some conclusions that inform contemporary thought about intercultural shared space. Even in the 1930's, Rebecca may have symbolised a new way to be 'a real white Australian' through choosing to share domestic space with Aboriginal people. The key elements of her legitimacy as a white Australian were her active choice to form relationships with Aboriginal people, and the admission of these into the domestic sphere. Without adopting Birdsell's strategy for biological assimilation, Rebecca's story can be read to endorse intimate relationships as an appropriate site for shared space.

In achieving such shared domestic space, Rebecca was understood to give up her claims to colonial privilege, and participate in a domestic space on Aboriginal, rather than European, terms. The fresh juxtaposition of symbols in the photograph in the newspaper undermines the

dualism that might be supposed from that statement. 'Aboriginal terms' - in the 1930's, as now - are hybrid and dynamic variations within a culture and across cultures. To be accepted within Aboriginal community, Rebecca was not required to give up markers of 'whiteness' such as European clothing or her native tongue. To be accepted within colonial society, however, Rebecca was expected to make none or very little accommodation to any non-Anglo cultural practices. 'Living as a Lubra' allowed her to continue most cultural practices she was familiar with, while also adding Aboriginal practices and allowing these to inform the beliefs and assumptions of her English upbringing. Her Aboriginal host culture could be described as one which incorporated difference, instead of assimilating it.

In many ways, it is not surprising that the anthropologists made no extra comments on the article they found. If they had met Rebecca, there would be no more to report other than that she read, crocheted, visited her friends, and looked forward to visits from her sons who worked on stations. Like the journalists who interviewed her, they would have found a woman with ordinary concerns. She was not exotic, or eccentric, or an activist, like her contemporaries Daisy Bates or Olive Pink. Her life, as those who inquired into it reluctantly discovered, did not conform to a romantic adventure, a captivity narrative, a hagiography of a saint, or even a 'good whitefella Missus'. And in that there is great comfort for 'ordinary Australians'. If this ordinary Rebecca can make choices to share her domestic life with Aboriginal people and communities and to allow a synthesis of cultural practices and beliefs to occur through the experience, then so can we all.

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Section C: Contact Zone

Refer to Volume One Section C Life Writing Chapter 9

Exegetical Essay Four

White Journeys into Black Country.²⁶³

As discussed above, colonial immigrations fetched up English immigrants on the coastal perimeters of Australia, where they encountered simulacra of the metropolis they left behind. By the late eighteenth century exploration had turned to continental interiors:²⁶⁴ the 1745 preface to Ulloa's travel account urged 'What idea can we form of a Turkey carpet if we look only at the border or it may be, at the selvage?'²⁶⁵ In Mary Louise Pratt's terms, the 'landscanning' 'seeing-man' had arrived hungry to 'discover', and to catalogue, according to Linnean systems of decontextualised similarities and differences, every singular living thing on the planet and hence appropriate them for Empire.²⁶⁶ This essay will consider Rebecca and Jim's journeys into Australia's 'interior' and into 'contact zones' with Indigenous people, in the context of colonial journeys in-land, exploring the transformations and migrations of subjectivities that occurred in these geographical and social spaces. Unlike colonial journeys that assume a return to the metropolis, Jim and Rebecca's journeying concluded in-land, where their lives may be seen as metaphors for building a decolonised nation.

Inland Explorers

Despite some female colonial explorers of Australia's interior, such as the 'Good Fella Missus' Mrs Aenaes Gunn in her *Never Never*, John Flynn's nurses sent to heal and domesticate men in the bush, and journalist Ernestine Hill who left her heart 'out there for good' when she returned to the coast, the colonial hegemonic vision inland was not only male, and British, but divine as well.²⁶⁷ Explorers' journals describe the all-seeing Creator watching over them, acting as Divine Providence, and from promontories the explorers themselves are the new Adam seeing and naming terrain, and claiming its exploitable resources for king and country.²⁶⁸ And yet in the colonial business of Exodus and claiming a country as 'terra nullius', Indigenous people guided,

fed and watered Europeans through country they already knew, named, and maintained property rights over. The historical interaction of explorers and indigenous inhabitants show that all were ‘constituted in and by their relations to each other’, and that in the colonial frontier zones, the making of coloniser and colonised ‘involv[ed] conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict’ ensuring little cultural change for the coloniser.²⁶⁹

Colonial exploration was never a true exile, as it was premised on the return of the explorer to the metropolis with the spoils of conquest, whether spiritual, material or conceptual.²⁷⁰ Failure to return is horrifying, and haunting, as the enduring emotion around names like Bourke and Wills, and Leichhardt, testify, and give the lie to the myth of conquest, while at the same time strengthening resolve to accomplish it.

Travel Writers

In the wake of explorers came travel writers like William Jessop in the 1860s and Ernestine Hill in the 1930s, cataloguing the land by its agricultural use, and the people by archaic ‘types’, as they invited their readers to see the exotic and eccentric through their pen portraits.²⁷¹ Madness – as an outcome of living in the ‘bush’²⁷² – and dullness or hellishness were common depictions of life inland.²⁷³ By the turn of the twentieth century, writers like Simpson Newland in Australia and Joseph Conrad in Europe were guiltily lamenting the effects of colonialism, adding to the picture of a ruined country inland.²⁷⁴

While Rebecca lived in Sydney, however, CEW Bean’s serial ‘The Wool Land’ was published in the Sydney Morning Herald, describing life west of the Darling with the ambiguity of the ‘native born’ for whom ‘home’ is now the new country.²⁷⁵ He laments the degradation of land, while also rhapsodising about its leopardwoods and red soil; he describes its people as both

losers²⁷⁶ - the ‘hard cases, the failures, the men who are battered and scarred, who have...fallen behind the running in the inner country’—and heroes who will save the nation.²⁷⁷ Reverend John Flynn called them ‘A1 human stock’ evolving in health and vitality, although eugenicists held that ‘the bush’ caused moral degeneration.²⁷⁸ Bean’s ‘real Australian’ stood over and against the ‘narrow’ city-types and inept English immigrant, a theme Bean continued when he created the ANZAC legend of the same raw material.²⁷⁹ Yet the people he applauds stay inland building the nation while he the travel writer, returns safely to the coast, giving the lie to his professed admiration for inland life and its residents.²⁸⁰

Wild White Men

There is another, less celebrated, group of white travellers who ventured inland and stayed there. In colonial discourse they are described as ‘wild white men’ who have ‘gone native’, a trope which includes living off the land, looking unkempt, living with Aborigines, and not returning easily if ever to white society. In European colonialism, the ‘wild white man’ is a conflation of pre-Christian ‘wild man of the woods’ and the supposed curse on Noah’s son Ham.²⁸¹ It represented degeneration down the ‘Great Chain of Being’, and as such was the enemy of European civilisation.

Men like William Buckley are depicted in caveman-type images, and described as living in a cave, although he did not. The elusive survivor of Leichhardt’s expedition, rumoured to be Adolf Classen, defied nine attempts to find him and ‘bring him in’, with self-appointed rescuers reporting Classen found the esteem given him by his host community difficult to abandon.²⁸²

Failure of wild white men and women to return to white society was explained in popular culture by the notion of captivity in a variety of forms—restrained by hosts, fearful of return or

physical or mental incapacity. However, the cases of both Buckley and Classen suggest a strong element of enjoyment and familial obligation in their desire to remain with the Aboriginal community who adopted them. As a recent biography of Buckley states, he was ‘a man cast out by one society and welcomed by another’.²⁸³ Or, as a Wurundjeri elder in the same text sees it, he was a man who ‘deserted his own culture and found another’.²⁸⁴ Described as ‘whitefeller blackfeller’, such people exposed the limits of English language to cope with this hybrid state.²⁸⁵ These terms indicate a transformation of allegiance occurring: no longer positioned between, but in solidarity with indigenous people

Rebecca’s journey inland

By the end of Chapter Three of the Lifewriting, Rebecca is poised to make another journey, and this time into the interior of the country. Rebecca’s anxiety ‘to see the country’ reflects colonial romance with exploring continental interiors. Refusing the constraints of gender, the self-professed ‘wanderer’ heads inland.

Documentation of Rebecca’s life narrative is emplotted around journeys to places conforming to convention for female travel narratives.²⁸⁶

I come from Greenwich...I came to Australia...After seven months in Brisbane I went to Sydney...Always a wanderer at heart, and anxious to see the country, my next position was at Wynbar (sic) Station ...a big sheep-run with a ninety-one-mile frontage to the Western Darling...We pitched our tent and a wilpie there in Green Gully, and I have lived in camps ever since, for nine years at Yandama, near Broken Hill, and for the last seven years at the Ram Paddock Gate.²⁸⁷

Her ambition to ‘marry the first Aboriginal man she meets’ describes the intent of her cultural, as well as geographical, journey.²⁸⁸ Within a colonial paradigm, Rebecca’s journey into transracial

romance seems unlikely, given that even in the relative safety of survival literature of the period such relationships were doomed:²⁸⁹

...such love will always break down... Whether love turns out to be requited or not, whether the colonized lover is female or male, outcomes seem to be roughly the same: the lovers are separated, the European is reabsorbed by Europe, and the non-European dies an early death.²⁹⁰

However, within the paradigm of contemporary Aboriginal life journey narratives, Rebecca's journey and ambition is a mark of maturity. In these, identity is constituted through each place of the life journey, and the people and events encountered there, and the successful life is marked by journeys of home-coming to family and kin rather than individuating in independence.²⁹¹

Rebecca is reported to have expressed this homecoming through family in a unique way:

'The path has led me to strange places... If as they say, a wife always takes her husband's nationality, I am an Australian, actually the only real white Australian there is'.²⁹²

This is clearly a particularly gendered discourse, but within it, she is claiming a 'kinship' Henry Parkes never imagined: not a kinship that ties her to England, but one that ties her to Australia, and to the only legitimate occupants of Australia.²⁹³ And that relationship, in turn, legitimates her belonging in the country.

Like the Biblical story of Ruth, Rebecca's story operates as a parable undermining colonialisms fear of miscegenation and asserting the fact of hybridity within the redemptive paradigm, and suggesting an alternate mechanism for white settler belonging.²⁹⁴ Rebecca's identity has migrated into an Indigenous narrative of homecoming to family and kin.²⁹⁵ Her choice was applauded by Adnyamathanha people: Cliff Coulthard recounted Jack saying:

He said "Oh we'll go back and see my people!" When he got back here he said to the Aboriginal men: he said, "You mob, you've all got black women", he said, "I've got a white one!". He was really proud that he got a white lady.²⁹⁶

And elder Gertie Johnson agreed:

She was really good help for the people. They taught her a lot of other [things]. Yes, she was good woman—a white woman—to come and stay with us.²⁹⁷

Jim's Journeys Inland

Jim's narrative is dominated by the missionary enterprise, a colonial combination of exploration to discover 'untouched natives' to convert, and travel writing to document the process, as he did on the 1928 trip he made as a probationer into the Musgrave Ranges with Will Wade and Will's new bride, Iris, described in Chapter Nine.²⁹⁸ However, Jim's reflections affirming indigenous culture and arguing to preserve their itinerant lifestyle, did not conform to the nation building agenda of a white and British Australia.

Jim's mentor Will Wade had a favourite saying which depicted the missionary as explorer lead by divine providence:²⁹⁹

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
'Give me a light that I might tread safely into the unknown'.
And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'³⁰⁰

For four months the group were without communication, in the grip of bad drought, and travelling during the event and repercussions of the Coniston Massacre. Jim loved itinerating, and despite being reassigned to Deputation work, and later the establishment of a mission at Copley, he continued to reflect on and write about his experience in Central Australia, in the *UAM Messenger*, and probably also in reports government required recording country, conditions and people encountered.³⁰¹ His articles include amateur anthropological observations of food preparation and marriage arrangements. He writes in the timeless present tense, rendering all Aboriginal 'actions and reactions repetitions of 'his' normal habits...not explicitly anchored either in the observing self or in the particular situation of contact in which the

observing is taking place.’³⁰² As in natural science writing, they are decontextualised and dehistoricised.

Missionary and colonial agendas complemented each other. In one report, Jim concludes ‘The children were quick at learning, and they sang pleasantly choruses taught them by Mr Wade two years ago. They, of course, did not understand the meaning of them.’³⁰³ Thus the people are designated simultaneously as good candidates for improvement—important in the context of debate about the educability or otherwise of Aboriginal people—and in dire need of it, a justification for further white intervention into their lives. The focus of transformation in traveling is on those met, rather than on the travelers themselves.

Jim’s arrival in Adnyamathanha country, however, generated the reflexive gaze of Adnyamathanha, and is documented in Adnyamathanha oral histories, not colonial reports, creating contrapuntal and alternative interpretations of Jim’s journey into the Flinders Ranges.³⁰⁴ These accounts feature the metaphor of journey which also figures in *muda*, or Dreaming, where it is interpreted as a creative and transformative activity.³⁰⁵ In the story of *Nguthunganga Mai Ambatanha* and *Yanmarri-apinha*, as it was told to me, the mother searching for her children follows the *vakuvaku* bird up the hill, ‘And as she climbed, she sang and created steps so she could climb faster.’³⁰⁶ An indigenous knowledge of journeys holds that travellers and their landscapes transform each other:

Journeys and pathways construct landscape and their tracks - sediments and sentiments - map the country. They shape the country, just as the journey shapes the traveller. The features of the landscape are not co-created by vision alone. It is the complete experience of walking along the pathway.³⁰⁷

In Chapter Eleven of the Life Writing, Elsie Jackson, describes Jim’s pathway through the country and into a new identity, as he makes his lonely way on a push bike down a dirt track

before he finds himself in the midst of thousands of Adnyamathanha.³⁰⁸ Jim is received into Adnyamathanha country and community, and also – unbeknownst to him – into a pre-existing Adnyamathanha paradigm described as a dream by the community leader, Mt Serle Bob, which placed him as the messenger of an Adnyamathanha deity figure, and the saviour of the *yuras* from colonial impacts.³⁰⁹ Other indigenous accounts of the arrival of white settlers incorporate the prophetic dream motif: Dawson Daniels, speaking of Ruth Heacock said:

‘Old people, my grandfather and his father had a dream, a good dream that someone would come out to them, to look after our sick people and take them to a better place. We believe that person was Sister Ruth and that dream apparently came true.’³¹⁰

Whether Jim, Ruth or Captain Cook, indigenous knowledge systems incorporate whites’ incursions into their own moral universe.³¹¹ This hermeneutic does not assume a temporal causality, but the kind of heterogeneic ‘time-knot’ Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests operates in subaltern histories.³¹² Deborah Bird Rose considers this an essentially moral arrangement of time, collapsing and stretching past-present-future into the matrix of an ethical and significant ‘now’³¹³, rather than a Christian narrative of time which damns the past, neutralises the present and focuses on a never-quite-attained future. Hence Ken McKenzie’s account of Mt Serle Bob’s dream recounted in Chapter Eleven, inscribes Jim’s subjectivity as having an ethical responsibility towards *yuras*, then and now.³¹⁴ Jim’s journey to their country was, unbeknownst to him, the arrival they had been waiting for, and continues to act as a cipher for relationships between the community and white church workers, as I was explicitly told at the outset of my relationships with the community.

