Storied Streets: Gendered Narratives of Fear and Violence in Australian Urban Landscapes

by Amy Mead (BA, Hons.)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
The Flinders University of South Australia

College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
Flinders University

Awarded 7th June 2021

Contents

Summary

The rape and murder of 29-year-old woman Jill Meagher in Melbourne's inner North in 2012 is the impetus for this thesis, as I look at the relationship between women and the city in the wake of violent crime in urban spaces. Meagher was killed by a man unknown to her, stalked as she attempted to walk the short distance home after drinks with colleagues at a bar on Brunswick's Sydney Road. Meagher's disappearance was followed closely on social media and by mainstream news outlets, and the public grief when it became known she had been murder was palpable. Tens of thousands took to the streets to protest violence against women in the days following the news of her death. Her name is still synonymous with female safety in cities, and this thesis looks to interrogate the narratives around women's supposed vulnerability on the streets.

Working within the fields of literary studies and creative non-fiction writing, I critically examine the rhetorics of what I call 'cultural narratives' informing these ideas – the notion that women must 'be careful' or avoid walking alone. I then partner with other writers to renew these tropes and discuss how literary texts by women can speak back to these ideas. Focussing on Melbourne, my research focuses on contemporary writing by women set in Melbourne, looking at writing by Sophie Cunningham, Catherine de Saint Phalle and Michaela McGuire, as well as discussing Helen Garner's 1977 novel *Monkey Grip* as a seminal text about women and Melbourne.

This thesis asks, 'why can't women feel safe walking through the city alone?', and looks at Australian attitudes towards gender, space and narrative, and how the latter can be used to both restrict and liberate.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and

2. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Amy Mead
31 July 2020

Acknowledgement of Country

I wish to acknowledge that this dissertation was written on the lands of the Kaurna people, and I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. I recognise, and deeply respect, their ongoing relationship with the land and waters, and their cultural heritage and beliefs.

I also wish to acknowledge that this thesis discusses the lands of the Wurundjeri people. I would like to pay respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living and working on Kaurna Country and Naarm.

This work deals with the urban experience, an experience that is the product of ongoing colonisation and the subsequent displacement and disproportionate suffering of First Nations people. I acknowledge this trauma, and that the sovereignty of the land I live and work on was never ceded, and I offer my solidarity with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their quest for self-determination and justice.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land. Treaty now.

Acknowledgments

Without the support and encouragement of Dr Amy T. Matthews, I would have never embarked on this project, nor seen it through to completion. Amy, you've been a constant source of inspiration as a supervisor, and have become a warm and considerate friend. Your kind words have kept me going when I've felt like throwing in the towel, and I look forward to many years of coffee, wine, conversation and collaboration.

Thanks also to other members of my supervisory team, who over the years have included Dr Patrick Allington, Dr Kylie Cardell and Professor Stephen Muecke. Special thanks to Stephen for jumping aboard and helping out during the final stages of my candidature. Your kindness, encouragement and ideas have been most appreciated.

Thank you also to my academic collaborators and friends, especially the brilliant and formidable squad (there are too many of you to name, an embarrassment of scholarly riches).

Thanks to my colleagues at Health Partners who have provided me with a welcome respite from academia over the years, and many laughs and heartening chats. Much gratitude to the two Alisons for being great bosses and so accommodating of my studies over the years.

Words cannot express how grateful I am to my beautiful friends (and your kids, partners and animals) for their encouragement, warmth and good humour over my candidature. I can't wait to feel free to have fun with you again!

Chris, Gerald, Matt, Gemma, Nick, Sally, Michael, Tuyen, Dan, and all the extended Heath clan, thank you for being the best second family I could ask for.

My incredible Mum Christine instilled a love of reading and a curiosity in me as a small child that has led me to this point, and has always been there for me, no matter the time or place. Thank you for your patience and inspirational strength. Dad, thank you for your ongoing encouragement and being the most accommodating landlord around, and Simon (and Amanda!), thank you for being such an entertaining, thoughtful and supportive brother. Love you all.

And finally, my little family: Patrick, and our animals, Joanie and Lucky. Patrick – thank you for everything, but most of all, being you. I love you.

* * *

Presenting my research at conferences has been an important developmental tool during my candidature, and it has been a joy to travel and meet my academic peers. Parts of this thesis were presented at the 2015 CSAA Conference in Melbourne, the 2016 AWGSA Conference in Brisbane, the 2017 ANU Humanities Research Centre conference in Canberra, the 2017 CSAA conference in Wellington and the 2018 AAALS Conference in New York City. On a smaller scale, presenting

at postgraduate conferences such as the WHIP conferences at Flinders and the SA Postgraduate Gender, Sex and Sexualities conferences have been immensely beneficial too.

I acknowledge the contribution of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship and a Flinders University Research Scholarship to enable my study.

Excerpts from the thesis form part of the article 'Bold Walks in the Inner North: Melbourne Women's Memoir after Jill Meagher' in *M/C Journal*, Vol 20, No 6 (2017).

Introduction

> Let me walk. Let me go at my own pace. Let me feel life as it moves through me and around me. Give me drama. Give me unexpected curvilinear corners. Give me unsettling churches and beautiful storefronts and parks I can lie down in.
>
> The city turns you on, gets you going, moving, thinking, wanting, engaging. The city is life itself.[1]

From childhood, most women in Australian cities are cautioned against walking certain areas alone and told not to walk solo after dark. Attack is often framed as inevitable: to walk while female is to court risk. Women are viewed as the weaker sex, and therefore as beacons for violence, sexual and otherwise. These standards are out of step with contemporary gender relations, reinforcing archaic notions that tie women to the domestic sphere, but many women still feel that being alone at night on the streets is still something to avoid for fear of becoming a victim of violent crime at the hands of a stranger. Yet statistically, men are more likely to be assaulted by a stranger, and women are more likely to be assaulted by someone close to them, in the home. Anti-violence charity Our Watch states that in Australia a woman is killed each week, on average, by her partner, and that women have triple the likelihood of being attacked by their partner than men do.[2] Intimate partner and family violence are often cited as reaching epidemic proportions in Australia, yet the home is still fetishized and the streets demonised. So, why do so many women fear being alone in the city?

Fear does not respond to statistics. This thesis will examine its more qualitative determinates, the narratives embedded in the culture surrounding Australian women's relationship with the city,

[1] Lauren Elkin, *Flaneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Vintage, 2016), p. 37.
[2] 'Quick facts', *Our Watch*, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/understanding-violence/facts-and-figures> [Accessed 10 May 2020]

narratives both literary and cultural, with a focus on those circulating in the period from 2012 to now. It will show that highly publicised violent crimes, particularly homicides, against women in Australian urban public spaces have caused this relationship to be brought into the open in new ways, as literary narrative work struggles to rewrite existing cultural narratives. Finnish geographer Hille Koskela gave me a start, particularly her paper, ''Bold Walks and Breakings': women's spatial confidence versus fear of violence'[3]. The paper examines how 'breakings' – an experience of violence in the street – inhibits women's 'boldness' – their confidence navigating urban spaces, traditionally coded male. I take Koskela's concept of 'bold walks' and 'breakings', and apply this terminology to query how these narratives increase or diminish Australian women's capacity to navigate the city. I am writing in the wake of vicarious breakings – that is, violent crimes committed against women in public places by a male assailant unknown to the victim.

The rape and murder of 29-year-old woman Jill Meagher in Melbourne's inner northern suburb of Brunswick in September 2012 serves as an impetus in this study, and the figure of Meagher (particularly representations of her in media reports about her death) acts as a haunting conduit to query Australian women's relationship with urban spaces. For myself and many of my female friends, the Meagher case was our collective breaking, as it affected us in a way that other crimes against women had not, and this could be attributed to the way it played out online: due to the growing dissemination of news via social media, stories of women being victims of violent crimes, particularly murders, in public spaces have been highly visible[4]. As platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (and other smaller social media outlets, too numerous to name, and forum

[3] Hille Koskela, ''Bold Walk and Breakings': Women's Spatial Confidence Versus Fear of Violence', *Gender, Place & Culture,* 4 (1997), 301-20.
[4] Anastasia Powell, Caitlin Overington, and Gemma Hamilton, 'Following #Jillmeagher: Collective Meaning-Making in Response to Crime Events Via Social Media', *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal,* 14 (2018), 409-28 (p. 410).

sites like Reddit) have become a part of everyday life, so does the immediacy and volume of news of crime, as the platforms serve the news as well as comment. Stories like Meagher's, where the female victim did not know their killer, are particularly newsworthy as the story fell back into the pattern of victim as prey; the old adage of being in the wrong place at the wrong time: they met the fate that women are always warned about.

Focussing on the cities of Melbourne and Adelaide, I will examine the dialectics of fear in these cities, and how these stories of 'breakings' compromise female relationships to space, when said space is *mythic* ('demonised'), *quotidian* (unremarkable), *cultural* (to be cultivated), and *storied* (news and literary narratives), all at the same time. None of these, including the reported statistics, is any more real than any of the others. They are all in play, and are synthesised, and contested, in the literary narratives that I am analysing. I investigate how narratives relating to these signal crimes are mapped onto space, and look at how these crimes manifest as dots on an affective topography of the city, instilling fear in women as they make their way through these spaces alone. The dissemination of news of these acts of violence, these breakings, contributes to pre-existing narratives regarding female vulnerability, that in turn perpetuate fear of crime amongst women, inhibiting the 'bold walk'. This thesis will look at how these narratives are spread, both in the community and via the media, and offer a counterpoint to these narratives, by showing how a selection of contemporary Australian literary texts offer a more nuanced view of how women navigate the city, a bolder view that crafts women's future becomings.

Two cities

I have chosen to look at Adelaide, the city I was born in, and still live and work in, to interrogate my own experiences, contrasted with Melbourne (that some of my bolder steps took me to), a site

of a number of high profile murders of women in the last seven years. This thesis will examine my own personal relationship with the two cities, in the wake of these homicides. My own reflections and anecdotal references to the reflections of my peers will intermingle with geographical and spatial theory, and analysis of contemporary Australian texts. This project will equally engage with the personal, the literary, the cultural, and the theoretical, generating a confluent cartography of memory contrasted with collective trauma, reflecting the complex nature of the topic, showing the Australian city as a palimpsestic site of memory, as well as a site of real and potential danger. I will establish a path through what I show to be ongoing dominant cultural narratives relating to women's supposed place in the city, by exploring my own experiences as an urban woman, and examining how the selected Australian texts subvert dominant cultural discourse surrounding female mobility.

Stories of present-day violence are relayed to citizens via a twenty-four-hour news cycle, and feed on broader narratives lodged in collective memory. Violent crimes are all too easily dramatised as public traumas, as trauma is mapped onto a site, the crime that occurred there is forever linked to the geographic locale – the name of the site imbued with a sense of grief, and unresolved menace. In Australia, major crimes tend to be referred to by their sites, rather than their perpetrators: Port Arthur, Hoddle Street, more recently the Lindt café. Yet crimes against women are individual, so they are known by the victims: Anita Cobby, Jill Meagher, Eurydice Dixon. In Melbourne's inner North, Brunswick's main drag, Sydney Road, can be mentioned without making the cognitive leap to the murder of Meagher, and not much was made of the sadly ironic Hope Street, where her handbag was found. Instead, her name rings louder – reminding women of their gendered vulnerability, affecting the way that they move through the city. The subject position of the woman situates her as victim. The site is imbued with a sense of "something happened" but rather than

only the site itself being psychically cordoned, this story is mobilised to imbue the *city* with a sense of danger for women, thus generating an affective cartography, flagged with sites to avoid. The city becomes a site of fear, a mythological setting, rather than home.

Violent memory permeates the Australian urban landscape: every city is built on land that bore witness to the unspeakable violence of colonial brutality, of frontier wars and genocide. The very act of walking the Australian city is to walk over other nation's disputed sovereignty, the brutal act of invasion relatively recent: *for we are young and…free*? Narratives emanate from these sites, generating a palimpsestic sense of place: stories are layered atop one another, sometimes contradictory, sometimes loud and false, sometimes quiet and concealed: "something happened", to someone, everywhere. These sites are heteroglossic – a multitude of voices tell these stories. First Nations songlines inhabit sites spiritually, and stories of violent colonial clashes jar. Stories are passed down, rhizomatic: rarely do they stand alone, instead symbiotically feeding a grander, more over-arching narrative about place and culture.

The threat of brutality embedded in cultural narratives about space is projected onto women who walk the city, their spatial awareness greater as they are reminded of their vulnerability constantly: by the media, by friends, by family, by partners. Narratives about violence are not mobilised to make Australian men fearful of the threat of violence in cities, even though they are the primary victims and perpetrators. They are not often warned to avoid walking the streets after dark, or even to shirk certain areas during the day. Violent crimes against women serve as examples: not to discourage potential perpetrators, but rather for women to adopt 'safety behaviours', primarily avoidance of certain urban spaces. From a young age, women are instructed to be careful in the public sphere, thereby submissively accepting their subjugation; spatial awareness forms part of

becoming a woman. Women are encouraged not to walk alone, thereby taught that the world is gendered; dominant cultural narratives assert that the public sphere is coded male, and that the female is associated with the private sphere – the home, the hearth. The female body is positioned as a locus of trouble, magnetically attracting it, thus requiring male protection to ward off the unwanted attention of unknown men. This thesis argues that cultural narratives reinforce this, and examines how literary narratives speak back to that notion.

Stories about numbers

Innovative literary narratives (as opposed to the orthodoxies of cultural narratives) have the capacity to forge new relations between female subjectivities and real and virtual city spaces. Statistics, in their objective reality, should be reassuring, but rarely are. A survey conducted by not-for-profit organisations, *Our Watch,* who work to end violence against women, and *Plan International,* showed that thirty percent of Australian young women aged 15 to 19 'agreed that 'girls should not be out in public places after dark'.'[5] The 2019 'Australia We Want' report, conducted by the Community Council Australia concluded that one in two women do not feel safe walking alone at night, whereas four out of five men do.[6] The report notes that this is below the sixty-one per cent average in other OECD countries.[7] Yet other crime statistics mentioned previously tell a different story about female safety by showing that men are more likely to be victims of violent crime in public space. The 2012 Personal Safety survey, undertaken by The Australian Bureau of Statistics, found that Australian *men* are more likely to experience violence

[5] Plan International Australia and Our Watch, 'A right to the night: Australian girls on their safety in public places' (2016), pp. 1-10 <https://www.plan.org.au/~/media/plan/documents/resources/a-right-to-the-night.pdf> [Accessed 9 September 2016]
[6] David Crosbie and Axelle Marjolin, 'The Australia We Want (Second Report)', Community Council for Australia (2019), pp. 1-60 (p. 11)
<https://www.communitycouncil.com.au/sites/default/files/Australia-we-want-Second-Report_ONLINE.pdf> [Accessed 10 November 2019]
[7] Crosbie and Marjolin, p. 7.

at the hands of a stranger rather than a person known to them,[8] and the Australian Government's Institute of Criminology's website states 'that most female homicides were the result of domestic conflicts such as disputes over child custody or ending a relationship'.[9] The word domestic is crucial here: put bluntly, a woman is more likely to be assaulted or killed in their home by a partner or family member than in a random attack by a stranger. Other initiatives such as feminist think tank Destroy The Joint's 'Counting Dead Women' campaign confirm these figures, as they pay tribute to each woman killed as a result of male violence on their social media channels. The majority of these women are killed by someone they know.

Despite this, women are still more fearful of crime in public spaces than men, even though men are more likely to be victims of violence in public space, something referred to by scholars as the 'paradox of fear'[10]. I am interested in how this paradox has proliferated, and its ideological scaffolding in an Australian setting. However, there are detractors of this theory, as some believe that men represent higher figures in the statistics as their numbers are higher on the streets, as women tend to avoid city streets alone. Yet this is still worthy of interrogation: I posit that women avoid the streets due to fear, and I believe that this fear relies on narrative – it is spread through story-telling, both anecdotal – word of mouth – and via the media.

'Where are you, dear?'

In a long-established feminist tradition, I deliberately place myself within the study. My motivation for the research was personal, to start with, then became political and theoretical, following in the

[8]Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Australia's 18 to 24 Year-Olds Most at Risk of Violence' (2013) <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/4906.0Media%20Release12012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4906.0&issue=2012&num=&view=> [Accessed 1 May 2015]

[9] Australian Government Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Women and Crime' (2015) <https://www.aic.gov.au/crime_community/demographicgroup/women.html> [Accessed 13 January 2016]

[10]This phrase is used widely but largely credited to M.Warr, 1994.

footsteps of theorists like another Adelaide woman, Sara Ahmed, whose 'living of a feminist life' entails a personal style. But for me, the fear of crime is something I have to untangle. When I walk alone, I am hypervigilant. I am always on the lookout. If someone near me is acting strangely, I move away or cross the road. I walk purposefully and avoid making eye contact with men on the street. I avoid deserted areas, even during the daytime. I keep my mobile phone handy. I am aware of my vulnerability as woman. But I also question this perceived vulnerability. Why am I vulnerable? Because I am a woman? Does this make me weak? Or does this mean that men want to hurt me? But should I be afraid? I want to use this thesis, narrativising it, to confront both my trauma and my privilege.

I cannot remember when I was first made aware of my supposed gendered vulnerability. It is something that, being a cisgender woman (that is, being designated female at birth and continuing to identify as female), I have always inherently known. I have never been without fear. I remember my parents allowing me solo walks or bike rides around my suburb when I hit adolescence, and in the early years of secondary school, bus trips to Rundle Mall, Adelaide's city shopping strip, to meet friends. It was always a given that I would be home before the street lights came on. During these daytime excursions, I knew not to talk to strangers, and to run or yell if I felt threatened. Now, at 36, I am still always aware of my surroundings: hyper vigilant. There are times when I do happen to walk alone at night, and the risk of violence at the hands of a stranger looms in the back of my mind. If I must walk after dark, I consider what makeshift weapon I can employ if attacked: an umbrella, my metal water bottle, my keys wedged between my fingers in my fist. I don't wear earphones, and I walk purposefully. On a mission.

Sometimes I call my mother while I walk, tethered to her via the GPRS magic of the mobile phone. She will ask me where I am, and I give her the street name, or a landmark: Botanic Road, near the gardens; North Terrace, by the old hospital; Hackney Road, just near the service station, almost home. By ringing Mum, I figure that if I am attacked and the phone goes dead, she will know where I am and can call the police. This brings me an odd, childlike comfort as I walk, and we chat.

The focus on the self is also a means of claiming space both on the page and on the pavement, heeding Helene Cixous's passionate opening call in her influential essay 'The Laugh of the Medusa':

> Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement.[11]

My project seeks to reflect movement through the structure of the dissertation, mimicking the physical movement through the city by shifting location, each chapter mirroring a traumatic 'blot' on the landscape, but also celebrating how the city can bring joy, or solace. By doing so, questions are raised surrounding aforementioned cultural narratives about female security in the public sphere. Are these locations benign or sinister? Can they be reclaimed? Is the act of walking these spaces an act of reclamation? Is writing, too, an act of reclaiming space?

And why do these ideas around women's place in the city prevail in Australia? Of course, the notion of women's supposed vulnerability in public spaces is not isolated to Australia, and women's safety varies a great deal throughout the world, but I do believe that the Australian

[11] Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism* 2nd Ed. ed. by Vincent B. Leitch (Gen. Ed.) (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), pp. 1942-1959 (p. 1942).

conversation around women and public safety needs to be interrogated in relation to Australian cultural values and mores relating to gender, especially considering Australian ideals of egalitarianism.

Melbourne

With a population almost four times the size of Adelaide, Melbourne was always 'the big smoke'. I first visited Melbourne when I was ten years old with my family – my Mum and Dad, and younger brother. We drove from Adelaide in Dad's car, stopping in Ballarat on the way and staying a few nights in a cabin in the caravan park there. When we reached Melbourne, it felt incredibly foreign to me, but recognisable at the same time. Melbourne and Sydney were Australia's cultural epicentres, where movies and television shows were filmed, cities that people from overseas actually knew, as opposed to Adelaide. There were trams everywhere – in Adelaide, we only had one tram line and it was on the other side of town to our house, where it snaked from the city to Glenelg, discreetly through the suburbs. And because of the trams there were people everywhere, getting from place to place together rather than stuck in their cars. And during our stay, we travelled on trams as a family.

Melbourne was (and I suppose, still is) *cool*, and cool has always been currency for teenagers and those in their twenties. People in Melbourne wore cool clothes, and listened to cool music, and lived in cool share houses. Cool bands came from Melbourne. Melbourne is urban, Adelaide is suburban, and suburbia definitely is not cool. But Melbourne also felt safe. When my friends and I visited the city in our early twenties, we felt more at ease walking around late at night bar hopping, whereas in Adelaide, we might have caught a taxi. After all, Adelaideans drive. Those who work

in the city might take the bus or the train because parking is too expensive, or students catch the bus to school or uni, but for the most part, we rely on cars to get us from A to B. Yet there is an insularity that comes with higher car use. The footpaths are more deserted, and thereby, more intimidating: one feels conspicuous alone on foot while everyone else is enclosed in a car. Similarly, public transport is more intimidating if our peers don't also use it. And then waiting at the bus stop or the train platform feels scarier too. Also, Melbourne still has high streets, as many of the suburbs were established before the move towards American style enclosed shopping centres. But then in early 2013, after I returned from six months overseas, I went to Melbourne with a friend for a music festival. We stayed with a close friend, another Adelaide girl, who lived in an apartment in Northcote. The apartment was in a building next to a shopping complex, and we had to walk through the car park to get home, after catching the tram from the city. It was late one night that I found myself more fearful than I had been on previous trips to the city, and as we walked through the carpark late at night, I expressed my fears to my friend. I found myself saying the name: Jill Meagher. What was it about her death that got me so wound up? Other women were murdered that year, but Meagher stuck in my mind. Is it because, according to Nils Christie's metrics, she is the 'ideal victim'?

I must acknowledge my privilege and ask myself: am I the ideal victim? I am white, able-bodied, educated, employed, middle-class, cisgender and in a heterosexual de facto relationship. So why am I still worried? I must make this work personal. To erase myself from my research would be to exercise exclusivity, and confirm the biases that I am interrogating. I must be open about my privilege and position. I cannot represent the experiences of other women, only my own. I will refer to anecdotal data collected through discussion with my peers, but I have deliberately

eschewed collecting data in an anthropological, academic sense, through interviews or surveys, instead positioning myself and my experiences as method.

I want to explore why these metrics for the ideal victim persist, and how these metrics speak to Australian cultural ideals. I will explore how the female victims of publicised murders in Melbourne were presented as 'ideal victims', and how their backstories were omitted or manipulated to do so, but also how the inclusion, and continued discussion of cases like Meagher's murder within the national discourse illustrates insidious cultural problems regarding race, class, sexuality and gender in Australia.

Fictocriticism

This thesis is deliberately multi-disciplinary. It emerges from Literary Studies and narrative is the focus – I will demonstrate how these stories are underpinned by ideology – but I also borrow from feminist geography, media studies and criminology. In terms of methodology, I borrow from fictocriticism, using it both as a methodological approach and a strategy: a way to read the city self, to 'read' my own stories – that is, to interrogate my own ways of being in public space, to examine how these narratives that I mention so frequently have burrowed their way into my psyche, and why I am not immune to their power.

Anna Gibbs writes that fictocriticism exists as rebuttal to research as a medium existing 'always somehow *after the event*'[12], and I suppose I too am writing after the event, but also in grim

[12] Anna Gibbs, 'Fictocriticism, Affect, Mimesis: Engendering Differences' *TEXT*, vol 9 (2005) <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april05/gibbs.htm> [Accessed January 10 2019]

anticipation of the event. I am writing to get myself off the path. To muddy the map. To question how I fit within the city. I want to examine how memory intersects within this, and how fictocriticism can engage with memory events, both collective and personal bringing them again to the fore in order to re-map the city.

I want to engage with my own memories of the city, times when I felt unsafe, excavating the site. Each chapter will return to a sore spot, something that happened to me that could be read as completely trivial on one hand, but on the other, made me feel unsafe and ill at ease – the kind of incident that would not happen to my brother, or partner – the kind of incident that happened to me, because I am a woman.

Fictocriticism allows for an engagement with the subjective that is not fraught. Gibbs notes that it makes use of 'anecdote and (or *as*) allegory which stage the singular encounter between the writer's emergent, embodied subjectivity and what is written about'[13]. This fits with the subjective nature of the city: my map of the city is personal.

Gibbs goes on to say that fictocriticism is a 'way of writing suited to speculative thinking and mode of research in which the researcher is implicated in what is being investigated'[14]. I want to speculate on my own place in the Australian city, and where I fit within this narrative of fear. I want to investigate how I have implicated myself in this narrative, despite never having been assaulted in a public place. Why do I see assault as an inevitability in public? Why do I feel so unsafe? I want to think these things through by writing about them. I do not have the answer to these questions,

[13] Gibbs.
[14] Gibbs.

and I believe the answer cannot be as simple as what is written in the statistics. The answers are clouded in values, cultural specificities and ideologies. The answers are multiple, like the paths. Fictocritical writing mirrors these paths – the winding to avoid trouble, the quick wits that we must adopt as we walk, the rumination, the joy, the fear.

Gibbs notes the confluence between fictocritical strategies and Situationist concepts of the *dérive* and the *détournement*: the 'turning around', the 'undoing'[15]. Indeed, fictocriticism lends itself to the digression – fictocritical paths are not linear – but neither is the topic at hand. As I write this thesis I find that the more I consider my own relationship with urban space, the more my study becomes haphazard and unwieldy. Should women be encouraged to walk the city solo after dark, or should we continue to engage in these acts of self-preservation due to these narratives of fear – and are these narratives factual? I chance that narratives of fear complicate the notion of the ludic derive, yet fictocriticism by women about the city can serve as *détournement:* undoing the gendered city.

Gibbs too calls on the notion of mimicry when discussing fictocriticism, when she writes, 'fictocriticism may make use of mimicry as strategic simulation and dissimulation, a performance of repetition in order, ultimately, to do something differently, to undo something, to make a difference'[16]. What of the mimicry of navigation? Who do we mimic when we use the streets? Do I mimic my mother? Can I mimic the men, who seem to navigate the streets without this fear that I hold on to? Will that make the difference – to use the city like them, to disrupt this gendered notion of space by deliberately taking up space, walking with a different set of spatial narratives?

[15] Gibbs.
[16] Gibbs.

This notion of taking up space with one's body, this sense of embodiment, is integral: I am writing the city self, the female body as it walks and weaves. As it may not walk. As it may stand. As it may sit. As it may occupy space. These are leaky ideas – leaky, unruly – like the woman. But also not like the woman – can we escape the binary? And what about the women who do not hear the stories? Where do they sit?

City as text

Michel De Certeau tells us that cities are narrative texts with their historical palimpsests, their openings and closures, constructing the lives that walk through them. But most of all they are emotional landscapes interpreted by their 'readers', 'whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text"'[17], yet whose readings are inflected by gender in ways that urban planners are striving to understand and accommodate in their designs. But most of all they are gender-neutral. Urban planning work that acknowledges gender frequently operates within essentialist framework. It reinforces the notion that women are inherently vulnerable, something I would like to walk away from. What does a city look like that assumes all of its inhabitants deserve the same feeling of safety, regarding gender, ethnicity, ability or age? Do Australian cities already offer this level of safety? If they do not, why? What does this reveal about deep-seated biases in the community? How do it answer the question, what does the city do? How does an Australian city differ from any other? Does it differ in its construction, in its organisational principles? And do these principles confirm these biases? How does the city change us? Do we adopt a different persona walking city streets? Do we have a city self? I will explore the city self, my own and the notion in the abstract,

[17] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 93.

and how this selfhood is compromised by stories of violence, these stories informing both my city self and the city itself. De Certeau writes that '*space is a practiced place*', that the street (place) is 'transformed into a space by walkers'[18], but that 'stories […] carry out a labour that constantly transforms place into spaces or spaces into places. They also organise the play of changing relationships between places and spaces'[19]. Stories of these crimes change women's relationships to urban spaces – 'marking out boundaries'[20], 'part of the oral narration that interminably labours to compose spaces, to verify, collate and displace […] frontiers'[21].

What stories mark out these boundaries, and how they are disseminated is of interest here. Criminologist Martin Innes penned the term 'signal crimes' to describe

> crime and disorder incidents [that] matter more than others to people in terms of shaping their risk perceptions. This is because some crimes and some disorders (but not other ostensibly similar incidents) are especially 'visible' to people and are interpreted by them as 'warning signals' about the risky people, places and events that they either do, or might, encounter in their lives[22].

Murdered women are often used as examples as to why women should avoid walking in urban areas after dark – but this is a fallacy, as the statistics discussed earlier attest that women are more likely to be killed by someone known to them, such as a partner or spouse, than a stranger. Yet the narrative that women should not be on the streets alone after dark persists due to socially maintained ideas about gender, safety and mobility. Crafted in communicable narrative forms, these ideas serve as weights upon the shoulders, inhibiting exploration and navigation of the city.

[18] De Certeau, p. 117.
[19] De Certeau, p. 118.
[20] De Certeau, p. 122.
[21] De Certeau, p. 123.
[22] Martin Innes, 'Signal Crimes and Signal Disorders: Notes on Deviance as Communicative Action 1.' *British Journal of Sociology* 55.3 (2004), pp. 335-55 (p. 336).

How can urban women be expected to embrace Situationist concepts such as the *derive* and *detournement* when just getting home from work after sundown is considered risky? How can they deliberately get themselves lost when female disappearances so often end up unsolved, or in murder? We all map space, according to memory, both collective and individual. How we process our own city is dependent on stories we have absorbed over time, stories that have been shared with the community, spoken about en masse, digested as a collective.

Collective memory

The notion of collective memory is inherent to this thesis. Maurice Halbwachs first coined this term, referring to how cultural groups internalise memories together, as they experience events as a group. I consider my collective memories as a South Australian who grew up in Adelaide in the 1980s and 1990s. Adelaide has a reputation for grisly murders. It has been falsely tagged by many as the 'murder capital of Australia'[23]. Stories about Arna, Grant and Jane Beaumont, known collectively as 'the Beaumont Children', young siblings who went missing from the seaside suburb of Glenelg in 1966, haunted my parents' generation[24]. The three children have never been found. Nor have 11-year-old Joanne Ratcliffe and 4-year-old Kirste Gordon, who in 1973 went missing from Adelaide Oval, where they were attending a local football game. They had gone to the toilet together and never came back[25]. Then, the year of my birth, 1983, saw the murder of well-known local news anchor Rob Kelvin's teenage son, Richard. The murder was linked to mysterious,

[23] Ruby Jones and Jessica Harmsen, 'Australia's murder capital: Why can't Adelaide bury the myth?, *ABC News*, December 15 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-15/why-cant-adelaide-bury-murderous-capital-reputation/9249142..> [Accessed January 10 2019]

[24] AAP, 'Beaumont children: why a 52-year mystery still has so much resonance across the country', *West Australian* <https://thewest.com.au/news/australia/beaumont-children-why-a-52-year-mystery-still-has-so-much-resonance-across-the-country-ng-b88731808z> [Accessed January 10 2019]

[25] Nicola Gage, 'Missing Persons Week: Kirste Gordon's parents recall day she disappeared from Adelaide Oval', *ABC News*, July 30 2017 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-30/parents-reflect-on-disappearance-of-daughter-kirste-gordon/8754968..> [Accessed January 10 2019]

anonymous and powerful group dubbed 'the family', so while Bevan Spencer von Einem was convicted of the killing, it is still suspected that he did not act alone.

In 1992, a 12-year-old girl from Adelaide's southern suburbs, Rhianna Barreau, disappeared[26]. I was nine at the time, and I remember watching the news with my parents and seeing stories about her disappearance, and suspected abduction. Our local newspapers, *The Advertiser* and the *Sunday Mail,* featured images of Barreau on their front pages as the police urged the public to come forward if they had news related to her disappearance. When I was allowed to walk around my neighbourhood on my own, I remembered Barreau. I was wary. I can still see Barreau's image in my mind's eye, the grainy photograph circulated by the media of a young girl with long brown hair and a happy, pretty face, wearing a t-shirt, smiling at the camera. I had no real concept of where Morphett Vale was; it seemed a world away. Down South. The suburb we lived in, Manningham, was neat and quiet and on the other side of town. Many of our neighbours were older couples, with neat gardens and moribund social lives, their children having long flown the coop. We felt safe in Manningham. Though I remember when my feelings of safety were compromised: when I was about twelve, I was allowed to ride my bike to and from school.

One day I was riding home with a friend who lived in the next suburb, and we were riding along the footpath, a bit carelessly, when we cut off the driver of a white Mitsubishi Magna. The car pulled over and an older man with white hair, and a white beard, possibly in his fifties, emerged from the car, angry. He pulled a police badge from his pocket and told us that if we conduct

[26] Nigel Hunt, 'Cold case: Police offer $1m reward for information on Rhianna Barreau's disappearance on October 7, 1992', *Sunday Mail*, March 7, 2015 <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/cold-case-police-offer-1m-reward-for-information-on-rhianna-barreaus-disappearance-on-october-7-1992/news-story/9c28f9d560d0e17b3bee16b7d5e2e8ee..> [Accessed Jnaury 10 2019]

ourselves like that again he'll send a patrol car around to speak to our parents. My friend and I separated and each rode home. I remember shutting myself in the bathroom at home, terrified, and as I look back, I think what was most damaging was the feeling of freedom that had been taken away from me. Being allowed to ride to school was a huge coup, and now it had been muddied. We later found that the supposed off duty police officer lived the next street over. I still don't believe he was actually a cop.