The metaphor of journey is understood in Aboriginal discourse as allowing that ‘there are many landscapes, even where they refer to the same tracts of country’³¹⁵: the missionary ‘improving’ agenda, and the fulfilment of prophecy of Indigenous empowerment can co-exist,

rather than compete for domination. Another Adnyamathanha informant described Jim as ‘like Moses, leading the people to the promised land.’ Jim becomes the person Adnyamathanha expected and journeys into a new subjectivity defined by and accountable to Adnyamathanha, while seeking to improve their lot at the same time.

Jim’s journeys end with his suicide and burial at the mission at Nepabunna in 1935. Various circumstances are given, including rumours of relationships with young women in camp, but the first reason I ever heard was that ‘He didn’t want to leave us’. As Cliff Coulthard explained, Jim was under orders from the UAM to teach Adnyamathanha that:

They’ve got to “[try to] live like white people”. So Page didn’t want to do that and he told the people. He said, “No, I don’t want to do that”, and he told people like Roy Thomas too.³¹⁶

Jim consistently resists white expectations that he be an agent of assimilation, bringing indigenous people into colonial culture; his death is interpreted as a final refusal to return to white society himself.

Conclusion: Decolonised destinations

Through journeys inland, Jim travels into a paradigm that defines his role as advocate in solidarity with the indigenous people he meets there. Rebecca’s journey weaves her into indigenous family and community. Their presence in Adnyamathanha community and history is a benefit to that community and its traditions, and not the cause of rupture from it. In these particular experiences in the contact zone, ‘inequity and coercion’ is replaced by solidarity and

kinship, and can be seen as metaphors for decolonised co-existence between indigenous and settler Australians.

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Section D: Meetings

Refer to Volume One Section D Life Writing Chapter 11

Exegetical Essay Five

Getting Off the verandah': contextual Australian theology in-land and in story.³¹⁷

In 1998, Stephen Pickard posited the verandah as an appropriate image from which to explore 'Gospel and Spirituality in an Australian setting.'³¹⁸ A post-colonial reading of the verandah in Australia reveals it is not an image to support positive encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Instead, the stories from the 'contact zones' Jim and Rebecca entered provide more productive material for a contextual Australian theology, and one that could be called a 'theology of decolonisation'. This material suggests that for immigrant European Christianity in Australia, an immersive encounter *in* the country and on the terms of indigenous Australians is necessary before a post-colonial contextual theology by non-indigenous theologians can arise in Australia. This essay explores how an Australian contextual theology developed by such metaphors can achieve a theology of decolonization for non-indigenous Australians.

Introduction

The photograph of Winbar Station in Chapter Five of Book One shows the structure skirted by generous verandahs. Frank Warwick, who showed it to me, was the five-year-old son of the Manager of Winbar Station in 1913. Recalling the staff there, he said:

Oh yes. Becky would probably have worked very much with Mum. Oh yes she would've worked very much with her in the house, but Jacky wouldn't have...

He wouldn't have very often come up near the house. If he'd wanted to see Dad he'd have let him somebody know 'I want to see the boss' and he'd have looked him up.³¹⁹

A postcolonial reading strategy

Franks brief lesson in spatial, racial and gendered station geography reminds us that few, if any, spaces in Australia are not inscribed by colonialism. That includes the iconic Australian architectural feature of the verandah, which has been proposed as a space of spiritual openness and social engagement.³²⁰ Against the ‘centric’ focus of spirituality in Australia, Stephen Pickard offers the coast, and its architectural manifestation, the verandah, as an appropriate site for Australian spiritual renewal, because it represents the domestic space of most Australians, and is perceived as an open and potentially permeable boundary.³²¹ Pickard’s project is to use the metaphor of the verandah as a culturally relevant description of the Christian God, and a subsequent model for the community of God, the Church. He says: ‘In speaking about the verandah God I have implicitly described a vision of what the Church is called to be... [a place where] ... East meets West, North meets South’.³²² Despite the attractiveness of this intention, there is something immoral about asserting the ‘image-power’ of this metaphor in ‘spiritual politics’, something Jean Baurillard might have thought erased or suppressed the past in Australia.³²³ In the Life Writing narrative, Becky encounters several verandahs, but does not meet her Jack on any of them. Giving priority to what is claimed as an indigenous epistemology³²⁴, oral history material for this project suggests ‘[an]other side’ of the story, and its examination elicits a contrapuntal reading of the verandah that suggests its permeability is extremely limited by colonial social conventions.³²⁵

The verandah was already a translated colonial artefact when it reached Australia in 1793 via several British colonies.³²⁶ It was theorised as a place of protection, security and safety from stranger, indigenous people, or the country itself.³²⁷ The view from the verandah further separated settler from country, the verandah posts creating a picturesque aesthetic which foregrounded fenced domestic space, placed agriculturally productive and cleared areas as the

focal subject, rendered against a background of uncleared areas, or wilderness. The construct of the verandah reflected separation of settler Self and Other, alienating the viewer of the scene of Otherness from participation within it.³²⁸ The structure supported the colonial panoptic gaze, which was also a profoundly theological idea, employed by Australian explorers in their journals to describe a 'Providential God', who, watching their efforts, revealed the country to them, and saved them from starvation, thirst and losing their way.³²⁹ From built promontories like verandahs, Europeans were able to supervise what they had colonised.³³⁰ This spatial psychology was expressed nationally by journalist CEW Bean in 1910:

'that country [beyond 400 mile circle from coast] , though it makes up the inside of Australia, they call the 'outside' country, because the centre of Australia is uninhabited, and this is the country which is on the farthest outskirts of civilisation.'³³¹

Phillip Drew specifically likens the verandah to the coast, where he says Australians loiter as an 'uninvited people': 'A people living outside the house on the eastern veranda of the Australian continent.'³³² In a reversal of the colonial motif of indigene as fringedweller, he situates the settler as the stranger waiting on someone else's verandah, and he concludes his book *Verandah: Embracing Place* by advising Australians will need to get off this coastal verandah before they will belong. It is not clear, however, whether in 'getting off' they will step onto dry land, or into the sea.

Despite this fringedwelling, Pickard asserts Australians have fallen prey to the centric spiritual mythology which first centered on London, and later Uluru. However he ignores this inverted and Antipodean sense of centre and margin in Australian consciousness. The geographic centre – the outback – is the marginal country beyond the 'frontier', that imaginal space where 'imperial culture [is] unravelling at its edges'.³³³ The imperial centre is firmly aligned with the

‘inside country’, the coast, the domestic space, and its architectural form, the verandah.

‘Outside’, outback, inland, is the Other.

Frontiers and contact zones.

Paul Carter, like Mary Louise Pratt, signals frontiers as places of communication and contact rather than separation.³³⁴ They are where the limits of self are negotiated in encounter with the ‘other’. Pratt terms these ‘contact zones’, defined as ‘the space of colonial encounters, the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict...[and where] subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other.’³³⁵ They are the antithesis of the verandah: they are not close to the centre of self but at its margins, beyond the fence lines; they are unprotected; social interactions are under negotiation and not yet regulated; subjects see and experience each other at close quarters not at a distance; and categories of resident and visitor are not finally assigned.

Despite Pickard’s desire to identify the verandah as an image of inclusive social interaction, this postcolonial reading of its function and meaning suggests it is far from an in-between or neutral space that hosts genuine and open-ended encounters between self and Other. That is more likely to happen in the contested and shared space of a contact zone, where Homi Bhabha says: ‘stories [are] still being written, nations still being constructed.’³³⁶ Peter Read reminds us that ‘contact zone’ locations are all around us, when he recounts that the ‘hairs on the back of my neck rose’ when his friend Dennis Foley ‘began unfolding his living Gai-mariagal culture on site after site of my own childhood’ on a visit together to Sydney’s northern beaches.³³⁷

Postcolonial literary practices, like those of Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, where the histories of oppressed and oppressor are read in the context of one another so that the nexus of ideology and power in a colonial setting may be broken, allow new and liberating discourses to emerge.³³⁸ In Chapter Five, the juxtaposition of Becky and Jack within the shared space of Winbar station that became a ‘contact zone’, and Jim’s constitution by Adnyamathanha as fulfilment of their prophecy when he arrived to establish a mission in their country in Chapter Eleven, creates textual contact zones in which the lifewriting text is a ‘new and liberating’ discourse of decolonisation in contemporary Australia.

Instead of a ‘verandah God’ presiding over reconciliation within such a colonising construct, I propose God of the ‘contact zone’, where the discovery of God and humanity is still an event in the making, and where each constitutes the other in the encounter.

Decolonising the Australian contact zone.

Contemporary discourse about decolonisation in Australia is as fluid as any other ‘contact zone.’ Margaret Somerville describes its practice in Nganyinytja’s cultural tours in the Anangu Pitjanjatjara Lands, where ‘tourists’ are intentionally held in a liminal and dynamic space. Difference is preserved but relationships forged while living (briefly) together on Anangu land.³³⁹ This is not unlike what Germaine Greer suggested could be ‘the shortest way to nationhood’, although her account moves beyond sitting in the dirt together, to urging non-indigenous Australians to learn indigenous culture, albeit one she describes in romantic and static terms.³⁴⁰ Deborah Bird Rose describes an instance of ‘decolonisation’ in the story of Mal the non-indigenous farmer who joined with indigenous people to protect Mt Dromedary from logging. During this process, he heard their stories of dispossession, and acknowledged his own

role in that; he heard them articulate spiritual attachment to the land that provided a language for him to do likewise; and both groups expressed their love of the mountain.³⁴¹ In this example, Rose is advocating decolonisation as ‘the unmaking of regimes of violence that enforce the disconnection of moral accountability from time and place’ so that morality can be restored to colonising agents by relinking time, place and consequences of actions.³⁴²

‘Decolonisation’ in contemporary Australia is figured as restorative for both colonised and coloniser, rather than Franz Fanon’s original use of the term to describe a process where members of the colonising nation would leave the country and the previously colonised peoples would subvert colonial representations and reclaim from their precolonial past a unified and cultured subjectivity.³⁴³ It also differs from the United Nations concept of decolonization as a process towards self-government by previously colonized peoples.³⁴⁴ In Aotearoa, decolonization workshops focus on ‘decolonising knowledge’ by ‘challenging colonial understandings and constructions’, particularly those ‘internalised’ by the colonized.³⁴⁵ Mick Dodson argues for indigenous Australians to forge indigenous subjectivity as a dynamic expression of ‘transculturation’, nurtured in resistance and relationship to non-indigenous politics of representation.³⁴⁶ As both Fanon and Ashis Nandy elaborate, colonizers are also detrimentally constructed through colonization, and that while decolonization begins with the colonized, it must end with the colonizers.³⁴⁷ Challenging the internalized colonialism of non-indigenous Australians becomes a responsibility for non-indigenous Australians engaging in a journey towards a true ‘post-colonialism’ in Australia.

The transformation of particularly settler subjectivities in the process of decolonisation in Australia, then, involve settlers ‘unlearning behaviours taught by the dominant system/paradigm’, seeking to build ‘real’ relationships across colonial ruptures,³⁴⁸ and ‘unmaking []regimes of violence’ by maintaining

accountability in time and place.³⁴⁹ It occurs in locations of proximity where indigenous people ‘host’ non-Indigenous people, in a dynamic of immersion, where separations of self and other are transformed in emerging inter-subjectivities.

Stories of Decolonisation as ‘Story’ Theology

If these are the notions of decolonisation from the Australian contact zone, then how might a theology proceed from this basis? Decolonisation is told in ‘real life’ stories of people engaging with people and having their subjectivities, if not their governance and place of residence, transformed. A theological method dealing with this material must also be grounded in stories of ‘real life’ transformations. Further, decolonisation requires a contrapuntal reading of shared histories to enable new and liberating discourses to emerge. Cultures are relativised in the process, guarding against the risk that a contextual theology can become captive to its cultural context and unable to offer critique.³⁵⁰

As discussed briefly in the Introduction to Book Two, doing theology by telling and writing stories is not a new theological method. Denham Grierson claims that since the narrative-symbolic form was the original mode in which God was apprehended, then poetic and non-rational forms of theology need to be restored to Christian discourse.³⁵¹ Further, the uncanny juxtapositions of contrapuntal texts create the dynamic of metaphor, where the slippages between unfamiliar elements create John Dominic Crossan’s ‘dark interval’, the space of possibility, when the assumptions of the old world are shattered and the new configurations not yet known, within which ‘God has room to move’.³⁵² This is the parabolic form of the contrapuntal hybrid lifewriting in Book One, which is the material for Sallie McFague’s ‘parabolic’ or ‘Metaphorical theology.’ The parable, as an extended metaphor, particularly in the form of poem, novel and

autobiography, can engage the reader in 'being interpreted' by the alternate logics which emerge from the juxtapositions.³⁵³ James McClendon, speaking particularly about biographical forms of theology, describes how the key images or metaphors of a life in some way exemplary of Christianity, can release new articulations of faith which in turn can modify systematic doctrines.³⁵⁴

While McFague has been criticised for failing to illustrate her theological method through literary texts, others (whom she refers to) have amply done so throughout the centuries of Christian theology.³⁵⁵ Jesus' parables, Paul's stories, St Augustine's Confessions, and more recently 'Third World', 'Asian' and 'Story' theologies all articulate theology through the medium of parabolic story itself, not as allegory, or illustrative, but as theology essentially rooted to the specificities of the textual artefact and its production. Paul Ricoeur has argued that the literary form of parable cannot be reduced to abstractions, and C.H. Dodd concurs, arguing from Julicher that even the Biblical evangelists were incorrect in inserting allegorical explanations of Jesus parables, as in the case of the redaction of the parable of the sower.³⁵⁶ 'Metaphors don't 'have' a message, they are the message.'³⁵⁷

Stories need these specificities of their content to function as a world within a world, creating in Ricoeur's term a 'world before the text' for readers to creatively inhabit and where they can experience 'redemption through imagination'.³⁵⁸ By inhabiting an imaginative world that combines disparate elements of reality in its metaphoric construction, new meanings can emerge for the reader that transforms their perspective, and identity. In this way, Ricoeur has argued that parabolic texts, including Biblical material, are potentially revelatory not because they have deposits of inspired truth, but because they 'enact a productive clash' between the world of text and world of reader.³⁵⁹ The historical specificities of narrative histories, or folk stories, allow

new theological insights to emerge from lived experience which can inform and form faith practice.³⁶⁰

Other Australian contextual theologies have explored elements of this approach to theological method. Don Carrington's 'Jesus' Dreaming' reads cultural 'dreaming' stories in the context of Biblical stories and visa versa – to develop new 'hermeneutical insights' for a culturally relevant Christian theology.³⁶¹ David Hunter draws on Ricoeur to suggest a contrapuntal reading of Stolen Generations history - 'retelling it from the point of view of the other' - so that the story of the past can be re-membered with new meaning, for both the children and families who suffered, and for the church organisations and members who participated.³⁶² Norman Habel turns his theological attention to the issue of reconciliation, intentionally bypassing Pickard's 'Aussie verandah' to conclude that 'The way to the soul of Australia, it seems to me, is a pilgrimage back through the landscape, through the stories, through suppressed memories to sites of resistance and suffering, the silent sacred places in Australia's history.'³⁶³

Protestant theologies like Pickard's have adopted key images as metaphors – verandahs, 'God Downunder' and 'Postmark Australia'³⁶⁴ – but without a contrapuntal or postcolonial reading of these images from the perspective of indigenous and non-indigenous relationships in Australia. Catholic theologians have looked for a metaphorical reading of Australian culture which illuminates 'continuity between divine grace and human culture' but without the benefit of polyphonic constructions of that 'culture'.³⁶⁵ Indigenous Australian theologies reflect a cultured reading of both the Bible, and historical Christian faith, interpreting God and Christianity in the light of contemporary indigenous experience and providing the kind of retelling that Hunter suggests can transform non-indigenous church members.