I want to use literary texts as case studies to engage with the affective geography of the city, mapping affect with each chapter. Chapter 2 will deal with fear – the most primal of emotions, an emotion imbued with a dynamism – fight or flight – a movement, movement through the city. I look at the contagion effect of fear as it is disseminated through the media. These stories are internalised and form part of the collective memory, but also influence individual narratives that are mapped on to the city. I examine how stories of violence may curtail navigation and exploration, and how they act as (literal) dead ends, as echoes of these crimes reverberate in one's mind – they are impressed upon the psyche, branded. These crimes are sutured to the collective memory, but the suturing is more pronounced on some individuals than others.

This chapter examines the stories told to Australian women about Australian women and the city. This chapter will look at how the city and is gendered and how this gendering furthers women's fear of crime. Scholarly work is being conducted globally in feminist geography regarding these topics, so I want to critically examine how this scholarship can be applied to Australian cities and Australian women. This is not to discount the work of Australian scholars in these fields such as Carolyn Whitzman, and her excellent work in feminist geography that has highlighted issues surrounding safety and female mobility, or Bianca Fileborn whose work on street harassment in

Australian cities has proven illuminating. This chapter will look at how these ideas flourish in Australian cities by delving further into Australian gender relations, particularly in relation to social regulation of public space. I examine the writing of prominent Australian feminists such as Anne Summers and Miriam Dixson to explore the evolution of gender relations in Australia. I also examine the 'Free to Be' app promoted by Plan International which endeavoured to map female safety in Melbourne.

I will query the provenance and proliferation of new micro-political gendered narratives, and how they proliferate in and among media, family and the community. They build on existing gender normativity, but critique it and search for new forms of subjectivity in social spaces. These narratives contradict statistics about violent crime in Australian cities, which show that men are at a higher risk of random attack. Women are more at risk in the home. But these narratives do not speak to statistics, they speak to outdated notions of separate spheres, the social reiteration of Victorian notions that tie women to the domestic sphere.

Moreover, Australian cities are built on a history of violence. Colonialism is tied closely to hetero-patriarchy, and the advancement of the traditional, Judeo-Christian family unit. These are narratives of control. This thesis is asking how can we use story to rebut story? How can we untangle these narratives to enable liberatory exploration?

Chapter Three, 'Violence: Spectre and Spectacle in the Jill Meagher case', explores the teleological act that these narratives predict – unfathomable violence, rape and murder. The death of Jill Meagher is what piqued my interest in the topic of female safety narratives, and this chapter will use the Meagher case as a study to engage with how the media deployed these narratives, and how

they can be read to demonstrate how these archaic attitudes prevail. This chapter will examine how fear of crime, particularly sexual violence, acts as a spectre for lone women in the city – a weight on their shoulder as they navigate space. This chapter will look at how the Meagher case unravelled to the Australian public, and how Meagher was presented as 'the ideal victim' by the Australian media, but how she also developed a spectral quality, her story haunting Australian women. This chapter will look at other high profile cases since 2012, and how these women too have been portrayed as the 'ideal victim', and how this profiling acts as erasure to female victims who may not meet this criteria. It will look at how whiteness pervades these narratives. I will also look at the spectacle of this violence by examining the ABC TV documentary *Conviction* about the arrest and conviction of Meagher's killer, Adrian Ernest Bailey.

In Chapter Four, 'Urban Promise and Potential in Helen Garner's Melbourne', I will move away from these dark acts and explore the potential of the city in Helen Garner's debut 1977 novel, *Monkey Grip*. I will examine the role of the city as a liberating force for the text's protagonist, Nora, and how Garner portrays female mobility within the text. I will also examine how the text works as a utopic fantasy for contemporary readers like myself, despite Nora's emotional marginalisation by her junkie lover Javo. I was drawn to Monkey Grip as it is a seminal literary representation of Melbourne and its inner Northern suburbs, and while it presents a female character wrestling with single motherhood and doomed romantic pursuits, she is never presented as fearful of the city. There is a constant threat of loneliness and emotional disappointment in the text, yet the threat of violence does not loom. Nora is bold in her use of the city, as she rides or walks through Carlton and its surrounds with confidence.

But I will return to the threat of violence though staying in similar geographical locales in Chapter Five, 'Brunswick Ground: on place, gender, grief and belonging'. This chapter performs a close reading of Catherine de Saint Phalle's 2015 novel, *On Brunswick Ground*, which engages with the murder of Jill Meagher on both a personal and community level, depicting a nameless female character who lives in Brunswick grappling with the death. I also examine Michaela McGuire's long form essay, 'A Story of Grief', published as a Penguin Short, which engages with the 'what if?' feeling that the crime engendered in Australian women – 'what if that was me?' I also digress to the pub, to look at the relationship between space and gender in Australian licensed venues, as the pub serves as a locus of community in both texts. I will probe the role of alcohol in the texts both as lubricant and social enabler but also as something that supposedly makes women more vulnerable, less likely to engage in safety behaviours as they 'let their guard down', but also more bold, more likely to use the city without fear.

In Chapter Six, 'Write to the city: Sophie Cunningham's Melbourne', I will discuss Melbourne writer and editor Sophie Cunningham's work, concentrating on her chapbook *Boundaries*, her text *Melbourne* and her essay 'Staying with the trouble'. Cunningham uses the city in a benign way, and functionality of the city enables her sense of belonging. I will look at how Cunningham both follows and forges a path in these texts, and her treatment of her suburb, Fitzroy. I will examine the tension in the texts between Melbourne's colonial, European ancestry and this portrayal.

Finally, Chapter Seven, 'The path home', will return to Adelaide, and reflect on my home town and Melbourne, by engaging with incidents from my past that have tested my relationship with the city, while I also look at the writing of Clementine Ford. This thesis will mimic an emotional register, an affective path through the city, going from fear and moving towards engendering a

sense of belonging, looking at how the city self can feel 'at home' in public space. This thesis queries how our understanding of urban space is informed by narrative, but also how narrative can intervene: how users of the city, De Certeau's walkers – in this case, walkers who identify as women – can re-write the city, contesting dominant narratives that relegate women to the private sphere through violence and intimidation. How can we wrestle the city from these narratives of fear and gender-based exclusion, instead reinscribing the city with joyful associations, fostering a sense of inclusion, imbuing urban spaces with playful potential and possibilities? This is a complex question, one that must take into consideration how the settler-colonial Australian city has come to be, and how the gender relations of those who use it are inscribed upon its streets.

CHAPTER 2 *Fear: Cultural narratives, violence and the ideal victim*

In the 2016 ABC TV documentary *Conviction*, former Detective Senior Sergeant Ron Iddles details the interview process that led to Adrian Bayley confessing to the rape and murder of Jill Meagher. Iddles says that prior to Bayley's confession, the offender told detectives a story. Bayley told police that on the night in question, he had spent a few hours with his partner and friends at the Quiet Man, a pub in suburban Flemington, before heading to Lounge, a bar on Swanston Street in the CBD. At Lounge, Bayley said, he and his girlfriend had a heated argument during which she excused herself to go to the toilet and failed to return. By all reports, this much is true, resonating with Bayley's girlfriend's account of the evening. However, it is at this point that Bayley and his girlfriend's story diverge.

His girlfriend states that she left the bar and, unbeknown to Bayley, returned to their rental property in Coburg where she hid from him, ignoring his persistent calls and text messages. Bayley on the other hand, artfully embellishes his story, claiming that he had followed his girlfriend after her disappearance, spending hours gallantly searching for her on the streets of the CBD. In actuality, he went home, changed his clothes and headed to Sydney Road, Brunswick, where he and Meagher's paths crossed. Bayley's story portrayed him as a doting boyfriend, only concerned for his partner's safety. To the interviewing police officers, he had said: 'I'm worried about women, women shouldn't walk around on their own'[27].

[27] Chloe Brice, 'Jill Meagher: Conviction Documentary Reveals How Killer Adrian Bayley Was Caught', *ABC News*, September 27, 2016 < https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-27/conviction-inside-the-hunt-for-jill-meaghers-killer/7864120> [Accessed January 20 2017]
.

Bayley's 'worries' are dark with irony: to maintain a veneer of innocence as he was interviewed by police, he told a familiar story, invoking a commonsense notion: benevolence for women, 'naturally' at risk on the city streets at night. Of course, he is in fact the masked bogeyman, and the familiar cultural narrative is his mask. Because such a moral veneer is unremarkable and culturally accepted, one can see how Bayley considered his story believable. Such concerns are everyday, flippant, female-restricting misogyny *lite*. Everyone worries about lone women on the streets at night, surely? Bayley's articulation that 'women shouldn't walk around on their own' worked as subtext in the Meagher case: it was not explicitly stated by most media outlets reporting on the crime, but remains the only available discourse for many in the community.

Fast forward to March 17, 2015. Early that evening, Victorian teenager Masa Vukotic was followed and brutally stabbed to death in a Doncaster park near her home. In a press conference following news of the crime, Detective Inspector Mick Hughes said, 'I suggest to people, particularly females, they shouldn't be alone in parks'.[28] Ten days later, a priest, Father Joseph Olickal, delivered a homily at a Catholic primary school service in Melbourne. He held up a newspaper clipping showing a photograph of Adrian Bayley, and told his congregation that Meagher would not have been murdered in 2012 if she had been more 'faith-filled' and 'home in bed' rather than 'walking down Sydney Road at 3am'.[29] Two months later, a 17-year-old Albury, NSW, girl was gang raped as she walked home from work, and Albury mayor Kevin Mack stated that he always 'encouraged women not to walk alone, to have someone with them at all times, because [being alone is] in itself

[28] Marissa, Calligeros, 'Parks Not Safe for Women, Says Homicide Squad Boss', *The Age,* March 20 2015, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/parks-not-safe-for-women-says-homicide-squad-boss-20150319-1m2rgc.html> [Accessed January 10 2017]
[29] Dan Buckley, 'Priest apologises for 'idiotic' comments on Jill Meagher', *Irish Examiner*, March 31 2015 <https://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/priest-apologises-for-idiotic-comments-on-jill-meagher-321260.html> [Accessed January 10 2017]

is an invitation for someone to take advantage of you.'[30] These men faced public condemnation for their comments, and were forced to apologise, but the sentiment continued its righteous crusade. In 2018, the body of 22-year-old woman Eurydice Dixon was found in Carlton's Princes Park. Like Meagher, she had been walking home from a night out and was killed close to home. And like the men before him, Local Superintendent David Clayton warned the public, stating, "this is an area of high community activity … so just make sure you have situational awareness, that you're aware of your surroundings … If you've got a mobile phone carry it and if you've got any concerns, call police". Detective Inspector Andrew Stamper went on to say, "my message is that people need to be aware of their own personal security," he said. "That's everywhere. If people have any concerns at any time, call triple-0. We would much rather have too many calls than too few"[31].

This chapter interrogates these warnings and worries, examining their provenance and continued power. How do stories about women falling victim to foul play in public inform discourse regarding female safety in Australian cities? Crimes such as those committed by Bayley – violent crimes involving female victims committed by men not known to the victim – are 'storied' in a particular way: mobilised and repeated, re-told, to affirm societally sanctioned gender roles, and to reinforce the public/private gender binary. These crimes are made into fables, stories told to females to purportedly discourage them from placing themselves in perceived danger in public spaces. The victims of these crimes are held as examples as to what could go wrong; women and girls are warned that if they walk alone, they will end up 'like (insert well known victim here)'.

[30] Kate Aubusson, 'Women Who Walk Alone at Night Invite Predators, Says Mayor of Albury after Alleged Rape', *Sydney Morning Herald,* May 1 2015 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/women-who-walk-alone-at-night-invite-predators-says-mayor-of-albury-after-alleged-rape-20150430-1mxcph.html> [Accessed January 10 2017]

[31] Rebecca Sullivan, 'The post about #EurydiceDixon Australian women are sharing on social media' *news.com.au*, June 15 2018 <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/the-post-about-eurydicedixon-australian-women-are-sharing-on-social-media/news-story/5131bf8ff310bd2fd0fe600c888e5295> [Accessed July 1 2018]

Additionally, this type of violent crime – one in which a woman comes across a stranger in a public place who randomly attacks or maims them – are not necessarily commonplace, but fit the schema that women as a gender are more vulnerable than men and therefore must employ certain safety behaviours to avoid assault or death when using the city alone.

For women, the danger of being attacked is amplified, and rarely interrogated, emblematic of this broader cultural narrative that asserts women are unsafe alone in public, and more vulnerable than men to assault, despite statistics (as mentioned in the introductory chapter) proving that men are more likely to be attacked on the street by a stranger. However, to women alone on the streets after dark, the spectre of violence (a spectral presence that will be discussed further in the next chapter), particularly of a sexual nature, at the hands of a stranger looms large. This cultural narrative, that curtails female movement by asserting inherent susceptibility to attack, is instilled into women from childhood (consider the fairytale of Little Red Riding Hood, for instance). These stories speak to ideas surrounding female vulnerability and mobility, and reinforce hegemonic masculinity in Australian culture, feeding into a broader cultural narrative about Australian women and their relationship with urban public space. Australian space is inherently gendered, and this chapter will look at how this binary continues to prevail in urban public spaces, and explore the ideological force at play that seeks to place women in the home rather than on the street. To track the provenance of these narratives, I will refer to several Australian feminist texts, and include a close reading of some of the work of Anne Summers.

Cultural narratives

This thesis examines the confluence between the literary and cultural narratives around female use of the city, and how women and girls are conditioned to use public spaces, which is part of a wider

discussion around gender and freedom. Adrian Bayley's statement that 'women shouldn't walk around on their own' is a succinct summation of the gendered 'cultural narrative' that I have been invoking: the idea that women are inherently vulnerable in public spaces and will invite harm simply by occupying this space alone. This narrative's grim hypothesis operates teleologically, as demonstrated by the Meagher case: a female abandons company, inevitably comes across a man who wishes to do her harm, and she is raped or killed, or both. This narrative is a common one. It has its roots in folktales (Little Red Riding Hood opposes the individual freedom of the coming-of-age girl to social constraint) and is built up and disseminated by the media, law enforcement, and the community, to instruct – to teach women that they must be fearful in public space, as that public space is not theirs to be free in. As Berrington and Jones point out, 'much reporting of sexual assaults is voyeuristic and misogynistic – reflecting, reinforcing and re-imposing patriarchal values. Stories about women abused and killed provide a clear warning to other women. Unless you put yourself under male protection, this is what could happen to you'[32].

Before exploring this further, my use of the term 'cultural narrative' requires more specific definition. These 'cultural narratives' are apocryphal: they are taken as a 'given' and culturally specific, seen as truth by much of the population, and spread both anecdotally and via mainstream, dominant media outlets. They are the narrative form that we give to ideas informed by moral codes, mythical structures that are spun out as stories and then become normalised as ways of being.

[32] Eileen Berrington, and Helen Jones, 'Reality Vs. Myth: Constructions of Women's Insecurity', *Feminist Media Studies,* 2 (2002), pp.307-23 (p. 312).

While this project engages most heavily with literary studies, the definition of narrative employed in this study is an interdisciplinary one. It is not a narratological study, yet looks to that field where appropriate. Rather, this project borrows a great deal from media and cultural studies due to the methodological approach adopted for the project, and the desire to engage confluently with media texts as well as the literary. I wish to explore narrative both from a cultural perspective and a literary one – hence, the reticence to employ the term 'narrative' as a synonym for 'story'. For example: in this chapter, the Meagher case remains the story, whereas the representation, and repetition of the case, is what I would refer to as the narrative.

While in some critical instances the term 'narrative' is used as a synonym for 'story', in this thesis I see them as separate entities, interrelated and often co-dependent but distinct nonetheless: *a single story forms part of a larger narrative*. Stories of violence such as the murders of lone women such as Meagher, Anita Cobby and Masa Vukotic buttress the cultural narrative that I am concerned with, but it is also scaffolded by societal attitudes and values systems. These cultural narratives are discursive: frequently spread through gossip, through chats with friends or co-workers, and through discussions with family. These conversations are often well-meaning but inherently didactic. The story of a violent crime is relayed to a woman to advise her to "be careful" – to remind her of gendered vulnerability, and that her appearance, as a woman on the street, makes her a potential victim. We tell stories of these crimes to one another, but the narrative underpins. This allows a story to shapeshift, to grow into something that bears little resemblance to an event, instead reliant on a cultural script already familiar. As we tell the story of the crime, we feed the cultural narrative, the overarching set of values, of ideas, made up of these stories.

This distinction between story and narrative is present in semiotics scholar Paul Cobley's definition of narrative. He states that narrative is 'the showing of the telling of … events and the mode selected for that to take place'[33]. He writes that story on the other hand, 'consists of all the events which are to be depicted'[34]. Cobley stresses that narrative is 'a *re*-presentation of events, and chiefly *re*-presents space and time'[35]. He writes that 'narrative undoubtedly *re*-presents features of the world, leaving some out in favour of others. It *re*-presents time, space and sequence; it facilitates the remembrance and exploration of identity; it imbues its representations with causality; it envisages an end; and it does all of these according to specificities of the technologies in which it is embedded'[36].

Indeed, the narrative that I am referring to serves this purpose: it *re*-presents stories about female victims of crime, arranging events as if to demonstrate causality, antipating a grim ending should the narrative not have the desired effect on its subject (that being the shirking of solo excursion). Crimes such as the Meagher case serve as the 'events' – the raw materials, the *story*. It is how this story is framed, how it is *re*-presented, that makes up the narrative – the cultural narrative that is deployed to instruct. Cultural studies scholar Chris Barker writes of narrative in a similarly instructive vein, suggesting that narratives 'supply answers to the question, how shall we live'[37]. Literary theorist Richard Walsh also gestures towards the use of narrative as a tool for comprehension, as he asserts that 'a story is both something *of* which we make sense and something *with* which we make sense'[38]. Could that 'sense' be the narrative – what informs the story, and also

[33] Paul Cobley, *Narrative* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), p. 6.
[34] Cobley, p. 5.
[35] Cobley, p. 237.
[36] Cobley, p. 228.
[37] Chris Barker, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), p. 131.
[38] Richard Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit', in *Theory Matters: The Place of Theory in Literary and Cultural Studies Today*, ed. by Martin Middeke and Christoph Reinfandt (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 265-79.

how it is disseminated? That idea of 'sense' – the making of meaning – is informed by a set of values that are culturally determined. Narrative is culturally situated: the way we make sense of a story is dependent on cultural factors relating to class, memory, ethnicity, gender.

Robyn Fivush writes that 'narrating our experiences by very definition implies a process of editing and selecting, voicing some aspects of what occurred and therefore silencing other aspects'[39]. Fivush mentions our experiences, but what of those experienced viariously, those mediated experiences: those that form part of the collective memory, part of our cultural fabric. Those experiences are synthesised again: relayed to the public via the media, therefore already heavily edited, then reproduced in anecdotal formats – 'did you hear about that girl that got killed?', rather than 'did you hear about that man who killed her?'. Fivush goes on to write that

> narratives are culturally canonical linguistic forms that modulate the organisation of experienced events. Narratives provide a sequential organisation that specifies the unfolding of an event along temporal lines, but even more so, narratives provide a temporal framework for understanding how and why events unfold as they do … Narratives move beyond a simple script or chronology to imbue a sequence of actions with causal links that explain why one action follows another, and, critically, does so within a folk psychology that interweaves actions in the world with human thoughts, motivations, and emotions. Thus a narrative provides an account of what happened that is dense with interpersonal meaning and evaluation.[40]

Fivush's reference to the 'folk psychology' of narratives implies the culturally canonical notion of collective memory. Australia's cultural memory is littered with criminal acts – from Ned Kelly, to the Port Arthur Massacre, to Ivan Milat, right back European settlement with the arrival of convicts

[39] Robyn, Fivush, 'Speaking silence: The social construction of silence in autobiographical and cultural narratives', *Memory* 18 (2010), pp. 88-98 (p. 88).
[40] Fivush, p. 89.

from Britain and the establishment of the penal colony. There is a mythic dimension to these everyday narratives.

When I refer to a 'cultural' narrative, I am referring to contemporary urban Australia, but of course each culture holds their own, and there is some overlap. I am reluctant to instead name this a 'national' narrative – these are at a different level that we would associate with say, Gallipoli – and given that my thesis is concerned with the urban, but it also suggests some kind of static 'Australian-ness', negating the nation's multicultural make up. Rather, I see this narrative as hegemonic, reflective of power structures within Australian society. Dominant members of a culture will attempt to most heavily impose their 'sense' on to the story, as Richard Walsh points out, 'narrative inherently does ideological work'[41]. A cultural narrative is an ideological one: informed by the dominant ideologies of the cultural group in question.

Furthermore, when I say 'urban', I mean urban in not only a physical, material, geographical sense but also how these narratives overlap into virtual spaces, as our culture is embedded online. We are assembled both on the landscape and digitally. The internet has changed the way we 'gather', creating a virtual polis that is largely dependent on narrative generated offline, as it proliferates news and opinion – often masquerading as one another. This affects our concept of the local as our public places are also online, made of noughts and ones rather than bitumen and pavers.

But how do we define culture, an even more contested term than narrative? John Hartley writes that while a fixed definition of culture is illusory, one way of looking at the term culture is as 'the

[41] Richard Walsh, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit', in *Theory Matters: The Place of Theory in Literary and Cultural Studies Today*, ed. by Martin Middeke and Christoph Reinfandt (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 265-79 (p. 266).

social production and reproduction of sense, meaning and consciousness'[42]. Chris Barker writes that culture is best thought as a 'mobile signifer that enables distinct and divergent ways of talking about human activity'[43]. Culture is dynamic and pluralistic, rhizomatic even, as the individual is situated in several cultural groups at once – we orbit several different cultural spheres of varying size and importance, that inform our own cartographies. Overwhelmingly, one's country of residence dominates – Australian culture – but what about nationality or ethnic background? Financial status? Religion? Where one lives (that is, Eastern suburbs, inner city)? Occupation or union affiliation? Political leanings? Extra-curricular interests, such as sport, theatre or live music? Involvement in the latter might make one also part of a 'subculture' or 'counterculture', a group that may buckle against the narratives of the dominant culture, *sub*verting them, *counter*ing them, according to values that may deviate from the norm. All of these variables make up our own individual values system, influencing our beliefs, giving us each a very specific brand of personal ideology. However, dominant cultural values will be those trumpeted by the media, government and law enforcement. Cultural narratives reflect dominant, collective ideology, and dominant, collective stories bolster this.

Feminist scholar Clare Hemmings's use of the terms 'story' and 'narrative' in her text *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* has informed the key terms in this project, despite the varying subject matter (though there are definitely ideological resonances). In the book's notes, Hemmings defines her terms as thus:

> By stories I mean the overall tales feminists tell about what has happened in the last thirty to forty years of Western feminist theory and indicate too their status as "myth" or "common opinion". By "narrative" I mean the textual refrains

[42] John Hartley, 'Culture', *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Tim O'Sullivan, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery, and John Fiske (London: Routledge 1994), p. 68.
[43] Barker, p 44.

> (content and pattern) used to tell these stories and their movement across time and space[44].

I borrow Hemmings's definition as it imbues narrative with a dynamism; it resists stasis. These 'refrains' can fluctuate, they are malleable, dynamic, amoebic: growing or shrinking as cultural values eb and flow. These values too, are in a constant state of flux, informed by public opinion, in turn informed by media reportage on violent crime. Values are contentious. The Australian Government's Department of Home Affair's Immigration and Citizenship… offers the 'Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles' eBook, which tells visa applicants that they must understand the following statement:

> Australian society values respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good[45]

However, many Australian government policies of recent years on both sides of politics have involved the stagnation of public welfare payments, the quarantining of these payments for Indigenous populations, offshore processing of asylum seekers, the deportation of refugee families, the continual refusal to recognise the threat of climate change – proving that compassion and the public good are complicated concepts. Additionally, it could also be argued that the equality of men and women is still in flux as governments continue to debate issues like parental leave and childcare provisions.

---

[44] Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter the Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. ed. by Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan and Robyn Wiegman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). p. 227.
[45]Commonwealth of Australia, 'Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles' <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/support-subsite/files/life-in-australia/lia_english_full.pdf> [Accessed February 10 2020]

Separate spheres

The concept of 'separate spheres' – that is, the tacit segregration of the public and private along gender lines – has long been a concern of feminist theory. From its very beginnings, the feminist movement has sought to emancipate women from the patriarchal assertion that their only role is in the domestic sphere, and that they stay confined to private space. Sherry B. Ortner's seminal 1972 essay asks in its title 'Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?'[46] and interrogates the universality of female subjugation through an anthropological lens. Ortner draws upon a swathe of scholarly work, including the writing of Simone de Beauvoir, that discusses how female physiology is employed as an excuse to restrict women to the 'natural', yet that this is merely a partriarchal construct, but one that reverberates throughout social and institutional mores. Ortner's claim to this construct's universality envelopes Australian culture within its scope. Research conducted by Australian scholars concurs, but shows that colonisation brought with it more defined spatial binaries. Sally Morgan and Ambelin Kwaymullina, who belong to the Palyku people of the Pilbara region[47], succinctly demonstrate the marked differences between the values of the colonisers and First Nations people, writing,

> When the English arrived on the shores of this continent a little over two hundred years ago, they brought with them a worldview very unlike the one that had sustained our peoples and countries for so many thousands of years. They carried with them a religion that spoke of the sacred as something to be found in heaven and not on earth; a belief in a hierarchy of species and gender; and a science which told them that all that was could be measured, and what was measurable was all there was[48].

[46] Sherry B Ortner., 'Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?', *Feminist Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 5–31.
[47] Madelaine Dickie, 'Pilbara Palyku mob share opulent illustrations; tense questions', *National Indigenous Times*, September 26, 2018,
<https://nit.com.au/pilbara-palyku-mob-share-opulent-illustrations-tense-questions/> [Accessed March 1 2021].
[48] Sally Morgan and Ambelin Kwaymullina, 'Solid Rock, Sacred Ground: Cultural Vandalism in the Pilbara', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 26.1 (2007), pp. 9-15 (p. 12).

These differing beliefs in gender hierarchy are echoed by white Australian scholars Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans who write that prior to colonisation of the continent,

> traditional Aboriginal societies … had no equivalent term to that of "housewife". Aboriginal women certainly dwelt in houses of a sort … They might even oversee their architecture and built them themselves … Yet Aboriginal women were not confined to these structures, nor was their entire life's role exclusively defined by their maintenance[49].

Saunders and Evans illustrate how European colonisation of the continent saw women's place within the home become cemented due to a significant shortage of servants in the colonies due partly to the stigmatisation of working in domestic servitude, so more women stayed and worked within their own homes[50]. As utilities such as gas and electricity, together with proper sewerage systems, became more widespread, so did household appliances which helped ease the housewife's load, but also contributed to the further fetishisation of the immaculate, clean home, made possible through feminised labour. Saunders and Evans (but with reference to Fox and Lake, Rieger, Dowse and Spearitt) the valourisation of the housewife as a pillar of virtue, morally above 'workwomen', 'shopgirls' and 'prostitutes', writing that

> morally, virtuous housewifes … would render the home environment the very antithesis of the outside work and market place, keeping private and public worlds as distinct and complementary as masculinity and femininity were expected to be. The wife/mother role was romanticised as both God-ordained and natural – and there were many metaphorical allusions to administering angels and nesting birds[51].

Though in Western industrial and post-industrial societies, the public/private gender binary, like the gender binary itself, has been in a state of flux. In the twentieth century, gender roles were disrupted in wartime, as women assumed previously male-dominated vocations on the home front, working in labour intensive jobs as 'manpower' was scarce. However, as men returned from battle,

[49] Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace, 1994), p. 176.
[50] Saunders and Evans, pp. 182-183.
[51] Saunders and Evans, p. 178.

the spatial gender binary became more pronounced as women were forced, and aided by newly available cultural narratives, to hand back work to their male counterparts and revert to traditional domestic labour or 'homemaking' roles. Post war commodity capitalism festishised the domestic space and the 'housewife', glamourising this figure to sell whitegoods and household appliances. The refrains of "honey, I'm home!" echoed from the United States to Australia, as pop culture saturated by advertising reflected this gendered fetishisation. This was highly apparent in Australia, as many women in the public service were forced to resign from their positions once they were married. The city's offices were populated mostly by men, with most women present unmarried and relegated to the 'typing pool'. It was widely assumed that when a woman married, she would endure a financial submissive position of homemaker and mother. The majority of married women were indentured to their husbands who served as their employer, sacrificing their spatial and financial independence. Their workplace was the home.

Yet despite advances resulting in the proliferation of women in paid work in Australia, the gendering of space continues, particularly after dark, ensuring limitations are placed upon female spatial mobility[52]. Due to their reproductive abilities, and thus, societal positioning as mothers, women are tied to the domestic: still largely confined to the hearth, to home *making*. The Victorian trope of the 'angel in the house' lingers. While heterosexual men with children may now shoulder more of the domestic load (in terms of household chores such as cooking and cleaning, and parenting duties), they remain societally positioned as breadwinners, as providers – they leave the home to go to work each day, thereby being associated with the public sphere. Men are seen as hunters, women are gatherers. One only needs to refer to contemporaneous debates dubbing

[52] Doreen, Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), p. 179.

childcare a ‘women’s issue’, and the concomitant proliferation of mothers taking up part time work, while fathers remain full time following the birth of their children. Public debates regarding paid parental leave in Australia are euphemistic: the discussion is focussed on maternity leave, not prolonged Scandinavian style paternity leave. Even women without children may still find themselves more socially conditioned to perform ‘domestically’ – this can be linked to the rise of home improvement and decoration as a hobby (as exemplified by enormously popular Australian home renovation television shows such as *The Block* or *House Rules*), or baking culture and the consequent proliferation of the ‘domestic goddess’ trope made famous by British celebrity cook Nigella Lawson. Neoliberal capitalist societies rely on these seemingly innocuous hobbies to maintain acceptable modes of domestic femininity. Interestingly, American retail giant K-Mart’s recent forays into trendy homewares in the Australian market have seen Facebook groups made up primarily of women discussing the store’s products. One group entitled ‘Kmart Mums Australia’ has over forty thousand members and counting. There is no companion group of ‘Kmart Dads’.

The resultant disconnection and alienation that comes from this hegemonic commodity fetishism in neoliberal Australia is illuminated in a recent study by researchers Daphne Habibis, Penny Skye Taylor and Bruna S. Ragaini. Habibis, Taylor and Ragaini interviewed and surveyed 474 First Nations people living in the Greater Darwin area about White Australian culture and neoliberalism, and in these discussions, their respondents deftly critique the cultural selfishness that pervades White Australia, and the White focus on individualism and personal material wealth that comes at the expense of community and care. The Aboriginal people interviewed reflected on what they deemed ‘dollar dreaming’, a push by White Australians to accumulate personal wealth that results in disconnection with community, family and nature, and a lack of empathy and compassion. Respondent Di says, ‘White fellas have dollar dreaming … to White fellas the dollar is sacred …

That's their way of life, their dreaming, their culture'[53]. This culture of domesticity is reliant on privacy, on a 'closed-offed-ness', walls separating oneself from the outside world: a push *inside*, desirous of privacy, away from the public. Respondent Clara invokes these binaries, saying bluntly, 'my stereotype of a White person is yeah, city, concrete, restaurants, just stuff that just does not matter'[54].

Catriona Elder, in her text *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity*, asserts that Australia is heavily reliant on this kind of heteronormative 'binary logic' to make sense of society[55]: self/community, man/woman, public/private. She writes that 'gender is deployed in national stories as a means of order the lives of men and women in terms of a public/private dichotomy'[56]. Elder's conflation of story-telling with gender resonates with this notion of 'cultural narratives', as story is employed to maintain gender norms.

But these narratives are complicated. Yes, women are being killed by men much too often in Australia. As of July 9, 2020, Destroy the Joint affirm that 29 women have been due to violence against women in this country this year. Before I submit this thesis, the figure may be higher. Yes, most women do not feel safe enough to warrant walking home alone at night. The spectre of sexual assault looms larger for women than it does (if it does at all) for men. However, given the data, is this worry worth our while? Should we be more worried about entering into relationships, or even friendships, with heterosexual men? Are our worries stopping us from being free?

[53] Daphne Habibis, Penny Skye Taylor, and Bruna S. Ragaini, 'White People Have No Face: Aboriginal Perspectives on White Culture and the Costs of Neoliberalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43.7 (2020): pp. 1149-68 (p. 1164).
[54] Habibis et al, p. 1158.
[55] Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2008), p. 66.
[56] Elder, p. 73.

But how can this freedom be measured, and how can it be measured in a safe way? Can we teach girls and young women to use the city in the same way as we teach boys and young men? Do we have a responsibility to warn girls of their supposed vulnerability? Or rather than teaching girls self defense, should we teaching boys how to treat women with respect? But is this benevolent sexism too woven into our societal fabric? An article on the Lonely Planet's website advises women travelling to Australia alone to 'avoid walking alone late at night in any of the major cities and towns – keep enough money aside for a taxi back to your accommodation'[57]. A thorough scour of the Lonely Planet website for equivalent advice for male travellers to Australia was not fruitful. These narratives apportion blame to the victim, suggesting that if they were not in the wrong place (wrong for whom?) at the wrong time (again, for whom?), then they would not have experienced this trauma.