A theology of decolonisation seeks to bring these aspects of metaphorical and story theology – key images, readings of Australian cultures and histories – together in parabolic stories from our contrapuntal lived experiences, that invite the reader to be transformed in the space that opens up in ‘the dark interval’ between polyphonic histories, and between the world of the text, and the readers own life. Parabolic stories of Becky and Jim offer such decolonising theologies.

Becky’s story as parable from the Contact Zone

Throughout the lifewriting narrative, Becky is deliberately represented as ordinary, privileging the ways in which she is remembered in indigenous oral history, over the ways her life is exoticised by European Australian writers.³⁶⁶ This in itself creates the first juxtaposition and ‘clash’ between the expectations of the reader, and the world of the text. The text refuses to portray Becky as ‘unusual’, although it is the uniqueness of her choice of marriage partner in that era that has intrigued the reader in the first place. It is her unmaking of the boundaries between British colonial Self and indigenous Other that makes her life a subject for inquiry. How can you live an ‘ordinary life’ in the contact zone? In the slippage between expectation and text, a new social norm arises which Becky reportedly calls being ‘a real white Australian’. The reader is being challenged to reconsider the basis of non-indigenous legitimacy in Australia, and to choose legitimacy through relationship with indigenous people, and all that implies about hybrid subjectivities, alternative epistemologies, non-indigenous responsibility to explore and understand their history in this country and their relationship to country, and the construction of shared past in the midst of present relationships.

Jim’s story as parable from the Contact Zone

Down the silvered vertical of the wooden Cross at the head of Jim's grave are engraved the words 'Jesus saves'. Across its arms, reads James Page 22 Dec 1935. Jim Page's story can be rendered as a chiasmic parable, pairing the assertion of salvation for a man who died by suicide, with the salvation prophesied by Adnyamathanha of Jim's affirmation of their culture and religion, remembered by Adnyamathanha as saying:

"You people got your own God, like you worship a God, and I worship the same God as you do, but only you do it in a different way."³⁶⁷

Jim's argument for itinerating missionaries rather than settled mission stations, printed in the UAM magazine, dialogues with Adnyamathanha interpretations of his death as 'he didn't want to leave us', and the permanent place in Adnyamathanha country and community memory he achieved by being buried there. The ongoing search for a suitable well to sustain the community during Jim's time forms a metaphor in conversation with Biblical imagery of Living Water, and water in the wilderness. A narrative from lived experience, recounted through oral histories as well as archival material, that turns on such juxtapositions, creates a parabolic theology that can only be read in the parabolic text, and not be extracted from it. Like the parable of Becky's story, Jim's parable unsettles the readers expectations of a 'good' missionary who promulgates faith, hope and improvement, when it turns on the failure to sink a well and his tragic suicide, which itself evokes notions of sacrifice, atonement and redemption. Like those hearing the story of Jesus' passion, the reader is challenged to think about success and failure in new categories, and is encouraged to read success through relationality within indigenous community that endures beyond the death of a life.

Parables as a Theology of Decolonisation

These parables focus especially on decolonisation for non-indigenous Australians, through assuming identification between reader and the primary subjects Becky and Jim, and the autobiographical voice of author. Confronting their internalised colonial scripts regarding non-indigenous identity, and non-indigenous roles in relation to indigenous people, readers are presented with images of identity and relationship in Becky and Jim's lives, and in the life of the author, which provoke readers to enact decolonisation within their own lives.

Is this theology? The text is deliberately literary, rather than religious, in order to convey stories in a form accessible to mainstream Australian society. Biblical parables adopted colloquial language and form to achieve this task in their day. The text intentionally remains a description of a life, rather than commentary upon it, in keeping with the intrinsically incarnational emphasis of Christianity. The juxtapositions created in the text, and between text and reader, create 'room for God to move' where new understandings of humanity begin to answer pressing ethical and moral questions confronting Australians. For these reasons, I believe this parabolic text is theology from this context and for this time.

Conclusion: towards a 'post' colonial theology in Australian life writing.

Despite the debates in theological method, it seems that theologies which address critical questions in postcolonial Australia will be unequivocally drenched in memory, history, story and landscape that are peculiar to this country. It will not be a passive observation or polite distance from the events and people who share this history, but immersive experiences in 'contact zones' where indigenous and non-indigenous encounter each other and a 'new self experience'.³⁶⁸ It will use metaphors that attend to their postcolonial readings, and extend these into parables through which a theology of decolonisation is expressed. This is the kind of immersive

experience the stories of Jim and Becky are about; and the sort of immersive experience the telling of their stories engenders. Their stories enlarge the meanings of doctrines like incarnation and redemption with images and phrases that resonate with Australian experience. The stories of Becky and Jim engage you in contrapuntal narratives that have emerged from the Australian contact zone, and ask you to locate yourself and the Spirit of Christ within that story.

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Section E: Transculturations

Refer to Volume One Section E Life Writing Chapter 17

Exegetical Essay Six

‘We had to give them everything’: Adnyamathanha agency in the economy of ‘whiteness.’³⁶⁹

Introduction

The missionaries came to us with nothing: we had to give them everything. We had to give them a donkey, and cart to go get the rations: they had nothing.

Gertie Johnson, Adnyamathanha Elder, 2005

Granny Gertie was illustrating for me the way the Adnyamathanha equipped their first missionary to carry out a task they needed doing, but had been unable to achieve themselves: the relocation of rations from Mt Serle Station, to the camp at Minerawuta several miles away, where the community had moved in protest at what they saw as exploitative rationing practices of the pastoralists at Mt Serle. Tim Rowse has described the geospatial control colonialism exerted through the ration system.³⁷⁰ The Adnyamathanha expected their missionary, their white man, to subvert that system for them. And he did, with their assistance. They already had all the resources for the job: donkeys, a cart – but lacked one thing. He on the other hand, had nothing – he was not a particularly skilled person – except his whiteness, and it was that resource the Adnyamathanha wanted to access.

In this essay, I present a contemporary view on the meaning of Jim’s whiteness within a contrapuntal reading of that historical circumstance. This approach draws on the postcolonial reading strategy of Edward Said, where ‘experiences in one [culture] are experienced within the lens of the other’³⁷¹ and also on forms of indigenous methodologies concerned that indigenous narrative is ‘Part of the exercise [...] about recovering our own stories of the past’, and that ‘oral history can help to give the full picture by filling in the other side of the

(written) account.³⁷² With Aileen Moreton-Robinson I suggest that contemporary whiteness theory does not take sufficient account of indigenous hermeneutics which have in the past and are continuing to construct alternative meanings for ‘whiteness’ which impact on the development of so-called white subjectivities within an indigenous context. For this reason, I pay close attention to the way Adnyamathanha *yura* ‘hailed’ – to borrow a term from Louise Newmans – their white male missionary.³⁷³

‘White’ interpretations of Indigenous stories of whiteness

In chapters eleven and thirteen of Book One, I describe Jim through representations of Adnyamathanha oral histories. But the production and the subsequent literary transformation of the material, as well as its content, are marked by my own and others whiteness. As the collector of oral history, its editor and then author of the text in which it appears, I inhabit all three of Ruth Frankenberg’s ‘locations of whiteness’: structural advantage, a standpoint of race privilege, and participation in cultural practices assumed to be normal.³⁷⁴ Introducing my autobiographical voice into the narrative is an attempt to expose the simulacra of white history making.³⁷⁵ Privileging and foregrounding Adnyamathanha oral history attempts to honour these representations of the past in their function to serve present Adnyamathanha concerns.³⁷⁶

Representations of Jim Page as a white man in the Adnyamathanha community seem to deny a similar operation of whiteness for Jim, as Leigh Boucher suggested when he argued for historical specificity of racial constructions.³⁷⁷ I recorded *yuras* saying:

Page wasn’t like a boss. He’d sort of work with people, not go there and say “You got to do this”³⁷⁸

‘Well I think he used to treat them better, mainly. You know, whether they go and ask him whatever they wanted, you know, he’d give it to them...’³⁷⁹

Missionaries ‘giving it to them’ has been variously interpreted by anthropologists as cargo-cult behaviour where missionaries create dominance over clients who can never repay the debts,³⁸⁰ or Indigenous people ‘riding in the chariot’ of the missionary who wants to be their patron, and receiving benefits for doing so.³⁸¹ Rose Kunoth-Monks suggests settlers are expected to deliver goods and materials which they and their government have insisted on imposing on indigenous people: it is a white idea and so a white responsibility.³⁸² But in addition, Jim’s dependence on Adnyamathanha from the start embeds him in networks of obligation and reciprocity, moving him into a status Bignall and Galliford term ‘becoming-minor’ by opposing dominant social codes which required missionaries to ‘be hard’ about dispensing goods.³⁸³ In Stephen Muecke’s terms, this exchange is the ‘mundane and cultural level’ of ‘visiting’ through which ‘narratives of difference’ emerge that can change our cultural understanding.³⁸⁴ Jim was not being assimilated: he needed to remain white, and a missionary, to play the role his hosts required.

At *Minerawuta*, Jim’s whiteness is not situated in any of Frankenberg’s three locations: he is not in a context of structural advantage of European over non-European but instead is within a traditional Adnyamathanha community that had accommodated successfully with the pastoral economy for decades prior the coming of missionaries;³⁸⁵ he is received as a ‘stranger’ in debt to the hosting community rather than one demanding race privilege,³⁸⁶ and at *Minerawuta*, the normal cultural practices of the community, including the first language, are unfamiliar to the newcomer. But not inhabiting locations of whiteness cannot be construed as Jim abdicating whiteness by ‘refusing to perform certain versions of whiteness’

as Frankenberg advocates, or by recovering ‘pre-white’ traditions of non-racist ‘whiteness’ as McMullan suggests.³⁸⁷ Rather, Jim is interpreted into a different discourse of whiteness where being ‘othered’ by Adnyamathanha ‘hails’ him to alternate structures of whiteness, and invites him into new white subjectivities. This dynamic can be explored through a transactional approach to race, also described as ‘transculturation’ by Mary Louise Pratt, where racial subjectivities on the frontier inform and transform each other, albeit within unequal power structures and often violently.³⁸⁸

Further, Du Bois’ theory of racial gifts and anthropological theorizing on the host-stranger engagement suggests that where the host ‘extends themselves [through hospitality] into the possession of the receiver’, creating a debt in the stranger that binds them into relationship with their host, that the guest will reciprocate with the gift of their difference or innovation for the benefit of the host community.³⁸⁹ In time, reciprocity leads to cultural incorporation, although not structural equality between host and guest, lest they lose the benefit differentiation brings.³⁹⁰

However, when Jim writes back to *The United Aborigines Messenger* about these first meetings, he already prefigures his future betrayal of such incorporations:

....I shall not want to leave them they are so responsive. Of course, everything is new and their enthusiasm is aroused, but nevertheless they are quite nice to work amongst, very polite.’³⁹¹

Ann Cowlshaw and others have described the sense of betrayal indigenous people feel when whites they had adopted return to their ‘own’ country.³⁹² Deborah Bird Rose writes of the claim incorporation makes on her:

‘I was no longer a stranger from far away. I had been protected and taught, brought into families and given names and skin. I had been claimed, and I was now bound by awareness of fidelity.’³⁹³

When Cliff Coulthard tells the end of Jim's story in his Social History tours, he concludes that by 1935, Jim 'didn't want to leave them', and tells the story of how Jim committed suicide just before Christmas that year at Nepabunna instead of being sent away from the mission by the UAM. It is this lens more than any other, which interprets Jim's ongoing incorporation into Adnyamathanha community.

A *yura* construction of Jim's 'whiteness'

In Elsie Jackson's story of Jim Page's entry into the Adnyamathanha community in Chapter Eleven, he is a 'poor fellow' and through tropes of wandering animals and ghosts, is 'othered' as Carole Ferrier says, based on 'both physical aspects observable in the body and culturally produced attributes within particular histories.'³⁹⁴

Jim's first encounter with Adnyamathanha was not important or unique enough to warrant detailed memory, unlike the very first encounter of *yuras* with white men described in Chapter Seven.³⁹⁵ To describe it, I draw on models of indigenous encounter developed originally by Spencer and Gillen through observations of Arrernte meeting rituals in Central Australia in 1901, applied by Sylvia Hallam to fragments of first encounter records in the South West of Western Australia and more recently used as a tool to analyse the lack of genuine encounter at Botany Bay by Maria Nugent.³⁹⁶ Because the non-indigenous strangers were unaware of and unable to interpret correct meeting protocol, the two cultures never joined in a shared experience of encounter in 1770. All that Cook could discern from the

interactions he observed was that 'All they seemed to want was for us to be gone', a fair guess after Katrina Schlunke reminded us that Cook punctuated his greetings with gun shot.³⁹⁷

As in that case, I portray radically different interpretations of the events of the first meeting by Jim and Adnyamathanha, as happily, Jim stumbles unknowing into making correct responses and so both parties proceed, albeit with different assumptions, to the next stages of integrating a stranger into the community. Heather McDonald has described how 'Aboriginal people and missionaries tend to interpret the other's behaviour by situating it within their own cultural context and judging it according to their own standards of appropriate behaviour' and how such 'unrecognised misinterpretation' can protect Aboriginal beliefs and values from those who would seek to change them.³⁹⁸ Jim Page, with a language barrier, and only slight cultural education based on his apprenticeship with Will Wade at Oodnadatta described in Chapter Nine, could not be expected to understand his own cultural significance at that meeting. What he did understand was that he was welcome and wanted, a significantly different starting point to Capt Cook.

The protocol for Jim 'meeting' Adnyamathanha was 'scripted' by the Adnyamathanha hosts, and Jim's fortuitous response allowed 'something new' to emerge in their relationship.³⁹⁹ Stephen Muecke has written that 'something new begins' when the indigenous host is not forced into using the visitors epistemologies; when the visitor has to invest something of their subjectivity into learning to belong; when 'strangers begin to accept their implication in a network of indigenous rights and obligations.' He says:

'Since the Aboriginal person accepts every stranger as a part of his world, the stranger must accept that her world too must be forever changed, in consequence, and according to this local philosophy.'⁴⁰⁰

A beautiful expression of this new intersubjectivity of host and guest is found on the tombstone of Jim's contemporary, Dr Charles Duguid at Ernabella/Pukatja:

'He called us and we became his. So we called him here to lie in the peace of our land.'

The 'postcolonial attitude' of 'becoming-minor' describes a settler subjectivity that acknowledges itself as visitor, and the indigenous host as the owner of the house.⁴⁰¹ But it is also subjectivity in migration, becoming, through the delicate negotiations of guest, host and sometimes kinship, incorporated into the indigenous moral universe. This is where the settler is invited to belong, with all the 'uncanny implications of being in place and 'out of place' at precisely same time.'⁴⁰²

Both Jim and Rebecca are buried at Nepabunna, but in their own *udnyu* cemetery there, symbolic of both their belonging in the Adnyamathanha community, and their continuing differentiation within it. They did not become Indigenous: they became incorporated into the Adnyamathanha universe and narrative of the 'long transitive now'; they became friend and kin, and they never left them.⁴⁰³

Jim's understanding of 'whiteness'

When Jim arrived at Minerawuta, he was armed with a certain construction of the role he was to fill. Reports from Pastor Kramer in 1926, and then Mr Sasche from the UAM in 1927 described a community 'plead[ing] for a missionary, being adversely affected by access to alcohol, and that the camp included 'a white women'.⁴⁰⁴ AP Elkin recorded that *yuras* told him in 1930 that they had requested a mission 'so that children might be educated against the bad habits of swearing and drinking', because 'the ration system was inadequate and

[because] their children needed to learn to read and write.’⁴⁰⁵ Adnyamathanha *yuras* had been asking for education for their children since the since the Royal Commission on Aborigines in 1914, when Susie Wilton was recorded saying ‘We would like our children to go to school, but we do not want them to go far away.’⁴⁰⁶

Further, in the late 1920s employment on the surrounding pastoral stations, in which Adnyamathanha had participated for the past five decades, had evaporated with the crippling drought.⁴⁰⁷ In the words of a later missionary with the Adnyamathanha, Harrie Greene,

‘...these poor people had fallen on bad times. There was no stock on the stations, they had lost their jobs and had just become wanderers again although they were all good tradesmen, excellent with motorcars, windmill experts, but we were sent there because they were starving in the corner of a big sheep station.’⁴⁰⁸

Jim Page would have understood his role as delivering that cluster of colonial objectives known as ‘the white man’s burden’: an inaccurate rendering of Kipling’s political critique, but a common term none the less for the work of protection from the negative influences of European culture, delivering European education for the children, subsistence rations for those who could not obtain them for themselves, and conversion to Christianity. Still riding the nineteenth century wave of English evangelical fervour to right the wrongs of colonization, the UAM believed itself one of the few organizations to ‘care’ about the plight of the dispossessed and ill treated Aborigines. President Gerard wrote:⁴⁰⁹

‘As far as my knowledge goes, speaking as a nation we have never attempted to tell the aborigines that our law protects them as well as the white people, and certainly have not done much in the way of promoting their advancement in civilization, and less to the ultimate aim under the blessing of Divine Providence to their conversion to the Christian faith.’⁴¹⁰

In Book Two Essay Two I argued that Jim also understood himself through the discourse of white colonial exploration, which relied heavily on the Biblical motif of the Exodus, and the

promise of finding God's people a 'Promised Land'.⁴¹¹ But significantly, Peggy Brock points out that Jim 'came to their settlement, not they to his,' and Adnyamathanha oral histories in Chapter Eleven would suggest he also came into their web of meaning.⁴¹² Jim Page is positioned to discover a new subjectivity as a white male missionary in Adnyamathanha country and community, ready for him to inhabit. While he could not have known the prophetic context of his arrival, this Adnyamathanha expectation represents an indigenous mechanism for incorporating the new within indigenous knowledge systems.⁴¹³

In the racial transaction occurring between Jim and Adnyamathanha, I suggest a subtle shift occurred: Jim set down the white mans burden, and instead took up the task the Adnyamathanha required of him. When, as Granny Gertie recalls, he was sent to retrieve the rations, he was acting according to the indigenous interpretation of rationing noted by Colin Tatz – that these were an entitlement in compensation for white use of traditional lands, rather than as the colonial administration intended, rewards for behaving as colonization required.⁴¹⁴ And when Jim '[gave] it to them' freely, he was also conforming to an indigenous typology of 'proper white men':

'...blacks had three classifications of white men: missionaries, white men and proper white men.'⁴¹⁵

'Missionaries' gave food which wasn't theirs but belonged to Jesus so they didn't know why it ran out sometimes, because missionaries had told them 'Jesus sent it to the blackfellow'.

'White men' 'humbugged' all the time and make trouble 'longa camp' and only gave a bit of food. 'Proper white men' had to earn what they share so they are generous when they share

their food and tobacco. Jim seems to have been judged a 'proper white man' by Adnyamathanha.

Migrating white subjectivities

Perhaps rations were not the only commodity to be migrating from white control. Without the scaffolding of whiteness infrastructure, Jim's subjectivity would also be more vulnerable to migration into Adnyamathanha defined whiteness. As the lone missionary amongst Adnyamathanha, his incorporation into Adnyamathanha norms may have proceeded similarly to that of other lone missionaries whose acceptance of their hosts hospitality, way of dress and aspects of lifestyle were enough to mark a 'fall' into 'savagery' or 'going native' in colonial terms. Inevitably colonialism understood such transculturations as individual failings, instead of the social dynamics of the host-stranger relationship.⁴¹⁶ But Jim was not the only 'white' in camp. A French colonial policy maker in that same year remarked: 'a man remains a man as long as he stays under the gaze of a woman of his own race.'⁴¹⁷ I suggest that the migration of Jim's subjectivity as a white man in the Adnyamathanha community was also shaped by the presence of the Mrs Rebecca Forbes.⁴¹⁸

Rebecca had already ceased to represent cultural 'whiteness'. Rebecca's reported assertion of a new construction of white identity - 'real white Australian'⁴¹⁹ - based on her relationship with her indigenous husband was able to exist, according to Kat Ellinghaus, within the protective enclave of the Adnyamathanha camp, avoiding the colonial gaze which may have challenged it.⁴²⁰ Even when the colonial media, did 'discover' her, they 'hailed' her as a hybrid 'white woman "living black"' and a 'white lubra' as discussed in earlier essays.⁴²¹ Under the gaze of a 'white lubra', Jim's own understandings of whiteness may

have been further encouraged to assume new shades and unique accommodations, as he ‘crossed’ into Adnyamathanha paradigms and began to speak back to white Australia on their behalf. Greg Denning’s work on the transcultural ‘crossings between people and places’ in colonialism argues that in such liminal circumstances, ‘it is possible to see beyond one’s horizons’ and become and discern something new in the process.⁴²²

In distinction to later missionaries, Jim is remembered as pioneering new cross-overs between previously discrete fields:

But Page said things to my people: he made a comment to the Adnyamathanha people saying that “You people got your own God, like you worship a God, and I worship the same God as you do, but only you do it in a different way. You have your ceremonies, and you do dances for your God, on this land, earth and so on”. James Page knew that they were worshipping the same god and we always say ‘*Arra Wathanha*’, [meaning] ‘the person up there, looking down’.⁴²³

Jim however, could not avoid the imperial gaze in his role as advocate for the community in negotiating for land for a permanent mission to deliver the protection Adnyamathanha wanted. As an advocate in the colonial politics of land, Jim did not abdicate his whiteness which was essential for his participation in the negotiations. Yet advocating land for *yuras*, from white pastoralists, could easily have allowed other white Australians to position him as a ‘race traitor’ increasingly to be ostracized and stripped of white privileges.⁴²⁴ Chapter Seventeen describes the stress caused to Jim by the dissonance between varying understandings of whiteness expected of him, and the conflict – external and internal – this generated.

Jim committed suicide at the mission he helped establish, but even this action is interpreted for the benefit – as well as sadness – of Adnyamathanha. Cliff Coulthard says it this way:

And to me now, and even to elders that I spoke to, [it] is that when he committed suicide, they were feeling no good because it happened before [Christmas]. It gave them a bad Christmas in 1935. And for a missionary they got to really know and love. They had a lot of time for him. But they felt that he was stressed out. They said “*nanga*”, “*nanga* this *udnyu* wants to do something for us, but he can’t you know”. ‘*Nanga*’ means he’s trying his best, but he failed so he took his life. Maybe he was trying to get attention [from] the rest of the state or rest of Australia saying “You know there’s these [people], don’t forget these black people”. ...[Page] did state this: “People are human beings you know. Just because their skin is black, they are still human and they’re not animals so don’t you go around shooting them”. You know, things like that. Page did say [that] and he said it in front of the Grandfathers I’m talking about. In that photo they’re [both] there with him.⁴²⁵

Conclusion

And so they buried Jim in Adnyamathanha country. Peggy Brock has convincingly argued for the incredible agency of the Adnyamathanha community since colonization. There is no reason to believe that my own engagement with the community is any less to achieve their purposes, than Jim’s engagement was. In the process of researching and writing the *LifeWriting*, my subjectivity as a white Australian has become more sharply defined by a continuing ‘moral accountability’ to the Adnyamathanha community, and in Alice Springs to the Central Arrernte community, as Deborah Bird Rose has suggested must become the case in the process of decolonization that unmakes the past regimes of violence between settler and Indigenous Australians.⁴²⁶ This is not just a stepping away from structural whiteness, but rather an investigation of new ways to be white in Australia, under the mentorship of indigenous people who have been recreating their indigenous subjectivities – and by implication, our white subjectivities - for at least two centuries.⁴²⁷

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Section F: Belonging

Refer to Volume One Section F Life Writing Chapter 20

Exegetical Essay Seven

Towards A Theology of Decolonisation: Living, Loving, Dying together in Adnyamathanha *yarta*.⁴²⁸

‘Many whitefellas come to live with us. When will one die with us?’⁴²⁹

An Australian contextual theology of decolonization is fundamentally about living into new subjectivities that establish ongoing accountability and connection between Indigenous and settler Australians, and to the shared places we inhabit. Deborah Bird Rose has described decolonization in Australia as ‘healing colonial ruptures’ through accountability through time and in place, and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.⁴³⁰ She described how ‘I was no longer a stranger from far away. I had been protected and taught, brought into families and given names and skin. I had been claimed, and I was now bound by awareness of fidelity.’⁴³¹ Living and dying with Indigenous people is the logical outcome of such fidelity. The gravestone of Dr Charles Duguid erected by the people of the Ernabella community he worked to establish, says it this way: ‘He called us and we became his. So we called him here to lie in the peace of our land.’

The graves of Jim and Rebecca in Adnyamathanha *yarta* signal a similar incorporation and mutual fidelity as the final achievement of their migration of subjectivity from a colonial orientation to ‘King and (Home) country’ into relationship with Indigenous Australian ‘kin and country’. ‘Jim Page didn’t want to leave us’ asserted Cliff Coulthard; ‘She should have been buried with our people’, said Granny Dolly, ‘because she grown up with us, was one of us.’⁴³² Yet Rebecca is said to have ‘chosen’ to be buried next to Jim, two *udnyus* together in

the heart of Adnyamathanha *yarta*. Their graves, like their lives, represent their hybrid identities as different to, and a part of, the Adnyamathanha community.

This essay will examine the parable of Jim and Rebecca's lives for new ways of understanding the process and transformation towards postcolonial ethical belonging and hybrid subjectivity, and suggest that these shed light on new ways to understand Christ's Incarnation in Australian history.

A Contextual Story Theology for Australia.

Previous essays argued that the life writing text 'Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha Community: White lives in a black community' conforms to Christian literary genres of parable and gospel and within the Christian tradition of contextual 'story theology'. I acknowledge that in some quarters concerns still exist 'that cultural and contextual concerns will bias the Christian expression and relativise 'truth' without the control of universal theological traditions.'⁴³³ However, this project clearly follows the established traditions of contextual theology, defined as 'the conscious attempt to do theology from within the context of real life in the world.'⁴³⁴ From within their life experience, people *do* – not *study* – theology, in order to understand how to live their faith. They ask questions of themselves, each other, Christian traditions and doctrines, and apply their conclusions in provisional ways in their life, and continue to reflect on their ongoing experience in this way. By doing theology from within the experience of Australia's struggles with colonialism, and from within the parabolic story of Jim and Rebecca, a theology of decolonization speaks from and to the Australian context and the ways in which the God of Christ and Christian faith is

incarnate in this place. This contextual theology follows the lead of earlier Australian contextual theologies, notably developed in the 1990s in the wake of the Australian Bi-Centenary of the advent of colonialism in Australia with the landing of Governor Philip and the First Fleet.⁴³⁵

The story theology in the extended parable that is Volume Three in the Appendices and from which chapters were excerpted for Volume One of this Thesis, focuses on the following experiences: migration of subjectivities into hybrid identities through hospitality and kinship; recognition of the Christian God within Adnyamathanha culture and *muda*; and connection to, and affirmation of, place and community symbolized by burial. The discussion engages particularly with the doctrinal concept of Incarnation and the presence of Christ within the lived experiences which inform the narrative.

‘They came and camped with us’: Incarnation as migrating subjectivities

The Abrahamic narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures are an outworking of Abraham’s initial call by Yahweh to ‘Leave your own country, your kin, and your father’s house.’⁴³⁶ Norm Habel has described how Abraham and his family become ‘sojourners’ who observe the protocols of their hosts in the several lands they travelled through.⁴³⁷ The Rainbow Spirit Elders take up the same theme:

‘We believe the story of Abraham offers a better way.’...‘for him the land is a host country, not enemy territory. Abraham respects the peoples of the land and they, in turn, welcome him into their land.’⁴³⁸

The pivotal declaration in the Book of Ruth by the widowed Ruth to her mother-in-law is the logical trajectory for an immigrant people seeking an alternative to conquest and colonization.

Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. I will die where you die and be buried beside you. May the Lord punish me if we are ever separated, even by death. (Ruth 1:16b, 17)⁴³⁹

Jim and Rebecca's one-way journeys from the centre of empire to Adnyamathanha *yarta* also entail a reorientation away from origins, and respect for and commitment to their hosts and the country where they have been welcomed and incorporated. The Incarnation of God in Christ can be understood in the same way, kenotically emptying Godself to enter into creation through humanity. Christ came and 'camped with us', in the words of the Rainbow Spirit Elders, for whom this metaphor is the foundation for understanding the incarnation of God in humanity.

'When the lifegiving Creator Spirit took human form, God camped among us as a human being; God became one of us in our land, and became part of our culture.'⁴⁴⁰

Incarnation is how we explain God being present with us, forever, never leaving us, never forsaking us. A God who has come to become part of us makes the kind of commitment we see in the lives and deaths of Jim and Rebecca. It is a challenge I contend that few white Australians have been willing to face up to, as we go about our landless and itinerant lives. Decolonised relationships that enter into Indigenous culture will demand ongoing obligations that embed immigrants in place and in relationships.

'She stayed' is a phrase repeated time and again by those I interviewed about Rebecca Forbes.⁴⁴¹ In the story of Rebecca, it is her choice to join with Indigenous people, and then to stay with Adnyamathanha, that is of primary importance, and which forms a context for the central revelation that she became a new and unique sort of 'white Australian' in the process.