I consider my own relationship with the city. I live on a suburb that hugs the city of Adelaide in a house that has always been in my family – a very run down house that when I first moved in after my grandmother passed away, seemed to me, lacked security. I considered all the ways it could be broken in to and pleaded with my father, my landlord, to improve the house's security. Soon after this, a man was breaking into homes in the western suburbs of Adelaide, homes where women lived alone. I cannot find any details of the cases online, but I have a memory of the cover of the *Advertiser* one day, with an article that suggested women who live alone should get a dog to protect them. So, as well as feeling unsafe on the street, I felt it inside my house too.

Mona Domosh and Joni Seager summarise:

[57] 'Australia in Detail: Women Travellers', *Lonely Planet* <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/australia/women-travellers> [Accessed March 10 2020]

> Women's perception of risk from crime in the city, and the gendered association of the city as male, are mutually reinforcing. There are real risks to women who venture into the wrong street at the wrong time, but our culture also tends to exaggerate those risks, thereby keeping women in their "place" (at home).[58]

Yes, the statistics do state that men are more likely to be assaulted or killed by a stranger, but the spectre of rape and associated acts of sexual violence and depravity has not been hammered into them from childhood. And do we push women on to the street, telling them that they'll be okay, when they might not be? When there is a very real problem with misogyny and violence against women in Australia? But why are we not warning women in heterosexual relationships of their dangers? We still fetishise marriage, but wince at the notion of a woman walking home from a night out because the myth of the protective husband/vulnerable woman outweighs that of the strong independent woman.

Stories and the Australian City

The introductory chapter touched on the importance of story in Australian culture, and this chapter seeks to elaborate on how story-telling informs Australian cultural beliefs, through informal linguistic dispersion together with mediated discourse such as news media, or social media (though the discursive means of the latter complicates this in a way that cannot be discussed economically here). Story-telling and myth is at the heart of the Australian experience, and Australians are (though also self-proclaimed) yarn spinners par excellence. Writer David Malouf says that Australians

> deal with the randomness of what happens to us is by seeing it as a story, imposing on the shape of story. Perhaps this is why folk tales and fairy tales mean so much to us. They offer a range of story-shapes […] that are models for turning the muddle of living from one day to the next into something with a middle and an end.[59]

[58] Mona Domosh and Joni Seager. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), p. 100.
[59] David Malouf, *A spirit of play: the making of Australian consciousness* (Sydney: ABC Books, 1999), p. 98.

This 'muddle' is important here, and resonates with the female experience: that push and pull between societally sanctioned roles and the self, between ideals promoted by story and narrative (and it goes without saying that Malouf's position as a white-presenting, upper-middle-class Australian man does allow him a position of privilege that complicates this 'muddling'). He goes on to state that anxiety plagues the Australian consciousness, writing,

> Identity can be experienced in two ways. Either as a confident *being-in-the-world* or as anxiety about *our-place-in-the-world*; as something we live for ourselves or as something that demands for its confirmation the approval of others[60].

Malouf's comment is pertinent when considering how the gender binary operates within the city: is this anxiety largely gendered? This confident manner of 'being-in-the-world' is denied a great many women as they walk the city, and compromises notions of identity and feelings of belonging. So while women may long for a city that allows them to live for themselves, rather than the approval of others, unfortunately recent studies have shown otherwise.

Australian femininities and masculinities

Miriam Dixson opens her seminal 1976 text *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to Present* with the following incendiary statement: 'I propose that Australian women, women in the land of mateship, 'the Ocker', keg-culture, come pretty close to top rating as the 'Doormats of the Western World'[61]. Australian women are immediately presented as abject, second in a cultural landscape that Dixson clearly sees as second-rate, populated by uncouth men and dominated by alcoholism.

[60] Malouf, p. 99.
[61] Miriam, Dixon, *The real Matilda: woman and identity in Australia, 1788 to the present* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), p. 11.

Dixson references the concept of 'mateship', which largely excludes women. Former Prime Minister John Howard exploited this concept, militarising it, extolling the importance of 'mateship' to the Gallipoli myth. Just as mates sit beside one another in the trenches, so too do they aloft barstools at the pub, reminds Dixson as she raises the figure of 'the Ocker', a fiercely anti-intellectual figure, uncouth, from the 'keg culture' that represents white Australia's troubling relationship with alcohol and the violence it spawns. In this culture, women are used to being walked over – neglected and used, bottom of the hierarchy – but also excluded, rendered less visible. American sexuality scholar David Halperin, concurs, as he writes that in contemporary Australia dominant heteronormative masculinity dictates that a 'a real bloke is a guy who avoids the company of women and prefers to spend all his time with his mates (that's how you can tell he's straight)'.[62]

Cartriona Elder agrees that there is a degree of homosociality[63] to mainstream (as problematic a word as that is) Australian culture. Consider the Australian barbecue, a hetero-social mis-en-scène frequently deployed to represent Australian values, where the men stand around the barbecue, beer in hand (representative of Dixson's 'keg culture'), as the male host cooks the meat, while the women gather inside, tending to the salads. Yet this suburban scene belies more sinister undertones. Elder writes in her book *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity*, that "throughout the twentieth century, the masculinity of so many Australian men was shaped by stories centralising independence and self-reliance, but also violence".[64] Elder posits that Australian masculinity has long been fostered through narratives that extol ritualised violence as self-determination, whether

[62] David M. Halperin, 'How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies,* 6 (2000), pp. 87-123 (p. 93).
[63] Elder, p. 67.
[64] Elder, p. 75.

performed by athletes on the AFL field, or commemorated through militaristic feats, thereby encouraging men to see themselves as agents of aggression. The 'stories' that Elder refers to work as examples of how aggression enacts personal liberation: by adopting the fearless stance of the brute, the male is free.

However, what I am concerned with is the construction of femininity, rather than masculinity, based on story-telling: how we see Australian women through this act of cultural 'othering'. Elder's aforementioned quote is valuable as it can be argued that Australian femininity is shaped in a similar way, but inverse: independence and self-reliance is de-centralised through fear of violence. As the 'other', the abject, woman are taught to fear violence from men, and while men are also taught to fear violence from men, they are also taught to make other men fear them. Recent years have seen a surge in comments on social media platforms from "mens rights activists" (put bluntly, a term that has entered in the feminist lexicon to describe men who derail discussions regarding gender and violence by listing the supposed ways that feminism has impinged upon their rights) who invoke the figure of the violent woman, a figure who many see as a cultural taboo that mainly manifests itself in women who kill their own children. This taboo has a lot to do with cultural memory, its most (in)famous incarnation being when the Australian public vilified mother Lindy Chamberlain whose daughter went missing during a family trip to Uluru in the 1980s.

Elder goes on to discuss how ultra femininity is valorised in Australia[65], but twelve years after the text's publication, one could query if this brand of gender rigidity is perhaps fading, dying a very, very slow death, or at least how we see the feminine is progressing. Shifts in Australian culture

[65] Elder, pp. 68-69.

have seen more women in the military, and more women occupying higher roles in law enforcement. The inauguration of the AFLW in 2017 has opened a significant conversation regarding female physicality, and the public's interest in female sport. A recent photograph of Carlton Football Club player Tayla Harris with her leg extended above her head after a kick stirred public opinion, to the point where the comments thread on the AFL's Facebook page was so volatile that the league momentarily removed the image, only to replace it later, realising that they were stoking worse public relations by kowtowing to their trolls. These trolls, and armchair critics, saw the picture of Harris as lewd, as they saw the underside of her thigh – a body part rarely sexualised in a male footballer in a similar pose. And therein lies the subtext: does the idea of Australian women enjoying bodily autonomy, akin to a man, so discomfitting to the Australian public?

In the preface to *The Real Matilda*'s fourth edition, Dixson writes that it would be difficult to qualify her "doormat" statement at time of the new edition's publication in 1999, but that the media has been 'increasingly shot through with physical and psychic violence', partly due to the popularisation of increasingly barbaric pornography, and that Australian women 'are particularly affected by the spread of a kill-culture'.[66] Yet one could argue that these cultural narratives relating to violence are borne from white settlement. They are narratives that hinge on Anglo-European Judeo-Christian values, inherently middle-class, capitalist, neoliberal. This is visible in older architecture in Australian cities, where buildings mimic European architecture, signs and symbols of colonisation, of hierarchy. And indeed, that hierarchy has always been reliant on partriarchal heteronormativity, of the power of white men and the supposed inherent vulnerability of women.

[66]Dixson, p. 6.

This power imbalance implies that Australian women be chaperoned by a man, and that man is romantically involved with them, their boyfriend or husband. But also that that man is willing and able to perform the role of chaperone, placing expectations on men that they are able to fulfill this protective domesticated role, setting them in opposition to the wolf-like wildness of predatory males 'out there'.

In Australia, domestication and whiteness tend to go together in what Hage calls 'paranoid nationalism'[67]. Narratives that reinforce whiteness do so by demonising Others and giving white patriarchy the role of protecting white women. Fear of the Other regularly gets mobilised as a settler-nationalist political tool. So, when white women– such as Meagher, or Cobby – become the victims the cultural narrative always-already set them up to be, there is an outcry. Yet when the same harm comes to members of minority groups, the discussion is muted. While not in urban space, but rather a remote beach in New South Wales, one could consider the scant media coverage of the 2011 murder of 33-year-old Aboriginal woman Lynette Daley. Or, in an urban setting, consider the lack of coverage the fatal stabbing of St Kilda sex worker Tracey Connelly. Connelly's killer has never been caught.

I am interested in how the discussion of gender, violence and place has evolved in Australia, and have looked to seminal Australian feminists like Dixson, and Anne Summers, for guidance. In her influential 1975 text, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Summers writes extensively on rape, situating it both within the private and public spheres:

> if they want to avoid illegal rape, women must be constantly wary. They can try to avoid it by not walking in the streets at night, by not hitchhiking, by not

[67]Ghassan Hage, *Against paranoid nationalism: Searching for hope in a shrinking society* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2003).

> wearing tight or revealing clothes. In effect, women must observe an unproclaimed curfew and obey unofficial ordinances.[68]

I find Summers use of the word 'wary' telling, as wariness could be seen as a corollary of fear – an end point when a woman has absorbed all the cautionary tales about their inherent vulnerability. What Summers refers to as 'illegal rape', this thesis would term 'stranger rape' – rape by an unknown assailant. She goes on to say 'the fear of rape is instilled in women so that they will remain indoors'[69] – in one's home, in the private sphere. Summers elaborates on her use of the term 'illegal rape' and by this she states that she means 'the rapes recognised as such by police and courts' and that 'the victim of illegal rape is far less likely to know her attacker'[70]. One could attribute Summers's use of these terms to the archaic, oppressive divorce laws at the time of publication, and laws discouraging, social acceptance of reporting of marital rape (if we consider my example of narratives regarding marriage earlier, this serves as a further illustration of how cultural values regarding marriage shift). No fault divorce laws were adopted in Australia the same year the book was published, 1975, but marital rape was not criminalized Australia-wide until 1994: the Northern Territory being the last state to legislate, South Australia being the first in 1976. Reporting of sexual assault is still haphazard, however, statistics advise that Australian women are more likely to be raped by their partner or someone they know well, such as a friend or relative.

Summers refers to this in her 2003 book *The End of Equality: Work, Babies and Women's Choices in 21st Century Australia*, writing that most sexual asssaults are unreported by their victims.[71] In this book, Summers refers to a spate of gang rapes in Sydney in 2001, and of the media 'reporting

[68]Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The colonisation of women in Australia* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2016), p. 337.
[69] Summers, p. 337.
[70]Summers, p. 339.
[71] Anne Summers, *The End of Equality: Work, Babies and Women's Choices in 21st Century Australia* (Sydney: Random House, 2003).

with barely disguised salaciousness'[72] regarding the attacks, discussing the racial element of the reportage due to the perpetrators being of Lebanese Muslim background. Summers links this salaciousness with the 'anti-Muslim hysteria … widespread in western societies since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001'. Summers writes 'that these were savage crimes of violence against young women seemed to be a secondary consideration' as the media capitalised on anti-Islamic sentiment.[73] Summers goes on to discuss how rape victims are frequently separated into binary oppositions by the Australian media, either 'innocent or those who 'asked for it''. She goes on to discuss the brutal rape and murder of Anita Cobby, writing that Cobby was 'judged by the media to have been a golden girl of innocence because she was a nurse of impeccable character and had been merely waiting patiently at a bus stop when she was abducted'.[74] The similarities between the Cobby and the Meagher cases are apparent when one considers how Meagher's workplace – the ABC, 'Aunty', a bastion of Australian respectability – her Irishness (always looked upon fondly by Australians given the large proportion of the population with Irish ancestry), her attractiveness, for apparent love of a 'good time', and her noble husband, evoked an outpouring of public grief comparable to the Cobby case.

Summers states in *The End of Equality* that 'there is a war of sexual violence underway in Australia and yet the subject is scarely discussed seriously anymore'.[75] She quotes Karen Willis of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre, who says that 'women are being gang raped most weekends in Australia'.[76] Summers argues that the media fail to report on rape. Interestingly, in the same year, the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes confirmed that women were more likely than men to have distorted

[72] Summers, *The End of Equality*, p. 104.
[73] Summers, *The End of Equality*, p. 105.
[74] Summers, *The End of Equality*, p. 115-116.
[75] Summers, *The End of Equality*, p. 102.
[76] Summers, *The End of Equality*, p. 107.

perceptions of the crime rate, believing it to be increasing despite it mostly remaining the same.[77] The report does point out that there was a marginal increase in sexual assault, however, they preface this, stating that like assault and blackmail/extortion, sexual assault falls under 'categories of offences usually not reported to police'.[78] This raises questions whether it appears to have increased solely due to more effective reporting of the crime. However, while it cannot be disputed that Summers's motivation is to end violence against women in Australia, could it be argued that the employment of highly emotive language actively perpetuates these fearful narratives?

The book goes on to discuss Australian women's struggle to combine motherhood and a career at length, but like many texts, fails to explicitly discuss parenthood in terms of a shared partnership. No questions are raised regarding whether or not men should have the option to work part-time, nor does Summers advocate for the aforementioned paternity leave. Speaking about childcare as a female problem could be read to reinforce the public/private gender binary . By neglecting to query male involvement in child-raising, and failing to encourage men to share equally in parenting tasks – particularly mundane ones such as taking children to and from school, food preparation and caring for them when they are ill – continues the insidious societal association between women and the home. If workplaces are left by women to have babies, that does leave a gap in the public sphere and can render some workplaces male-dominated if their workforce is largely of child-bearing age. By promoting paternity leave, not only as some gay male couples may wish to stay at home with an infant, the private sphere – the home – is also a welcoming space for male parents too.

[77] David Indermaur and Lynne Roberts, 'Perceptions of crime and justice', in *Australian social attitudes: the first report*, ed. by Shaun Wilson, Rachel Gibson, David Denemark and Mark Western (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), pp. 141–160 (p. 147).
[78] Indermaur and Roberts, p. 143.

The End of Equality was published fourteen years ago. A more recent text by Summers, *The Misogyny Factor*, published in 2013, also discusses violence against women, stating that together with 'financial self-sufficiency' and 'the ability to control one's fertility', 'the need to be free from violence' is a 'fundamental principle of women's equality' (50).[79] She focusses on domestic violence – invoking monstrous terms such as 'plague' – but acknowledging that most a woman's partner or family member is more likely to assault them than a stranger. Yet in a chapter titled 'Scorecard', comparing Australian gender relations with similarly developed nations like Canada, Summers returns to the topic of parenting, stating that reports have found 'one in four women are effectively working for nothing' due to the cost of childcare. Again she is positioning the women as the primary caregiver – apportioning the women's wage as the one that pays for childcare in lieu of her being able to watch the children – and thus strengthening the link between women and the home.

A Cartography of Sadness

A May 2016 survey carried out by non-government organisation Plan International Australia and Our Watch, an Australian not-for-profit anti-violence organisation, found that thirty per cent of Australian females aged 15-19 surveyed believed that 'girls should not be out in public places after dark.'[80]. The results of this survey led Plan to create the 'Free to Be' campaign, starting with a crowd-sourcing project in December 2016: a free downloadable 'digital mapping tool' that allowed users to 'drop pins' on areas in Melbourne they found threatening, and as well as access

[79] Anne Summers, *The misogyny factor* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013).
[80] Plan International Australia and Our Watch, 'A right to the night: Australian girls on their safety in public places' (2016), 1-10 <https://www.plan.org.au/~/media/plan/documents/resources/a-right-to-the-night.pdf> [Accessed September 9 2017].

fellow users pins. The map was only open for a short time, with the data used to raise questions for 'architects, designers, planners and policy makers', according to news reports[81].

The archived map demonstrates how narrative is mapped, both cartographically, discursively and personally. Users log 'happy' or 'sad' spots and add descriptions to justify their claim. Hope Street, Brunswick, the site of Meagher's rape and murder is logged as a 'sad spot'. An anonymous user has logged a description that reads "this is where Jill Meagher was raped and then strangled to death. I will never walk in this area alone at night." Another sad spot is logged close by that merely reads 'RIP Jill Meagher'. On another sad spot logged some blocks away from the site, another user comments, 'It's just a hidden area and there's so many assaults that happen here that the police never deal with or don't believe in. Worse is that Jill Mahar's [sic] rape case came when Brunswick had already become a city of assault for whoever spent lots of time there. There's always strange men hanging about there and preying on the young girls who attend university'.

Many of the 'sad spots' have comments that suggest they have been logged based on user's feelings alone, rather than any experiences of harrassment. One 'sad spot', a carpark on Saxon Street, Brunswick, reads,

> The area here behind the stores are extremely dirty, with litter everywhere and an abandoned lot with a fencing around it, it is quite uncomfortable to be around. There was a man who I saw walk out of a dirty shed in overalls, the hygiene in the back of these shops is creepy and eerie. I came in the day to go to Savers and parked here, but I can't imagine how it would feel at night, most likely a worse feeling. It is a dead end road so if you were to be cornered in this spot at night time when the lights are dark, i can't begin to imagine how frightening that would be.

[81] Olivia Lambert, 'Women reveal harrowing stories of sexual harassment and abuse they cop on Melbourne streets', *news.com.au*, March 29, 2017 <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/women-reveal-harrowing-stories-of-sexual-harassment-and-abuse-they-cop-on-melbourne-streets/news-story/9e15de77fe471d8e71822cdd5ffd61d8> [Accessed September 9 2017].

The conflation of 'men in overalls' with an experiential 'eerieness' demonstrates how complex personal, internal narratives around place can be – one person may find a man in overalls 'eerie', while another may be comforted by their presence.

While the Free to Be project opens up vital discussion regarding women's relationship with the city, it also could be viewed as potentially problematic. 'Threatening' is a subjective term, and this app does not take into consideration users' prejudices around class and race, possibly receiving skewed data from biased participants. Users from wealthier suburbs travelling into lower socio-economic areas may report feeling threatened due to prejudicial associations between poverty and crime. On a sad spot on Sydney Road, one description reads, 'lots of beggars outside the chemist or McDonalds here'. Another user named Dee comments, 'I regularly shop around here, and have been harassed by the female addict who pretends shes homeless, who begs outside McDonalds. People stop and give her money: please dont, she doesn't use it for food, only ice.' A user named Aimee demonstrates this classist fear of the poverty-stricken, 'Such a creepy area. I always avoid this entrance because of the creepy homeless people outside. There is always a weird creepy man in maccas'. [82]

Users with racial prejudices might do the same in areas with a more visibly ethnically diverse population. These prejudices cannot be assessed – users are not going to tick a box upon registering suggesting they are classist or racist, though having users register their ethnicity and income could help but would still be problematic – and thus, these variables would have an enormous bearing on the app's results. Furthermore, employing women to collate data on their own feelings of spatial

[82] Please note that this information was obtained while the Free to Be app was live in 2017. Unfortunately, this data is no longer available to the public, and hence, a reference is unavailable.

disturbance, then denying them access to the data can be construed as exploitative, and further enhancing notions of patriarchal urban 'gatekeeping' by authorities. It could be argued that the 'Free to Be' app demonstrates how stories about female mobility in urban Australia feed into ideas that reinforce societal notions about women and space. This narrative asserts that women alone in public will invite trouble – they will attract men who will harrass, assault, rape or at worst, murder them – thereby portraying them as potential victims. One could argue that assault is normalised[83] through this lens. While the app is a form of interactive media that is multiply-authored by its users – a 'wiki' of sorts – posts contesting these notions seemed absent, yet this raises the question of moderation also.

The language around women's urban safety often seems to concentrate on visceral reactions to clues of menace, such as the 'men in overalls' mentioned earlier. Yet there seems to be little discussion paid to the social problems behind these instinctual indicators. Jane Jose's 2016 non-fiction text, *Places Women Make*, is described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* writer Marc McEvoy as a, 'book about women who have contributed during the past 200 years to shaping the buildings, spaces and social and political agendas of Australian cities'.[84] For the most part, Jose's text is temporally situated in the daytime hours, and populated by heteronomative family women – mothers with their children. Jose discusses women such as Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore, who as a young mother in inner Sydney's Redfern, was upset that she was denied a public lawned area for her children to play on, and after querying this was told by the powers that be that 'it was easier to sweep up the broken glass from bottles on the concrete'.[85] The broken glass serves as an

[83] Berrington and Jones, p. 312.
[84] Marc McEvoy, 'Jane Jose on why women should be more involved in designing our cities', *Sydney Morning Herald* (January 1, 2016) <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/jane-jose-on-why-women-should-be-more-involved-in-designing-our-cities-20160101-glxqkr.html> [Accessed 5 May 2019]
[85] Jane Jose, *Places Women Make* (Mile End: Wakefield Press, 2016), p. 42.

indicator of complicated socio-political issues pertaining to poverty and addiction in the area that are seldom dealt with when discussing women's safety.

Moore's anecdote is unaccompanied by any discussion of Redfern, which sits on Gadigal land of the Eora Nation, and its importance to Sydney's urban Aboriginal community, and its historic and continuing importance to Australia's First Nations communities. In the latter half of the last century, Redfern's Aboriginal population grew to become the largest urban Aboriginal community in the country, and the epicentre of Australia's Black Power movement. Prominent Aboriginal activists such as Gary Foley helped start up Aboriginal health and legal services to service the community when mainstream white social services failed to do so. There is scarce discussion in the text of Redfern's Aboriginal residents economic disadvantage relative to the rest of the inner city residents, such as those in neighbouring Darlinghurst, Surry Hills or Ultimo.

Like many mainstream texts about cities, Jose's book extols the virtues of gentrification but does not use the word. Jose does not elaborate on gentification, while clearing away the broken glass, has also paved the way for much displacement of communities such as those in Redfern of a lower socio-economic status, who may suffer from social problems that plague those in a perpetual state of poverty, such as alcoholism and violence. In the text, the broken glass frustrates not as a symptom of a capitalist system that fails to look after its vulnerable, nor as a system that forces the vulnerable towards self-medication, yet as a threat to comfortable, middle-class existence.

There is no doubt the text is written for a middle-class, white audience, rather than critics of gentrification and its effects on women who experience homelessness or poverty, or violence, who may work in precarious employment, or a job that forces them to work late hours and trudge

through an empty, lonely city after disembarking from insufficient public transport. Jose is more concerned with the daytime city: a city of leisure lit by sunlight, populated by residents who share similar passions and socio-economic status. Her philanthropy in the text is reserved for tasteful cultural institutions such as libraries – she cites Lucy Turnbull, former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's wife, as philanthropic example, referring to Turnbull's quest for a twenty-four hour library in inner Sydney, instead of exploring more sensitive, complex issues such as the displacement of public housing residents in Sydney's Millers Point. One wonders if figures such as Turnbull who occupy Australia's wealthier eschelons fail to see these concerns as they are scarcely alone on the street. They always have enough money for transport, able to easily afford car travel, either driving their own reliable automobile and being able to fuel it and foot the bill for parking and tolls, or using a car service or a taxi. Many women are forced to walk as they do not have the luxury of having private transport at their beck and call.

Instead, Jose focuses on a particular constituency of middle-class, Anglo-Australian family women in the text, and does not examine how lone women use cities, particularly in the evening. Rather, her text purports to feature 'stories of the nurturing places women have given us', detailing the role women have played in urban planning in Australian cities, helping to create 'places that nurture, surprise or cocoon'[86]. Jose's frequent use of the term 'nurture' raises questions, namely, that when discussing gender and space, can this term be applied without running the risk of gender essentialism? In the text, Jose often refers to women's supposed greater ability to 'care', as oppposed to men. She positions the women she discusses as maternal figures – not only biologically, as mothers – but also maternal figures in the greater community, as she writes that

[86] Jose, p. 1-2.

'women are natural storytellers and homemakers'[87], relegating women to the domestic and the maternal. Jose posits that 'cities are the playrooms of our lives'[88], yet to an extent the emphasis on motherhood in the text disavows women the play in this scenario by positioning them as 'nurturers', watching their children playing rather than playing themselves. She goes on to write that 'while social patterns are changing, in Australia women remain the primary nurturers, care givers, mothers and grandmothers as part of the circle of life, nature and nurture'[89]. This statement does not take into account some women's desire to eschew motherhood, let alone the primary care giving role, but also ignores fathers assuming this role, or men in same sex domestic partnerships. The book is sandwiched by this ideological stance, as Jose ends the book by writing, 'tomorrow's children need the places women make'[90], further inciting the maternal doctrine that populates her text.

Yet for all the discussion of women as 'nurturers' and their caring capabilities, there exists the same blindspot in a lot of urban planning: the subtle lack of compassion to discuss the concerns of more vulnerable members of the community – those who populate the streets as they have nowhere else to go. Activism such as that couched in Jose's text is largely focussed on how architecture and planning can work for those who sit within the same middle-class, maternal position; even when discussing this activism she writes some women begin as 'activists, agitating for change, often at their own kitchen table'[91], still positioning women in the domestic. While the book is centred on the urban, there is scant discussion of women (sans family commitments) and how their relationship with the city may be complicated by stories of violence.

[87] Jose, p. 4.
[88] Jose, p. 3.
[89] Jose, p. 15.
[90] Jose, p. 203.
[91] Jose, p. 4.

Colonisation and the domestic

As in other colonised nations, belonging is complicated in Australia. Our cities act as anchors of nation-building, of civilisation, and safety, places that seek to epitomise order and structure in opposition to the wild and unpredictable Australian outback. Our cities are thereby coded European, and white gender values are inscribed on the city, and with that comes Australian history: one of brutality with maleness at the foreground. While First Nations attitudes towards Country centre on the land's role in kinship systems and spirituality, the white relationship to land centres on extracting value from it. The corporatisation of urban space means that this space comes at a premium. Land is seen as a place to build a house; it is a commodity. There is a certain level of privilege that comes with urban space, and home ownership is framed as an aspiration in Australian culture. In 2017, a real estate mogul caused a furore by suggesting that young Australians would have more chance of being able to buy a house if they forsook café brunches, igniting what was then on known as the avocado toast debate[92]. And the less money one has, the further out they must rent or buy. As urban sprawl increases, affordable housing is placed further and further from the central business district. Women in lower socio-economic status may not enjoy the privilege of being able to walk to work from home. Under capitalism, it makes sense to usher women into cars and houses, or on expensive and unreliable public transport. And while walking is free, this is further complicated by disability, where more technology than usual is needed to enable movement through city streets.

[92]Sam Levin, 'Millionaire tells millennials: if you want a house, stop buying avocado toast', *The Guardian* (May 16 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/15/australian-millionaire-millennials-avocado-toast-house> [Accessed August 20 2018]

These histories of colonisation, and its continued impact informs the narrative, changing its shape, yet its underlying substance prevails: the public sphere is gendered male. It is a layered narrative however, speaking not only to attitudes about women's safety in public spaces, but also how women's behaviour continues to be policed, and how women are still disavowed the civic freedoms of their male counterparts. While this project focusses on Australia, these ideas are not unique to this country. Across developing nations, men make up a much higher proportion of victims of crime in public places,[93] yet these narratives persist: women continue to be fearful of crime when in public, and the community (by 'community' I am referring to women's families, partners, colleagues and peers, but also the greater community including the media and law enforcement) continue to foster this fear.

American feminist philosophy scholar Laura Hengehold refers to the 'paradox of fear', reminding of the higher likelihood of men being victims of assault, yet the disproportionate anxiety and fear displayed by women regarding crime in public spaces. She writes that

> *imagined* sexual violence, as circulated in news reports and warning from one's own social circle, can have such a negative impact on women's ability to feel safe in urban spaces and to defend the safety of others – ultimately to experience themselves as *citizens* of a terrain or state[94].

Hengehold goes on to discuss how these 'imaginings' are framed in narrative form; we are taught how to frame these stories based on this narrative due to being vicariously exposed to violence. She writes, 'even those who have suffered real aggression explain their experiences to themselves and other in terms of movies, news items … and gossip or family conversation' (56; see also

[93] Carol Brooks Gardner, 'Safe Conduct: Women, Crime, and Self in Public Places', *Social Problems* 37, (1990), pp. 311–328 (p. 311).
[94] Laura Hengehold, 'When Safety Becomes a Duty: Gender, Loneliness, and Citizenship for Urban Women', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 39 (2011), pp. 48–69 (p. 49).

Horeck). The media informs oral narrative (gossip, family conversation) around safety, and oral narrative is informed by media reportage regarding crimes. Thus begets the cycle that informs this ever present cultural narrative around female safety. But these narratives are outdated and masculinist: they reek of gender essentialism, and they *effectively* and *affectively* curtail women's liberty. Fear, it turns out, is a 'public feeling'.[95] But fear and terror are not circulating 'out there' in the world, in society, nor are they locked 'in our hearts', but ricochet between the two. Maybe this individual-society opposition has run out of usefulness, when we want to talk about that fears move around in public. I claim that the role of narrative is all-important here as a vehicle for public feelings, precisely because it can articulate individual feelings with social rules, grossly in the case of much journalism, more subtly in the case of the literary narratives I explore.

Australian women, (dis)armed with such narratives, step out into public space, each footfall aligning with or challenging the available narratives. In the city, gender relations are inherently spatial, yet these spaces are growing less clearly defined. As women have gained equal rights in Australian society, their societal landscape has expanded in tandem. Yet the gender binary that dictates public space 'male', and private space, 'female' still persists. Women are still inextricably linked to the 'home' and 'hearth' despite emancipatory efforts. The Victorian 'angel of the house' still lurks, its presence so insidious it often goes unquestioned. Contemporary real estate listings will often refer to a separate rumpus room or shed as a space for a potential 'man cave', an area detached from the home (the women's domain) for a man to escape his familial roles, as if those roles inhibited his masculinity. Heteronormativity is at play here too: it is assumed that a home will be inhabited by a heterosexual, cisgender couple, each neatly fulfilling societally designated gender

[95] Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

roles. Women do not get a 'cave', as it is thought that the home is their domain, yet Kathleen Komar writes,

> The technique of forcing women back into an enclosed space reminiscent of a womb in order to destroy them is an old one. Antigone comes to mind, but so do all of the women of fairy tale and myth who are confined in caves or dungeons. The enclosed spaces that echo the biological space of the female become arenas of punishment or at least confinement in which women can themselves be contained and separated from male social space.[96]

Hille Koskela asserts that woman's fearfulness is not innate, more so it is taught.[97] This fear is socially constructed, teaching females that public space is not *theirs*: it is gendered male. Cultural narratives are inherent to this construct. Psychic maps are carried through space, dotted with stories of violence that resonate and restrict. For women, urban cartographies are affective and cultural.

Women employ safety behaviours when alone. In the introduction, I mentioned my use of the mobile phone, but anecdotally, I can list others: many women will seek to protect themselves by placing their keys within their fist, by pretending to speak to a man on the phone, by crossing the street when a man is walking behind them, by carrying aerosol spray in their handbag to be used as mace. These safety behaviours cost women, the burden being not just emotionally taxing, but also economic. They contribute to the added costs charged by society to women (think cosmetics, clothing, grooming, menstruation, healthcare), shaming women into not utilising free transportation – their legs, if able-bodied. Private automobile transport is a luxury not afforded to all urban women. The costs associated with car ownership – the purchase of the car or loan repayments, registration, insurance, fuel and repairs – make it prohibitive to certain members of the community. Furthermore, driving to and from one's destination does not exclude the possibility

[96] Kathleen L. Komar, 'Feminist Curves in Contemporary Literary Space', in *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet and Joan Templeton (Amherst: University of Massachusets Press, 1994), p91.
[97] Koskela, pp. 89-107 (p. 91).

of violent crime. Carparks in the city are not always easily accessible, and may mean a walk between where the car is parked and one's destination. Even in the car, a deliberately frightening narrative is deployed, as women are warned of 'carjacking' and taught to lock their doors when driving alone. Additionally, inexpensive public transport carries risks too: consider Prabha Kumar, or Anita Cobby, Kumar killed on the way home from the train station, Cobby while waiting for the bus. We must take taxis, or ride-sharing services such as Uber, but those are dangerous too. Perhaps we drive? After all, we would not want to over indulge around strange men.

Women must populate the street – this is where liberation occurs. Women must ignore the fearful cultural narratives that push them back into the private sphere, instead claiming their equal place in the public sphere. These narratives subjugate women, reinforcing sexist ideas that they are the weaker sex and require male protection in public spaces. Catriona Elder writes about the construction of narratives around Australian culture being a process all Australians are involved in[98], and these constructs being intrinsically tied to place: how then can these narratives around space be reconstructed to allow this liberation?

[98] Elder, p. 6-7.

CHAPTER 3 *Spectres and the spectacle in the Jill Meagher case*

In her absence, Jill Meagher was ushered into the Australian public consciousness. Employed as an administrative worker at ABC Local Radio, she was unknown to the general public before she disappeared from Sydney Road in September 2012. Meagher was *always already absent* in this story: she was first introduced to the public as a missing person, then a confirmed homicide victim. We were introduced to her in her absence *by* her absence. Her *absence* caught the attention of the Australian media and propelled her into the national imaginary, affirming her *presence* within it. Crimes like the Meagher case serve as lingering spectres that hold women back from claiming their space in the city, affecting their personal mobility and clouding their streetscape. This chapter will explore the spectrality of the Meagher case by closely examining the ABC TV documentary *Conviction* and examining how Meagher and her killer, Adrian Bayley, became both spectres and spectacles in the Australian cityscape. I will examine the cast of characters that populate this 'ghost story': Meagher as primary spectre; the viewer, casting myself in the role; Meagher's husband as the grieving man; and Adrian Bayley as the monstrous perpetrator of violence. I will look at each of these characters and examine how their presence engenders this notion of haunting.

Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock writes that, 'the ghost is the mark or trace of an absence'[99]. This chapter will examine this simultaneous absence and presence, by considering how the Meagher case haunts Australian culture, and how this spectrality feeds on the spectacle of violence in public space. The previous chapter mentioned this 'spectre' of violence and how it haunts women much more so than men, despite statistics demonstrating the latter's vulnerability to random attack. Yet the Meagher

[99] Jeffrey Weinstock, 'Introduction: The Spectral Turn' in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 61-67 (p. 64).

case, and cases like it, where women are killed by a man unknown to them outside of their home, serve as spectral warning of not only women's vulnerability in the urban spaces, but also that their very presence is antithetical to the 'public sphere'. In the previous chapter, I introduced the concept of separate spheres, and discussed the way in which city spaces are gendered, and how this reflects prevailing gender roles in Australian society. This chapter will explore how Meagher and Meagher's killer, as spectral figures, continue to haunt these spaces and thereby reinforce these cultural narratives around gender, violence and space.

In order to explore this narrative's persistence, it is necessary to examine how signal crimes such as the Meagher case are woven into Australian collective memory. This speaks to how trauma metamorphoses into cultural memory – how collective memory works its way into storytelling and myths about gender and the city, how trauma maps itself on to the landscape, and how it feels to be a woman in that atmosphere of trauma. In this category of 'woman', I welcome all who identify as women, wherever they fall on the gender spectrum. My experience as a cisgender straight woman is different from those who occupy other subject positions and I benefit from a certain level of privilege as I move through the city. I want to acknowledge my privilege as a white woman, and as an able-bodied woman. Due to my position, I write from this perspective, as I do not wish to speak for those whose identities differ from my own. My research examines the power of stories, and I believe that this power is not mine to monopolise, but rather to look at why certain stories about certain women are given more power – why the Meagher case captured the public imagination to such an extent.

Rather, I wish to trace a path of my own, as I follow how the crime is 'storied', how it feeds into this cultural narrative, how it is mythologised. The collective memory of the crime not only lingers

at its scene, but throughout public space: it haunts. I will examine how this haunting puts women 'in their place', both figuratively and literally. While semblances of gender equality are forged within Australian society, these psychic obstructions remain.

Meagher serves as a metonymic figure within this work: this thesis discusses Meagher, but is not exclusively about her, instead employing her as conduit figure to explore these ideas around mobility and space. This chapter will examine Meagher as spectre and spectacle, and how this came to be. Meagher is framed as the 'ideal victim': white, middle-class, family-oriented, working in a white collar industry at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Meagher was close to her family, albeit living at some distance from them – after all, she was talking to her brother who lived in Perth, where her parents also resided, just before she was attacked by Bayley. She was presented as happily married, her husband Tom a key figure in her story. News outlets used images of the pair's wedding day, Jill as a joyful bride in white. Interestingly, as the story progressed, and surveillance footage from Sydney Road became available, it emerged that the footage was taken from a bridal store. The trope of the bride haunts the story, as if to validate Meagher's sanctity, her vitrue. This chapter will discuss this further, emphasising how Meagher serves as a spectral, but also spectacular figure, as the media furore around the Meagher case created a spectacle: a crime so initially mysterious, then so gruesome, the Australian public could not look away. There is horror and terror at play at once: the terror of this act prompts women to question their place in the city, and the horror of the act reminds them of their vulnerability. As the story progressed, Meagher went from missing to dead, always mute. She was two dimensional, an image in most media reports prior to the CCTV footage. The same pictures were used repeatedly by media outlets, and this chapter will examine one of these closely.

When speaking of absence and presence I borrow from Jacques Derrida, and his work on spectrality, particularly from his text *Spectres of Marx*. I want to keep in mind this simultaneous absence and presence, and employ the conceptual figure of the spectre, invoking Meagher and her killer Adrian Bayley as spectres, but also exploring how the crime itself haunts: the spectre of a woman's violent death at the hands of a stranger haunting public space; a ghost watching over and following lone women; a spectral presence that lingers in both the physical and psychic landscape. I will argue that the spectrality given to both Bayley and Meagher – Bayley as monstrous figure, and Meagher as mute bride – only exacerbate the anxieties held by women around their use of public space. I wish to posit that Meagher was rendered spectre through the media coverage and narrativisation of the crime. She became a ghostly figure to Australian women, who learning of her disappearance, and then of her rape and murder, were haunted by their own fears around public safety. The case was turned into a ghost story – but who was the ghost? Meagher herself was victim rather than menace. I want to suggest that Meagher and Bayley were simultaneous spectres.

I wish to also consider the spectre's etymological neighbour, the spectacle, and reflect on how this crime was rendered spectacular, by looking at how the public grief directed towards Meagher, and how gendered cultural tropes served to ameliorate this grief. Jill Meagher stands as spectre and spectacle. She is a haunting figure, ghostly, but also a figure to be looked at, a figure that attracts attention. And rather than enact change, and rouse discussion around women's right to the city, the case developed a grim quality partly due to depictions of Bayley in the media. Bayley's arrest features prominently in the ABC TV documentary *Conviction*, as mentioned in the Introduction of the previous chapter, which, at the time of writing, is readily available on the Australian version of streaming subscription service Netflix. This chapter will close by examining this documentary in light of this spectre/spectacle relationship.

The etymological root of the words 'spectre' and 'spectacle' both comes from Latin words which mean 'to look', *specĕre* and *spectāre* respectively. Derrida points out that

> in the series of more or less equivalent words that accurately designate haunting, *specter*, as distinct from ghost [*revenant*], speaks of the spectacle. The specter is first and foremost something visible. It is of the visible, but the visible invisible, it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood[100].

Indeed, we see here how Meagher's missing status as news of her crime unravelled made her the 'visible invisible'. While Derrida may argue the distinction between the figures of the spectre and the ghost, I wish to conflate the two. I borrow the concept of spectrality as a theoretical way of examining this crime, but also making sense of the spectacle around it. The idea of the spectre came into theoretical prominence with Jacques Derrida's 1993 text *Spectres de Marx*, which was the following year published in English under the title *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International.* Derrida invoked the idea of hauntology to reflect the looming presence of Marxism in late capitalism. I wish to retrieve Derrida's terminology from its Marxian context, instead applying his concept to demonstrate how fear of violence in urban spaces looms large in the female psyche, as their stories haunt. I cannot claim the grouping of these terms – the spectre and the spectacle – as my own exclusively. Cultural geography scholar Gillian Rose used these words together when discussing the media coverage of terror in her paper, 'Spectacle and Spectres: London 7 July 2005'. In this paper, she asks 'how *should* we be with these particular spectres?' and echoes Derrida's exordium in *Spectres of Marx*, which speaks of "learning to live"[101]. She discusses the photographs of the dead and wounded published in British newspapers and asks, 'what sort of responsibility, what sort of politics, is at stake here? What do we need to

[100] Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, 'Spectrographies' in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 37-51 (p. 38).
[101] Gillian Rose, 'Spectacle and Spectres: London 7 July 2005', *New Formations* (2007), pp. 45-59 (p. 45-46).

learn?' I wish to ask similarly pointed questions of Meagher's murder. How can the story of this brutal crime enact change? How can it foster discussion regarding violence both in private and public space, and emancipate rather than detain women? Why does this case continue to possess this spectral power, its mention still provoking discussion in Australia regarding female vulnerability and public space?

When I started my PhD and began looking at the Meagher case as a cultural phenomenon, there was scant scholarly work published on the crime. However, as my research has progressed and violence against Australian women continues unabated, there has been some work published on how the Meagher case 'haunts' the Australian consciousness, such as Olivia Barr's 2017 work. Barr maps public grief on to Sydney Road (in a similar fashion the *Conviction* documentary which I will come to later in this chapter), examining the road as a 'mourning place'. [102] Barr concentrates on Sydney Road as a haunted landscape, but I assert that Meagher's spectral presence looms large in the Australian urban imaginary, not just on a stretch of road in Brunswick. Indeed, as the epicentre of the crime, Sydney Road will remain connected to the Meagher case, but the crime attached to this place attached means the story's haunting presence can be felt by women alone on any street they walk.

[102] Olivia Barr, 'Mourning place' in *Spaces of Justice: Peripheries, passages, appropriations*, ed. by Chris Butler and Edward Mussawir (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), pp. 73-93.

Meagher as ideal spectre

See above: this is the photograph of Jill Meagher that has been used most frequently in the public domain. This image quickly became sutured to the public imagination, as it was used by her family and friends on social media when she first went missing; it was on 'Missing' posters plastered around the local area, then used by authorities to alert the public of her disappearance, and then used wholesale by the media. In the image, Meagher is sitting alone, smiling but not looking at the camera, instead, she is gazing into space. She looks content. Meagher's face, framed by tousled dark hair, is made up, but her lipstick slightly worn. Perhaps she has just knocked off work and is pleased to be home. Judging from the light in the image, it appears to be about dusk. It looks as though she is sitting on a balcony, as a glass sliding door is to her left. In this image, she is positioned on the threshold. She sits not quite inside the home, yet still within the domestic sphere. It looks to be what some photographers dub 'the golden hour', as the sun slowly sets, a liminal time

– not quite day, not quite night. This liminality, this sense of being on the threshold further haunts this image as Jill stares happily into the distance.

The room behind her contains a heaving shelving unit piled high with the everyday detritus of comfortable domestic leisure. There are paperbacks – some Penguin Classics, easily identified by their orange and white spines – and board games – Monopoly and Scrabble. A split system air conditioner is attached to the wall. Brown couch cushions are just visible in the bottom of the frame. But this comfortable domestic tableau gives the image an uncanny quality. Consider the title of Freud's essay that introduced the concept of the Uncanny, *'Das Unheimliche',* which literally translates from the German to 'unhomely'. This renders the image all the more unsettling. This homely *mise-en-scène* raises questions from the viewer: is this her apartment? If this is indeed the Meagher residence, this is where Jill was headed the night that she was killed, but she never made it. Is this the flat on Lux Way in Brunswick? Was this the home that Jill shared with her husband? Are we seeing into Jill and Tom's lounge room? Due to the nature of the narrative from which it emanates, this image encourages speculation on the part of the viewer. While she is within the home in the image, the image was utilised to promote her disappearance, the fact that she had not returned to the home. She is unhomely, uncanny. The room looks 'lived in' – yet she is no longer living.

Yet, the aforementioned objects in this image are quotidian: board games and paperbacks. There is a middle-class familiarity to this image, a mirroring, a doubling: these are objects that may populate many comfortable Australian homes. For me, this prompted a subconscious identification with the spectre. My shelves are dotted with those orange and white Penguin spines, and board games share the bookcase real estate, and I have friends whose living rooms share these features. Meagher could

be read as a particular type of spectre, perhaps as *doppelganger* – another German term meaning an apparition of one's double. Is the uncanny nature of this image reliant on its jarring ordinariness? Seeing one's *doppelganger* is supposedly a harbinger of doom, an omen of death. Hence, we could see Meagher's depiction by the media as an "everywoman", thereby allowing Australian women to identify with the victim, as if to suggest that her fate could be theirs. Do women see themselves in Meagher? Is she a ghostly reflection? In Meagher, and in this image, I see my own doppelganger, an omen of death, a pervasive threat to my safety.

Of course, this identification is reliant on hegemonies relating to class, heteronormativity and whiteness that resound in Australian media coverage of signal crimes against women. These ideas were returned to in 2017 in the mainstream press by Australian feminist commentator Clementine Ford in a Fairfax news article published following the five-year anniversary of Meagher's death, where she discusses how the media portrayal of Meagher illustrated "Missing White Woman Syndrome", a term attributed to American journalist Gwen Ifill. Meagher is the 'ideal victim', and to some extent, I suppose I am too. But the privilege that comes with being the ideal victim is tricky; it is an identity, and a weight. White, straight, able bodied women are coveted objects and Victims (with a capital V). This is the identity I have inherited, its privilege buttressed against something unsettling: something that haunts. There are multiple intersections of power at work here. Black women's bodies, sex worker bodies, trans bodies, disabled bodies are victimised but their victimisation lacks this public recognition. White women's victimhood is spectral – it haunts everything; the ghost of the ideal victim deployed as a hegemonic figure.

Ford goes on to speculate what the public has 'learned' following the case, echoing Rose's call for some kind of moral lesson from tragedy. Ford refers to the image at hand when she writes,

> There are certain moments in history that mark a turning point for cultural understanding, acting as catalysts for change. For Victorians, one of the most brutal examples of this can be found in the now iconic image of a smiling woman gazing into the far left distance of a camera's lens.[103]

Ford's use of word 'iconic' to describe the image reflects how the picture acts as a stand in for the story, but also how well known the case was, and how it represented something within the public sphere: a general sense of unease amongst women, a feeling of increased vulnerability, a lack of control. Ford's mention of the 'gaze', the way that Meagher does not look at the camera, only increases this eeriness, the unsettling quality of the image. She is not there – she is displaced. She has been taken away from this domestic, interior setting. Her eyes have disengaged, lending a lack of materiality, indeed a lack of mortality. Meagher is frozen in time, made two dimensional, but she still haunts. The still image is immobile and silent. We do not hear her voice. This image of Meagher, like other images of female homicide victims, is charged with the spectral gaze. We look at these faces, cognisant that they are dead women. Their image is imbued with their fatal narratives, forever linked to their death story, and burned into collective memory.

Crime, memory and haunted spaces

Meagher's 'story' is representative of a larger, complex narrative around women and safety. Her murder has become a 'signal crime', a term penned by criminologist Martin Innes to denote a crime that operates on this metonymic level. Innes writes that these crimes become a 'signification […] read by the audience that something is wrong in society and some form of behavioural or cognitive adaptation is required.' Innes refers to several high profile murders of children in the United

[103] Ford, Clementine, 'Five years on, have we absorbed any lessons from Jill Meagher's murder?', *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 22 2017, <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/news-and-views/opinion/five-years-on-have-we-absorbed-any-lessons-from-jill-meaghers-murder-20170921-gylxpr.html> [Accessed March 5 2018]

Kingdom, demonstrating how the crimes led to a larger public discussion about the safety of minors in the community. To me, as an Australian, the James Bulger case stood out in Innes's text; the CCTV images of two year old Bulger's killers Jon Venables and Robert Thompson (both only ten years old themselves) leading the infant through a busy Merseyside shopping centre were instantly darkly iconic. These images came back to haunt Australians like me, as the British justice system was rumoured to have sent the killers to Australia when their sentences ended, their crime too public and too heinous for them to return to their community in England. The CCTV footage of Meagher has become similarly iconic, serving as a visual aid and deterrent in the 'stranger danger' archive, to borrow a childish phrase that never really goes away. Innes writes that 'even after the criminal justice process has concluded, traces of these crimes and their investigation remain in the public memory, as signifiers of some of the problems of manufacturing social control in late-modernity'.[104]

It is a given that in most cities we are constantly being watched by omnipresent closed circuit surveillance cameras. As there is no hope of instantaneous intervention if a crime is being committed, they are meant to act as deterrent, their presence optimistically preventative (so much so that fake, 'simulated' cameras are sold). They record: a recording, that is only useful after the fact of a crime. Businesses use them under the notion that they are preventing theft, untrusting of their customers, and sometimes their employees, but the recording is only useful in case of prosecution, of tracking crimes after they occur, offering proof of the unlawful act. Some cameras are monitored by security, but many are not. *Candid Camera*, an American television series that spawned international versions, made palatable the concept of surveillance to the masses. The show

[104] Martin Innes, '"Signal crimes": detective work, mass media and constructing collective memory', in *Criminal Visions, Media Representations of Crime and Justice*, ed. by Paul Mason, (Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2003), pp. 51-72 (p. 51).

would capture 'ordinary' people in compromising situations, alerting them with the iconic line, 'smile, you're on Candid Camera', personifying the camera as a friendly, benevolent figure – a smiling Big Brother. CCTV footage was integral to Bayley's arrest. Police released footage of Meagher speaking to a man on Sydney Road. They suspected the man of foul play and appealed to the public to find him.

Hille Koskela uses an optical metaphor when she deems CCTV 'the gaze without eyes'[105]. The optics of surveillance camera footage is often impaired, and so like most CCTV footage, the footage of Meagher and Bayley was grainy. CCTV footage can be seen as reminiscent of spirit photography, a practice popular in the nineteenth century where double exposure was employed to fraudulently manifest ghostly apparitions in an image[106]. It shares this eerie, spectral quality, with no sound accompanying the vision. These oddly reminiscent aesthetic commonalities are discussed in Janine Little's article, 'Jill Meagher CCTV: Gothic tendencies in narratives of violence and gender justice', as she writes about what she terms the 'intriguing resonances with gothic imagery and iconography' in the surveillance footage that captured Meagher's encounter with Bayley, and consequently, her final moments alive. Little writes of how the footage 'haunts' by comparing it to fictional female gothic narratives, casting Meagher as the 'lead character in 'female gothic' cinema'.[107] Yet that cinema is cyberspace, where the video remains as a reminder of the crime on YouTube. Little points out that the footage was never intended for public viewing and how the

[105] Hille Koskela, "'The Gaze without Eyes': Video-Surveillance and the Changing Nature of Urban Space", *Progress in Human Geography,* 24 (2000), pp. 243-65.
[106] National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, 'Spirit Slides' <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/spirit-slides> [Accessed 1 June 2020]
[107] Janine Mary Little, 'Jill Meagher CCTV: Gothic Tendencies in Narratives of Violence and Gender Justice', *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (2015), pp. 397-410 (p. 398).

broadcast of the footage problematizes the victim's privacy, as well of that of their family's, 'held for perpetuity'[108].

The CCTV footage led to Bayley's conviction and, on a shallow level, this can explain the public interest in it to a degree. But this is naïve. We are watching a dead woman and her killer. We are mesmerised – the camera turns us into voyeurs, rubbernecking. The footage was taken from a camera situated within the Duchess Bridal Boutique at 517 Sydney Road. There is an uncanny irony to the bridal shop being the source of the footage, considering so much of the coverage of the crime focussed on Meagher's status as a young wife, still bridal – not yet a mother, not yet an older woman, still young and desirable. Jay Daniel Thompson and Rebecca Louise argue that this level of respectability, of palatable femininity, asserts her status as 'ideal victim', contrasting the 'beatific' coverage of Meagher's death with the lack of coverage of the 2011 murder of sex worker Johanna Martin, who like Meagher, was strangled to death[109].

Tom Meagher's role as husband was central to construction of Meagher as 'ideal victim' too. To some, he was cast as failed protector, home asleep while his wife was killed. He had stayed in the night of her death, and notified police of her disappearance when she uncharacteristically failed to return home. The Meaghers wedding photos, and happy snaps of the couple together, were used by many media outlets, as if to affirm the victim's moral sanctity, as if a woman's goodness is affirmed by her consecrated heterosexual relationship with a man. One could argue that part of Meagher's

[108]Little, p. 402.
[109]Jay Daniel Thompson and Rebecca Louise, 'Sexed Violence and Its (Dis)Appearances: Media Coverage Surrounding the Murders of Jill Meagher and Johanna Martin', *Outskirts: feminisms along the edge,* 31 (2014) <https://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-31/jay-daniel-thompson-and-rebecca-louise> [Accessed April 7 2016]

'ideal' status was cemented by the depiction of her husband's. Tom Meagher's grief became central to the story, his loss the loss that is storied. There is a level of erasure at play here, as the victim is almost erased by the story of the grief felt by their family (who they 'belong' to). Jill's suffering is spectral but it's her husband's suffering that is present and central.

This was also illustrated by the media's coverage of the disappearance of New South Wales woman Stephanie Scott in 2015 which focussed on Scott's status as bride to be, disappearing days before her wedding. Like Meagher, it was later found that Scott had been raped and murdered. Constantly in media reports, Meagher was the bride, the wife – pictured on her wedding day, in white, or with her husband Tom. The bride on her wedding day is a spectacular figure: a figure to be looked at, and recorded constantly for posterity. Yet she is also spectral: traditionally the bride wore white in reference to her soon-to-be former self, the virgin. It was uncanny that given the media's fixation with Meagher's status as wife, the footage that would lead to the arrest of her killer was taken from a camera situated in a bridal shop, almost as if to allay the discomfort of the news of her rape prior to her murder, whitewashing the sexual brutality of her death.

As mentioned, the CCTV footage of Meagher and Bayley remains online. Like much of the material contained on the internet, YouTube can be make-shift; videos are ephemeral and can disappear, taken down due to copyright or legal issues, only to reappear months later. At the time of writing, when using the search terms 'Jill Meagher CCTV', the first video that appears is from the Melbourne news and talkback radio station 3AW. It was uploaded on 25 Sep 2012.
The video's description reads:

> RAW VISION: Victoria Police say there are four people they wish to speak to urgently regarding the Jill Meagher disappearance as they release CCTV images of her moments

> before her disappearance.
>
> The footage will be released at a press conference at 1:00pm on September 26, 2012.
>
> Police said the footage shows Jill outside the Duchess Boutique on 517 Sydney Road in Brunswick at approximately 1:10am on Saturday morning.[110]

The tagline 'Raw Vision' is telling; while it states that the video has been taken directly from the boutique's footage, it also implies some kind of wound, inflicted on the neighbourhood, a sore spot, unattended to. The hyperlink that purports more information goes to a '404 Page Not Found' on the 3AW website. Again, unattended. Underneath the description, like all YouTube uploads, the video is categorised and shown to hold a 'Standard YouTube Licence'. It is grimly categorised under 'Entertainment'.

Here we explore the haunting footage, but first we pause. In the frozen image, before pressing play, the camera is positioned high, near the ceiling, allowing for a full view of the entrance. The shop's door is set back about a metre from the footpath, making an alcove type entry as the front windows protrude, and sit right against the footpath. The shop looks like many others built in the 1970s and 80s in Australian cities: a floor to ceiling glass frontage, the windows and door framed by a utilitarian looking aluminium. On the window above the door, the shop's street number – 517 – is in large, austere orange decals (that the viewer sees backwards as we are looking on to the street). From this vantage point, it seems that the bridal shop holds no discernible air of romance or excitement. Some of the racks look like they are made from black wrought iron, a style popular in the 1990s. They look dated and heavy and jar against the aluminium of the doorframe. Mannequins

[110] 3AW Radio, 'Jill Meagher CCTV Footage', YouTube, September 25, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiBck13rpcA> [Accessed 30 March 2016]

are in each window on either side of the entrance. On the right-hand side, the backs of two mannequins are visible, both wearing white gowns, one much more fitted, with ruching across the back. As the camera is positioned closer to the right side of the shop when looking at the street, it is hard to fully see the display on the left, but one mannequin is clad in what looks to be an orange dress, and it looks as though a stool is next to her, with a framed sign perched atop. The racks on either side of the shop are jammed with the requisite assortment of long dresses in shades of a virginal colour spectrum spanning bright white to soft pastel blue. A strip of red carpet runs from the door across the otherwise drab dark grey flooring, a vain nod to some kind of Hollywood-like artifice. We wait.

The video itself is two minutes and thirty-one seconds long. For most of the video, we just see a fairly plain shop filled with these bridal dresses in different hues, hanging limply in low light; the frame is punctuated every now and then by a passer by outside. At about 1'54" we see a man outside the shop slowly walk into the frame. He is wearing blue jeans and a the now infamous blue hoodie. It is Bayley. A woman follows, but looks uncomfortable, slightly hunched over. She is much more dressed up, wearing a dress that falls just above the knee, with light coloured heels, otherwise all in black. She holds her handbag, and looks like she is fidgeting slightly: uncomfortable, pulling something from her bag. We cannot explicitly see the man speak to her but it seems obvious from her posture that she is hoping he will stop and leave her alone. The man moves and she awkwardly goes in the same direction, no doubt just wanting to get home. We cannot see their faces.

In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida writes about the "spectral asymmetry" of the "visor effect", invoking the ghost of Hamlet's father in his armour, who sees but cannot be seen. Derrida writes that "the

armour lets one see nothing of the spectral, but at the level of the head and beneath the visor, it permits the so-called father to speak"[111]. Is Bayley's hoodie like Derrida's visor, or is the camera the visor? Indeed, the surveillance camera exemplifies this visor effect: paternally overseeing the subject, but the subject disembodied. The camera watches but will not intervene: time lapses stand in the way, advocating for punishment rather than stopping the crime from actually occurring. But this paternalist punishment is also enacted on the victim, deterring them from occupying the space.

In an article entitled 'The Politics of the Visor', Matthew Beaumont invokes Derrida's theories of hauntology in an architectural sense, suggesting that the façade of buildings in cities not only dwarf the humans that walk below them, but haunt them. City users can can be watched from the buildings, by the buildings, with the watchers unable to be seen. He writes, 'As we move about their spatiotemporal orbit, all buildings look back at us from some virtual vantage point', going on note that 'the building is a Thing, in so far as it embodies the gaze of the Subject bat at the same time does not subjectivize itself. In this way the individual is trapped in the logic, imprisoned in the perspective, of the Other-Thing.'[112] He writes that 'the gaze of buildings is hostile, armed.' He goes on to say that

> The visored building thus constitutes an insignia, to use Derrida's term, for the deposition of power in the contemporary metropolis. Its armed gaze is symptomatic of the developments that have for some time been taking place in metropolitan cities such as London, where spaces are not only increasingly privatised but shaped at all levels by the technological apparatus of a surveillance system deployed to consolidate, police and reinforce this relentless process of privatisation.[113]

[111] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York : Routledge, 1994), p. 7.
[112] Matthew Beaumont, 'The Politics of the Visor: Looking at Buildings Looking at Us', *City,* 22 (2018), pp. 63-77 (p. 68).
[113] Beaumont, p. 75.

As we watch the CCTV footage, are we donning the visor, as we view both Meagher and Bayley? Is the surveillance camera the visor?

517 Sydney Road no longer houses the Duchess Boutique bridal shop. At the time of writing, when looking up the address on Google Maps, Google Street View images show a shop called "Soirée 4 All". The Street View images are marked December 2016. The front windows feature four mannequins, but they are somewhat obscured by red signwriting. The ghostly outline of the word "DUCHESS" still appears on the second storey of the building – it looks as though the original letters have been removed, taking a layer of paint with them. Duchess Boutique has moved two doors down to 521. Google Street View shows their shop frontage with six mannequins clad in the same shade of green – a similar shade of green to the Irish flag, which is coincidental, considering how Meagher's Irishness was discussed in each article about her. When news came out that the CCTV footage of Meagher's final moments was taken from the Duchess Boutique cameras, the store became a makeshift shrine to Meagher, with bouquets of flowers left by the store's entrance. News outlets used images of these shrines, not unlike iconic images of beds of florist-wrapped bouquets that served as shrines for other famous dead women, like Princess Diana. In one image of Jill Meagher's shrine, another iconic dead woman stands in the window of the boutique: a Marilyn Monroe poster gazes out at the flowers.

The ghost in the blue hoodie

While Meagher has become a metonymic figure for a violent act against a woman in a public place, Adrian Bayley has too served as metonym for a monstrous male figure that commits this act. Removed from life, both serve as spectral reminders, Bayley the demonic ghost, Meagher the slain

beauty. Meagher's death has enshrined her name as shorthand for what could happen to a woman walking home alone, and Bayley as the fate women may meet. From then on, Meagher's killer's likeness shares this spectral quality, cast as 'bogeyman'. While an Australian woman may feel that twinge of identification when confronted with Meagher's face – as in they might know who he is, or what he did – Adrian Bayley's image haunts in another way, a fervent reminder of misogynistic malice, of the violent figure in the shadows. There is a beauty and the beast dichotomy at play, as Meagher represents the vulnerable feminine – high heels, skirt and bare legs, long black hair, clutching a handbag – Bayley serves as the beastly, vicious masculine, threatening and tightly wound.

Bayley became known as the "man in the blue hoodie", a name given to him by police following the release of the CCTV footage that showed him with Meagher on Sydney Road, footage that led to his arrest. A pulpy true crime paperback called *Evil in a Blue Hoodie* by Joe St John told the story of the crime, focussing on Bayley's exploits, but was soon retracted for sale during the case's legal proceedings (it is no longer available from major Australian booksellers, and I have unfortunately been unable to obtain this book for research purposes). The garment that Bayley was wearing on the night of the murder – the famous blue hoodie – is a symbolically loaded garment. It is undeniably a political garment, charged with cultural context. The hoodie is frequently donned by protestors, the hood pulled over the head. It's a garment that is seen to have malicious potential, a garment that can conceal, and thereby a garment to be feared. Consider the fatal shooting of Florida 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmermann in 2012: Martin's grey hoodie was mentioned by Martin in a phone call to police, as though the garment had some kind of sinister charge. But Martin was just an innocent teenager, on his way back from buying snacks, caught in a drizzle so the hood pulled over his head. Hoodies aren't a rare garment – they're sold in every

department store, and worn by a large majority of the population. They are comfortable in cool weather, sold as activewear and lounge wear. As I type, I don a fleecy hooded jumper to keep warm. The hood can be worn up as if to shun contact, a signal to the outside world, 'do not disturb', offering its wearer a shield. Yet some see it as a threatening garment, its wearer a grim reaper in a hooded cloak, or trying to shirk recognition (from CCTV) when performing a sinister act. As 'spectre', Meagher and Bayley are both apparitions in the footage, made phantasmic.

Crime as spectacle

While it has long enjoyed success, true crime has recently blossomed as a popular genre in commercial non-fiction. Department stores such as Big W and Target have designated Crime sections in their book departments that stock the titles, stories of brutal violence sitting next to Romance paperbacks, cookbooks and children's picture books. The *Underbelly* series, originally penned by John Silvester, somewhat popularised the genre in Australia, as the series was adapted by the Nine Network. Underbelly focussed on the Moran Family, the stars of what is often referred to as Melbourne's 'gangland'. Earlier, career criminal Mark 'Chopper' Read's autobiographical books also enabled the genre's popularity, though his books were less 'true crime' and more humorous, rollicking tales of his life. Rosalind Smith credits the genre's success in Australia with 'a tradition of national mythmaking surrounding criminal figures', the nation's settler-colonial beginnings as a penal colony having informed the collective national identity[114]. Smith explains that Australian true crime texts time and again make their subject crimes that serve as 'cultural

[114] Rosalind Smith, 'Dark Places: True Crime Writing in Australia', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature : JASAL* 8 (2008), pp. 17-30 (p.17).

flashpoints'[115], or as what Innes would call 'signal crimes', stories that reflect 'cultural unease'[116], that illustrate social anxieties, thus it is fitting that St John should narrativise the Meagher case to work within this genre's grim canon.

These books are enjoyed by both genders but their covers often employ what could be seen as stereotypically 'masculine' design: black, with faux old typewriter fonts, as if to capture the detective dramas of a bygone era when male protagonists dominated, resplendent with clouded, dark images. There are many questions to ask around why true crime has captivated the public so much at this point in time, and to question whether it is problematic, or somehow cathartic, yet this is outside of the parameters of this thesis[117]. However, I do note that while we consume the story of the crime, it is mediated to be somehow palatable and intriguing, and most importantly, entertaining.

Indeed, true crime podcasts have become hugely popular in recent years. National Public Radio's *Serial* was an enormous success both in its native United States and worldwide, paving the way for other serialised crime narratives like the 2017 ABC podcast *Trace*. *Trace* tells the story of the murder of Maria James in 1980, a single mother of two, who was killed in her home in Melbourne's Thornbury on a Tuesday morning. She ran a bookshop, and lived with her two sons behind the shop. The crime has remained unsolved. Rachael Brown, the journalist behind the podcast had appealed to the public for information regarding the case.

[115] Smith, p. 17.
[116] Smith, p. 26.
[117] for further reading on the topic, see Punnett, Ian Case. *Toward a Theory of True Crime Narratives: Textual Analysis*. 2018. Routledge Focus on Journalism Studies; for an Australian perspective, Gregg, Melissa, and Jason Wilson. 'Underbelly, True Crime and the Cultural Economy of Infamy', *Continuum: Television and the National* 24.3 (2010): 411-27.

Thornbury sits within the invisible boundaries of Melbourne's inner north. Like the suburbs it borders, it was popular post World War Two with Italian and Greek migrants, but is steadily experiencing gentrification as the city's young people struggle with high rents in suburbs closer the CBD. It is adjacent Brunswick, where Meagher was killed, but the James case is much more domestic in nature. James, unlike Meagher, was killed in her own home, albeit one that shared a doorway with her workplace.