‘She was a good woman to come and stay with us’ said Granny Gertie. In the newspaper article submitted by Ernestine Hill in 1932, Hill is clearly incredulous that Mrs Forbes chose to stay in the camp, even after her husband’s death. She quotes Rebecca saying:

‘The policeman said that if I would come out of the camp and put my name on the electoral roll, he could get me the regular rations, but I would sooner sit down here, where my boys are among their own people. Besides, the neighbours might get jealous if I were on whitefella tucker and I don’t like to make bad friends after all these years’.⁴⁴²

Not only did Rebecca live with Adnyamathanha, but unlike many white missionaries or government workers living in Indigenous communities then or now, she intentionally shared the same living conditions and lifestyle as her Adnyamathanha neighbours and people.

Cliff Coulthard’s interpretation of Jim’s suicide as ‘he didn’t want to leave us’ resonates with the same theme: Jim came and pitched his tent among them, and in his death chose to never leave. He left the colonial zones of coast, and missionary allegiance to the colonizing agenda, and journeyed into Adnyamathanha *yarta* and loyalties. In terms of the metaphors of these exegetical essays, both Jim and Rebecca ‘got off the verandah’ and were invited to make their home beyond the fence lines in the contact zone. Rebecca is reported to have said:

We pitched our tent and a wilpie there in Green Gully, and I have lived in camps ever since, for nine years at Yandama, near Broken Hill, and for the last seven years at the Ram Paddock Gate.⁴⁴³

Jim pitched his tent across the fence at Ram Paddock Gate, and again at the Boundary camp, and finally within Nepabunna itself when other missionaries wanted his hut.

The Gospel of John in the Christian scriptures echoes this imagery, with the claim that Christ ‘tabernacled (or dwelt) among us.’⁴⁴⁴ The word translated ‘tabernacled’ is unique to this gospel, and is used four times to denote a permanent stay with reference to the Hebrew scriptures description of God’s permanent presence amongst God’s people.⁴⁴⁵ While a ‘tabernacle’ is seen as an impermanent form of housing like a tent or box, its contents – the

spirit of God – are understood to reside permanently amongst the people. The relatively minor Biblical theme of ‘Immanuel’ – used once in the Gospel of Matthew as a textual reference to the only two other uses of phrase in Isaiah Chapters 7 and 8 – also references this concept of the presence of the second person of the Trinity with and amongst humanity. The historical entry of an eternal presence in Creation is a familiar concept in an Aboriginal worldview, where the ‘long transitive moment’ Rose has described assumes an accountability to the ones who came before and responsibility to those who come after, fully realized within the present moment.⁴⁴⁶ It is an essentially ethical construction of time. Of course Jim’s arrival can be read back into stories a deceased leaders dreams; of course Jim and Rebecca’s graves signal that they will always be part of Adnyamathanha present and future experience. In the same way, the metaphors and experience of ‘camping with us’, ‘staying’ and ‘never leaving us’ describes a new way to understand the presence of the second person of the Trinity within Creation, as one of solidarity, immanence and permanence, with mutual accountability and commitment.

Becoming Incarnate

In previous Exegetical Essays, I explored notions of how hosts and strangers meet, and enter into a process of incorporating the stranger into the host community, while preserving the strangers difference to enable their innovation to enrich the host community.⁴⁴⁷ The missiologist Antony Gittins, following the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, argues that the relationship of host and stranger is mediated by gift giving which creates reciprocal obligations between the parties. The ‘gift is the extension of the giver into the possession of

the receiver.’⁴⁴⁸ The stranger brings the gift of their innovation and difference; the host offers the gift of hospitality.

In Exegetical Essay Six, I argued that the gift Jim had to bring was his whiteness; in return the Adnyamathanha gave him the resources he needed to do his job – bring rations to the community – and a place to stay.⁴⁴⁹ Rebecca’s gift is the traditional alliance formed through marriage, and in return she becomes incorporated into the Aboriginal universe through kinship. In addition she is remembered for her midwifery skills – ‘She got me!’ – which brought new life into the community.

Meetings between hosts and strangers conform to cultural scripts, by which each judges the others’ actions and the foundations of the future relationship are established. Sylvia Hallam’s interpretation of Indigenous meeting protocols became the framework for the speculative fiction depiction of Jim’s meeting with *yuras* at Minerawuta in Life Writing Chapter Eleven.⁴⁵⁰ In the process of mutual giving and receiving between hosts and strangers, new subjectivities are born between them. Stephen Muecke has written that:

‘Since the Aboriginal person accepts every stranger as a part of his world, the stranger must accept that her world too must be forever changed, in consequence, and according to this local philosophy.’⁴⁵¹

David Turner has also argued that Aboriginal Australians sought not to dominate but to accommodate, incorporating strangers as ‘a part of the one embedded in the other and vice versa without affecting the integrity of either’.⁴⁵²

Both Rebecca’s claim to have become ‘a real white Australian’, and Jim’s recognition of his God in the Adnyamathanha religion, are evidence of the embeddedness of these two colonial English immigrants in Adnyamathanha culture and world view. Sir Eric Wilmott in the 1986 Boyer Lectures also works with this image of embeddedness, suggesting that

Australians become ‘embeddlings’, where different cultures are embedded in each other, not like a melting pot, but more like a matrix where the distinctive parts continue to contribute to a thing that changes and evolves as a whole.⁴⁵³ For Jim and Rebecca to have become ‘embedded’, they have achieved what Simone Bignall and Mark Galliford have called ‘becoming-minor’, resisting the common codes of colonialism where colonizers projected their antithesis onto Indigenous people, creating an unbridgeable ‘us’ and ‘them’ opposition.⁴⁵⁴ They are both coming to define themselves through Adnyamathanha concepts of subjectivity – kinship and culture – so that cumulative with their identity as immigrants, they are becoming something new.

Paradoxically, ‘something new’ incorporated into its host community may indeed appear ‘ordinary’, as I have argued elsewhere was the dominant experience of Adnyamathanha who lived with Rebecca.⁴⁵⁵ This kind of ‘becoming-minor’ is a term that can be read into the Christian doctrine of ‘kenosis’, expressed in the hymn fragment in Philippians 2:6-11 where Christ ‘emptied himself taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are and being in every way like a human being.’ Like the second person of the Trinity, Rebecca and Jim placed themselves, and were received into, locations and relationships where their ‘border identities’ or intersubjectivities were created and transformed ‘by critically shifting the alliances that constitute these spaces.’⁴⁵⁶ The process of ‘becoming’ implies a radical transformation from what was. In incarnation, the second person of the Trinity takes humanity into the Trinity, so there can never be a separation or even duality of human and divine again. Something new has happened that changes the identity of God and of humanity forever. Christian tradition has struggled to understand or articulate this ‘something new’

which is both human and divine without losing the distinctive gift of each. The Council of Chalcedon in 451AD wrote its creed over this very issue, asserting that Christ be acknowledged 'in two natures', rather than 'from two natures' as the Orthodox churches protested.⁴⁵⁷ These days one is understood as a restating of the other and so the ecumenical split has been overcome, but for my argument, this debate may be relevant again, as I argue that intersubjectively, two natures cannot remain unchanged in proximity to each other. One plus one equals three. Divine plus human equals Christ. English plus Adnyamathanha equals something new, a 'real white Australian'.

In the discourse of decolonisation, 'becoming-minor' is a movement towards 'indigenous-becoming' of an immigrant settler/stranger engaged in decolonization.⁴⁵⁸ In the remaining colonies of Britain - Australia, Canada and New Zealand - decolonization is figured not so much as a return of political power to the Indigenous population and a 'return' to the country of origin for the colonising peoples,⁴⁵⁹ but rather as cultural co-existence with a commitment to 'unmaking of regimes of violence' which continue to encode colonising practices on colonized and colonizer.⁴⁶⁰ After all, the history of 'welcoming strangers' in Australia is one that bears out Gittins' warning that 'Trusting strangers can indeed be dangerous to health and life' ...and that 'It is one thing to want to show hospitality to the stranger; quite another thing is it to cede one's initiative and expectations.'⁴⁶¹ He advises missionaries to 'allow themselves to be contextualized as strangers'. This is precisely how I have written Jim's arrival and incorporation into the Adnyamathanha community. In the contemporary context of Indigenous political self-determination present day *yuras* construct Jim as the 'ideal' missionary, meaning that he worked alongside and not over *yuras*; attempted to learn *yura ngawarla*; respected gender and age appropriate protocols; and affirmed Indigenous religion

and cultural practices. The affirmation of this way of becoming incorporated gives practical guidance to ministers and Australians like me about ways to behave in Aboriginal country.

Jim and Rebecca's shifts away from colonizing relationships can also be understood through the hermeneutic of the Footwashing in the Gospel of John. Sandra Schneiders has argued that in Chapters 14 and 15 of John's Gospel, Jesus' subversion of the order of master/servant into the mutual service of 'friends' creates a template for relationships of equality in the Christian community and beyond.⁴⁶² Elsewhere I have argued that further to this, washing another's feet in the ancient world was considered even below the duties of a servant: in ancient literature it appears primarily as an act of intimacy between lovers. The three further references to 'friends' in John Chapter 15 underscores the sacrament of Footwashing as initiation into non-hierarchical intimate and loving relationships amongst Jesus' community. I agree with Schneiders that friendship and mutual service are portrayed as the template for Christian relationships, and propose that the relationships between Jim, and Rebecca, and Adnyamathanha, illustrate a model of non-hierarchical relationship.

These dynamics of decolonized relationships also inform how I image God coming into human lives. As the stranger, who knocks at the door but does not force entrance; as the stranger who brings a gift to us, and in return receives hospitality; as a stranger who comes to share our life and experience, not to judge, overwhelm or deride it. The Rainbow Spirit Elders envisage divinity in the process of 'becoming-minor', using the language of John 1:14, where logos enters into and becomes one with humanity. Not the creator standing outside of creation, but creator being recreated through engagement with creation. Further, Christ's arrival to hosting humanity is not one experienced as overwhelming and dominating, as the

traditional paradigm for dramatic conversion might suggest. Christ the stranger who engages with the meeting protocols of the host, who exchanges gifts and becomes obligated to the host, proceeds from a position of humility and respect before humanity. Christ does not come to colonise humanity, but to decolonize and ‘unmake the relationships of violence’ that have segregated humanity and divinity.⁴⁶³ Not by transforming humanity, but by sharing it. Like Rebecca and Jim, who did not achieve liberation for the Adnyamathanha for colonialism, this understanding of Christ does not redeem people out of their situation, but is a creating or life giving presence with them in it. This dynamic of ‘becoming-minor’ is also the movement of Christianity in contextual theology itself: to come as a stranger and become transformed into a subjectivity existing within the culture. CS Song has criticized the modern agenda of Reinhold Neibuhr which proposed varieties of relationship between Christ and Culture as ‘against, for, above or in paradox with...[or] transforming culture’ and instead claims that Jesus agenda was to bring out the best of the religious culture in which he found himself and urge the reconstruction of community from that basis.⁴⁶⁴

Incarnation as hybridity.

In previous exegetical essays, I have argued that hybridity is the only possibility in a postcolonial worldview, where even the subaltern voice must speak into the dominant discourses to critique them, and where processes of transculturation have enabled colonized groups to select from the colonial culture to serve their own cultural objectives.⁴⁶⁵ Mark Brett has argued that postcolonial interpreters of Pauline treatments of ethnicity – ‘in Christ there is neither Jew nor gentile’ – reveal not a universalizing or erasing of cultural specificity, but

instead an embrace of the hybrid nature of Christian community.⁴⁶⁶ Non-Indigenous Australians need to understand themselves within this tradition, grafting on to the spiritual inheritance of Indigenous Australians and forming a hybrid community. 'This is not to suggest a self-negation on the part of any group, but rather a receptive incorporation into the life of God' which he suggests occurs through 'kenotic listening'.⁴⁶⁷

Racial and cultural hybridity have been concerns of the Hebrew scriptures as well, where particularly the Exilic literature poses a range of theologies in response to diaspora and dispossession. The Books of Jeremiah, Ruth and Esther, are parabolic stories that encourage their readers to imagine making a home and coming to belong in the new country. The revelation of the Book of Ruth is the stark reminder that even the great Jewish king David is of hybrid ancestry, relativising others calls for racial purity. In the Book of Esther, the protagonist reveals her own hybrid identity as a Persian princess and a Jewess, asserting a composite of these identities is possible. These traditions counter the calls for racial purity in other books like Ezra and Ezekial, although the ethnocentrism of these texts in their historical contexts has been questioned by postcolonial Biblical scholars such as Mark Brett and Daniel Smith-Christopher.⁴⁶⁸

However, racial purity supported by Biblical notions of 'a chosen race' was one of the overriding concerns of empire and of colonization in Australia. Nineteenth century theories of race were endlessly concerned about 'admixture of blood' and how to categorise the resulting offspring, and even twentieth century media struggled to understand Rebecca as a 'white lubra'.⁴⁶⁹ Reinstating the validity of racial and cultural hybridity in the traditions of Esther, Ruth and Jeremiah, and the affirmation of the hybrid ancestry of Jesus himself,

affirms hybridity in humanity as not only legitimate, but a reflection of God's own hybrid nature in Jesus, and in the Godhead. This revelation is potentially redemptive for readers who allow their subjectivities to migrate into hybrid states through relationships with the text, and with Indigenous Australians beyond it.

You worship the same God: Incarnation in cultures

The UAM 'Two Ways' poster illustrates a mutually exclusive choice between Indigenous culture and Christianity. While it was developed after Jim's death, I have no doubt that it represented the dominant theology within the UAM at his time also. Yet Adnyamathanha Christians like Ken McKenzie affirm that God was present in their culture, 'in disguise', and Cliff Coulthard explicitly recounts Adnyamathanha belief that Jim acknowledged 'You worship the same God'.⁴⁷⁰

At that time, such an affirmation was as mutually exclusive to the ideology of empire as were the later UAM's 'Two Ways'. Indeed, one of the key justifications for colonization was to 'bring Christianity' to 'heathen' who were otherwise 'doomed to hell'.⁴⁷¹ To assert that the Christian God was already there undermined a central principle of colonialism, as well as primary motivation for the Christian missionary enterprise in Australia. Jim's affirmation compels the reader to expect to encounter God in new ways and in new guises. It requires non-Indigenous readers to assume the attitude of learners from Indigenous people, such as that taken by Deborah Bird Rose learning from Hobbles Danaiyarri.⁴⁷²

Acknowledging Christ in cultures requires capacity to recognize localized expressions of divinity. Tony Swain has argued that as a landless people, the Hebrews developed the concept of a universal omnipotence, located in the sky not the earth, and who was therefore

‘other’ to creation.⁴⁷³ Yahweh’s promise to reinstate place became a justification for colonialism to impose its culture-bound version of the universal God onto the places and cultures it conquered. Yet while colonialism privileged the Joshua accounts of violent conquest, the Abramic narratives offer an alternative metaphor for settlers which engages with and acknowledges immanent and localized expressions of divinity: in the stories of Abraham, he makes alliances that bind their participants into obligations to each other, he buries his wife according to Canaanite traditions, he receives blessings from Melchizedek and worships his god with him. Mark Brett has expanded the reach of this tradition further through the Hebrew scriptures, claiming Amos 9:7 and Isaiah 19:25 also affirm Yahweh’s liberating presence within the history and cultures of other peoples.⁴⁷⁴

Deborah Bird Rose has examined Indigenous stories that contrast these two traditions of conquest and co-existence in the stories told of Ned Kelly and Captain Cook in the Victoria River district of northern Australia. Ned Kelly is seen as a white fellow and an Indigenous person simultaneously who, in the stories, helps to make some of the land features, and fights for Indigenous people against white invaders. He is analysed and found to be a ‘purely moral’ white man and therefore an ‘equitably social order that includes Europeans can be established as an enduring principle of life.’⁴⁷⁵ In contrast, Captain Cook in these stories stands for the immoral European, the invaders who have no enduring place here. Other versions of the Captain Cook stories assert there were two Cooks, the first who brought good things and was moral, but the second came to invade and was immoral.⁴⁷⁶ These stories indicate that as Indigenous cultures found ways to incorporate the novelty of colonization into their world view, the possibility of non-colonial relationships with Europeans could be imagined, and

occasionally, experienced. As Rose says of the Yarralin people, 'They tell stories which open up possibilities,' – as a good parable should – and in this case, the possibility of an Abrahamic approach to co-existence rather than the dominant history of colonial conquest.⁴⁷⁷

Adnyamathanha stories of Jim and Rebecca's ways of entering and affirming

Adnyamathanha culture and community can be interpreted through this muted tradition of the Hebrew scriptures, and also open up 'possibilities' for non-colonial relationships between hosts and strangers.