Yet, like the Meagher case, gender plays a role in the case's story. James's status as single mother, particularly in her local Italian community, complicated the crime. It was assumed by many that she was killed by a jilted lover. However, James's disabled son had reportedly been abused by the local parish priest, and it has been suggested that the murder points towards a larger conspiracy involving the church. Detective Ron Iddles served on both cases, and was featured heavily in the Trace podcast as well the *Conviction* documentary, which I was discuss further. The James case was Iddles's first 'big' case, and in the podcast he recalls his process, like he does in *Conviction*.

Solving the James case has been complicated by police bungles. Key items of evidence went missing during a move from one police location to another. As James's body was found in her bedroom, her quilt, pillows and bed linen were key evidence. A mix up saw these blood-stained items disposed of, crucial pieces of evidence now lost, and the crime remains unsolved. The title of the podcast unknowingly gestures towards Derridean thought, gesturing towards the trace that the crime has left on the area. Derrida states that, 'A specter is both visible and invisible, both

phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance'[118]. But he points out that 'the word "specter" is the perfect anagram of respect', but also 'scepter', generating a regal link that suggest a paternalistic omniscience, 'an unconditional authority' that invokes 'the virility of the father'[119]. If we look at these true crime stories, whether they come by podcast like Trace, documentary like Conviction, or a paperback, as reflecting cultural narratives around female vulnerability, this paternalistic link is clear – these texts demonstrate that the city holds danger to women.

Spectacle

In the aforementioned ABC TV documentary *Conviction*, that recognisable image of Meagher is seen immediately after the opening credits, on a "missing" poster taped to a telegraph pole on Sydney Road. She has again been displaced from the domestic, adhered to the public, so again we can return to this notion of 'unhomeliness' and consider how this image of Meagher speaks to the gendered binary of the public and the private. The missing picture we looked at previously jars in its domesticity, but as she is framed as 'Missing', Meagher is made spectral, a ghostly 'angel in the house' to which she will not return.

The *Conviction* documentary adds to the spectacle of the crime. It opens with shadowy, computer generated images, and a deep, masculine voiceover, which states, "It was the crime that shocked a nation. A young woman brutally raped and murdered by a violent criminal who should have never been on the streets." 'The streets' is often used as a shorthand for the public sphere but it is a loaded

[118] Derrida and Stiegler, p. 39.
[119] Derrida and Stiegler, p. 43.

term – after all, for some, "the streets" can invoke a feeling of unhomeliness, an *unheimlich*, as homelessness rises in Australia and the streets are repurposed by the homeless as shelter, yet the streets also serve as cultural milieu, shared space for the community.

The documentary then shows footage of Sydney Road at night, but cuts to a remote, deserted road at night, then a telegraph pole with a 'Missing' poster featuring that image of Meagher discussed in earlier in this chapter. We are then shown shots of Melbourne streets, throngs of Melburnians in quotidian situ – crossing at the lights while a voiceover tells us that the case 'ignited public outrage on a massive scale'. We are shown images of seized SIM card as suspenseful music plays. One could ask: in our hyper connected age, is a mangled SIM card symbolic of a suspended existence? It means one is no longer contactable, no longer vocal. Yet the SIM is traceable, and Bayley was convicted as a result of it being traced, as police were able to follow the card as it travelled with Bayley to dispose of Meagher's body in Gisborne. Again, I return to the mobile phone as protector, and point out that Meagher had been speaking to her brother who lives in Western Australia about their father before the attack.

A police radio provides the soundtrack to computer generated images of a car going down a remote road, echoing the site where Meagher's body was found. A detective then says menacingly, 'had we not caught Bayley, he wouldn't have stopped and we would be dealing with a serial killer', confirming the fear that women shared when Bayley was still at large. Meagher as bride is reinforced again, as we see images of Meagher laughing with her father on her wedding day, as a voiceover says, 'it is inevitable but so wrong that Jill Meagher will be defined by those few obscene minutes, from the moments that her chance meeting with a monster were recorded on CCTV until her senseless death in an East Brunswick laneway'. Her definition is more complicated however,

as her status as ideal victim is reinforced by these images of her as a bride, and the voiceover that tells us, 'she was a friend, a colleague, a confidante, a wife, a daughter.' Women are often remarked upon in relation to others, as though their personhood is only reliant on their relationships. We see CCTV footage of Meagher leaving work at the ABC the day of her death, again, the footage has no sound, so we cannot hear her voice. At no stage in this story is Jill given a voice.

Shots of Brunswick – from above, at night and during the day – create a kind of omniscient viewpoint, positioning the viewer as outside of this world. It makes Sydney Road, and Brunswick generally, menacing. Social media hashtags pop up on the screen: #prayersforjill, #whereisJill, #Brunswick. There are screenshots of Bayley going through tolls, emblazoned with CITYLINK TRANSACTION. We know now during these moments, Meagher's body was in the boot of his car.

There is a lot of mapping in the documentary, but it is demonstrative of how technology tracks our every move, and how the GPRS in our mobile phones can show authorities quickly where we are at any given time. While in cases such as this, technology has worked in favour of justice, however, there are concerns that tracking technology can also jeopardise women's safety, and be used by abusive partners to track a woman's whereabouts. Obviously, these concerns are outside of the documentary's purview, but worthy of consideration nonetheless.

The night vision style images of Bayley are particularly haunting, presenting him as a monster who strikes after dark. Meagher's mother is featured, saying, 'I hope they put more cameras in here'. Yet cameras do not save people, they cannot intervene in the act, they only enable police to catch the perpetrators. Furthermore, when CCTV is lionised as some kind of saving grace for some

women, is that at the expense of other women, such as sex workers, for whom being 'caught on camera' may jeopardise their livelihood. In an essay in *Kill Your Darlings,* Gillian Terzis writes on these cameras, stating:

> Grief, of course, is routinely politicised. After Jill Meagher's murder, community outrage appeared to have resulted in a tangible policy outcome. In February 2013, the state government gave Moreland City Council $250,000 to install nine CCTV cameras on Sydney Road, from where Meagher was abducted. But as of September 2014, only four were installed and none of them were operational, despite signage indicating otherwise.[120]

If we rely on devices such as CCTV, or mobile phones, to save women from attack, we defer the blame. We make women responsible for their own safety, and make the state, and infrastructure, the paternalistic, ever watching eye.

When Bayley was first arrested, Iddles was on leave, holidaying in regional Victoria. The documentary recreates Iddles's holiday, placing him in a caravan, re-enacting his telephone conversations with his colleagues as he sits in the caravan in his shorts and thongs, painting him as the relatable everyman. Iddles was publicly called out for his use of a photograph of Meagher's body in the open grave where Bayley had dumped her. Iddles showed this photograph at a function where he was a speaker. Meagher's family supported Iddles despite the outcry, however. Was his showing this photograph supporting this idea of Meagher as spectacle or did it render the crime less spectacular, making it more real, more tangible to the public? Furthermore, if we frame these crimes as 'real', are they then considered quotidian, part of the everyday? Does it make more sense for these crimes be treated as exceptional, as spectacles? Does making them more real desensitise the public to these violent acts, or push women off the street? Meagher's husband Tom wrote about the 'monster myth', the idea that figures such as Adrian Bayley are made monstrous by the media,

[120] Gillian Terzis, 'Death Trends: Hashtag Activism and the Rise of Online Grief', *Kill Your Darlings* 22 (2015), pp. 9-24 (p. 11).

detracting from violence against women that occurs in the home, by a woman's family or a relative or close friend. In *Conviction*, Bayley is painted as the ogre. His rap sheet of previous crimes does support this depiction, though his previous violent acts involving sex workers in St Kilda did not attract attention nor support from police and the media, and are not featured much in the documentary[121]. The press and public apathy towards sex worker deaths, as opposed to the enthusiastic outpouring of grief towards Meagher, demonstrates that the portrayal of Meagher does gender, rather than sex, work. The attributes accumulate to compose a portrait of normative victimhood: respectable, bride, white, young — and hence a suitable investment for our grief.

A voiceover instructs us how to view the crime, stating solemnly, 'Jill Meagher shouldn't be remembered as a victim, a cause, a point of protest or a martyr. Adrian Bayley should be remembered for what he did. Jill Meagher for what she was.' These sentiments are accompanied by an image of Meagher and husband Tom, the two looking dishevelled and happy, yet ominous music plays. The voiceover leaves us with awkward questions around remembrance: what are the parameters for remembering Bayley? When and where should he be remembered? Should women remember him as we walk the streets? As a monstrous figure, a symbol of what could go wrong for a lone woman on a deserted street, he looms large in the consciousness.

Soon after Bayley's arrest, a march was organised to remember Meagher. On Sunday September 30, 2012, a crowd that stretched for about a kilometre walked a length of Sydney Road. Numbers vary across reports but estimates state about 10,000 people gathered in a public display of grief, walking past the lane where Jill was dragged and killed. This march had a different tone to overtly

[121] Thompson and Louise.

feminist 'Reclaim/Take Back The Night' style marches which date back to the 1970s and protest violence against women on the streets. This march appeared more elegiac in nature, a funereal dirge rather than an impassioned politically charged protest[122]. In an image found online, the man who organised the march, photographer Philip Werner, holds an A4 sign that states in capital letters, 'choosing peace, hope, non-violence and solidarity with all women', then in smaller print, 'join a campaign to end violence against women eg whiteribbon.org.au or onebillionrising.org'. One could cynically query the solidarity with all women, particularly victims of relationship violence, crimes that are grimly unspectacular and shrouded by domesticity.

The White Ribbon campaign has attracted much criticism over the past few years for its 'awareness raising' but lack of support for frontline services. The charity is somewhat spectacular in its own way: attracting public and governmental largesse, having a raft of celebrity ambassadors, but not actually monetarily supporting the victims of domestic violence in any way. The organisation is symbolic, like the march itself, which also did not raise any money for frontline charities, but served as a means for the local community to exorcise its grief publicly: spectacularly.

Photographs of the march capture the spectacle: a mass of people heading down Sydney Road, carrying signs decrying the crime and demanding the safety of women. The march could be seen as a vigil for Meagher, a way for the community to mourn the passing of one of theirs, a means to channel their outrage, a reclamation of the space. The optics were spectacular, as media outlets as images of the marchers flooding Sydney Road spread through media outlets, bearing a tidal wave

[122] Additionally, 'Reclaim The Night' marches usually occur after dark, as their name suggests, while the march for Meagher happened on a Sunday morning. A history of RTN marches and their complicated history is not practical here: see *Radical Feminism Feminist Activism in Movement* by Finn Mackay (2015) for an expert, thorough and nuanced examination.

of emotion down Brunswick's main thoroughfare. Being a main inner Melbourne road, trams jostle for position, the tracks blocked by the mass of people. The bright daylight of the images a stark contrast to the eeriness of the CCTV images, and the darkness of night during which the crime occurred.

Little writes that 'while thousands are moved to physically embody their activism as protestors in Melbourne, … the naturalised perceptions of women's relative powerlessness in public spaces such as night time streets … remain a contradiction that assures the violence of media representations of women is implicit in authoritative texts (such as mainstream news reports)'[123]. Indeed, the march seemed to affirm the public's sympathy for random victims such as Meagher, rather than murdered Melbourne sex workers such as Jasmine Martin or those killed due to intimate partner violence. The spectacular nature of the crime seemed to offer this kind of cognitive dissonance via domino effect: as news got worse, the greater the public grief, and the more spectacular the reaction.

A showreel of fear

As the Jill Meagher case was elevated to cultural spectacle, much of the story was built in our mind, reliant on a handful of images. The story was constructed like a zoetrope, moments were spilled but the rest of the frames were filled in based on assumptions: Jill's face, serenely smiling on a 'missing' poster; images of her as a bride, happy with husband Tom. Then came the more sinister moments: grainy CCTV images recorded from cameras on Sydney Road. Rather than enact change, or even ongoing discussion around women's 'right to the city', the case developed a grim spectral quality, a warning that women kept in the back of their mind when walking alone at night. Mediated

[123] Little, p. 406.

relics, such as these images, serve as ghostly reminders of societal mores surrounding female mobility. Space is imbued with this spectral quality. The absence generates a presence, a haunting: a presence of trauma, of collective grief, of shared mourning.

The memory of Jill Meagher haunts Australian women and the street, both the memory of the case – of the crime itself, of the rape and the killing – but also Meagher herself, a figure representative of female autonomy and agency, robbed of both. Like Anita Cobby, she is a palatable victim and her haunting serves to reinforce Australian cultural norms around gender and place. Meagher's absence is felt by women uncannily. She is posited as a reflection. They see themselves in the spectre, doppelganger like. This concept of spectrality is hard to pin down. But this is reflective of female confidence on the street: sometimes one is confident walking alone, sometimes not. Sometimes the ghost will suddenly appear. Feelings of confidence are ephemeral. The spectre, in its absence, problematises the presence, robbing females of their own presence by reminding us of this liminality between presence and absence – the way we too could be made absent by force *if we are in the wrong place at the wrong time.* But it also makes spectacles of us – situating the woman on the street firmly within the male gaze.

This raises questions about the framing of these crimes – violent crimes committed in a public place against a woman unknown to the perpetrator. By presenting them in documentary form, crime serves as entertainment. The consumer is the passive spectator in this scenario. They do not experience the crime, they are witness to the narrative, rather than participant. The passivity of the spectator is reassuring, rather than vulnerable. They are unseen by the assailant, not under attack. By listening to these stories, do we as consumers of these documentaries make ourselves less vulnerable – do these stories award us the tools to avoid these situations? Or do these stories play

into paranoia that may immobilise the woman? And what of the men who listen to these stories – who do they identify with?

The proliferation of reportage around the crime – the inescapable nature of the contemporary 'twenty-four-hour news cycle', the invasiveness of social media – meant that news of the crime was unavoidable. Then, as women walk the streets, they are haunted by these cases, by the spectre of the maimed woman, by the memory of other acts of brutality enacted upon women.

CHAPTER 4 *Urban Promise and Potential in Helen Garner's Melbourne*

I first came upon Helen Garner's 1977 novel *Monkey Grip* in my high school library. As with Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette's novel *Puberty Blues* before it, a classmate found the book on the shelves and it was passed around, pages open at the most salacious scenes. My peers and I, at our all girls Catholic school, found saucy respite in Nora's romantic adventures, the book feeding our adolescent curiosity about drugs, relationships and sex. The text is imbued with a sense of urban freedom, as the protagonist, Nora, a young woman in her twenties or thirties, lives in Melbourne's inner North, travelling from her share house to those of friends and lovers, to the local pool, to bars and restaurants, out late to gigs.

I did not read the whole book until I was in my early twenties, wanting to move out of home but unsure where to or how. I was newly single after ending a relationship that started when I was about seventeen and had long passed its use-by date. Around this time, a close friend of mine had moved to Melbourne and I considered doing the same. I visited him and enjoyed the freedom the city offered, away from conservative ex-boyfriends and parents and responsibility. Melbourne held the promise of a lifestyle that was less mundane, less suburban, less provincial than what Adelaide offered.

This chapter looks at Melbourne as a city of promise and potential, employing *Monkey Grip* as an exemplar text to explore the possibilities of Melbourne as a liberatory literary space, to explore the more positive stories in the wake of the previous chapter. My first experience of storied Melbourne

was not one of hostile streets. The Melbourne I was introduced to was in texts like *Monkey Grip*: a fictional fantasy space, where adventure was possible, whereas Adelaide was bogged in the banal and the real. I assert that the narratives of violence and fear are not the only narratives, and they can be radically challenged and subverted by women's narratives of the streets they move through. I want to present female storying as radical feminist act.

Monkey Grip still fosters this sense of exploration, both for me as a reader, but also as a woman navigating the city. In this chapter, I explore how the city's promise and potential manifests as 'freedom' in Garner's text, and how Nora moving through Melbourne demonstrates this: her boldness, her confidence in the city, despite her gender. This boldness was built into my conception of Melbourne, imbibed through these narratives of the city, before I ever visited it in person. I will expand on the locale of the text, the cultural milieu of the Inner North and the gritty mystique this area holds, and the geographical legacy of the text. I want to present Melbourne's inner North as a female literary milieu and site of *promise* – what the city can offer – and *potential* – what one can make of that offering. I wish to explore how one can grow on these streets, rather than shrink from them.

After a repeated reading of the novel in my thirties, I came to ponder gender and the Australian city as theme in the text. How is it that a novel published at the tail end of second wave feminism, can still feel so trenchant for a millennial feminist like myself? I would argue that the now obsolete brand of 1970s second wave feminism of *Monkey Grip* is part of its appeal. There is a sense of promise to the text, a feeling as though the city offers a precipice to launch oneself. I consider the sense of naïve freedom offered by bohemian 1970s Melbourne, as Nora cycles through her neighbourhood – I say naïve as the freedom to explore a lifestyle fuelled by sex and intravenous

drug use was complicated by the arrival of AIDS in the 1980s – but also a freedom to move through the city as a woman alone with little thought paid to danger. To me, as a child of the paranoid 1980s, this was tantalising.

While Nora is encumbered by single motherhood and the emotional baggage brought on a haphazard love life – her on/off relationship with heroin user Javo – her peripatetic freedom offers glimpses of liberty that are still not enjoyed by a great many women. Reflecting on the book some thirty-five years later, Nora's mobility and agency despite her romantic woes seemed quite provocative. Garner's text was a symbol of a more permissive city; though her love affairs found her entangled and emotionally oppressed, Nora enjoyed relative autonomy in Melbourne's inner North, and a lifestyle that allowed her mostly to come and go as she pleased, her physical mobility rarely hindered. Melbourne is a benign yet important background character in the text, as Garner explores the inherent tension between shifting gender politics, romantic love, and domestic life in Australian society at the time.

In her paper 'The Man-Shaped City', Jane Darke writes that 'modern women novelists virtually take the city as backdrop for granted as a place where a central female figure can be or becomes self-determining, with like-minded female friend as indispensable support and undependable men in walk-on roles'.[124] I wish to consider Darke's proposition more deeply, in line with the notion of the right to the city. Can we look at the city as a backdrop for self-determination for women outside of the novel, but employing the novel as a kind of exemplar framework? Can the city still be a site

[124] Jane, Darke, 'The Man-Shaped City', in *Changing Places: Women's Lives in the City*, ed. by Chris Booth, Jane Darke and Susan Yeadle (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1996), pp. 88-99 (p. 89).

of self-determination if it is promoted to something greater than a backdrop? I want to consider Nora as example of Koskela's bold walker, traipsing through Carlton to the Fitzroy Baths on foot or sometimes by bicycle. Nora's boldness seems almost more radical now: the heroine of this 1970s text freer on the streets than her 2010s counterparts.

The urban mystique of the inner North

In 2014, at a screening of the film adaptation of *Monkey Grip*, artist Megan Cope introduced the film by giving a speech about what the movie and the book mean to her, a woman in her thirties living in Melbourne after moving there from Brisbane. She spoke about the impact *Monkey Grip* had on her perception of her new home town:

> As I ride my bike and walk my dog around the inner north of Melbourne I often think about Nora, and about being a single woman orbiting the art and music scenes in a new city. I see there's a long, historic and magnetic assembly between artists, musicians and the inner north of Melbourne, with its capacity to accommodate and motivate us all so comfortably.[125]

In the early 2000s, writer Lorelei Vashti also moved to Melbourne from Brisbane and chronicled this time in *Dress, Memory: a memoir of my twenties in dresses*. Vashti writes that 'the move … makes you feel like a pioneer, one of those dusty and determined characters out of an American history novel trudging west to seek a land of gold and dreams'[126]. Deeply engaging with Melbourne, the text eschews the 'taken for granted' backdrop idea of the city that Darke observes in fiction. Instead, Vashti consciously examines her relationship with her city, elaborating on the notion of moving from elsewhere as an act of self-determination, building the self through geographical relocation:

---

[125] 'Megan Cope on *Monkey Grip*', *Chart Collective*, November 13 2014 <http://www.chartcollective.org/post/2014/11/13/megan-cope-on-monkey-grip#:~:text=Monkey%20Grip%20is%20a%20story,least%20once%20in%20our%20lives.> [Accessed March 1 2020].

[126] Lorelei, Vashti, *Dress, Memory: A Memoir of My Twenties in Dresses* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2014), p. 83.

> You're told you can find treasure – the secret bars hidden down the alleyways, the tiny shops filled with precious curios, the art openings overflowing onto the street. But the true gold that paves Melbourne's footpaths is the promise that you can be a writer, an artist, a musician, a performer there. People who move there want to be discovered, they want to make a mark[127].

I quote Vashti and Cope not only because their sentiments sum up this notion of 'promise' for young people moving to Melbourne's inner North, but also because, thirty years later, they work within the *Monkey Grip* tradition, telling the tale of a young woman who moves from a quieter locale to Melbourne and winds up in inner North share houses, and the music and arts scene, her love life chaotic as she strives for independence. Nora moved to Melbourne from elsewhere –she travels 'down through Geelong to Ocean Grove, where I had lived as a child'[128] and takes her daughter Gracie to visit her parents in the country. She comments, 'I felt a freak there' and that 'I would go nuts in the country. I was already nuts in the city, but had learnt to handle it.' [129] Nora finds solace in the city, in its noise and chaos. For her, it is 'home, home, home'.[130]

But first – let us set the geographical parameters of the text. When I refer to the 'inner North', I refer to the suburbs on Melbourne's city fringe, to the north of the Yarra River. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Melbourne's

> 'northside' comprises North Melbourne, Carlton, Fitzroy, Collingwood, Abbotsford, Thornbury, Brunswick and Coburg. Bell Street is the boundary for northsiders. It stands for artists, warehouse parties, bicycles, underground music, lightless terrace houses, postmodernity and 'awareness'.[131]

[127] Helen Garner, *Monkey Grip* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1977), p84.
[128] Garner, p.20.
[129] Garner, p. 128.
[130] Garner, p. 130.
[131] Natalie Craig, 'A city divided', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (February 5 2012) <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/a-city-divided-20120202-1quub.html> [Accessed March 20 2016]

Indeed the Inner North has long been represented as the 'progressive' side of the city, more so than the traditionally wealthier Inner South-East, where Melbourne's 'old money' lives in their mansions, in Toorak and surrounds. In his book, *Melbourne: City of Words*, the late scholar John McLaren devotes a chapter to the Inner North, tracing its bohemian reputation: 'After the war, these neighbourhoods were colonized by migrants from Europe, and in the 1960s by the artists, musicians, writers, actors, junkies and layabouts whose stories Helen Garner was to tell'[132]. Indeed, *Monkey Grip* is inhabited by characters playing these roles – at times playing several at once.

Rather than Bell Street as the *SMH* asserts, most see the Yarra River as the true cultural boundary, bringing with it a sense of ideological division. This is elaborated on in a 1989 interview of Helen Garner by the writer Mandy Sayer that only saw publication in 2019, in the *Sydney Review of Books*. Sayer discusses the text's setting with Garner:

> *M: I can relate to the areas that your characters lived in that North Fitzroy, Carlton community. I was wondering as a writer what you feel is most appealing about that community. Why do you choose to set your work in that community?*
> H: Because that's the life I know, I think. It seems interesting to me because there was that whole movement in the seventies of collective life. People don't want to do that anymore. It is every man for himself and the devil take hindmost these days. But we had ideals back then which often people now dismiss as hippy. It's funny because when people use the word hippy about the sorts of people that I knew, or was, it makes me laugh. We didn't think of ourselves as hippies, we thought of ourselves as serious people with politics. We weren't in it for having fun. It was a very moralistic community in a lot of ways and we rather despised people that we saw living south of the Yarra. You know, the people in Prahran and St Kilda. All those places where everybody just lay around and the women did all the work and the men bludged off them. There was a lot of that going on. It was much more Presbyterian north of the Yarra. We were all very stern about things. There are people who live regular family lives, and who are shockable, who read *Monkey Grip* and sometimes are appalled by the amount of sex and drugs and everything. They don't seem to see the moralistic angle that there is to those people's lives. Almost puritan, oddly. Even though the behaviour wasn't puritan the ideas were.[133]

[132] John McLaren, *Melbourne: City of Words* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013), p. 146.
[133] Mandy Sayer, 'Mandy Sayer interviews Helen Garner', *Sydney Review of Books* (March 12 2019) <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/mandy-sayer-interviews-helen-garner-1989/> [Accessed June 1 2019].

As Garner states, there is an ideological force, and political motivation, at play in the collective way the characters live within the text. They are actively rejecting the gender norms of their parents' generation – and 'the people in Prahran and St Kilda' – and experimenting with gender roles, and experimenting with different modes of sexual relations (though looking at the text through a contemporary lens, it is rather hetero-normative), shifting away from straight laced monogamy, but at the same time, unsure of how to emotionally manoeuvre this new way of being. As Garner mentions, that there is a moralistic subtext and that manifests itself in the way that the characters attempt to live, and love, communally.

Garner began writing *Monkey* Grip in 1975, while she was living in share houses with her daughter Alice. She tells Mandy Sayer that, 'the Labor government had established benefits to support mothers. I applied for one of those and I lived on it for four or five years. I look back on that and think, 'that was my first grant''[134]. And thus, with her income secured and Alice at school, she approached writing like a paid job, and on weekdays, she would venture to Swanston Street and work in the grand Reading Room in the State Library of Victoria[135], an enormous architectural contrast to the spaces that inhabit the novel. Of course, much has been made of the parallels in *Monkey Grip* between Nora and Garner herself, and much of the criticism that Garner received when the book was first published was that it was more autobiography than fiction. She did base the novel on her diaries, but as she states in a *Meanjin* essay defending the fact,

> Why the sneer in 'All she's done is publish her diaries'? It's as if this were cheating. As if it were lazy. As if there were no work involved in keeping a diary in the first place: no thinking, no discipline, no creative energy, no focusing or *directing* of creative energy; no intelligent or artful ordering of material; no *choosing* of material, for God's sake; no shaping of narrative; no ear for the music of human speech; no portrayal of the physical

[134] Sayers.
[135] Bernadette Brennan, *A Writing Life: Helen Garner and Her Work* (Melbourne: Text, 2017), p. 30.

> world; no free movement back and forth in time; no leaping between inner and outer; no examination of motive; no imaginative use of language.
>
> It's as if a diary wrote itself, as if it poured out in a sludgy, involuntary, self-indulgent stream—and also, even more annoyingly, as if the writer of a diary were so entirely narcissistic, and in some absurd and untenable fashion believed herself to be so entirely unique, so hermetically enclosed in a bubble of self, that a rigorous account of her own experience could have no possible relevance to, or usefulness for, or offer any pleasure to, any other living person on the planet.[136]

Garner's mention of the 'portrayal of the physical world', and the way the text moves – the 'leaping between inner and outer', the way it transports Nora – is particularly pertinent here as we consider the manner in which Garner employs the city as a device, as means to reflect Nora's fluctuating feelings of freedom. In an article for *The Guardian* on *Monkey Grip* twenty-five years on, author Charlotte Wood writes that

> These critics of *Monkey Grip* also missed the point that the form itself was the radical thing: an act of self-assertion, the deliberate claiming of space for the domestic experience of a modern young woman of her time."[137]

Yet I would argue that Garner is not only claiming space domestically – half of the novel exists outside of the home, on the streets, at the pub and the Baths. Nora moves through a real city, and this sense of verisimilitude is made possible through Garner's portrait of Melbourne, using its landmarks and street names, but also its domestic architecture – the share houses, 'the old brown house on the corner, a mile from the middle of the city'[138]. Zora Simic, in an article that explores the idea that *Monkey Grip* exists as Australia's first feminist novel, writes that the text demonstrates 'the turn towards the contemporary urban world as a rich source for storytelling' in contemporary literature[139], but also mentions that it is an inherently 'Melbourne' book as Garner presents a milieu

---

[136] Helen Garner, 'I', *Meanjin* 61 (2002) <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/i/> [Accessed March 10 2018]
[137] Charlotte Wood, 'Helen Garner's Monkey Grip makes me examine who I am', The Guardian (October 25 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/25/helen-garners-monkey-grip-makes-me-examine-who-i-am> [Accessed September 10 2019].
[138] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 1.
[139] Zora Simic, ''Unmistakably a book by a feminist': Helen Garner's Monkey Grip and its feminist contexts' in *Everyday Revolutions: Remaking Gender, Sexuality and Culture in 1970s Australia*, ed. by Michelle Arrow and Angela Woollacott, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2019), pp. 139-159, (p. 146).

unique to the city, 'set in a specific scene'.[140]

That scene is one of gigs, theatre performances and busy share house kitchens. And while it can be seen as a virtuous way to share resources, it could also be said that economics are a driving force behind communal living. A large house in an inner-city suburb of a major city is usually unattainable for a person in their twenties who works odd jobs writing, or acting, or playing in a band, or maybe doesn't work at all, so dwellings are shared, and rent is split. This is particularly true for single mothers like Nora, who like Garner did, may subsist on government benefits, albeit benefits generous compared to those offered today. But this way of living is chaotic and messy, both in terms of the hygiene and cleanliness of the home, but also the emotional wellbeing of its inhabitants. Molly McKew and Katherine Ellinghaus, in their article on Melbourne share house communities in the 1970s and 80s, point out that *Monkey Grip*, together with director Richard Lowenstein's films, 1986's *Dogs in Space* and 2001's *He Died With a Falafel in His Hand*, are the most visible representations of counter cultural share house living in Australian culture, and the chaos that comes with it[141] (later on one could suggest that share house representation crossed the river and into the mainstream with the success of the St Kilda based television series *The Secret Life of Us*).

[140] Simic, p. 155.
[141] Molly McKew, and Katherine Ellinghaus, ''Someone's Been Fucking Using This for Meat Again': 18 Berry Street and Melbourne Sharehousing in the 1970s and 1980s', in *Urban Australia and Post-Punk: Exploring Dogs in Space*, ed. by David Nichols and Sophie Perillo (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2020), pp. 141-56 (pp. 145-146).

A circus of security

Not dissimilar from Nycole Prowse's invocation of Bakhtin's carnivalesque in her discussion of the novel[142], McLaren calls Garner's characters' communal way of living a 'circus' where the details of the characters' sex lives 'serves to chart the conflict between the enjoyment of the physical and the achievement of an intimacy that contradicts the ideology of independence'[143]. Indeed, while Nora, and her peers, strive for independence in some ways – that is, not to be tied down by conventional relationships, or 9 to 5 jobs – in other ways, there is a co-dependence fostered by communal living that both allows and disavows freedom. It allows Nora to leave her daughter Gracie with the other occupants of her share house, or with the child's father, and go on spontaneous trips to the country, but it also sacrifices secrecy: her housemates and their circle always know whose sleeping with whom. Thereby, leaving the domestic setting, and taking off into the street alone, allows some freedom from these tensions and the rather incestuous nature of the share house romance.

After all, when one returns home, the houses in *Monkey Grip* are never locked. Nora is visited by Javo at all hours of the evening – she often wakes to find him in her room, or her bed. Windows are left wide open ('I fell asleep beside my open window…'[144]). McLaren points out that the house Javo goes to to score heroin, 'his old junkie haunt'[145], is on Easey Street, where housemates Suzanne Armstrong and Susan Bartlett were killed in 1977, the same year Monkey Grip was published by McPhee Gribble. Armstrong and Bartlett were both in their late twenties, and stabbed

[142] Nycole Prowse, 'Possibilities from the Peripheries into the Urban Labyrinth: Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*' in *Claiming Space for Australian Women's Writing*, ed. by Devaleena Das and Sanjukta Dasgupta (Cham: Springer International Publishing 2017), pp. 213-226 (p. 221).
[143] McLaren, p. 148.
[144] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 11.
[145] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 66.

to death while Armstrong's baby slept in his cot in another room[146]. McLaren quotes a 2005 interview with Garner for ABC Radio where she discusses how jarring the murders were, given the lax security of their communal households:

> when we read about those murders in the papers, our blood ran cold because it could have happened to us … they were very innocent times in the sense that we didn't lock our doors, the key was in the front door, and people walked in and out of the houses in quite a casual way. And we were always going out to pubs and dancing the night away, and sometimes one would come home with the person one had only just met.[147]

This nonchalance is reflected in the text, as the threat of violence is never mentioned. Nora, in all her traipsing through the streets, is not harassed, and no one is ever attacked in the houses.

Giselle Bastin points out that while there exists this physical openness in terms of home security, comings and goings are still enforced via social boundaries and gossip among peers: the rules of security are emotional, rather than physical[148]. While that emotional security is longed for, physical security is not an issue, both in the home or on the street. Cars are shared (Nora 'got into Martin's car which was to be mine for longer than any of us had thought: and I drove home…'[149]). Bikes are piled outside entrances (Nora 'disentangled our bikes from the heap outside the kitchen door'[150]). Mobility is easy.

---

[146] Loretta Florance, 'Easey Street murders: $1m reward to catch cold case killer who left toddler alone in cot', *ABC News* (January 16 2017) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-15/million-dollar-reward-for-easey-street-cold-case-murders/8183434> [Accessed March 20 2018].
[147] McLaren, p148.
[148] Bastin, Giselle. ''The 1970s Gossip Girls: Gossip's Role in the Surveillance and Construction of Female Social Networks in Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip'*, *Antipodes,* 23 (2009), pp. 115-120 (p. 116).
[149] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 47.
[150] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 9.

This ease of mobility is mentioned in Carolyn See's 1982 review of Garner's second novel *Honour and Other People's Children* in the *New York Times* marvels at this seemingly peaceful milieu, opening with:

> Helen Garner's Australia is a land both bucolic and exotic, a land of junkies and wallabies, of women's rights and outdoor plumbing, of homeless children in a beneficent atmosphere, of people looking up at night to see "a thousand stars," a land where they jump on their bikes and ride through the warm, grass-scented evening air down to public parks without the slightest thought of being mugged.[151].