Death as Belonging

Shirley: We just live here.

Leo: It's a home, it's a, I don't know.

Shirley: Home for us.

Leo: I don't know what do you call that, hey. Well we've been to Queensland, we've been to NSW: they got some trees and north and south end of Queensland yes. And up here and down from Alice Spring and those places. I don't know. I said 'We live here but them places, I suppose the other people see the same thing. It's a very nice place but not good as this'. I don't know why, how? But it must be our home, innit. You belongs to this country; you stop here, eh. It must be that way. That's what we think about.⁴⁷⁸

These two old people, husband and wife, are now buried in the Nepabunna Cemetery, side by side. *Nyanga*, these two. For them to be buried anywhere else just wouldn't be right: they were born at Nepabunna, grew up there, lived and worked in the Flinders Ranges all their lives. They are Adnyamathanha, and that is their country. Their life journeys are collapsed into their origins. The 'rightness' of being buried in relation to a person's life is borne out in the Dedications at the end of Life Writing Chapter 20, where the twelve people who have passed away since their contribution to this project was made, have all been buried in places that reflect their lives, and their ties to kin and country.

Settlers, as immigrants, have a ruptured relationship between origins and their life journeys and destinations. Where they are buried, if they or those close to them have a choice, reflects the relative strength of their allegiances to origins, or destinations. Jim's burial at Nepabunna could be construed as an accident of location, except for the dominant interpretation of his suicide as 'he didn't want to leave us'. His burial place is understood as his choice. It is also clear that Rebecca's burial place was her own choice: to be identified with the other *udnyu* who came to belong with Adnyamathanha, and in the community and country that had been her home for nearly thirty years. A local white resident claims her place of burial should have symbolized her whiteness:

She should be buried here [Copley cemetery], not under a bush out there. But she was a white so couldn't be buried with Aborigines so the grave's on its own. They should move it. There's just her and that missionary who slit his throat. If you kill yourself they can't give you a Christian burial so he was buried up on the hill. They shouldn't have buried her there.⁴⁷⁹

An Adnyamathanha elder said her burial place should have symbolized her Adnyamathanha kinship:

Mrs. Forbes should have been buried this way (indicates direction with her hands), not (at right angles to Jim's grave as she indicates with her hands) at the feet. I told her son that. And she should have been buried with our people (in the Mathari cemetery) because she grown up with us, was one of us.⁴⁸⁰

Rebecca chose the hybrid space, belonging to both, and asserting her membership of a small company of whitefellas able to claim this. Their graves function literally and symbolically as affirmations of both such hybrid identities, and their solidarity with the kin and country who welcomed them in and made them at home.

Jesus' own burial is also a vexed affair. The Gospel narratives make it very clear that Jesus chooses to meet his death in Jerusalem, and presumably to be buried there. But all four Gospel narratives report an empty tomb on Easter Sunday, with Matthew and John concluding the gospel with the Christ returning to Jesus' birthplace in Galilee, and John ending with the Christ returning to heaven, his divine origin. The Gospel of Mark represents each of these final locations in its two endings, caught by the editors need to explain the received traditions. Even the historical location of the tomb in Jerusalem is unsettled. While this aspect of Christian tradition is foundational for an understanding of a universally redemptive Christ, it unhelpfully removes the ethical specificity that the burial of Jesus' body in Yahweh's holy city might bring. An empty tomb does not progress a theology of decolonization in Australia. But the making of elaborate shrines at the place of Jesus' death does, and has done from the early eras of Christianity. There is no question that Jesus was a Jew, as there is no question that Jesus Christ must be 'fully one of us', as the Rainbow Spirit Elders assert:

'What the creator spirit was doing in Jesus Christ was becoming fully one of us. The Creator Spirit hunts with us, shares our food, camps with us, speaks our languages, dances our ceremonies and sleeps by our fires. This Christ is not a foreigner but an Aboriginal person like us. The Creator Spirit belongs to our country. For us, Christ is not European but one of our own, from our land, and present wherever our people are struggling, sick or suffering.'⁴⁸¹

There is no question, that for non-Indigenous Australians, Jesus Christ must also be 'one of us', and in the parables of Jim and Rebecca I argue that we have glimpsed a de-colonialised Christ: 'becoming-minor', an embeddling, in solidarity and intimate relationship with Indigenous Australians.

'Say what is the Gospel According to You?' ⁴⁸²

You are writing a Gospel
A chapter each day,
By deeds that you do,
By words that you say.
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true;
Say what is the Gospel
According to you?⁴⁸³

Writing the lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes has described a trajectory from origins to belonging in a new country, from colonialism to decolonized relationships, from stranger to incorporation into kin and community, and from ‘otherness’ to commitment to ethical accountability to culture and country through time and in place. These themes are all there in Rebecca’s headstone:

In loving memory of Rebecca Forbes
nee Rebecca Castledine.
Born London England 1878 Died Nepabunna 1959.
From the land where time begins to the timeless land
Loving wife of Jack “Witchetty” Forbes
Fond mother of John and Raymond, mother-in-law of Joyce
Dearest grandmother of Daisy, Daniel and Darryl
Our loving great and great great grandmother
Peacefully sleeping
A true friend and companion of the Adnyamathanha people

These elements describe a theology not of liberation, as much as one of becoming, affirmation, and inclusion. What I have tried to do, as a white Australian, is follow the lead of Indigenous theologians and ask what Christ looks like as one like me. I have found in stories from our shared history, images of Christ in white Australians Jim and Rebecca, showing me from within my own culture and religious heritage traditions of decolonized relationships that

offer alternative ways to understand and live out Christian lives in twenty-first century Australia.

For each non-Indigenous Australian like me, the questions remain: where do I belong? Where will I be buried? What will be written on my gravestone? In a nation founded on the lie of *terra nullius*, and where Indigenous disadvantage continues to be a result of structural racism, people like me – a white woman, a Christian and a Church minister – have an ethical and moral responsibility to become at home in this country which belongs to Aboriginal and Islander peoples, through decolonized and postcolonial personal relationships and friendships with Indigenous people, and through enduring commitment to country and cultural protocols where we have been welcomed in, and become friends, and family.

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¹ Taken from a discussion Paper for Life Writing Symposium, A Flinders Humanities Research Centre Symposium, June 2006, Flinders University

² United Aborigines Mission, *The United Aborigines Messenger* 1929-.1 June 1929, p15 Verse on the Children's Page.

³ For an intentional advocacy stance in the fields of anthropology and history respectively, see Diane Bell, *Ngarrinjjeri Wurruwarrin: A World That Is, Was, and Will Be*. (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1998). Mark McKenna, *Looking for Blackfellas' Point: An Australian History of Place* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002).

⁴ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004).

⁵ Beth M Robertson, *Oral History Handbook* (Adelaide: Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch) Inc, 2000).

⁶ Tracy Spencer, "The Lives of Jim Page and Rebecca Forbes in the Adnyamathanha Community: White Lives in a Black Community," (2010). Ch 1

⁷ Anita M Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2003). pp10-14 Gives a thorough treatment of the views of a wide number of Indigenous academics on the topic.

⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. p36

⁹ Heather Kerr and Amanda Nettelbeck, ed., *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Jackie Huggins, "Respect Vs Political Correctness," *Australian Author* 26.3 Spring (1994). p12, 13

¹¹ Willa McDonald, "Tricky Business: Whites on Black Territory," *Australian Author* 29.1 Autumn (1997). p12

¹² Professor Greg Denning, "Challenges to Perform: History, Passion and the Imagination," (http://www.nla.gov.au/events/history/papers/Greg_Denning.html), vol.

¹³ Gillian Whitlock, "From Biography to Autobiography," *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Webby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). p255

¹⁴ Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1975).; Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). p7 Paul Ricoeur's cross-disciplinary work in literary theory and theology suggests that a subject can experience 'redemption through imagination' and that particularly in metaphor and its more discursive form, parable, the unfamiliar juxtaposition of images and meanings that bring life to these forms also create a new 'world before the text' which the reader can imaginatively inhabit and so experience their selfhood in new ways through such texts. He describes his term 'world in front of the text' on pp221 ff.

¹⁵ Richard A Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, ed. GN Stanton, vol. 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Marlene Kadar, ed., *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

¹⁷ Alisa Bunbury, *Arid Arcadia: Art of the Flinders Ranges*, ed. Jan Hylton and Penelope Curtin (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2002).; Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987). p53 Quoting Eyre 1840

¹⁸ Whitlock, "From Biography to Autobiography." p233 Also Peter Read, *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Fiona Probyn, "How Does the Settler Belong?" *Westerly* 47 (2002).

¹⁹ Elspeth Probyn, "True Voices and Real People; the 'Problem' of the Autobiographical in Cultural Studies," *Relocating Cultural Studies: Developments in Theory and Research*, ed. John Shepherd and Ian Taylor Valda Blundell (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). pp110-112

²⁰ Robert Manne, ed., *Whitewash: On Keith Windshuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2003). Stuart MacIntyre, *The History Wars*.

²¹ Bell, *Ngarrinjjeri Wurruwarrin: A World That Is, Was, and Will Be*.

²² Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). p64; Fern Kupfer., "Everything but the Truth? (Acceptable Lies in Creative Non-Fiction Writing)," *The Women's Review of Books* 13.10-11 (1996).

²³ Gareth Griffiths, Bill Ashcroft, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1989). pp52-54

²⁴ Bill Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ch 5 includes a comparison of the positions of Spivak and Bhabha on this question. Spivak argues that the subaltern voice can never be heard in its own terms within a colonial context: Bhabha's contention is that even within colonial text, traces of genuine subaltern voice can be discerned.

²⁵ Susan Magarey, Caroline Guerin and Paula Hamilton, ed., *Writing Lives: Feminist Biography and Autobiography* (Australian Feminist Studies, 1992). p142

²⁶ Susan Maushart, *Sort of a Place Like Home* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Center Press, 1993). p207

²⁷ M M Bakhtin., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Slavic Series, ed. Ed Michael Holquist Trans Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist., vol. No. 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

²⁸ H Thomson, *Bio-Fictions: Brian Matthews, Drusilla Modjeska and Elizabeth Jolley*, The Colin Roderick Lectures (Foundation for Australian Literary Studies, James Cook University, 1994). p2

²⁹ Thomson, *Bio-Fictions: Brian Matthews, Drusilla Modjeska and Elizabeth Jolley*. p1

³⁰ Thomson, *Bio-Fictions: Brian Matthews, Drusilla Modjeska and Elizabeth Jolley*. p10

³¹ Susan Lever, *Real Relations: The Feminist Politics of Form in Australian Fiction*, Asal Literary Series (Sydney: Halstead Press, 2000). p135

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- ³² Thomson, *Bio-Fictions: Brian Matthews, Drusilla Modjeska and Elizabeth Jolley*. p1; Hamilton, ed., *Writing Lives: Feminist Biography and Autobiography*. p141
- ³³ Hamilton, ed., *Writing Lives: Feminist Biography and Autobiography*. p142
- ³⁴ Hamilton, ed., *Writing Lives: Feminist Biography and Autobiography*. p167
- ³⁵ Brian Matthews, "Writing the Self in/ after the Postmodern: 'Poppy' and 'Heddy and Me'," *Southern Review* 22.1 (Mar 1989).
- ³⁶ Drusilla Modjeska, "Writing the Self in/after the Postmodern: 'Poppy' and 'Heddy and Me'," *Southern Review* 22.1 (Mar 1989); Drusilla Modjeska, *Timepieces* (Sydney: Picador, 2002). p218
- ³⁷ Modjeska, *Timepieces*. pp67-8, 89
- ³⁸ Modjeska, *Timepieces*. p73; Matthews, "Writing the Self in/ after the Postmodern: 'Poppy' and 'Heddy and Me'."
- ³⁹ Modjeska, *Timepieces*. p73
- ⁴⁰ Whitlock, "From Biography to Autobiography." p247
- ⁴¹ Fiona Probyn, "A Poetics of Failure Is No Bad Thing: Stephen Muecke and Margaret Somerville's White Writing.," *Journal of Australian Studies*.75 (2002). pp19-20
- ⁴² Hamilton, ed., *Writing Lives: Feminist Biography and Autobiography*. p31
- ⁴³ Isabel Flick and Heather Goodall, *Isabel Flick: The Many Lives of an Extraordinary Aboriginal Woman*. (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2004).; Susan Maushart, *Sort of a Place Like Home*. (Fremantle, W.A.: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003); Stephen Kinnane, *Shadow Lines* (Perth: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 2003).
- ⁴⁴ Sharon O'Brien., "Daisy Bates in the Desert. (Book Reviews)," *The Women's Review of Books* 12.10-11 (1995 July).; Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" *Partisan Review* 42 (1975).
- ⁴⁵ Michael Sprinker, "Fictions of the Self: The End of Autobiography," *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980). p322-324
- ⁴⁶ Elspeth Probyn, 'True Voices and Real People; the 'Problem' of the Autobiographical in Cultural Studies,' *Relocating Cultural Studies: Developments in Theory and Research*, ed. John Shepherd and Ian Taylor Valda Blundell Routledge, London and New York, 1993. p110 In arguing for the emancipatory effect of feminist writing, Probyn describes how female readers of female heroines were able to construct literary selfhood in contrast to their actual lives. My text offers several points for identification between reader and character, one of which is identification through the authors self-representation.
- ⁴⁷ Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987).
- ⁴⁸ Whitlock, "From Biography to Autobiography." p233; Andrew Lattas, "Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism: Primordality and the Cultural Politics of Otherness," *Race Matters*, ed. Gillian Cowlishaw and Barry Morris (Canberra: Aboriginal studies Press, 1997). These issues are taken up by a raft of

Australian authors and critics, as I have argued in Tracy Spencer, "Getting Off the Verandah': Decolonising Australia," *'Something Strange' CRNLE 2005* (Kangaroo Island: 2005)

⁴⁹ E Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). p127; Whitlock, "From Biography to Autobiography." p233 Also Peter Read, *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2000) And Elspeth Probyn, "How Does the Settler Belong?"

⁵⁰ Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*.p37

⁵¹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002). p41

⁵² Michael Dodson, "The End of the Beginning: Re(De)Finding Aboriginality.," *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, ed. Michele Grossman (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003). p36

⁵³ Penny Taylor, "Crossing Boundaries: The Value of a Comparative Reading of Oral Histories.," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal: Crossing Borders* 19 (1997) p6 citing Jackie Huggins in Bain Atwood (Ed.) *The Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines and Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996 p.xxxviii

⁵⁴ Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature*. (Canberra : Aboriginal Studies Press , 2003) pp43,44; Michele Grossman, ed., *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003) p24

⁵⁵ Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature*. p45

⁵⁶ Benita Parry, "Problems of Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 9 (1987). P30; Jessica Hutchings, *Decolonisation and Aotearoa - a Pathway to Right Livelihood*, 20052005.; Deborah Bird Rose, "Love and Reconciliation in the Forest: A Study in Decolonisation," *Hawke Institute Working Paper Series* 19 (2002). p14

⁵⁷ Dodson, "The End of the Beginning: Re(De)Finding Aboriginality." p38

⁵⁸ Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature*. p19

⁵⁹ David Jopling, "Self Knowledge: Making and Finding Sense in Life History," *Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography.*, ed. Ian Read Donaldson, Peter and Walter,James, vol. 6 (The Australian University.).p79; Philip Zeigler, "Biography: The Narrative," *Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography.*, ed. Ian Read Donaldson, Peter and Walter,James, vol. 6 (The Australian University.). p229

⁶⁰ Foucault, "What Is an Author?" p609, 610, 614

⁶¹ Bain Atwood, Burrage, Winifred, Burrage, Alan, and Stokie, Elsie, *A Life Together, a Life Apart: A History of Relations between Europeans and Aborigines*. (Melbourne University Press, 1994). p215

⁶² Carole Ferrier, "Resisting Authority," *Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography.*, ed. Ian; Read Donaldson, Peter and Walter, James, vol. 6 (The Australian University.). p106-7

⁶³ Richard A Hutch, *Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest*, Studies in Religion (London and NY: Continuum, 1997). p23-54; Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *American Academy of Religion* (1971).

⁶⁴ Zeigler, "Biography: The Narrative."p229

⁶⁵ For description of the term 'post modern' applied to this literary context, see Nettelbeck, ed., *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism*. P3; Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh, ed., *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001). P90 and others.

⁶⁶ Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000* (Freemantle: Freemantle Arts Center Press, 2000). P565 quoting Iniguez, Valencia and Vazquez 1997 p250

⁶⁷ Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*. p565 Quoting Clendinnen 1998 p203

⁶⁸ Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000*. p566

⁶⁹ Jane; Schech Haggis, Susanne; Fitzgerald, Gabriele, "Narrating Lives, Narrating Whiteness: A Research Note," *Journal of Australian Studies* 60 (1999).

⁷⁰ Klaus Neumann, "Among Historians," *Cultural Studies Review* 9.2 (2003).;Manne, ed., *Whitewash: On Keith Windshuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History*.

⁷¹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 1988). p139; Atwood, *A Life Together, a Life Apart: A History of Relations between Europeans and Aborigines*.

⁷² Victoria Haskins and John Maynard, "Sex, Race and Power: Aboriginal Men and White Women in Australian History," *Australian Historical Studies* 126 (2005). P194; Jeremy Beckett, ed., *Wherever I Go: Myles Lalor's 'Oral History'* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000).p152

⁷³ Maynard, "Sex, Race and Power: Aboriginal Men and White Women in Australian History."; Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation.*; Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan, ed., *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand*. (Crows Nest, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2001). P21 cites Alessandro Portelli 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop Journal* no 12 1981 p100

⁷⁴ Sue Taffe, "Witnesses from the Conference Floor: Oral History and the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders," *Fresh Cuts: Journal of Australian Studies* 67 (2000).

⁷⁵ Taffe, "Witnesses from the Conference Floor: Oral History and the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders."

⁷⁶ For an example of this, see Maushart, *Sort of a Place Like Home*. p43 'No one is better qualified to tell the story of everyday life at the Moore River native settlement than the children who lived there. This chapter is narrated by two of them, a boy and a girl. Although strictly speaking they are fictional characters, their words are not drama but documentary...monologues have been constructed, like vast jigsaw puzzles, from pieces of

eighteen interviews with former children of Moore River. All the incidents described in these monologues actually happened. The language in which they are described is also faithful to original sources. Time sequences have been altered or compressed, some of the names have been changed and certain details have been sharpened or shaded to enhance the accuracy of the whole.'

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the historical and contemporary concerns of oral history, see Atwood, *A Life Together, a Life Apart: A History of Relations between Europeans and Aborigines*. Part 3

⁷⁸ Maynard, "Sex, Race and Power: Aboriginal Men and White Women in Australian History." p193-4; Hutchings, *Decolonisation and Aotearoa - a Pathway to Right Livelihood*; TRoderic Lacey, "Whose Voices Are Heard? Oral History and the Decolonisation of History: Pacific Voices.," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal: Crossing Borders* 19 (1997).; Erica Neate and Marie Wilkinson, "Listen with Your Heart.," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal: Crossing Borders* 19 (1997).p15

⁷⁹ Maynard, "Sex, Race and Power: Aboriginal Men and White Women in Australian History." p193-4; Hutchings, *Decolonisation and Aotearoa - a Pathway to Right Livelihood*.; Lacey, "Whose Voices Are Heard? Oral History and the Decolonisation of History: Pacific Voices."

⁸⁰ Magowan, ed., *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in*

Australia and New Zealand. P103; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003). p15-6

⁸¹ Heiss, *Dhuuluu-Yala: To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature*.

⁸² Peter and Jay Read, ed., *Long Time Olden Time: Aboriginal Accounts of Northern Territory History* (Institute for Aboriginal development Publications, 1991).

⁸³ Peter Read, "A Phantom at My Shoulder," *Shaping Lives: Reflections on Biography*., ed. Ian; Read Donaldson, Peter and Walter, James, vol. 6 (The Australian University).

⁸⁴ Magowan, ed., *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand*.p103

⁸⁵ Margaret Somerville, *Body/Landscape Journals* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1999). p142

⁸⁶ Penny Van Toorn, "Indigenous Texts and Narratives," *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Webby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). p21

⁸⁷ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology*. p16 quoting Said 1993:59 'we...re-read it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and beyond which) the dominating discourse acts.'

⁸⁸ Bill Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. p52-54

⁸⁹ Stella Clarke, "Havoc in History House," *Weekend Australian* March 4-5 2006.

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- ⁹⁰ M.D. Allen, "Daisy Bates in the Desert: A Woman's Life among the Aborigines. (Book Reviews)." *Belles Lettres: A Review of Books by Women* 10.2 (1995 Spring).
- ⁹¹ O'Brien., "Daisy Bates in the Desert. (Book Reviews)", Allen, "Daisy Bates in the Desert: A Woman's Life among the Aborigines. (Book Reviews)."
- ⁹² Per Ola and d'Aulaire D'Aulaire, Emily, "Daisy Bates in the Desert: A Woman's Life among the Aborigines. (Book Reviews)," *Smithsonian* 26.6 (1995 Sept).
- ⁹³ Inga Clendinnen, *Tiger's Eye: A Memoir* (Melbourne: Text, 2000). p245
- ⁹⁴ Kadar, ed., *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*. p152
- ⁹⁵ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 2 Ed. 2004) p66
- ⁹⁶ Kadar, ed., *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*. p10
- ⁹⁷ Kerry Goldsworthy, "She Goes Berserk in the Middle of a Sentence," *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism*, ed. Heather Kerr and Amanda Nettelbeck (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1998). p169
- ⁹⁸ Kadar, ed., *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*.
- ⁹⁹ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*.
- ¹⁰⁰ F L Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Revised)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). p583
- ¹⁰¹ N W Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures*. (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1942, 1992). p29
- ¹⁰² Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures*. p233, 316
- ¹⁰³ Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures*. p9
- ¹⁰⁴ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p121 citing Aristotle in *Rhetoric* I.ix.33, 1367b)
- ¹⁰⁵ Bakhtin., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. p15; Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p120
- ¹⁰⁶ Richard Burridge, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*. (London: SPCK, 1994). p7
- ¹⁰⁷ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p8 citing Schmidt (1919) famous quote.
- ¹⁰⁸ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p14
- ¹⁰⁹ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p53

¹¹⁰ Burrige, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p120 Sources can be: written historical documents, archives, letters, treatises, histories, biographies, inscriptions, collections of sayings, anecdotes, philosophical writings, dialogues, discourses, speeches, memoirs etc; and oral traditions (highly respected in less literate society) including family memories and precedents, stories, eye witness accounts, personal memories, tradition of a school or group, anecdotes etc.; Burrige, *Four Gospels, One Jesus? A Symbolic Reading*. p7

¹¹¹ Burrige, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*.p219

¹¹² Burrige, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*. p257

¹¹³ Grierson, D in *Uluru Journey: an exploration in narrative theology* 1996 JBCE

¹¹⁴ *The Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1995 v46 n1 p428(3) *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays* by Hans W. Frei. (book reviews) *David Fergusson*. Oxford University Press (UK) 1995

“Several features of Frei’s theology now appear in sharper relief. His repeated emphasis upon narrative as the hermeneutical form of the Gospels was borne not from a general philosophical conviction about the narrative structure of human existence but rather from the christological conviction that the evangelists intentionally depict Jesus as the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord.”

¹¹⁵ Athanasius ‘The Life of Antony and the letter to Marcellinus’ in *The Classics of Western Spirituality* Trans Robert C Gregg SPCK London 1980 Preface by William A Clebsch p xiii

¹¹⁶ Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*. p86-7; Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. p85-87

¹¹⁷ Hutch, *Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest.*; Jr. James Wm. McClendon, *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology*. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1974, 1990 (New Edition)).; McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology.*; John Shea, *Stories of God: The Unauthorised Biography* (Chicago: The Thomas More Press, 1978).; TW Tilley, *Story Theology, Theology and Life Series* (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1985).

¹¹⁸ Sobrino J *Archibishop Romero: Memories and Reflections* (Maryknoll, NY.:Orbis books 1990) p58

¹¹⁹ C.S. Song, *Tell Us Our Names: Story Theology from an Asian Perspective* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984).; Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology.*; G W Trompf, ed., *The Gospel Is Not Western: Black Theologies from the Southwest Pacific* (New York: Orbis, 1987).

¹²⁰ Eg TeSelle, S (McFague) *Speaking in Parables: a study in metaphor and theology* (London: SCM press 1975); Tamez, E *Through her eyes: Women's theology from Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books 1989); Pobee JS and Von Wartenberg-Potter, B (eds) *New Eyes for reading: Biblical and theological reflections by women from the third world* (Geneva: WCC 1986); CS Song *Tell us our names: story theology from an Asian perspective* (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis books 1984)

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- ¹²² Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*. p244
- ¹²³ Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1954). p159
- ¹²⁴ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*. p159
- ¹²⁵ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*.
- ¹²⁶ McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*.p81
- ¹²⁷ McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*. p2, 46 See also; C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961).; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*.
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- ¹²⁹ McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology*. p71
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- ¹³⁶ Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story*. p171
- ¹³⁷ Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*. p9
- ¹³⁸ Norman C. Habel, *Reconciliation: Searching for Australia's Soul* (Sydney: Harper Collins Publisher, 1999). p152
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¹⁴² Jerome Bruner, 'Selfmaking and World Making,' *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, ed. Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh, *Studies in Narrative* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001). p30

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¹⁴⁵ Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). p17; Deborah Bird Rose, 'Rupture and the Ethics of Care in Colonized Space,' *Prehistory to Politics: John Mulvaney, the Humanities and the Public Intellectual*, ed. Tim Bonyhady and Tom Griffiths (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1996). p205, 194, 198; Boer, *Last Stop before Antarctica: The Bible and Postcolonialism in Australia*. p117; Brian Elliott, *The Landscape of Australian Poetry* (Melbourne: FW Cheshire pub, 1967). p21

¹⁴⁶ Robert Allen Warrior, 'A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians,' *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (London: SPCK, 1991). p293 describes how Puritan preaching described Native American Indians as Amelkaites or Canaanites, to be annihilated if unable to be assimilated.

¹⁴⁷ Rose, 'Rupture and the Ethics of Care in Colonized Space.' p205

¹⁴⁸ Ann Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology,' *Imaginary Homelands, an issue of the Journal of Australian Studies*.61 (1999). p2; Kerryn Goldsworthy, 'She Goes Berserk in the Middle of a Sentence,' *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism*, ed. Heather Kerr and Amanda Nettelbeck (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁹ John Milton, 'Paradise Lost,' (1667). Book 12

¹⁵⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). P61 describes the relationship between the colonial project of 'improvement' in colonised lands, and

European descriptions which rendered the place and its inhabitants as lacking, and therefore in need of 'improvement'.

¹⁵¹ Bill Bell, 'Bound for Australia: Shipboard Reading in the Nineteenth Century.,' *Journal of Australian Studies* June (2001). p6 citing Rev David McKenzie *Ten Years in Australia*, William Orr, London, 1851, pp 152-3.

¹⁵² Kerryn Goldsworthy, 'The Voyage South: Writing Immigration,' *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia*, ed. Liz Gunner and Sarah Nuttall Kate Darian-Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) p53

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¹⁵⁴ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. P28 citing Foucault *The Order of Things* 1970

¹⁵⁵ Helen Armstrong, 'Mapping Migrant Memories: Crossing Cultural Borders,' *Oral History Association of Australia Journal: Crossing Borders* 19 (1997). p59

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¹⁵⁷ Whitten, N 1988 cited in Jeremy Beckett, 'Aboriginal Histories, Aboriginal Myths: An Introduction,' *Oceania* 65.2 (1994).

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¹⁶⁰ Veronica Brady, *Can These Bones Live?* (Leichhardt: The Federation Press, 1996). p23

¹⁶¹ Rose, 'Rupture and the Ethics of Care in Colonized Space.' p204; Brady, *Can These Bones Live?* p51; Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology.' p17

¹⁶² Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology.' p5

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¹⁶⁴ Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. p179, 183

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¹⁷⁴ Goonan, *A Community of Exiles: Exploring Australian Spirituality*.

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¹⁷⁷ Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*. p148

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²⁴⁶ Personal communication Daisy Shannon, Quorn, 2002 'I don't know who the Aboriginal people in the picture are: they're not my father or uncle or grandfather. That's certainly Granny though.' Personal communication Gertie Johnson, Nepabunna, 2002. She thought the photograph was of Jack Forbes, Rebecca and their two sons.

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²⁴⁹ Sally Morgan, *Wanamurranya: The Story of Jack Mcphee* (Freemantle: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 1989).