As we can see, *Honour*'s world overlaps with *Monkey Grip*'s: the children, the activism (Nora attends a May Day march wearing a t-shirt she emblazons with HO CITY to mark the liberation of the Vietnamese capital[152]), the bikes, the smells, the sights, but also the freedom felt by Garner's characters in the city, who live 'without the slightest thought of being mugged'.

In 2012 Helen Garner wrote about the sense of unease in Melbourne following Meagher's murder in *The Monthly*, in a piece that began with a conversation about the murder between the writer and a female companion. She again reflects upon this previous ambivalence towards personal security, and as if to confirm Nora's agency in *Monkey Grip*, they discuss a mutual friend: 'God, how many times have I walked home feeling invincible. In the 60s Evie used to stroll across Fawkner Park at midnight. She said she was never scared'[153]. In *Monkey Grip*, Nora's happiness in her personal freedom manifests as song, as she walks 'home very, very slowly across the drying park. … I sang to myself, loud and unabashed,…[154]'.

***

[151] Carolyn See, 'Paradise, Australian Style', *New York Times* (April 4 1982) <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/04/04/books/paradise-australian-style.html> [Accessed March 20 2018].
[152] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 56.
[153] Helen Garner, 'Vox', *Monthly* (November 2012), p. 14.
[154] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 29.

I consider the times I have walked home by myself late at night. A time when I went to an Adelaide Fringe Festival opening night – always one of those nights that is both overwhelming with crowds and underwhelming with experiences, with long lines for drinks and cabs home. A night that feels like everyone in Adelaide has made their way to the city, including those who normally stay at home for the rest of the year, clogging the streets, swaying and hollering obnoxiously after too many drinks. I knew it would take forever to get a taxi, and I knew that if I did get one, the driver would be annoyed at such a short fare, so I decided to walk. It was only a fifteen-minute walk home, and there were plenty of people around, but they tend to peter off around Botanic Road, and the walk past Rundle Park at night is intimidating. The park itself is dark and poorly lit (this was before it was transformed into 'The Garden of Unearthly Delights' at Fringe time as it has been in more recent times, and clad in temporary fencing). There are plenty of trees to conceal wannabe attackers, and it slopes in the middle, so large swathes of the park are not easily visible from the footpath.

I did it, but I didn't sing like Nora. I was frightened, but I felt silly to be frightened. I was a grown woman. I feigned boldness, but every now and then stole a glimpse over my shoulder. I made it home unscathed. Of course I did. I feel silly even writing about it. What a minor occurrence for most people. But at the time, my friends thought I was being careless. They insisted I message them when I got home to let them know I was safe.

Nora's bold walks (and bike rides)

It could be said that *Monkey Grip* is a love story – but one that sits outside of the realms of romantic narrative convention, outside of traditional modes of heterosexual courtship. There is no

teleological push towards matrimony, nor is Nora desirous of starting a family with Javo. Their relationship is unstructured and somewhat polygamous, though their mutual inclination towards non-monogamy is a source of consternation and frustration, mainly from Nora. These are characters actively seeking an alternative lifestyle, one that differs from the norm and rejects the traditional nuclear family. There is a great deal of spillage between the domestic and the streets, as Nora moves from place to place:

> 'I finished work and took a bus to Carlton. On the bus stop I had to fight the housewifely urge to make things simple, to stay in the groove, to go straight home. I had an hour before the time I'd promised to be home for the kids, and I needed to be sociable.'[155]

Nora's willingness to fight the 'housewifely urge' to 'go straight home' posits that liberation, for her, is an ongoing task, and one that she links to the city, and her use of it. While her living arrangements are unconventional, and she is far from a housewife – she is a single mother, a young divorcee and seems uninterested in marrying again – she still sees socialising outside of the home as preferred. The quick paced manner in which Garner writes about socialising conveys the happy exhaustion that comes from a good night out:

> I went to the Kingston to hear Jo Jo Zep and danced till the floor was too packed for me to move, and then I danced on a chair. I went to a party, ate some sausage rolls with tomato sauce, drank a plastic glass of punch, came home, made myself a glass of Tia Maria and cream; fell into bed.[156]

She fails to mention her daughter Gracie in this passage, which suggests that Gracie's father, or someone else in their circle, is minding her, giving Nora the time to socialise. Nora is actively rejecting the prevailing cultural narratives of the time surrounding gender that suggest that a woman's place is in the home, as doting housewife. Nor does it appear that the men in Nora's circle view women in this reductive manner, though their behaviour does reflect a rather different

[155] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 42.
[156] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 236.

conception of emotional labour that is expected from men in relationships today. Zora Simic queries, 'how Garner's fellow women's liberationists made sense of a book that thinly fictionalised attempts to reconcile heterosexual relationships with feminist politics'[157], a reconciliation that while attempted, is not forthcoming by the end of the novel, as Javo concludes his sexual relationship with Nora to pursue one with a close friend of hers.

The city as site of self-determination

Jane Darke writes that 'the city is where opportunities are, not only for work and careers but also to become a more interesting person, to try different roles outside the confining labels of a face-to-face society'[158]. Yet, even if we adopt Koskela's bold walk, the city presents challenges too: a pace of life that is sometimes stressful, constant interaction with others and the incessant noise and chatter that comes with moving through built up public space. Nora sometimes dreams of leaving the city, finding her fast-moving life and her emotional entanglements cumbersome. She holds concerns that she will unravel. After a trip to Hobart with Gracie, she comes back to Melbourne and is confronted by rowdy football fans in the city. She is jarred by the noise of the city, compared to the quiet she has experienced whilst away, and thinks

> If I am not careful, my reservoir of quiet will be punctured here, it will leak or squirt out, and I'll lose it.
> At home I take the pictures down from my wall. I slept well, and dreamed a lot, of urban delirium, lying quietly in my familiar bed. I woke up to the sunshine and began to think about simplifying my life. I ought to take care, though, that I don't strip it of supports I need in order to live in the city. I can drop a lot of things – possessions, like the clothes I never wear – but in the city the thread that holds it all together is not easy to find.[159]

[157] Simic, p. 142.
[158] Darke, p. 97.
[159] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 147.

Garner employs topographical metaphor to examine affect as Nora walks the city – her 'reservoir of quiet' suggesting a large emotional distance akin to a body of water, but a permeable one, between her and fellow city dwellers. Her wellbeing is tenuous – holding it together by a 'thread' that seems evasive – 'not easy to find'. Yet rather than textile, Garner litters her writing with liquid metaphor. Later, Nora's emotions are again reflected in Melbourne's geography, but also in liquescent form, as Garner employs the waterwall at the entrance of the National Gallery of Victoria International on St Kilda Road to demonstrate the enormity of Nora's heartbreak after her romantic relationship with Javo comes to an end, as '…the tears ran and ran off the sides of my face, soaking the pillow, the way the water runs down the big glass panes at the gallery'[160].

This use of shorthand – 'the gallery' – emblematic of the institution's cultural and geographical importance in the city (the building a landmark on St Kilda Road, next to the spired Arts Centre) and a call back to a scene prior where Nora visits the NGV with her friend Eve. They walk arm in arm through the gallery, where Nora shows Eve her

> secret picture, *The French Window*, two women sitting at a circular table having a cup of tea; beside them a long window opens to let in a strip of bright garden, the hard lovely light of summer; in the middle of the lawn sticks up a polished brass tap, and on the verandah you can see half a deck chair.
> 'That's you,' remarked Eve.
> I said, 'That's *us*,'

An image of Nora's 'secret picture' can be found on the NGV website[161]. As she describes, Harley Griffiths's 1942 painting does feature two women at a table, though one of them has her back to us – the other faces the viewer and gazes straight ahead with a steely, unsmiling expression, a hat atop

[160] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 230.
[161] 'The French Window', *National Gallery of Victoria*, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/5657/> [Accessed March 20 2019].

her head, her legs crossed, her sensible leather lace up shoes shining. Rather than a long window, as Nora describes, French doors are beside the women, one of them pushed open to the garden, letting in the breeze. The hatted woman has placed her knitting on the table, her ball of yarn on the floor. Nora's fascination with this painting could suggest that she sees herself growing old with the company of her female friends, rather than her male paramours, and finds peace in this possibility. Her mention of the tap is interesting though, as when I gaze at the image on my computer screen, I doubt I would have been able to discern that object without her description. As taps wind open and shut, holding in water, it may represent Nora's emotional repression – is she quite at peace with this proposition, with this sombre domestic situation? The stillness, and the low light in the room in Griffiths's painting serves as a stark contrast to the social dynamism at play in the share houses she inhabits. But the door in this still room is open – there is a chance to move outside. The woman is unmoored. Her knitting has been placed on the table, and her mouth is shut. She does not seem engaged, but still. Does Nora see herself in this passivity? Does she want to disengage?

There is a chiaroscuro to Garner's text, a painterly working of light and shade that reflects the turbulent nature of Nora's emotional landscape. Novelist Sofie Laguna notes the sensuousness of Garner's prose, writing in *Meanjin* that

> Garner wrote about an urban life I knew, with passion and truthfulness. But Monkey Grip, for me, was also a book about nature. Garner described in sensual and poetic detail, through the eyes, ears and skin of a woman, living in inner-city Melbourne, heat, dryness, rain, darkness, the seasons, fire, the wind, sunlight[162].

This sensuousness is evident, yet more dynamic as Garner writes of Nora cycling with Gracie to the Baths, her description atmospheric and lively, evoking the smells and sounds of the surrounds:

[162] Sofie Laguna, 'Australia in three books', *Meanjin* (Autumn 2016) <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/australia-in-three-books/> [March 20 2018].

> …down the wide road and into the green tunnel, the cave of the Edinburgh Gardens. No-one around, though it is ten o'clock in the morning. The hoses flick silver strings on to the drying grass. The cicadas beat a rhythm that comes in waves, like fainting or your own heartbeat. We sweep round the corner in to the Belgium Lane, where the air is peppery with scent of cut timber and even on this still day the poplars flutter over the ancient grey picket fence; they thrust up their sprouts through the crackling asphalt under our wheels'[163]

Garner frequently invokes atmospheric elements such as light, and the weather – that intangible feel of the city – as Nora offers platitudes like, 'the sun shone every day. I rode my bike everywhere. I went to the library. I was reading two novels a day'[164], an effort to represent a contentedness that is not there, an effort to cover up the wounds. After all, she calls herself a 'fast faker'[165]. Bernadette Brennan suggests that this narrative fluctuation reflects the nature of addiction – for Nora, to Javo, for Javo, to heroin – writing, 'in its cyclic surge and retreat, the story can be read as repetitious and going nowhere. From a different perspective, it represents the ebb and flow of relationships and the endless cycle of dependency on drugs or love[166]'.

'Full summer in the city: chlorine and rock and roll'[167]

Rarely does a discussion of *Monkey Grip* fail to mention the setting of the iconic Fitzroy Baths, where Nora and her friends and their children while away summer days. The first chapter of the book is titled 'Acqua Profonda', a nod to the (now heritage listed) sign painted on the wall in the 1950s to warn newly arrived Italian migrants to the area of the deep water[168].

[163] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 10.
[164] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 37.
[165] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 8.
[166] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 39.
[167] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 190.
[168] Rory Hyde, 'The Pool in Venice, a preview', *Landscape Australia* (April 1 2016) <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/the-pool-in-venice/> [Accessed March 20 2018].

And as we come close to the book's conclusion we come to water again: near the end of the novel, Nora considers how the baths make her feel as she grapples with losing Javo to a friend of hers, Claire:

> I looked down at the sparkling, chemical-blue water with its herd of jostling bodies. I thought, yes, down here I am older and sexier and in some untouchable way freer than I am anywhere else.[169]

Garner's use of water is almost baptismal, as Nora's confidence is 'reborn' after being immersed at the local pool, her local community and its landmarks, and its people, offering her a renewed feeling of independence following the tumult of her relationship with Javo. After all, throughout the text, the city's main danger, to Nora, is loneliness. Her fear permeates both the domestic and the outside sphere, mapping itself onto the landscape, as she considers,

> …the loneliness of remembering summer night bicycle rides, rolling home to the big house with a full heart, sailing through floods of warm air, the tyres whirring on the bitumen, then over the gutter and into the park and feeling the temperature drop under the big green leafy balloons.[170]

While the city has much to offer, the city also reminds of what was lost. Landmarks exist on an emotional level as well as geographical sense, place etched with memories.

Monkey Grip's legacy

Monkey Grip promises a world to its young female readers: it promises urban spaces that can be explored without fear, of dark, night streets that hold magic rather than danger, of empty parks that allow one to sing aloud. However, when we look at *Monkey Grip* through a contemporary lens, it would be reductive to look at the 1970s as if the decade was devoid of violent crime. The 'open door ecosystem' that Garner perpetuates in the text, coupled with Nora's willingness to explore Melbourne on foot or by bicycle with no mention of personal safety, suggests that this experience

[169] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 239.
[170] Garner, *Monkey Grip*, p. 173.

may have been somewhat niche. Nora and her contemporaries' behaviour does suggest an insularity that may foster this ambivalence, and one must also consider that Nora and her contemporaries were for the most part, white, educated, straight able-bodied people. Indeed, Brennan addresses this tribalism in the text, writing,

> Garner's characters are at home in the nightclubs and pubs of Fitzroy and Carlton. […] the potent combination of theatre in La Mama and APG, vibrant pub band culture, socio-political awareness and shared households, made their milieu and their lifestyle unlike anywhere else[171].

However, what Brennan dubs their 'tribalism', also makes their social landscape rather cloistered, and one of prevailing whiteness. The text features no Aboriginal characters, nor any mention of Aboriginal culture. Fitzroy and Collingwood have long held special cultural significance for the First Nations people of the area, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and in the 1960s and 70s, Fitzroy was the epicentre of the burgeoning Aboriginal rights movement, in tandem with Redfern in Sydney. The Aboriginal Health Service was established in Fitzroy in 1973 on Gertrude Street. The Builders Arms Hotel, for instance, at 211 Gertrude Street, features a plaque acknowledging its importance as 'Aboriginal social and political gathering space from the 1940s to the 1980s', and that it 'earned a reputation as the Black pub of Melbourne[172]' (sadly, at the time of writing, the pub's website makes no mention of its black history and has now been thoroughly gentrified and owned by a prominent Melbourne hospitality group[173]). One could ponder if this is reflective of the cultural politics of the time, and that Australia was still very segregated at the time of the book's publication, even in progressive areas like the inner North.

I could plot a map of cultural touchstones that that make up my own mystical Inner North, places

[171] Brennan, p. 40.
[172] 'The Black Pub of Melbourne', The Museum of Lost Things (May 29 2018) <https://www.museumoflost.com/black-pub-melbourne/> [Accessed June 10 2020].
[173] Builders Arms Hotel, <https://buildersarmshotel.com.au/> [Accessed June 10 2020].

I've only visited on the page, or on the screen, or listened to: landmarks experienced vicariously, that have become illuminated to me through art. *Monkey Grip* is one of these artefacts: it mapped the inner North for me before I properly visited, imbuing the area with this sense of bohemia, this sense of anarchic potential – a place so unlike suburban Adelaide where I grew up. And when I visited Melbourne, I saw the street names mentioned in the text: Peel Street, Delbridge Street, Rathdowne Street, Bourke Street, Collins Street, allowing me to trace Nora's steps if I felt so inclined. But did this place exist outside of *Monkey Grip*? Or is it just a nostalgic oasis? This was a mystical place though – a fictional world. Emily Potter and Kirsten Seale write about the complexity of place within, and around *Monkey Grip* as a cultural artefact, in an illuminating article that demonstrates how the text 'materially informs how people inhabit the inner north'[174], contributing to Fitzroy and the inner North in a material sense, informing the cultural make up, and gentrification of the area. It is unlikely that Nora and her ilk could afford to live such a lifestyle in today's Carlton, or Fitzroy, as stories such as *Monkey Grip* have become part of the area's history, lending it cache, and in turn, making it more attractive, driving up the rents. The lifestyle depicted in the text is a product of its time. These days, it's unlikely government benefits would be enough to cover a portion of the rent in a big, inner North share house like the one in the text. As an unemployed welfare recipient and single mum, Nora would probably be relegated to the outer suburbs. If she did have a chance to live in the inner North, her only chance might be in one of the public housing high rises that litter the area, dwellings that lack the louche, bohemian cache of the houses in the novel.

[174]Emily Potter and Kirsten Seale, 'The worldly text and the production of more-than-literary place: Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* and Melbourne's 'inner north'', *cultural geographies* 2019, pp. 1-12 (p. 8).

These issues aside, it remains that the text encompasses the potentiality there is within the city, the life that can be made there. Heartbreak, in all its cruelty and chaos, is central to the text's plot, but also the notion of freedom. The book remains an important text in Australian literary history, not only for its portrayal of counter-cultural communities and the changing sexual mores in 1970s Melbourne, but also for its depiction of a woman who is unafraid of moving through the city, who sees comfort in the city and what it offers. Garner expresses a great love for the city in her prose. Examining *Monkey Grip* enables us to query how far urban women have come in terms of mobility – forty years later, can they move through the city with the ease that Nora does?

CHAPTER 5 *Brunswick Ground: on place, gender, grief and belonging*

> the skyscrapers, the cloudscratchers – here comes a city
> A crowded train, a silent night
> The country's black and the cities are bright
> On this flight, through the night…[175]

The lyrics to 'Here Comes a City' by late Grant McLennan of Australian band the Go-Betweens personify the city and its dynamics – its push, and its pull, the way it heaves and mellows depending on the time of day, the way it can feel crowded yet lonely, then empty and quiet. The city is a place of contrast between the bustle and the silence, one can go from a busy bar to a silent, lonely street. For women, the city at night, hollowed out and emptied of its human contents, with its residents holed up at home in bed, can be enormously intimidating. In this chapter, I consider the dynamics of place and the city, looking at community, belonging and grief, and making a detour via an Australian institution that sees all three of these themes come through its doors – the pub.

To explore these themes, I will examine two texts, Catherine de Saint Phalle's 2015 novel, *On Brunswick Ground*, and Michaela McGuire's 2013 text, *A Story of Grief*. Both deal with the rape and murder of Jill Meagher, the crime's inclusion in the texts demonstrative of its cultural impact and how the crime itself serves as a barometer of trauma in contemporary Australia. Both texts are geographically situated in Brunswick – ground zero of the Meagher case, if you will – and explore how the crime engulfed the suburb in grief, compromising the topophilia of the area for many of its residents, particularly women, and creating a 'traumascape'. This chapter will examine how de

[175] The Go-Betweens, *Here comes a city* (London: EMI, 2005).

Saint Phalle's and McGuire's texts explore gender and belonging in light of the crime, paying close attention to the discussion of community.

On Brunswick Ground, by Catherine de Saint Phalle, a French émigré who moved to Australia in 2003, offers the perspective of an unnamed female narrator who lives in Brunswick, grappling with grief for Meagher, but also for a relationship with a former lover. A cast of other Brunswick women inhabit her world, all feeling similar pangs of grief for various reasons. While *On Brunswick Ground* is a work of fiction, McGuire's *A Story of Grief* is a non-fiction long form essay, published as Penguin Special but now out of print in paperback form. In the essay, McGuire examines how the Meagher case unfolded, and the grief that enveloped the city. She discusses how she, as a woman of a similar age to Jill Meagher, dealt with the news of the case. Both texts also engage with Australian urban drinking culture to varying degrees, and with alcohol and nightlife come further complications regarding discourses around women's mobility. I will discuss these complications by taking a digression to the pub – we will take a seat at the bar and examine how these public drinking spaces are gendered, and the challenges they present in terms of women's urban mobility.

Narratives and spaces of trauma

When considering high profile, violent crimes in Australian cities, there are certain names and places that come to mind: the Lindt café, Anita Cobby, Hoddle Street. Several violent crimes attain a high profile in the Australian media each year. However, the disappearance, rape and murder of Jill Meagher captured the Australian public imagination in a way that seemed to speak to way we consume news in a social media obsessed, twenty-four hour news cycle world. In *On Brunswick*

Ground, the narrator contemplates, 'how Jill Meagher's death is woven into the fabric of Brunswick[176]. Indeed, the crime is mapped onto the space.

In her text *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*, writer and cultural historian Maria Tumarkin examines how trauma is mapped upon a place. Tumarkin primarily examines sites that have seen prolonged conflict, and or, multiple deaths, such as Sarajevo and, in Australia, Port Arthur. Yet I want to take Tumarkin's concept and apply it to Brunswick. McGuire writes as Brunswick resident, and De Saint Phalle positions Brunswick as the epicentre of trauma, trauma even beyond the Meagher case. Each character has their wound, and their trauma serves to bring them together. Brunswick, like Easey Street in the previous chapter, is marred by a sense of 'what happened' there – these places are traumascapes on a smaller scale: traumascapes in that they have mapped themselves onto local cartographies.

Community

Jane Jacobs, in her seminal 1961 text on urban planning, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, writes that, 'lowly, unpurposeful and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city's wealth of public life may grow'[177]. The wealth she references is immaterial, but reflected in the abstract – a feeling of contentedness with where one chooses to live based on the people one comes across in the neighbourhood. A quick perusal of the Australian website Homely, which offers house hunters suburb reviews from other website users, shows that many reviewers rate Brunswick highly for its 'community feel'[178]. In this context, this is a hard

[176] Catherine de Saint Phalle, *On Brunswick Ground* (Melbourne: Transit Lounge, 2015), p. 156.
[177] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), p. 72.
[178] 'Brunswick', *Homely* <https://www.homely.com.au/brunswick-moreland-melbourne-greater-victoria> [Accessed March 1 2020].

term to pin down – what kind of metrics are employed to measure this 'feeling'? Is it a sense of neighbourliness, a friendliness – people saying hello to one another when they pass on the street, Jacobs's 'contacts'? Is it a bustling community hub, like a market, or a street lined with busy cafes? What do we mean when we use the word, 'community'? The *OED* defines a 'community' as, 'A body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity. Hence: a place where a particular body of people lives'. So, a group of people that share the same postcode, a definition that is quite without feeling, yet I wish to use the term in a warmer context, reflecting Jacobs's sentiments. I wish to tie it to a sense of affective *belonging*, 'Something which constitutes a part of another', a togetherness, an indefinable feeling of affection for the geographical place one calls home. Feminist geographer Tovi Fenster writes that a sense of belonging is associated with memory[179] – but what happens when memories of place are not generated by one's own experience, instead vicariously collective, and associated with fear? Does this generate a 'traumascape'?

On Brunswick Ground

Catherine de Saint Phalle's *On Brunswick Ground* is a fictional exploration of the mechanics of community and the reverberative impact the Meagher case had on the narrator's local Brunswick community. The text explores belonging and place from the perspective of a Brunswick resident, as she observes and personally grapples with the distress Meagher's murder has caused her otherwise peaceful adopted community. It features an ensemble cast of characters, who all come into contact with the unnamed female narrator who is contending with her own feelings of fear and

[179] Fenster, Tovi, 'The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life', *Journal of Gender Studies,* 14 (2005), pp. 217-31 (p. 218).

confusion regarding the rape and murder of Meagher in her neighbourhood, but also emotional longings for an estranged romantic partner. Through first person narration, we are granted interiority, we become part of the Brunswick community, but there at a distance, as it is insinuated the narrator comes from elsewhere, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

The book opens in a bar, which is fitting given a bar was a focal point of the Meagher case, as the now closed Bar Etiquette was the last place she was seen alive before she left to walk home down Sydney Road. The bar in *On Brunswick Ground* is The Alderman, a popular establishment that has been on Lygon Street for over a decade. We are away from Sydney Road, removed from the scene of the crime – just over a kilometre's walk away. The bar's name carries some gravitas: an 'alderman' is a local governmental officer. We return to the *OED* for a definition: 'a civil officer in a borough, city, etc., next in dignity to a mayor; a senior member of the legislature of a municipal council or corporation; (in some countries) a member of the legislature of a city, borough, or ward; a city councillor'. In the novel, the bar serves as a kind of organisational building, a kind of council, a managing precept. The bar is where the characters assemble to discuss matters, to govern themselves and others: the protagonist and a woman called Bernice meet in this scene and discuss the latter's wish to have a child, a choice she is making on her own as a single woman of thirty-nine, using artificial insemination. The narrator describes the space poetically, likening it to a 'marina'[180], as though the patrons have moored there, resting their sails. She overhears Australianisms: 'no worries, mate'; 'I'm easy'; 'you're right'.[181] Terms that are intended to put their recipient at ease, but in a rather superficial sense, throwaway lines. The way she notices these terms posits the protagonist's otherness early, she is 'hanging in the middle of a blur of voices, like

[180] de Saint Phalle, p. 7.
[181] de Saint Phalle, p. 7.

some strange fruit from another tree'[182]. In the bar, she meets her friend Bernice, who proceeds to emotionally hold court, discussing her desperation for a child, dispelling those easy-going Australianisms, proving their superficiality.

The Meagher case is introduced when the protagonist leaves the bar, walks her friend home, and intends to return to her home alone on foot. Her friend is concerned by her doing this, "after what happened to that poor girl"[183]. And without needing to name her, Meagher is foisted into the narrative. De Saint Phalle situates the narrative temporally by mentioning other actual events, writing, 'today there was a peace march held in honour of Jill Meagher'[184]. The march was held on Sunday September 30, 2012. A few days prior, Adrian Bayley had been arrested for the rape and murder of Meagher. The march was posited in the media as a way for the local community to come together and express their grief, yet their mass, their footsteps, almost trod into the ground the connection of the crime to Brunswick, the indelible mark that it left in the community, rendering it a traumascape.

Textu(r)al metaphors

De Saint Phalle's narrator recognises this, as she reflects that, "something about her [Jill Meagher] being raped and murdered in Brunswick has ripped the fabric of the neighbourhood"[185]. The ambiguity in this sentence – "something about" – is deceptive. Of course Meagher's rape and murder would disturb the Brunswick community, but how the mechanics of this disturbance is what the text is interested in, how the rip manifests and what it reveals, and how the fabric is woven.

[182] de Saint Phalle, p. 7.
[183] de Saint Phalle, p 12.
[184] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.
[185] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.

The narrator ponders that, 'the light itself seems to have suffered a rent and let in something that wasn't there before'[186]. De Saint Phalle's affective use of light and texture reflects how feelings of grief will cause these heightened senses, cause one to notice the light acutely. She demonstrates how mood can be atmospheric. She demonstrates how mood can be mapped on to space:

> I don't want to remember why I am here. Mapping my way as I walk, I just want to remember forward, as the desert light slinks into Brunswick, making the dust glitter, creating mysterious, nocturnal places under the curved metal roofing over the shops.[187]

The curved metal roofing over the shops serves as a reminder of the Duchess Boutique, the bridal shop that Meagher and her killer, Adrian Bayley, walked past the night she died, the boutique's CCTV capturing the two and providing police with the lead required to pursue Bayley. De Saint Phalle demonstrates how the quotidian can become strange under trauma, how the ordinary can become mysterious.

Later the protagonist mentions that she met Jack, her former lover, when she landed in Melbourne on a tourist visa[188]. He is tied to Melbourne for her, his comments about the haunting nature of grief ironically haunting her, and she recalls that he once said to her that, 'People leave unfinished business. I'm a musician. I feel it often. Floating stuff, unspent tears, boomerang smiles that haven't come back; the unsaid things that clog the air around us'[189]. Her grief for the loss of her relationship intermingles with the shared grief of Meagher, forming a comorbidity of community and individual heartache. The atmospheric nature of community grief – what Jack called 'things that clog the air' – is important to de Saint Phalle, as she considers the shared vicarious mourning when a local is killed, even if it is someone not well known, writing, "it's not only about fear or danger, but more

[186] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.
[187] de Saint Phalle, p. 15.
[188] de Saint Phalle, p. 75.
[189] de Saint Phalle, p. 76.

about a subtle presence that has taken some invisible space in the air"[190]. The crime lingers in the air, but also in the self – in the mind of women as they walk the streets. These crimes thrust upon women knowledge of their own abjection. As she wanders through Brunswick, the text's protagonist considers how she is 'mapping' her 'way as I walk'[191], reflecting a sense of personal cartography that permeates the female psyche in urban space. Urban women must be cartographers by nature, they must craft their own maps to avoid danger and anticipate spots that may make them feel vulnerable or unsafe, spots that may have been sites of violence for other women, or simply make them feel uneasy.

Yet the mapping could also be due to the landscape being foreign, as the protagonist continually gestures towards her 'otherness'. She seems liminal, often on the fringes – at the bar, picking up snippets of other conversations. She comes across a man at a bar who she believes her otherness offers solace:

> I find myself staring up into his face. His whisper barely reaches me.
> 'I was in the same bar on the twenty-first of September. I saw Jill Meagher on her last night alive.'
> He is moving away hurriedly now. Sarah has not heard. Only the stranger is told, the one with the accent, the one who will go and carry the secret overseas where it can be forgotten. I am not going anywhere, but I have no one to say it to, and it feels almost sacrilegious to to comment on it now. […] It seems that everyone in Brunswick has some connection to Jill Meagher's death, his or her own ken of bereavement.[192]

The liminal position that the narrator finds herself in – Brunswick resident, proximally close yet 'other' – means that she is often confidante. Other characters disclose their intimate feelings to her, as if she is *carte blanche*, a blank sheet on which to project their turmoil, their insecurities. Mitali speaks to her as they work, and she studies her, noting that,

[190] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.
[191] de Saint Phalle, p. 15.
[192] de Saint Phalle, p. 27.

> her face closes down and I know she is thinking of her brother as if she had cried it out in anger and pain. Sometimes I have a sense she is asking me silently for help. A feeling of ineffectual urgency overpowers me. But all I can do is to carry on clipping my shrub.[193]

The narrator often occupies this almost anthropological position when in discussion: observing their mannerisms, their neuroses and idiosyncrasies, passive. But while this could be read as passivity, it could be seen as thoughtfulness, a deep consideration for her adopted home and its residents. She comments that after Meagher's death, and the subsequent peace march, 'a subtle presence … has taken some invisible space in the air. Even I, as a stranger, can feel it"[194]. Yet exactly how she is other is not made entirely clear. It is left open-ended. We know about the tourist visa, but is she French, like her author de Saint Phalle? At the beginning of the text, belonging is problematized, as we are unsure of the protagonist's origins, as she sees herself 'like some strange fruit hanging from another tree'.[195] She is gratuitously well read, and the text is littered with constant literary references, to writers like Raymond Carver and Cormac McCarthy[196], Ian McEwan[197] and Greek legends, which provokes an eerie foreshadowing of the murder of Eurydice Dixon in the text, jarring to read now, when on page 13, we return to the bridal shop. The narrator recalls the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, in the context of Meagher's last moments captured on the Duchess Boutique's CCTV:

> A bridal shop: the sad irony of it. Aristaueus, the beekeeper, tries to rape Orpheus's wide on their wedding day. As Eurydice runs to escape him, a viper bites her ankle. Orpheus goes down into hell to retrieve her, but, like all the newspaper articles and all the policeman of the world, he can't bring his Jill Meagher back to life. Her photographs splashed on front pages, the peace march in her honour, are nothing but Orpheus's backward glance into Hades as Eurydice swirls away from him.[198]

[193] de Saint Phalle, p. 60.
[194] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.
[195] de Saint Phalle, p.7.
[196] de Saint Phalle, p. 96.
[197] de Saint Phalle, p. 148.
[198] de Saint Phalle, p. 13.

The uncanny referencing of 'Eurydice' aside (I will return to this in the final chapter), de Saint Phalle's casting of Tom Meagher as Orpheus confirms the aforementioned (in the previous chapter) portrayal of Meagher as the 'ideal victim', conforming to essentialist standards of femininity and 'wifedom', the object to his subject. There is a sentimentality to *On Brunswick Ground*, a romantic, lyrical turn of phrase that risks gazing at Meagher's murder through a Vaseline-smeared lens, stripping a barbaric crime of its reality and making it into some kind of parable, softening its brutality. To see Meagher as wife – part of a socially-sanctioned, heteronormative unit, part of a couple – nullifies some of her humanity as an individual, her strength, her independence. It casts her in Tom's shadow, rather than in the light, as individual, as a member of her Brunswick community, as a member of Australian society. Granted, as her spouse, Tom's grief is palpable, but this conflation reduces Jill to how she is seen in relation to others, rather than how she is seen as a human being. The novel also casts Jill into relief against the protagonist and the author. She is object to their subject. Ghost to haunt them. But in grief, is it possible to avoid this? Does examining how the dead person is woven into the fabric, albeit of family, community, society, make us feel less alone?

The narrator ponders the murderer, Bayley, considering, 'This man has walked the streets, drunk a beer with his elbows on the bar, watched the football and barracked for a team. He has a mother – he may even be a sperm donor'[199], prompting questions in arguably a similar vein: why must another woman (a mother) be deployed to recognise a man's humanity? Why must we see women in relation to men, or invoke these women as if to remind men to respect the opposite sex? So often we hear this appeal to humanity – that she's someone's daughter, someone's sister, someone's

[199] de Saint Phalle, p. 14.

wife, someone's mother, someone's friend. Yet she reminds us here of the dangers of casting Bayley as 'monster', dangers echoed by Tom Meagher himself in an essay for White Ribbon Ireland, titled 'The Danger of the Monster Myth'. In his essay Tom Meagher reflected on facing Bayley via video link in court. He wrote:

> Something about his ability to weave together nouns, verbs and pronouns to form real, intelligible sentences forced a re-focus, one that required a look at the spectrum of men's violence against women, and its relation to Bayley and the society from which he came. By insulating myself with the intellectually evasive dismissal of violent men as psychotic or sociopathic aberrations, I self-comforted by avoiding the more terrifying concept that violent men are socialised by the ingrained sexism and entrenched masculinity that permeates everything from our daily interactions all the way up to our highest institutions.[200]

Indeed, de Saint Phalle gestures towards these cycles of violence as the protagonist states, 'I hunted on the web and found that a violent father physically abused the alleged killer. It wouldn't excuse him, but it might explain something, mightn't it?'[201] She notes that saying he is evil 'would only reveal a fraction of the whole'[202], referring to what Tom Meagher called the 'terrifying concept' of violence as a product of socially sanctioned hyper masculinity.

Women tend to look after one another in *On Brunswick Ground*. The protagonist, her colleague Mitali, and their boss Kim work as landscape gardeners, tending to the yards of Brunswick, their work metaphorical in some ways for the manner in which they tend to one another emotionally. Their quiet, physical works allows them to give each other space to grieve and to tend to the wound that has been left in the community by Meagher's murder. They thoughtfully discuss the crime together. Like the narrator, Mitali is also transfixed by the Meagher case, saying, 'I know I never

[200] Tom Meagher, 'The danger of the monster myth', Our Watch (May 18 2015) <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media/Latest-news/The-danger-of-the-monster-myth-by-Tom-Meagher?feed=LatestNewsFeed> [Accessed August 20 2016].
[201] de Saint Phalle, p. 41.
[202] de Saint Phalle, p 81.

met her, but I can't stop thinking about her'[203]. This seems a common response to the case; one I feel too. There is that self-identification mentioned in the previous chapter – the inclination that can come to some women (myself included), to see ourselves in other women, but also to see ourselves in these hazardous, life-threatening situations, to consider ourselves, our own womanly bodies, as these beacons of trauma, this locus of trouble, object of the male gaze, that we are responsible for keeping out of trouble. She asks, '…And why was she raped and murdered in Hope Street, of all places?'[204] The irony of the street name is bitter, yet the text is imbued with a sense of hope.

Mitali, who is of Indian heritage, considers why she is more affected by the Meagher case than by another crime which happened about the same time, a crime in which an Indian woman was murdered by her husband, who then set fire to their home. This woman shared Mitali's cultural background, yet Mitali identifies more with Meagher. Is this a return to the paradox of fear, as discussed in previous chapters? That we fear random attack on the street, yet statistically are much more likely to be victim to violence at the hands of a family member or partner? Mitali's comments may reflect the cognitive dissonance around domestic violence, which circulates in discourse around violent crimes committed in public places: while women are more likely to be killed by their partner or a family member, the killing of a woman on the street at the hands of a stranger seems to generate a more acute level of fear. She tells the protagonist, '*That* disaster, directly connected with my parents' culture, doesn't touch me as much as Jill Meagher's death. Her killing takes as much room in my mind as in the bloody newspapers'[205]. Mitali's point reinforces my

[203] de Saint Phalle, p. 18.
[204] de Saint Phalle, p. 18.
[205] de Saint Phalle, p. 19.

argument that crimes such as the killing of Meagher, and the media discourse surrounding them, suture themselves to women, forging a place in their mind that reminds them of their supposed innate female vulnerability, controlling their movements and their dampening their confidence.

Mitali goes on to say, 'All I can do now is mourn this unknown woman who was *nothing* to me'[206] Her comment seems almost callous, poorly expressed – Meagher is obviously not nothing to her, rather she represents a feeling of ill ease in the community, but she is unsure of how to grieve for a stranger, even if she did share her geographical orbit. Her inarticulateness around these feelings demonstrates the complicated nature of this kind of shared, yet distant, grief. Yet it is more than this – Mitali is so uncomfortable with this grief as Meagher serves as an avatar for herself, an avatar for all women. She is what could be, if we are in the wrong place at the wrong time – and that is all that is separating us from becoming her, and therein lies the terror. This grief becomes twofold then – as we grieve the self, the city self and its freedom. But did it ever exist? Stories like Meagher's plague us from childhood. Meagher's fate is a weight many women carry. This is proven later by the narrator, as she sits that the bar and comments, 'I feel like we're all Jill Meaghers; any one of the women in this room could be lying in her shallow grave'[207].

A breaking

This theory is tested at the midway point of the text, as the narrator of *On Brunswick Ground* and her friend are Sarah are walking along the Merri Creek trail, which runs through nearby Brunswick East. It is about dusk when two men set upon them with a knife. Even before the men approach them, the narrator senses their menace,

[206] de Saint Phalle, p. 19.
[207] de Saint Phalle, p. 28.

> Suddenly I am aware of them both together. They know each other. They have talked to each other by the water […] They are so different, but their movements have the same slow, withholding darkness. I grab Sarah's arm.
> 'Sarah, these guys, it's not good. Be careful.'[208]

They escape the men by jumping in the creek:

> I jump towards Sarah and grab her and launch us both in the creek. As the waters lift and splash at us, she seems to spring to life and we are thrashing blindly ahead. We are doing the right thing – we were stuck – but now we are moving. They have not jumped in after us. They are still on the bank. We wade and wade and push ourselves forward, to the other side of the creek, away from the setting and dying sun.[209]

When the characters in the text attack the women, it feels like a teleological inevitability, which rings true for many women – why else would women adopt so many safety behaviours if they did not believe this to be true? The women's quick response to the violence demonstrates how ingrained these feelings are. Yet even in the face of their innate knowledge of male violence, the women in *On Brunswick Ground* are reluctant to give up their peripatetic freedoms and continue using the streets. Walking together, conversing while doing so, the characters stroll, understanding one another further with each step. To stop them walking would be to mute them, to sever these understandings, understandings that are multiple – of each other, of the self, of place, of space.

Interestingly, the Meagher case seems to take over from the characters' own experience of random violence – they remain more fixated on this woman they do not know, rather than the incident at Merri Creek. This prompts uncomfortable questions: is it because they escaped their attackers and Jill Meagher did not? Perhaps this frames their escape as luck? And luck is frightening, because it is out of your hands, and sometimes it runs out. The protagonist considers that 'this Brunswick tragedy holds so many other events and feelings in its sway. The suburb has been held hostage

[208] de Saint Phalle, p. 87.
[209] de Saint Phalle, p. 88.

because a woman has died, because her pain has touched all those who walk the streets where she walked'[210].

In the week following their attack, the narrator visits Sarah at the Alderman, where she works. She comments that the bar is full, and Sarah deadpans, 'Attempted rape and possible murder are good for business'[211], as though the patrons have flocked to offer solace. Yet the narrator visits the bar to console herself, to address what her friend Bernice diagnoses as 'post-traumatic stress', telling her to seek counselling.[212] Yet it becomes apparent that the narrator finds counsel in the camaraderie she has with her friends at the bar, it serving as a community hub.

Women and their local

Jane Jacobs points out that bars can improve the safety of a neighbourhood, discussing a bar on her own street, writing that it's 'comings and goings […] do much to keep our street reasonably populated until three in the morning, and it is a street always safe to come home to'[213]. But what of the internal workings of the bar? And while the street that the bar is on is safe to come home to, what about walking home from the bar itself to one's own street further afield? The Alderman is a central gathering point in de Saint Phalle's text, not unlike many pubs or bars in many city streets around Melbourne, which draw a large crowd of local residents. It actually exists – as mentioned previously, it sits on Lygon Street – and is somewhat of a hybrid bar and pub, due to its shopfront location. The narrator's friend Bernice asserts it is a bar, saying, 'As for pubs, I *never* go to pubs'[214],

[210] de Saint Phalle, p. 169.
[211] de Saint Phalle, p. 89.
[212] de Saint Phalle, p. 94.
[213] Jacobs, p. 40-41.
[214] de Saint Phalle, p. 94.

but I would argue that the main thing that sets it apart from a pub is merely the building its housed in. It has the same relaxed atmosphere of similar pubs in the area, as the narrator sits at the bar with a book, commenting 'Here I'm safe to read, and to remember other beers, and other conversations, on the other side of the planet'[215]. Therein lies the appeal of this bar for the narrator – she is free to be alone and unbothered, while for many women, sitting alone at a bar can make one feel like a magnet for strange men.

I want to digress here and examine the notion of the 'local', one's adopted favourite watering hole (as the Alderman is in *On Brunswick Ground*) closely, as local pubs and bars and drinking is central to the Meagher story – as mentioned previously, she had spent the night of her death enjoying drinks with work colleagues and had left a bar to walk home when she encountered Bayley – but also many women's own stories about fear and urban space, particularly in Australia. Pubs are so often invoked as quintessential Australian spaces, forgetting that pubs came from the colonisers, as they are just as glorified in the United Kingdom. However, the pub's clearly defined use of space mirrored Australian gender relations and how they have shifted in time, and I think it is important to consider how these are still subtly reinforced by their architectural layout.

In Australian pubs, women were once upon a time relegated to the 'Ladies Lounge', or the Saloon Bar. Men were permitted full rein of the pub, of course, and the Front Bar was strictly reserved for men only. The only women who were permitted in this space were barmaids, and their presence was one of service, both commercially and morally as they pulled beers and kept a watchful eye over proceedings. Again, we return to Summers's invocation of Caroline Chisholm's branding of

[215] de Saint Phalle, p. 90.

Australian women as 'God's Police', the arbiter of social mores – well-behaved, responsible for their own behaviour but also men's. Diane Kirkby has written on how 'beer culture' has long been closely linked to Australian masculinity and nationalism, and this link was strengthened in the 1990s after advertisers feared losing Australians to more 'intellectual pursuits', thereby doubling down on the perceived 'manliness' of beer to sell more units[216]. This is still apparent in many beer advertisements aired today featuring predominantly male characters. And there are still subtle reminders of the gendered segregation of Australian drinking culture in many Australian pubs that have retained their original architecture, as the front bar and the saloon bar remain separate entities.

I want to take a detour from Melbourne for a moment, travelling to Adelaide and considering two pubs with this kind of history that I know quite well – two of my 'locals', if you permit me to have two. Firstly, let us travel to The Hotel Metropolitan, or the 'Metro', on Grote Street in Adelaide, which sits next to the recently rejuvenated Her Majesty's Theatre. Aptly, the room that is closest to Her Majesty's is dubbed the 'Theatre Bar' and can be entered from the corner of Grote and Pitt Streets. The room is dressed in flocked wallpaper, has a wood fire, bookcases, plush seating, and historical images of the pub and the area framed on the walls. The area has two televisions, inevitably playing sports channels. However, if one enters through the main doorway on Grote Street, and walks straight through, one reaches the 'Sports Bar', an area decorated in a much less sophisticated theme. Like the Theatre Bar, it has stools at the bar, but also high round tables where groups can gather, and banquette seating to the side. The tables are placed so that the televisions can be viewed from each vantage point, and a blackboard displays what games will be broadcast

[216] Diane Kirkby, '"Beer, Glorious Beer": Gender Politics and Australian Popular Culture', *The Journal of Popular Culture,* 37 (2003), pp. 244-56. p253.

at the pub that week, as well as information regarding the pub's Footy Tipping Competition, and gambling information such as match odds. The room allows entrance to the Pokie Lounge, the Beer Garden (one of the two areas smoking is permitted, the other being outside on Grote Street) and the 'Band Room', where live acts perform.

The pub's emphasis on live music and sports telecasts tends to make the Theatre Bar more of a geographical convenience, attracting Her Majesty's patrons before and after performances next door. There is a discreet gender divide at the Metro: groups of women tend to gravitate towards the Theatre Bar, which is warm, pleasantly decorated and is set up for conversation between small groups, and a few tables allow for dining, whereas men, prefer the Sports Bar. The emphasis on sports in this bar codifies it as an inherently male area: the sports played on the televisions are played by men, officiated and refereed by men, commentated by men and watched by men. Advertisements shown on the sports channels target men: gambling companies, hair replacement or beer. Australian Rules Football, or AFL, is an interesting case in Australia as it has a large female fan base: it is often said that women make up half of the AFL's audience. Yet sports bars still cater to an intrinsically male audience, a modernisation of the Front Bar. They cannot tell women they are not welcome, but they can skew the architecture as such. And in turn, bands that play the venue are often all male. Gigs, too, are frequented by more men than women. The Band Room is small, and watching a band with a large following can mean standing in very close quarters with other patrons.

The Metro's female toilets can be reached through a corridor leading from the Theatre Bar, or through the Beer Garden. The toilets are situated at the very back of the pub, the doorway right next to a gate to a small car park off of Penaluna Place, a laneway next to the pub. Bands use the

carpark to ‘load in’, bringing their equipment through the gate to the Band Room. For this reason, the gate is sometimes left unlocked, allowing access to the female toilets to those who are not patrons of the establishment. When using the toilets on a quiet night, or during the day, when the Band Room is not in use, and the Beer Garden empty (smokers preferring the area at the front of the pub, on Grote Street), the toilets can be an intimidating spot. As women use cubicles, rather than a urinal, they are enclosed, restricted: if an assailant was to enter the toilets, they would be immediately at risk.

The Exeter, on Rundle Street, also retains its original architectural layout, so that the Front Bar and the Saloon Bar are separated. However, the Exeter has long had a reputation as one of Adelaide’s more ‘Bohemian’ (for lack of a better word) and ‘open-minded’ pubs – largely due to its unwillingness to renovate, as many pubs in the city have. The pub is characterised just as much for what it lacks - superfluous trend-driven decoration such as water features and pokie machines - than by its idiosyncracies - its plethora of dusty knick-knacks behind the bar, and messy newspaper cut outs stuck to the wall, made up of jokes mostly only decipherable to the staff. The Front Bar and the Saloon Bar of the Exeter have no real gender segregation as they are largely the same – there is no theme to either, just a spot to sit, one side with more natural light. In fact, both bars at the Exeter have hooks under the bar to hang one’s handbag on – a sure signal of welcome for many women burdened by these accoutrements of Western femininity.

Both pubs attract a similar clientele due to their live music roster. The Exeter, however, does not care for sport: there are no televisions or tipping competitions (for patrons, anyway), only a dart board and maybe a few punters in footy scarves who might gather after a game at Adelaide Oval. This makes it somewhat of an anomaly in terms of Australian pubs, as sport is a powerful cultural

force in Australian culture, and sport and alcohol consumption remain linked through means such as advertising during telecasts and at sporting grounds (though this is no longer as visible as it once was). Sport continues to promote gender segregation and does so spatially (as elaborated on by scholar Mandy Treagus in her writing on the popularisation of netball in Australia as 'a continuing artefact of late nineteenth-century femininity'[217]).

But how do we get home?

Thus, for women, the pub is a liminal space – one that we are permitted in to, but one that carries a significant masculinist legacy. And it does not end when we leave the pub. Pubs and bars are part of the night time economy – places often visited in the evening. Alcohol is consumed in these establishments, and with any hope, patrons leave their car keys at home. How does a woman who attends a bar or pub make their way home if they are alone?

We return to the conundrum Jill Meagher faced, one that I referred to earlier in this chapter: do we take a cab, or a ride sharing service like Uber, or public transport, or walk? These choices are fraught; women must do the mental arithmetic and calculate the risk attached to each mode of transport. These calculations can be more difficult when intoxicated, and with it comes the inevitable victim blaming if something is to happen. In *A Story of Grief*, Michaela McGuire ponders, 'Recently, I tried to count how many times I'd been out drinking when the only thing that got me home safely was an inbuilt homing device'[218].

[217] Mandy Treagus, 'Playing Like Ladies: Basketball, Netball and Feminine Restraint', *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 22 (2005), 88-105. p102.

[218] Michaela McGuire, *A Story of Grief* (Penguin: Melbourne, 2013), p. 11.

Yet again, we return to the notion of victim blaming – surely McGuire should be able to wander home inebriated and not be attacked? She elaborates on how this discussion around victim blaming was played out publicly following Bayley's arrest, writing:

> A couple of months after all of this, a prominent local femininist interviewed an even more prominent overseas feminist about this same narrative thread. 'And of course it should never be about victim blaming,' gushed the local feminist, after offering a quick summary of the story, 'but I worry about the idea of saying to women, "Don't change your behaviour, this is not your problem!" I feel like that's saying, "You should be able to leave your car unlocked with the keys in the ignition, or leaver your front door unlocked, and expect nobody to burgle you."' The international feminist agreed, 'Yes, it's on that basis that I don't wear high heels…Because when I'm lying in bed at night with my husband, I know there's a woman coming who I could rape and murder, because I can hear her coming up the street in her high heels, clack-clack-clack. And I can hear she's on her own, I can hear what speed she's coming at, I could plan where to stand to grab her or an ambish. And every time I hear her I think, 'Fuck, you're just alerting every fucking nutter to where you are now''.[219]

The discussion between the two feminists reminds me of the internal discussions I have had with myself when I get dressed to go out at night. Shall I wear a scarf, or could that be used to pull me aside, or strangle me if I find myself walking alone somewhere? Same thing with a necklace. Should I wear flat shoes so I can run away if I need to? Maybe I'll pack some flats in my bag if I have to walk home. These internal dialogues feel silly, but then I remember a self defence seminar we had to attend at school. A visiting police officer conducted it and told us if we were ever about to be raped, to urinate on ourselves and our attacker will be so repulsed they may give up. Twenty-something years later, that policeman's advice still hasn't faded from my memory. As women, we must avoid high heels, dangerous accessories and wet ourselves to avoid attack.

Women are well aware of the dangers of walking home from the pub. Writer Katherine Smyrk of *The Big Issue*, a Brunswick local, notes that "Jill Meagher's death affected a nation', writing that

[219] McGuire, p. 32-33.

> a collective gasp rippled through Melbourne – and much farther. For those living nearby it was like a thump in the chest. With panic we recounted stories of going to the very bar she had been at that night. Of walking, tipsy and reckless, along that exact street at 3am. With horror we watched the CCTV footage on the news of Adrian Bayley talking to her outside a formalwear shop. With heartbreak we yelled pointlessly at the TV for her to run. Women everywhere thought of the countless times they had been in that position: head down, hands in pockets, heart racing, not making eye contact but remaining polite with the man who was standing too close, looking at her strangely, giving her the creeps[220].

Smyrk's use of the term 'reckless' to describe walking home at night is an interesting one, demonstrating this ingrained subjectivity around female mobility. We place ourselves within the narrative – as McGuire reminds, '*it could have happened to me*'[221]. I am placing myself within the narrative, like McGuire, arguably, like de Saint Phalle, like Smyrk. Could my walking be seen as resistance, or recklessness?

Labelling this kind of behaviour 'reckless' could be considered awkward at best, internalised misogyny at worst. After all, walking costs nothing and improves one's health, and catching a taxi (Meagher's disappearance was just prior to the popularisation of ride-sharing services such as Uber to Australia) can also put women in harm's way. Taxi drivers are often presented to women as being lecherous figures, dangerous in their own right. Stories of cabbies sexually harrassing or assaulting their female passengers are not uncommon, and these stories also prey on women's thoughts, like the 'countless times' Smyrk refers to. Women are warned by their families not to sit in the front seat (I remember hearing somewhere that the safest seat is directly behind the driver – I consider this everytime I take a cab or an Uber), and the distance she walked home would often be scoffed at by a taxi driver – a short fare, a cheap one that prevents them from driving someone farther afield and pocketing more cash. Indeed, social control is hinted at in the dialogue around

[220] Katherine Smyrk, 'Loss on Hope', *The Big Issue* (September 22 2016) <https://www.thebigissue.org.au/blog/2016/09/22/loss-on-hope/> [Accessed March 15 2017].
[221] McGuire, p. 20.

Meagher's death. Part of the frustration regarding her death is the 'problem' of female mobility. As society asserts females are inherently vulnerable, and that lone women on the streets attract trouble, what is to be done with the lone woman? Rather than create safer cities, with more effective public transport, or encourage men to respect women, the onus is still put on the lone woman to guarantee her own safety – but what if that onus can be shifted to one shared by the community? Can the shock of grief foster this shift, and can community come together to enable this change?

A Story of Grief

Michaela McGuire's *A Story of Grief* deals with the Meagher case in a more journalistic sense, yet shares many of the same concerns as de Saint Phalle's novel, as we consider the effects of Meagher's death on Brunswick, rendering the area a traumascape, and the public grieving that ensued. Again, we are led by a local, as McGuire acts as narrator here, planting herself within the text, as I do within this dissertation. She lives in Brunswick and is a similar age to Meagher, thus leading to constant identification within the text with the dead: '*it could have happened to me*, went the uneasy shiver, the near miss, the sentiment, the relief, the guilt, and then the grief. It could have happened to any of us, but it didn't. It happened to Jill Meagher'.[222] The refrain of 'it could have been me' reverberates in the text, McGuire repeating this five times. We see ourselves in Meagher's reflection, made aware of our own vulnerability, our own mortality.

Women place ourselves within the story – we play what McGuire calls 'an awful kind of a Choose Your Own Adventure game, an interactive narrative that I wasn't yet sick of hearing endings to'.[223] McGuire discusses how the crime was storied, how it was retold and 'twisted into a lesson about

[222] McGuire, p.3.
[223] McGuire, p.11.

public safety, taking the idea that a woman had any right to feel safe walking home at night and turning it into a myth, wresting the narrative back as a feminist text'[224]. She is concerned by the 'battle to repurpose the story for the advancement of private agendas'[225]. This takes me aback – in some ways, I could be accused of doing this through my research, but I am drawn to this repurposing as this is something I have always done in my head – I have always considered why I have to be wary of dark streets when my male peers don't. The Meagher case resonated with me for the same reasons it seems to for McGuire, as she considers her own movements through the city, and how they mimicked Meagher's.

McGuire's text focuses heavily on the collective, the shared rupture of the crime. Her writing leans on the 'us', the 'we'. She opens with, "we all know her story"[226], reminding her reader of the 'frenzied media coverage'[227]. And the public grief. McGuire writes that 'the grief was palpable', and that 'the outpouring on social media reached fever pitch'[228], yet she also writes of the awkwardness of this grief, 'the clumsy obituaries penned by strangers'.[229] As a public, we are not taught how to be with this grief – there are no sacraments like those endured after a loved one passes. Yet the proliferation of social media offers the public a platform to verbalise and share their grief like never before, to eulogise for someone they never met, never knew.

For a woman, the story behind this grief essentially reminds you of how fragile the concept of belonging and community is, when one sinister man can drag you down an alleyway and end your

[224] McGuire, p. 5.
[225] McGuire, p. 20.
[226] McGuire, p. 1.
[227] McGuire, p. 2.
[228] McGuire, p. 20.
[229] McGuire, p. 20.

life in a matter of minutes. Those feelings of collectivism, of fellow feeling, of solidarity, are fleeting. While it is a shared story, and as shown in de Saint Phalle's text, there is a bonding over this grief, but while events like this purport to 'bring the community together', women are made to feel more alone in some ways. The story is one of contrast – the emergence of the individual from the group, the breakaway of the woman and her reining in, and then the group re-emerges to grieve the individual. It is pneumatic, up and down.

McGuire writes that 'the story of Jill Meagher and Adrian Ernest Bayley had the weight of a myth, and Bayley the look and feel of a monster'[230]. One is reminded of Tom Meagher's words, but also Frankenstein's beast – could we ask if Bayley was without community, or was alienated from his local community? Is he what happens when primacy is given to commerce rather than community, as neoliberalism and development further erodes community in our cities? McGuire goes on to consider that, 'Adrian Ernest Bayley was Melbourne's demon, a captive one, and the city was fascinated both by Bayley himself and their revulsion towards him. For the most part, though, this modern mob didn't act, but instead tweeted about the things they might do.'[231]. Often nowadays, following acts of trauma, highly publicised crime, community has been co-opted by platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. She comments that, 'Jill Meagher's name was mentioned on Twitter or Facebook every eleven seconds the day Bayley was charged'[232].

McGuire writes of Meagher in the CCTV footage captured outside the Duchess Boutique, 'As she teetered just a little, the city street beneath her seemed to hover between one that was safe, and one

[230] McGuire, p. 24.
[231] McGuire, p. 25.
[232] McGuire, p. 26.

that was not'. Again, the city is imbued with this life, with this demeanour. Yet could we look at the city as mere backdrop – as an inert location – can we remove the acts of the city's residents from the city itself? Can there be one without the other? Does the city hold that level of influence?

She goes on to say, 'once the frenzy subsided, for many it did not seem enough to merely condemn Adrian Ernest Bayley. It was too neat an ending, perhaps, one that didn't provide any hint as to what the true meaning of the story was. And so the narrative shifted again, away from what was wrong with the city, and what the solution could be.'

These are questions that have plagued me throughout my research: what is wrong with the Australian city? How can we fix it? The city is personified within her text – 'the city's distress'[233], 'the city seemed almost relieved'[234]. This raises questions as to what a city actually is – can we see it as this almost sentient being, this organism, capable of emotion, capable of love and hate? But in reality, is it a manifestation of commerce, a means to end – concrete, metal, glass, not blood, skin and soul? How can we re-examine place to find a way to use the city in a more bold sense?

[233] McGuire, p. 23.
[234] McGuire, p. 24.

CHAPTER 6 *Write to the city: Sophie Cunningham's Melbourne*

Social anthropologist Shirley Ardener writes that

> societies have generated their own rules, culturally determined, for making boundaries on the ground, and have divided the social into spheres and territories with invisible fences and platforms to be scaled by abstract ladders and crossed by intangible bridges with as much trepidation or exultation as a plank over a raging torrent[235].

The rules that Ardener writes of are unwritten. They are not law. They are buttressed by stories, making up these cultural narratives that I have been referring to: narratives that tell us how we should be, how we should live. The narrative I interrogate in this study fences women in; it tells them where, and when, they should be, or not be – where they should walk, or not walk, or cycle, or not cycle, or get off the bus after dark, or call their husband or boyfriend (or brother, or father…) to meet them at the bus stop. The narrative is heteronormative, classist and ableist. But most of all, it relies on stories about women who met a 'breaking', grim fate for not following the rules – who maybe had no choice but to break them, or were faced with a situation where all their contingency plans had fallen through, like Ardener's plank into the raging torrent. These stories are used as examples to discourage women from flouting the rules, to discourage them from questioning their spatial subjugation based on essentialist notions of female 'vulnerability'.

Tension is inherent to walking while female: sometimes it feels like one is walking an invisible tightrope, treading carefully to stay out of harm's way. We can feel tense when we walk an unfamiliar neighbourhood, or in a foreign city, but even our own home town can feel jarring sometimes; if pestered, we can grow fearful of walking our own suburb, our own city. But belonging is the antithesis to fear. If one belongs to a place, this fosters a sense of protectiveness

[235] Ardener, Shirley. 'Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women: An Introduction' in *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, ed. by Shirley Ardener (London: Crown Helm, 1981), pp 11-34 (p. 11-12).

towards that space and its fellow inhabitants: a desire to keep the place ours, to avoid that sudden feeling of unfamiliarity that fear brings. Belonging brings with it boldness, and allows for confidence in the city.

Yet there is also a tension between belonging and representation. As colonised cities were built by men, for men, a woman's sense of belonging is complicated. This chapter explores the tension between a room of one's own and a city of one's own, as I explore how Melbourne writer Sophie Cunningham represents belonging in her texts about Melbourne and how it fosters boldness. I want to examine how Cunningham writes about her home town, and how her writing often implicitly touches on the tension that populates the urban space, as she addresses questions – sometimes unconsciously – around space and gender in the colonised city. I wish to investigate the tensions that penetrate the text, tensions that are not isolated to Cunningham's work but rather all works that explore the female urban experience, tensions that are specific to urban narratives.

Urban space is immersive, it is en masse: it is crowds, queues, traffic jams. Yet it is also often solitary, as we walk among strangers, earphones in, striding resolutely, blocking out the throng. The act of writing is solitary too, yet static, still rather than jostling, aside from the tapping of fingers on keys. Reading, too, is a still act, save for the brave pedestrians one sees every now and again who negotiate the footpath with their head in a book. My point is though, that there are dichotomies at play here in the urban, tensions that seem to loosen, black and white that fades into grey, as we occupy space, alone, together. I am interested in these tensions, and how they complement or contradict those exacerbated by gender and fear.

In this chapter, Cunningham serves as case study as to how to write about one's own city, how to break free of the shackles of belonging, while not negating one's sense of home, rather looking beyond it, as she sees the city with simultaneously old and new eyes. We return to the ideas of belonging and community explored in the previous chapter, looking at how community exists, seemingly against all odds, in the contemporary city. I examine how Cunningham writes about belonging, but also plays the role of lone walker and observer as she travels through Melbourne. Cunningham has become a staunch proponent of walking and Melbourne, combining the two often, notably in the essay 'Staying with the trouble', the non-fiction book *Melbourne*, and her chapbook *Boundaries*, a collaboration with photographer Dianna Wells. This chapter will perform a close reading of these three texts, as they form what I consider Cunningham's Melbourne walking oeuvre, and will look at how Cunningham's work explores the connection between place and foot, and how Cunningham's walking can be seen as a deeply personal assertion of her right to the city.

'Staying With The Trouble', an episodic treatise on walking and its philosophical implications, is not set in Melbourne, but largely situated in the United States, namely New York City. She writes of walking the entire length of Broadway, across several New York City boroughs with a group of friends. While *Boundaries*, published by the City of Melbourne in 2016, has Cunningham back in her home town, accompanying Wells as they walk the perimeter of the city of Melbourne. Wells's photographs accompany Cunningham's text, a long form essay tracing the map that is illustrated on the book's first page. The map is captioned

> BOUNDARY LINES*
> *Not to scale,
> More the vibe of the thing.[236]

[236] Sophie Cunningham, *Boundaries* (Melbourne: City of Melbourne, 2016), p. 1.

'The vibe of the thing' is a reference to the character Dennis Denuto, the hapless solicitor played by Tiriel Mora in the 1997 Australian film *The Castle*. The film depicted Daryl Kerrigan, a painfully regular Australian bloke who is outraged by the proposed compulsory acquisition of his family home which sits alongside the boundary of an airport in Victoria – probably Tullamarine but never made explicit. Kerrigan enlists the help of local solicitor Denuto to fight for his home in court where the law man refers to Mabo, suggesting it's the 'vibe of the thing', a phrase that has become a quoted punchline in Australian culture. Cunningham's text too deals with contested land. A boundary implies a limitation, a line not to be crossed, to keep undesirables out or in. It is offensive or defensive, restrictive or assertive, a choice or a demand. One can also have 'boundaries' in a pop psychology sense, a standard that we hold others to in the manner that they deal with us, a method of emotional self defense, a means of regulating the effect others have over us. Boundaries are linear – they are lines to follow – they are a direction, a way to herd or be herded. They are cartographic and psychic, and other the two meanings bleed into one another.

Walking to Cunningham

Sophie Cunningham is a formidable figure in Australian publishing. She has authored five books, and was former editor of literary journal *Meanjin*. She held this position for a number of years, and has also worked for publishers McPhee Gribble and Allen and Unwin. She lives in Fitzroy with her wife Virginia and their cat, but has also spent time living in the United States. She often speaks at literary festivals, and in August 2015, I flew to Melbourne to attend the Melbourne Writer's Festival to hear her talk, among other events. I had been most looking forward to an event titled 'The Politics and Pleasures of Walking', a pedestrian-themed discussion between British writer

Will Self and Cunningham, which fell on the last day of my trip away. The event was being held at the Boyd, a place I had never visited, a 'Community Hub'[237], housed in a building that was once a girls' high school, on busy City Road, in Southbank. At the time of the trip, my thesis was in a foetal state, burgeoning. As I began examining the relationship between women and the city in contemporary Australian culture, the scope of my project seemed to be narrowing towards the idea of the Walking Woman, or how the figure of the *flâneuse* could be repurposed within a contemporary Australian context.

I had recently read Cunningham's memoir cum travelogue cum local history *Melbourne* and her essay 'Staying With The Trouble', which had won the *Australian Book Review*'s Calibre Prize that year. I was also interested in Will Self, despite his work falling outside of my research parameters, given his writing is mainly set outside of Australia. However, Self's work in the field of psychogeography piqued my interests. Psychogeography, a word penned by French philosopher Guy Debord, is succinctly summed up by Merlin Coverley in his book *The Art of Wandering: The Writer as Walker*, to be 'the point where psychology and geography intersect'.[238] I know that Debord and his colleagues at the Situationist International had intended psychogeography to poke at the stuffy ideals surrounding Haussmann's Paris, and France's increasing shift to the Right in the mid twentieth century, but the idea of a map dotted not by staid, logical landmarks, but by emotional pangs resonates with me, and embodies my affective experience of walking the Australian city as a woman.

[237]'Boyd Community Hub, *City of Melbourne*, <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/hubs-bookable-spaces/boyd-community-hub/Pages/boyd-community-hub.aspx> [Accessed May 3 2016].
[238]Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, 2012), p. 193.

While Baudelaire's *flâneur* strolled the city idly, people-watching, Debord and the Situationists suggested the psychogeographical *dérive* (loosely translated to English as "drift"), more of an experimental, experiential form of walking, less informed by timetables and the commercial layouts of the city. I thought about Self's walk in his text *Psychogeography*, where he walks from his home in London, to Heathrow, where he boards a plane to New York City. Once he lands, he leaves the airport on foot, walking from JFK in Queens, to Manhattan. Quite the feat, so it seemed appropriate that I travelled to the Melbourne Writers Week event by foot, perhaps adopting the figure of the *flâneuse* or the psychogeographer. But can I assume this position if I already know where I am headed? Am I drifting if I have a plan? Does a schedule, a time limit, kill the *dérive*? But aren't we all on schedule, really?