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- ²⁷⁴ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1902, 1973).; Simpson Newland, *Paving the Way: A Romance of the Australian Bush* (Adelaide: Rigby Ltd, 1893).; Simpson Newland, *Blood Tracks of the Bush*, Bells Indian and Colonial Library (London and Bombay: George Bell and Sons, 1900).
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- ²⁹⁹ RM Williams, *A Song in the Desert* (Australia: Angus and Robertson, 1998).p33
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- ³¹² Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation*. p25

³¹³ Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation*. See Ch 3 The Long Transitive Moment. p54 'Paul Ricoeur (1985:16) defines the now as being "constituted by the very transition and transaction between expectation, memory and attention".'

³¹⁴ Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation*. p13 Rose argues Levinas claims as an ethic of human connectivity as an 'inalienable aspect of the human condition.'

³¹⁵ Lowe, 'Landscape as Metaphor for the Interaction between Different Ways of Knowing.' p82, 83

³¹⁶ Cliff Coulthard, *Transcript of Interview 191001*, ed. Tracy Spencer (Iga Warta: 2001)

³¹⁷ Based on an article Tracy Spencer, 'Getting Off the verandah: contextual Australian theology in-land and in story', *Pacifica*, 2005.

³¹⁸ Stephen Pickard, "The View from the Verandah: Gospel and Spirituality in an Australian Setting," *St Marks Review* Winter (1998). p7

³¹⁹ Frank Warwick, "Transcript of Interview with Frank Warwick 240602," ed. Tracy Spencer (Adelaide: 2002)

³²⁰ Pickard, "The View from the Verandah: Gospel and Spirituality in an Australian Setting."

³²¹ Philip Drew, *The Coast Dwellers: Australians Living on the Edge* (Penguin, 1994). p xiii. Drew asserts that it is characteristic of Australian expression that 'edges are open boundaries', although he does not reference this assertion.

³²² Pickard, "The View from the Verandah: Gospel and Spirituality in an Australian Setting." p9

³²³ Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (Routledge, 1993). p177; Peter Manthorpe, 'Keerweer Welcome: Exploration of the Duyfken Replica', English Honours (Creative Writing) Thesis, Flinders University. p24 citing Jean Baurillard's arguments for the immorality of images in 'The Evil Demon of Images', 1987 reproduced in Thomas Docherty (ed), *Postmodernism, A Reader*, (Harvester: Wheatsheaf, 1993) p194; Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2004). Ch 1 'Recuperation' explores the image of the 'big swag' covering over and suppressing Indigenous experience in Australian history. p11

³²⁴ Victoria Haskins and John Maynard, 'Sex, Race and Power: Aboriginal Men and White Women in Australian History,' *Australian Historical Studies* 126 (2005). p193-4; Jessica Hutchings, *Decolonisation and Aotearoa - a Pathway to Right Livelihood*, 2005.; Roderic Lacey, 'Whose Voices Are Heard? Oral History and the Decolonisation of History: Pacific Voices.,' *Oral History Association of Australia Journal: Crossing Borders* 19 (1997).

³²⁵ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2003). P16 quoting Said 1993:59 'we...re-read it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and beyond which) the dominating discourse acts.'; Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology*. p15. This definition of postcolonialism as a reading strategy derives from the arguments of Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty

Spivak.

³²⁶ Philip Drew, *Veranda: Embracing Place* (Pymble NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1992).p43

³²⁷ Brian Hudson, "The View from the Verandah: Prospect, Refuge and Leisure," *Australian Geographical Studies* 31.1 (1993). p71 . Behaviour theorists like Appleton suggest 'prospect-refuge' theory to explain the aesthetic appeal of verandahs where biological survival depends on being able to observe landscape, prey and predators from a hide-like structure, planning responses at leisure; and on being able to be protected from inanimate threats of weather conditions.

³²⁸ Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987).p147; Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). p60, 63; Susan K Martin, 'Dead White Male Heroes: Ludwig Lechhardt and Ned Kelly in Australian Fictions,' *Imagining Australia: Literature and Culture in the New New World*, ed. Judith Ryan and Chris Wallace-Crabbe (Cambridge Massachusetts and London England: Harvard University Press, 2004). p27

³²⁹ Roland Boer, *Last Stop before Antarctica: The Bible and Postcolonialism in Australia*, *The Bible and Postcolonialism*, vol. 6 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). p77, 83

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³³⁹ Margaret Somerville, *Body/Landscape Journals* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1999). p53; Probyn, "How Does the Settler Belong?"

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⁴²⁴ Race traitor Definition Wikipedia November 2010: is a pejorative reference to a person who is perceived as supporting attitudes or positions thought to be against the interests or well-being of their own race.

⁴²⁵ Coulthard, Transcript of Interview 191001

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⁴²⁹ Question from a Binning man near Jabiru to Rev George Woodward, on the occasion of farewelling a minister from Arnhem Land, told to me by Rev Dean Whittaker, then Patrol Minister for Jabiru and East Arnhem.

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⁴³² Coulthard, *Conversation with Dolly Coulthard 16701*, vol.

⁴³³ Clive Pearson, 'Christ and Context Down Under: Mapping Trans Tasman Christologies,' *From Here to Where? Australian Christians Owning the Past - Embracing the Future*, ed. Andrew Dutney (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1988) JB Metz' call for a 'polycentric Christianity' where Otherness is acknowledged rather than assimilated, and key issues in a location determine theological priorities, has been taken up by Pakeha theologian Neil Darragh. Darragh outlines a theological method that defines his speaking position, and issues of particular import to Pakeha New Zealand, as the foundation from which a contextual theology proceeds, with some dialogue with non-New Zealand theologians and theological traditions in the later stages of the process. Other theologians, like Torrance and Mostert, sound a note of concern that cultural and contextual concerns will bias the Christian expression and relativise 'truth' without the control of universal theological traditions. See Alan J. Torrance and Hilary Regan, ed., *Christ and Context: The Confrontation between Gospel and Culture* T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993. ; Neil Darragh, *Doing Theology Ourselves: A Guide to Research and Action*. (Auckland: Accent Publications, 1995)

⁴³⁴ *What is Contextual Theology?* An ICT Publication, Institute for Contextual Theology, Braamfontein, 1985

⁴³⁵ Clive Pearson, writing for an Australian Bi-centenary publication titled *From Here to Where? Australian Christians owning the past - embracing the future*, offers his own metaphor for Australian contextual theology:

God Downunder, or a Christology from below. In the same publication, Andrew Dutney offered the metaphor 'postmark Australia', which combined a contextual orientation *in* a location, in the same way universal Christianity is simultaneously located *in* Christ. Catholic contributions in this era, from Tony Kelly, John Thornhill and Veronica Brady offered substantial readings of Australian culture which Lilburne summarised as emphasising 'continuity between divine grace and human culture.' In Geoffrey Lilburne, 'Contextualising Australian Theology: An Enquiry into Method,' *Pacifica* 10.October 1997:350-364 p351. Lilburne also suggests that contributions of Australian Protestant theologians have focussed on the tools of Biblical scholarship to interpret Australian experience, although my references suggest Protestant contribution is wider than this, in Geoffrey Lilburne, 'Australian Theology: Protestant Contributions,' *Colloquium* 28.2 1996:19-30 p29. Norman Habel is one who has turned his theological attention to the issue of reconciliation, bypassing Pickard's 'Aussie verandah' to conclude that 'The way to the soul of Australia, it seems to me, is a pilgrimage back through the landscape, through the stories, through suppressed memories to sites of resistance and suffering, the silent sacred places in Australia's history.' in Norman C. Habel, *Reconciliation: Searching for Australia's Soul* (Sydney:Harper Collins Publisher, 1999). p152. Habel notes his indebtedness to the Rainbow Spirit Elders, with whom he worked on another Protestant, and indigenous, Australian theology, *Rainbow Spirit Theology*, itself one of several significant indigenous theological voices informing Australian contextual theology, see Rainbow Spirit Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology* (Blackburn: Harper Collins Religious, 1997); see also Anne Pattel-Gray, 'Dreaming: An Aboriginal Interpretation of the Bible,' *Text and Experience: Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible*, ed. Daniel Smith-Christopher (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Djiniyini Gondarra, *Let My People Go: Series of Reflections of Aboriginal Theology* (Darwin: Bethel Presbytery Northern Synod of Uniting Church in Australia, 1986).

⁴³⁶ Genesis 12:1

⁴³⁷ Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*. Ch 7

⁴³⁸ Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology*. p82

⁴³⁹ Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story*.p68

⁴⁴⁰ Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology*. p59

⁴⁴¹ Gertie Johnson, *Transcript of Interview 17701*, ed. Tracy Spencer (Nepabunna: 2001) ; Williams, *Conversation with Rm Williams by Phone on 13/08/01*; Shannon, D. (2001). Transcript of Interview 1. T. Spencer. Quorn SA: Oral history recorded interview.

⁴⁴² Hill, 'The Strange Case of Mrs. Widgety.'

⁴⁴³ Hill, *The Great Australian Loneliness: A Classic Journey around and across Australia*. p271-3

⁴⁴⁴ Gospel of John Chapter 1 verse 14

⁴⁴⁵ <http://bible.cc/john/1-14.htm>

⁴⁴⁶ Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation*. See Ch 3 The Long Transitive Moment. p54 'Paul ricoeur (1985:16) defines the now as being "constituted by the very transition and transaction between

expectation, memory and attention”.’

⁴⁴⁷ Tracy Spencer, *Getting Off the Verandah*: *Decolonising Australia*, ‘Something Strange’ CRNLE 2005 (Kangaroo Island: 2005); Tracy Spencer, ‘We Had to Give Them Everything’: *Adnyamathanha Agency in the Economy of ‘Whiteness’, ‘Historicising Whiteness’*, ed. Kat Ellinghaus (Melbourne University: Department of History, University of Melbourne in association with RMIT University Press, 2007)

⁴⁴⁸ Anthony J Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation* (New York and Marwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1989).p92

⁴⁴⁹ Spencer, ‘We Had to Give Them Everything’: *Adnyamathanha Agency in the Economy of ‘Whiteness’*

⁴⁵⁰ Sylvia J Hallam, ‘A View from the Other Side of the Western Frontier: Or ‘I Met a Man Who Wasn’t There.’” *Aboriginal History* 7.2 (1983). pp134-136

⁴⁵¹ Stephen Muecke, *No Road (Bitumen All the Way)* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1997). pp184-5

⁴⁵² Deborah Bird Rose, ‘Ned Kelly Died for Our Sins.’, *Oceania* 65.2 (1994).

⁴⁵³ Eric Willmot, *Australia: The Last Experiment. 1986 Boyer Lectures* (Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 1987). pp21,22

⁴⁵⁴ Michael Dodson, ‘The End of the Beginning: Re(De)Finding Aboriginality.’, *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, ed. Michele Grossman (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003).p37

⁴⁵⁵ Spencer, ‘White Woman Lives as a Lubra in Native Camp’: Representations of ‘Shared Space’.

⁴⁵⁶ Simone Bignall and Mark Galliford, ‘Reconciling Replicas: The Second Coming of the Duyfken,’ *Cultural Studies Review* 9.2 (2003). p56

⁴⁵⁷ Creed of Chalcedon, 451, in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalcedonian_Creed

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood;

truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body;

consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood;

in all things like unto us, without sin;

begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood;

one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably;

the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ;

as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

⁴⁵⁸ Galliford, 'Reconciling Replicas: The Second Coming of the Duyfken.'

⁴⁵⁹ Benita Parry, 'Problems of Current Theories of Colonial Discourse,' *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 9 (1987).

⁴⁶⁰ Hutchings, *Decolonisation and Aotearoa - a Pathway to Right Livelihood.*; Deborah Bird Rose, 'Love and Reconciliation in the Forest: A Study in Decolonisation,' *Hawke Institute Working Paper Series* 19 (2002).

⁴⁶¹ Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation*. p115

⁴⁶² Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Foot Washing (John 13:1-20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 76-92.

⁴⁶³ Rose, 'Love and Reconciliation in the Forest: A Study in Decolonisation.'

⁴⁶⁴ C S Song, *The Stranger on the Shore: A Theological Semantic of Cultures*, The Cato Lecture (Melbourne: The Joint Board of Christian Education, 1992). p26

⁴⁶⁵ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology*. p15. Spivak asserts, a 'pure subaltern' voice cannot be heard because of the necessary constraints that hybridise the subaltern voice in order for it to be heard in the dominant discourses. See also Fiona Probyn, 'How Does the Settler Belong?' *Westerly* 47 (2002). p84; Muecke quoted in Michele Grossman, ed., *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003).p181; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). p6; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983). P77; Tracy Spencer, "Getting Off the Verandah': Contextual Australian Theology in-Land.' Proceedings from the Australian Missiology Conference 2005.

⁴⁶⁶ Mark G. Brett, 'Canto Ergo Sum: Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Christianity,' *Pacifica* 16 (2003).

⁴⁶⁷ Brett, 'Canto Ergo Sum: Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Christianity.'p256

⁴⁶⁸ Mark G. Brett *Decolonising God: The Bible in the Tides of Empire*. The Bible in the Modern World, 16. Series Eds J. Cheryl Exum, Jorunn Okland, Stephen D. Moore (Sheffield Phoenix Press: 2008) Ch. 7; Daniel Smith-Christopher *Commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah* (Oxford Bible Commentary, 2001)

⁴⁶⁹ Spencer, "White Woman Lives as a Lubra in Native Camp': Representations of 'Shared Space'.'

⁴⁷⁰ McKenzie, *Transcript of Interview 150801*.

⁴⁷¹ Roland Boer, *Last Stop before Antarctica: The Bible and Postcolonialism in Australia*, *The Bible and Postcolonialism*, vol. 6 (Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).; Tracy Spencer, *White Journeys into Black Country: Biblical Journeying to and within Australia., Landscapes, Exiles, Belonging, Home conference* (New Norcia Monastery, via Perth, Western Australia: 2005)

⁴⁷² Deborah Bird Rose, *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in an Aboriginal Australian Culture* (Cambridge, NY, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992). p14

⁴⁷³ Swain, *A Place for Strangers: Towards a History of Australian Aboriginal Being*. p27

⁴⁷⁴ Mark G. Brett, 'Canto Ergo Sum: Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Christianity,' *Pacifica* 16 (2003).

⁴⁷⁵ Rose, *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in an Aboriginal Australian Culture*. p201, 202

⁴⁷⁶ Chips Mackinolty and Paddy Wainburranga, 'Too Many Capt Cooks,' *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions: Ethnographic and Historical Studies.*, ed. T Swain and DB Rose. General Editor Victor C. Hayes (Bedford Park SA: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1988).

⁴⁷⁷ Rose, *Dingo Makes Us Human: Life and Land in an Aboriginal Australian Culture*. p234

⁴⁷⁸ Leo and Shirley Coulthard, *Transcript Leo and Shirley Coulthard 290302*, ed. Tracy Spencer (Leigh Creek Station, Flinders Ranges: 2002).

⁴⁷⁹ *Conversation with Tommy Agnew 16/7/01*

⁴⁸⁰ *Conversation with Dolly Coulthard 16/7/01*

⁴⁸¹ Elders, *Rainbow Spirit Theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal Theology*.

⁴⁸² United Aborigines Mission, *The United Aborigines Messenger 1929-.1 June 1929*, p15 Verse on the Children's Page

⁴⁸³ United Aborigines Mission, *The United Aborigines Messenger 1929-.1 June 1929*, p15 Verse on the Children's Page