And I'm not walking from home like Self anyway. I'm staying with a friend and I caught the train, a short trip from Collingwood, to Southern Cross Station, where I left my baggage (again, very un-drift like, but I was flying home to Adelaide that afternoon) in a locker at the railway station and planned to wander the city centre, attempting to kill time before the session. But is 'killing time' antithetical to psychogeography – time being a capitalist tool to measure productivity? But it's a Sunday. I'm not at work. I'm in a different state: geographically, anyway. Which means I'm more alone. So, I make my way through the city, straddling the line between loneliness and happy solitude, half glad I'm by myself, half wishing I had a companion to chat to.

Yet, like so many of my urban excursions, this walk is quickly organised around capitalism and its consumptive desires: I had been meaning to buy a book that I could read on the plane ride home, so I made my way to Metropolis, a suitably urban named bookshop situated in Swanston Street. Walking down Swanston Street always leaves me feeling a touch delicate: the crowds heaving to

and from Flinders Street Station, the garishness of the cheap souvenir shops, the down-at-heel hawkers selling their wares on the footpath, or begging for spare change. The bustle and the cruelty of the city in stark relief. I watched from the corner of my eye as a tourist blithely took a photo of a down-and-out young person sitting cross-legged, holding a sign asking for money. The sign-holder waved for the photo, hopeful, and the tourist waved back, before happily walking off with his expensive-looking SLR camera, leaving no money for his subject. I saw a man sitting on a milk crate, facing a streaky, mirrored wall as his female companion applied cheap make-up to his face, screaming at him to sit still; their behaviour amphetamine charged and incongruous but still oddly affectionate.

I continued to meander, through clothes stores and bookshops, my attempts at drifting always punctuated by commerce, buying nothing and growing hungry, cursed by indecision. I felt foggy and preoccupied, self-conscious, feeling that wandering the city and browsing the shops was such a gauche exercise and totally outside psychogeographic ideals. Really, I should have headed straight to culture: to the NGV, or ACMI, or ACCA. Any acronym would have sufficed more than H&M. Eventually I realised I was cutting it fine, timewise, so I made my way back towards Southern Cross Station. I wanted to check how long it would take me to walk back from the venue in Southbank to Southern Cross afterwards to catch the Skybus, as the talk was meant to end at 3:30 and my flight was at 5:35. I typed the address in to Google Maps on my phone. I needed to stay on schedule.

From the station, I walked over the Yarra and past the sprawling Crown Casino complex, odd and impenetrable in the daylight, all shades of charcoal and black, tinted windows and lights competing with the (bleak) sunshine. I got to City Road and kept walking until I discovered footpaths blocked

by inevitable Melbourne construction. My route was blocked. How was I meant to get to the talk? I felt lost. The construction workers instructed me to go around the back to get to the venue at number 207, gesturing towards the laneways that lead to the back of the Crown complex, where it looked dark and empty, despite it being just before 3pm. I walked down there with trepidation, feeling lost. I went back to the lollipop men and asked them if I could just cross the road, and they said yes, ushering me across. I got to Boyd and I was about half an hour early. Time was getting more and more impenetrable, my hunger and anxiety about getting to the airport later making it hard for me to sit still and wait. I had seen a McDonald's on my way, so I went back, sheepishly past the construction men holding their lollipop signs, and ordered some food; as I ate it, I felt conspicuous as I sat on my own. I felt self-conscious about being in here, oddly concerned about the incongruities of going to McDonald's prior to a literary session, but also filled with the strange self-consciousness that occasionally still grips me when I walk a city other than my own alone. I walked back. The lollipop men had disappeared. Southbank felt soulless and desolate, an area populated by office blocks and a casino.

When I got back to the Boyd, attendees were milled about the entrance. Eventually the doors to the room open and we began to take our seats. Will Self appeared, lanky and drawn, flanked by *Australian Book Review* staff. I overheard someone ask, 'where's Sophie', and another replied drily, 'she was walking here and got lost.' Cunningham appears in a few moments and the talk gets underway. She reads an excerpt from 'Staying With The Trouble'. Self reads a passage from his text *Psychogeography*, collated from his columns of the same name for the *Independent* newspaper. He spoke of his wife's bemusement regarding his lengthy walks, and it became apparent that in Self's text, walking was gendered as he stated that most psychogeographers are men. He read:

> do I believe that men are corralled into this field due to certain natural and/or nurtured characteristics, that lead us to believe we have - or actually do inculcate us with - superior visual-spatial skills to women, and an inordinate fondness for all aspects of orientation, its pursuit, minutiae and - worst of all - accessories? Absolutely. And so, while not altogether abandoning the fantasy of encountering a psychogeographic muse who will make these jaunts still more pleasurable, poignant and emotionally revelatory than they already are, in my continent heart I understand that I am fated to wander alone, or at best with one other, occasional…male companion.[239]

The notion, even if it was tongue in cheek, of men's 'superior visual-spatial skills' baffled me, and still does, when pondering that passage. This sentiment ignores women walkers, like Virginia Woolf, Cheryl Strayed and Robyn Davidson, the latter pair embarking on 'jaunts' that would blister and batter Self's feet. He deviated from his brief mention of gender, going on to discuss the political implications of the psychogeographic *dérive*, suggesting that our walking practice is largely dictated by socio-capitalist schedules and commercial use of private space. I thought of my morning, and how so many of the places I visited were informed by both gender and capital, selling 'accessories' to keep me feminine, but idle, or slow. To make me looked at, rather than to allow me to explore.

And despite Self's overt discussion of the political implications of walking, I couldn't help but think that Cunningham's walking practice was far more politically charged than his. Cunningham's *Melbourne*, was set in 2009, and chronicled this year in the life of her home city, but was published in 2012, almost exactly a year prior to the murder of Jill Meagher. As the authors talked, Cunningham mentioned that family members attempted to discourage her from walking following the news of Meagher's rape and murder. She replied that this made her *more* stubborn, and fixated her on her status as pedestrian; she argued that to discourage women from walking alone is just another means of policing women's bodies. Her references to attitudes about the Meagher case

[239] Will Self, *Psychogeography: disentangling the modern conundrum of psyche and place* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 12.

reminded me of Detective Inspector Mick Hughes's statement, following the murder of Masa Vukotic; I recall Hughes's 'suggestion' that, 'people, particularly females, they shouldn't be alone in parks'.[240] Hughes's comments reflect a walking practice that is proscriptive and functional – walking for exercise, or walking as a mode of transport. How does this allow women to explore urban spaces more obliquely? Where's the *drift?*

Yet I consider where I came from that day on the train. When I travel to Melbourne, I stay with a close friend in her house in Abbotsford. While researching, I learned that CCTV footage of Vukotic's killer, showed him disembarking from a bus on Johnston Street, Abbotsford, not far from my friend's house, on the day of her murder. I try not to think about it.

Rather than walk, I caught an Uber back to the train station to get my bag, and to hop on the Skybus to get to the airport, and home to Adelaide. This quashes the anxiety around my tight schedule, yet raises other concerns regarding safety, as I think about the stories I have absorbed about women being assaulted in taxis and ride-sharing services such as Uber. Sure, the app tracks mine and my driver's movements, but I am still at his mercy. And it's almost always a man in the driver's seat. Luckily this driver was congenial and put me at ease. I got to the airport on time.

In 2017, I returned to Melbourne to hear Cunningham speak at another Melbourne Writer's Festival event, this one titled "Women Writers in the City". Cunningham shared the stage with fellow Australian writer Rebecca Harkins-Cross, and American writer Emily Witt. Cunningham spoke of how she uses herself as an 'organisational device' in her texts, employing 'the 'I' as an organising principle' in *Melbourne*. Cunningham is ever present within her text: she is tour guide through her

[240] Calligeros.

Melbourne, she is the reader's walking companion. Her Melbourne, her psychic maps, are ever present. In the talk, she dubbed walking as a 'way of getting knowledge', discussing how walking helps to work out one's feelings of, and towards, space. But does she mean that she is walking towards knowledge, or does the knowledge build as we put foot to pavement?

Cunningham spoke of how the Meagher case complicated women's relationship with the city, stating that 'women can't not walk in the city because something awful happened'. By calling the event 'something awful' rather than employing it to demonstrate a causal link between women's vulnerability in public spaces and violence, Cunningham confronts those who seek to hem women in, to restrict their movement. Cunningham also frames Meagher's rape and murder as an exception – 'something awful' demonstrates how the crime was terrible but also out of the ordinary, not an everyday occurrence. The circumlocution employed by Cunningham mirrors the unspoken threat that women experience in the city: these crimes act as subtext, as undercurrent, the unspoken patriarchal mark upon space. To name it is to have to deal with it. When one is warned of walking, and chooses to disregard these warnings and traverse by foot regardless, we confront the ideological gap between didacticism and liberation, between paternalism and freedom. This act brings knowledge: of the self, and of the city.

In *Melbourne* she writes that, 'The cityscape has become embroidered over the years with impressions of these larger public dramas, moments that nestle alongside more private and fleeting experiences.'[241] But is this embroidered cityscape at the expense of women's mobility? Are these

[241] Sophie Cunningham, *Melbourne* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2012), p. 4.

crimes recited back to us to remind us of the dangers of the street, to suggest that on foot may not be on guard?

While Cunningham's text is urban – it belongs to the city – however, at times it moves beyond the metropolitan area, occupying this tenuous space where untamed forces of nature impinge upon the manufactured tidiness of the city. Cunningham opens the text by discussing 2009's Black Saturday bushfires, events that had an unspeakable impact upon Victoria, so much so that the National Museum of Australia calls the fires a 'defining moment in Australian history'[242]. These bushfires collapsed the boundaries between the urban and the rural, as the city was engulfed with smoky air that had drifted over from the Victorian bush. The fires revealed city dwellers comfort in their city being civilised and controlled – not as prone to nature's whims – as a construct, its boundaries febrile (and boundaries, and their tenuousness, something that will pop up throughout this chapter), showing that we all breathe the same air. Disasters, whether they are natural, like Black Saturday, or to do with the manmade like the Westgate Bridge collapse, are uncaring of human comfortability or structure. Cunningham deals with both events in *Melbourne*, as she tells the story of a year in the life of her home city.

Tension on the landscape

The text's foreword begins with, 'My mother remembers…'[243], immediately establishing the relationship between the city and memory, between city and belonging, and city and story. The text is divided into the seasons, beginning and ending with Summer. I have always thought that

[242] National Museum of Australia, 'DEFINING MOMENTS: Black Saturday bushfires', <http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/black-saturday-bushfires> [Accessed August 10 2017]
[243] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 1.

Melbourne summers feel different to Adelaide's: Melbourne's more built up landscape feels hotter, even though Adelaideans are often reminded they live in the 'driest state on the driest continent'. She writes that the city's stifling hot summers tend to push residents our of their dwellings and on to the street – the old houses that make up many of the inner-city suburbs featured in the text not suited to the heat.[244]Cunningham writes in loving tones of her neighbourhood and the street on which she resides, Fitzroy Street. Yet this discussion of the inner-city disturbed some critics of *Melbourne* who noted the geographical confines of her narrative, namely right wing social commentator Gerard Henderson. In a lengthy takedown of the book for the conservative *Sydney Institute Quarterly*, Henderson writes that, 'Sophie Cunningham's book is not a study of a city but, rather, a small part of it.'[245] Henderson seems to suggest that the text must be representative of the entire city, yet this is fundamentally impossible: the text stands as part memoir, part travelogue, Cunningham's impressions of the city. But Cunningham is not travelling to Melbourne – she is already home. Her representation of the city is residential: she belongs to the city, she is not passing through. Surely this suggests a more grounded, a deeper perspective, one that is rooted in the quotidian, in the known? Yet the text is also one of re-discovery. Cunningham has had to examine these places afresh, places that were deeply lodged in her subconscious. She had to engage with other's stories of place while holding on to her own. Cunningham acknowledges these geographical restrictions, and writes that if her "ashes were scattered in the Carlton Gardens you could mount an argument for a life lived as narrowly as that of any 18th-century village girl'.[246] Her Melbourne is narrow, yet *Melbourne* still manages to breach her personal cartographic boundaries, though it still stays relatively close to the city centre.

[244]Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 29.
[245] Gerard Henderson, 'Sandalista Watch - Sophie Cunningham's Melbourne', *Sydney Institute Quarterly* (2012), pp. 3-8 (p. 3).
[246]Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 6-7.

There is a map in the inner covers of *Melbourne*: we see landmarks such as Readings bookstore, La Mama Theatre, Merri Creek, the Westgate Freeway, the National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square and the State Library of Victoria. These places are featured in the text, but one must ask these questions of the paratext – did Cunningham's text inform the cut off points of the end paper maps? David Atkinson drew these maps, was his cartography informed purely by Cunningham's or also influenced by his own affective geography? Brunswick and Eltham are gestured to by arrows. Then, the pages between the contents and the foreword are illustrated with the pattern that adorns the buildings in Federation Square. Recent years saw American computer giant Apple and the Victorian State Government work on plans to build an Apple store in Federation Square, a three-storey building that will afford customers views of the Yarra River. Opposition to these plans has been fierce: the obvious criticism being that 'Fed Square' was meant to be a public space, devoid of commerce, a gathering place. Supporters of the proposed development point out that the area has never been without commercial tenants, as it is populated by cafes, gift shops and a 7-Eleven convenience store. However, the risk lies in an overseas multinational such as Apple stamping its brand on a very Melbourne locale. Cunningham writes at length about Fed Square in the 'Winter' chapter of the book. The location she conjures seems to be an intersection of culture, history and the residues of obsolescent modes of production, as the square was built atop the 'unappealing Gas and Fuel buildings'[247], gesturing to the ever-changing cityscape of Melbourne, toppled buildings standing tall as memories in long-time residents minds.

[247] Cunningham, Melbourne, p. 160.

Cunningham establishes this link between collective memory and the personal early in the text: that the city, as it is traversed by millions of individuals, becomes a place for the collective, for the sharing of moments common to the collective. The passing of time is punctuated by these shared moments that demonstrate the common beliefs of the city, the common interests, the oppositions, the rivalries, the troubles. Yet she acknowledges the tension between the media's depiction of events, and the community's version of events, and the trauma associated with the ongoing recitation of said events. She writes that that during the Black Saturday fires:

> The media's intense telling and retelling of people's experiences of survival, or of their deaths, became difficult to bear. It was only when researching this book that I realised this relentless going-over of details is a relatively recent thing.[248]

She goes on to compare the coverage of the bushfires with the Westgate Bridge collapse, stating that while it was front page news the day after the disaster, two days later mentions of the event were pushed to page 15 of the newspaper. She writes,

> This wasn't because people didn't care: they did, they do, it's an event that haunts the city still. It's just that the culture in which an endless poring over of people's grief, an almost ghoulish fascination with how they 'felt', was not yet the norm in the mainstream media.[249]

One could attribute this to a number of things – the twenty-four-hour news cycle, social media, even the changing affective patterns in the public sphere. Yet it demonstrates how the reportage of traumatic events can compound this trauma, and how collective memory is recorded and replayed. Memory and how it is mapped on to place, and the tension between individual and collective memory, is inherent to the text. Cunningham addresses this early as she writes in the book's foreword,

> it's impossible to isolate which of my memories are generic and which are the ones that only a life lived in Melbourne could yield. Or when our memories stop being personal and start sounding like echoes of something more: floods remind us of repressed rivers, creeks

[248] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 20.
[249] Cunningham, Melbourne, p. 20.

> and billabongs; a falling bridge suggests a parochial city's struggle to become something else; wearing an orange T-shirt emblazoned with 'Its Time' suggests a political watershed, optimism; a footy match is easily understood as class warfare.[250]

As Cunningham ties place to memory, she lends it a political charge, but also reminds that place, politics and the personal are innately tied together. While we may recall these 'public dramas', we too recall their atmospheric and affective qualities. I want to return to Cunningham's mention of 'something awful', and consider how memories of these 'something awfuls' are imbued with this sense of atmospheric affect. In the foreword, Cunningham recalls serious crimes and that "summer holidays seemed to be the time that the inexplicable things happened',[251] as she writes about the 1976 abduction of Eloise Worledge, who was taken from her bedroom in suburban Beaumaris. I am reminded of the languid ennui of school holidays in the city, the summer break all long days, stark sunshine, hot concrete and uncomfortably warm nights, Cunningham was thirteen when Worledge was snatched, and it prompts me to consider cases like Rhiannon Barreau, Richard Kelvin and the Beaumont children, the 'inexplicable things' that haunt Adelaide. Richard Kelvin was 15 when he was killed in 1983, the year of my birth. He was taken from Ward Street in North Adelaide and his body was found at a dirt airstrip in Kersbrook a month later. Kelvin's father, Rob, was a newsreader on Channel Nine and the murder was believed to have been linked to the infamous 'Family' murders. I had not yet entered the world when Kelvin was killed, but I am well aware of the crime's fallout, as his death shook Adelaideans, and no doubt contributed to my parents and other guardians of their generation being overly protective of their children.

[250] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, pp. 1-2.
[251] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 2.

As in *Monkey Grip*, we are reminded of the Easey Street killings in Collingwood, where two women, Suzanne Armstrong and Susan Bartlett were stabbed to death in their home.[252] Cunningham writes of how the street's association with the crime persists, as she visits friends in on the street, a 'street forever haunted'.[253] I think of Anna-Jane Cheney, who was drowned in the bath in her Magill home in 1994, or Corinna Marr, who was shot and killed in her unit in Howard Street, Collinswood, not far from where I grew up. The crimes took place in these women's homes, not on the street, yet spill out onto our psychic maps: a jarring reminder when we pass the location.

Cunningham raises the Hoddle Street massacre in 1987, when Julian Knight executed passers-by sniper style from behind a billboard on the corner of Ramsden and Hoddle Streets. He killed seven people and injured nineteen. I knew about the Hoddle Street massacre for years yet I have no memory of how I first learned of it. Again, the location of the crime is close to my friend Toni's house in Abbotsford. As I crossed Hoddle Street on my way to Collingwood to get a bite to eat, I considered the crime. Yet when Cunningham touches on the 'particularity of geography in crime drama', it comes up as she chats with a friend about the use of Melburnian locales in crime series *Underbelly*[254]: the crimes are immortalised through their dramatization. *Underbelly*, through its book and television adaptations, has turned the crimes depicted into soap operas, rather than crimes that stop regular people in their tracks. They are insular, unlikely to affect the general public, much like the links she makes between the Queen Victoria Market and organised crime, particularly Italian criminal groups such as the infamous Calabrian 'Ndrangheta.[255] Cunningham's recitations of these underworld links are more curious than salacious: she does not attempt to invoke fear or

[252] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p.2.
[253] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 253.
[254] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p.52.
[255] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 50.

suggest any kind of threat to the public, instead demonstrating the insularity of the criminal gangs, but also somewhat removing the gendered, psychosexual threat of urban violence. Despite the 'inexplicable things' mentioned earlier, and the *Underbelly* gang dramas, Cunningham's Melbourne is benign. She is unafraid to walk its streets. Could this be due to familiarity?

Many of the characters in Cunningham's texts are known to her. Old neighbours, friends, or housemates, some colleagues. She writes of a Leonard Cohen concert she attends at a winery just outside of Melbourne where the crowd is full of acquaintances. She comments on how 'these people create my version of Melbourne: these looped connections that start in kindergarten, school and university and are refined by where you live and the work you do'.[256] These relationships – these connections – take on a cartographic quality, as though the crowd is populated by pins on a map that denote an association to place made through love, friendship, career or shared interests. One could argue that these 'connections' – these pins map the narrative, suggesting that memoir, as a genre, reads cartographically. Cunningham writes of 'overfamiliarity' being a 'Melbourne phenomenon', 'a reason why people … need to leave the place from time to time'.[257]

She writes that Melbourne is 'a city of inside places and conversations. Of intimacy'[258] (one could suggest that if *Melbourne* is a text that deals with the city's interiors, then *Boundaries* is its exterior counterpart). Cunningham writes of the passing foot traffic in her street, on the way to the Standard Hotel, a popular pub, perhaps for the fact that it sits off of the main drag, Brunswick Street, suggesting an obscurity that fosters an intimacy with its patrons: a sense of seclusion. Cunningham

[256] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 10.
[257] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 78.
[258] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 7.

suggests that the intervention of the Fitzroy Residents Association (FRA) made the suburb a 'place you walk', as they opposed planned freeways that would have 'taken out' several streets, including Fitzroy Street, where Cunningham resides.[259] However, infrastructure is not the only deciding factor as to whether an area is 'walkable'.

Privacy can be complex – it can be both desirable, but also isolating. As discussed in previous chapters, sometimes women are forced into privacy through societal perceptions that align them with the domestic sphere. City residents need privacy, but sometimes privacy is only awarded to those who can afford it – those who afford rent or a mortgage, rather than a room in a share house. Cunningham writes that 'a hundred years ago you only lived your life in public if you couldn't afford the space to be private'.[260] Yet this still rings true, as demonstrated by the continual clashes between authorities – namely Victorian police and the Melbourne City Council – and the homeless in the central business district. In 2017, media attention was placed on the homeless and those who protested on their behalf outside of Flinders Street Station. Cunningham's comment referred to the slums of Fitzroy, Carlton and Collingwood in the 1930s, but public housing in these suburbs remains. High rise tower blocks dot the area, particularly near Hoddle Street. These buildings stand out: austere beacons, dated, built in the 1970s. She writes that, 'the isolation of the high-rise Atherton Estate and the pervasive gentrification of the suburb create a greater sense of segregation'.[261]

[259] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 31.
[260] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 30.
[261] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 39.

Gentrifying tensions

Cunningham briefly touches on the imposing class divide that looms large in Melbourne's inner North. While the area's licensed venues, food and coffee culture and fashion boutiques may suggest a young population, most of this demographic cannot afford to purchase housing in the area and pay steep rents living in share houses. And even so, these young people are the type that can afford these steep rents – those in lower socio-economic groups cannot, and thereby are pushed out of the area. She touches upon the cult of real estate that has swept Australian cities as she mentions the flashy local real estate agent, 'quite the celebrity as he walks up and down Brunswick Street in his designer suits or reverse parks one of his luxury cars in front of local cafes'.[262] Real estate agents serve as cultural gatekeepers in Australia as property offers not only capital in a fiscal sense, but also in cultural and social ways. Being able to list one's address as Fitzroy or surrounding suburbs nowadays speaks of a level of privilege and taste. Yet as discussed in the previous chapter, Fitzroy was, and is, an important area of Melbourne in terms of Aboriginal history. She discusses the forced displacement of First Nations groups from country as a result of colonisation.[263] She writes that the local Indigenous population, who once had strong links to the area, has been severely affected by gentrification as health and social support services have been relocated, replaced by white capital: 'boutiques, bars and restaurants'.[264]

The text is unavoidably littered with references to gentrification, as Cunningham addresses how ongoing gentrification is playing out in areas such as working class, multicultural Footscray.[265] Footscray's migrant population has long been the scapegoat for any social ills that may plague the

[262] Cunningham, Melbourne, p. 41.
[263]Cunningham, *Melbourne*, pp. 23-25.
[264] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 42.
[265] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 237.

area. Cunningham writes of how the influx of Vietnamese refugees to the area in the 1980s were blamed for the rise in the area's heroin trade, and that the local railway station was seen as 'the go-to place for drugs'.[266] The area's local African population is now often blamed for violence in the area by the mainstream media, particularly youth from the Sudanese community.

Gentrification rightfully attracts criticism – it raises the cost of housing, and forces those who cannot afford to remain in the same area to find somewhere cheaper to live, thereby compromising a sense of belonging within an area, corporatizing place. However, what is often ignored, though problematic, is the manner in which gentrification will often make women feel safer. Yet this safety comes at a cost, meaning that those residents pushed out of the gentrified space may not enjoy these privileges.

Cunningham does not broach the topic of privilege explicitly in the text, yet from the text, it is clear she has always lived in middle-class or inner-city suburbs. She writes of her and her partner walking into town from their home in Fitzroy, a trip that does not cost anything but can only be made if one lives close enough to the city.[267] She further discusses the links between her personal geography and her literary career, in her memories of her time spent working at McPhee Gribble publishing house, landing the job as she rented McPhee's terrace house in Fitzroy.[268] Cunningham mentions walking with fellow writer Michelle de Kretser, and visiting her in Richmond prior to de Kretser's move to Sydney.[269] Cunningham writes of de Kretser's love for Sydney writing, 'there is a physicality to life in Sydney that is immensely seductive and rewarding'.[270] Walking Sydney is

[266] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 239.
[267] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 156.
[268] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 100.
[269] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 113.
[270] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 119.

more physically challenging than Melbourne, with its hills and varying terrain, particularly in harbourside suburbs. Surely Melbourne, with it's flat, gridded streets, lends itself more to an ambulant physicality, a more casual stride.

She speaks of the city's literary events and discusses the ethical quandary that these pose given that they are so closely aligned to commerce, quoting her old boss, publisher Hillary McPhee, who writes, 'we now package crucial debates as public entertainment […] Audiences are consumers rather than citizens, booking the sessions out, asking their questions, getting their books signed and going away until next year'.[271] Indeed the Melbourne Writer's Festival does charge admission, while Adelaide Writers Week, our equivalent literary festival, does not. Yet, cover charge or not, these festivals tend to attract the privileged, the initiated, the highly educated: those familiar with the arts, with the financial means, and leisure time, to indulge their interests.

Cunningham writes of the arts as though they are outside of the commercial realm of the city. She tells of how she attended a letterpress workshop at the height of winter in the Nicholas Building just off Flinders Lane, where she and other attendees 'worked away, with only the occasional soup break and the footy on in the background. I realised that I felt about as Melbourne as it's possible to feel. It was a good sensation', going on to say that 'it is crucial that Melbourne find a way to continue to provide spaces for less corporatized forms of culture to exist'. [272] Cunningham conflates Sydney with corporate culture[273], and states that 'Melbourne is a city that is building its reputation as a place where more independent, less corporatized forms of culture thrive'[274]. But less

[271] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 157.
[272]Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 175.
[273] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 179.
[274] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 187.

corporatized forms of culture – presumably encompassing creative industries such as the arts – also require lower rents.

Yet Cunningham does not only reserve her leisure for artistic pursuits, speaking in adoring tones of Australian Rules Football (AFL). She writes of the three years that her beloved Geelong Football Club made the finals, writing, 'what is clearest in my memory of each of those three years is the half-hour walk from our house to the MCG', the Melbourne Cricket Ground, where finals are played.[275] Yet, there is tension here still: in terms of corporatized culture, the Australian Football League would have to be one of the most corporate out. Cunningham writes at length about Melbourne's obsession with footy.[276] The book was published prior to the introduction of the women's league, the AFLW, which has strong links to the area that Cunningham's text most resides, as the first game of the first season of the AFLW, between Carlton and Collingwood, was played at the home ground of Carlton Football Club, Princes Park. Cunningham writes of her association with Princes Park in the text, telling of how her father, a Carlton supporter, used to take her and her brother to games there when she was a child.

The first AFLW game was a lock out – it cannot be said it was sold out as admission was free, and at the time of writing continues to be despite the large crowds offering the opportunity for the AFL to introduce even nominal ticketing and supplement the player's meagre incomes. Yet going to standard season AFL games does not come cheap, and the MCG has a prestigious membership system that favours its monied patrons when doling out Grand Final tickets. Cunningham demonstrates how class is tied to football barracking by way of geography. Areas that may now be

[275] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 192.
[276] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 59.

gentrified – Collingwood, for example – but were previously populated by predominantly working-class residents still have a reputation as being 'working-class' teams. Cunningham writes of how supporters of the Melbourne Football Club are often 'skiing Volvo drivers'[277], as they have a wealthier supporter base, and the MCG is their home ground.

These themes of geography and class permeate the text, and frequently give way to a discussion implicitly referring to the safety of an area of Melbourne. I have previously discussed the divide between the city, between those who live North and those who live South of the Yarra river. Cunningham sums it up neatly, 'At first this was because the rich lived south of the river and the poor lived north of it. These days the divide is more a cultural one, albeit imagined'.[278] Cunningham writes of St Kilda, an anomaly south of the river, and its grit; its reputation as a destination for hedonism and debauchery, an area characterised by sex work and drug dealing.[279] She writes of the tension between St Kilda residents, both old and new, and sex workers. Cunningham's liberal use of the word 'prostitution' too suggests a tension as the word is often deemed a slur by sex workers. She discusses the 'street prostitution problem', stating that, 'people are attracted to the area's boho feel but don't want to be mistaken for prostitutes by cruising tourists'.[280] Only certain streets in St Kilda are used by sex workers, and the behaviour of the workers makes it easy for punters to identify them. Typically, if a woman was walking briskly through the area, keeping to herself, it would be unlikely that they would be mistaken for a sex worker. There is a classism at play here, as the text does acknowledge that this 'problem' that plagues the area is emblematic of much deeper and more complex social issues such as poverty, addiction and abuse.

[277] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 73.
[278] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 244.
[279] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 123.
[280] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 124.

The ‘problems’ of times past are discussed in a deeper context, as Cunningham writes that Melbourne’s layout is ‘neatly Freudian – a metaphor built of bitumen and bluestone, in which the conscious (the grid) tried to repress the subconscious (the laneways)’, almost painting an Escher-like picture of the city. She writes that the laneways give way to debaucherous activity, where ‘Melburnians indulged their more private behaviours: where they defacted and urinated, fucked, played, worked and drank’, telling how in the late 1800s, ‘brothels lined Little Lonsdale and gambling dens thrived in the Little Bourke Street’.[281] She writes of the development of the city’s laneways in the early 1990’s, making them far more salubrious. However, laneways are still secluded, still off the beaten track, still unsettling when walking alone at night. Jill Meagher’s death in a laneway off Sydney Road followed *Melbourne*’s publication by only one year.

Cunningham is more comfortable with the grit of the inner city than the suburbs, however, as she dubs herself a ‘suburbia-phobe’: she compares those who walk through Carlton and Brunswick voyeuristically but fearfully pointing out the sites of gangland murders with the fear she feels walking through her childhood stomping ground of Hawthorn.[282] She writes of the stories of childhood abductions in suburbia: where the aforementioned middle-class children were taken from their comfortable bedrooms during the night, and how it has coloured her view of the suburbs, rendering them a place where things go bump in the night. Again, she raises this tension: she writes about Ivanhoe, the setting for the 2010 film *Animal Kingdom*, writing that the leafy suburb ‘certainly isn’t the obvious spot to make a film about gangland killing’ but that the director David

[281] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 202.
[282] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 130.

Michod 'capitalised on the strange tension between aspiration and reality that characterises some suburbs'.[283]

Yet one could argue that the tension lies between the suburbs, populated by working families, living in detached houses with driveways and multiple cars, and the residents of inner city suburbs like Fitzroy and Carlton and Richmond and Brunswick who live in smaller houses and are able to walk everywhere. There is a class divide here that speaks to social and cultural capital more so than financial status, yet the latter is implicit. Melbourne is a city that wears this kind of allegiance on its sleeve: it elects Greens candidates – it has huge protest marches – it is a thinking city. Its residents wear black and are proud of their coffee culture. Cunningham quotes director Michod who discusses how he shied away from archetypal Melbourne symbols in his film, stating, 'the impression that people get based on the movies is very often one of a cutesy, quaint village of trams and Victorian frills. My experience of the city is that it's a much bigger, badder city'.[284]

Again, there is a level of privilege that comes with 'suburb-phobia': for some, it is not financially prudent or possible to live in the inner-city suburbs that Cunningham's text resides in. However, sometimes the suburbs fail to afford solo women the same freedom of movement as their streets are less populated. Cunningham writes that, 'anxiety gripped me when we pulled up to the car park of the Glenferrie Road Shopping Centre'[285]. Cunningham's anxieties are manifested by memories of adolescence, memories firmly pinned to her psychic map of the area. She recalls the 'bland horrors' of the suburb, an oxymoronic summation of the painful ennui experienced during one's

[283] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 133.
[284] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 134.
[285] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 135.

teenage years. Cunningham grew up in a middle-class, conventionally 'safe' part of Melbourne: one could consider the contrast between her recollections and that of someone who spent their teenage years farther afield, in a suburb lacking in French restaurants and tennis clubs[286]. She acknowledges that 'the Hawthorn I grew up in during the 1970s was not the exclusive suburb it is now, but it was comfortable'[287], 'comfortable' being a euphemism for without financial burdens. Cunningham explains that the suburbs that sat a higher elevation, like Kew, were more affluent – she avoids the scatological temptation to dub the lower more effluent when she explains that the suburbs that sat lower down the Yarra were more industrial and would flush their waste into the river.

The concluding Summer chapter of the text details many changes that came to pass at the beginning of 2012, as legislation affected city living. She writes that at the beginning of 2012, 'the state government decided to 'do something' about the violence that seemed to engulf the CBD's King Street – a strip of the city lined with twenty-four-hour drinking venues – most Saturday nights'.[288] 'Drinking venues' seems a euphemism of gentleman's clubs, another euphemism for strip joints. King Street is home to many of the city's largest strip joints, and an area most women I know shy away from. I consider the crowd that would frequent King Street, yet turn their noses up at the Tote, the iconic Melbourne pub that sits on the corner of Johnston and Wellington Streets in Collingwood. I have been to the Tote many times and never felt unsafe, and got the impression women are welcomed as much as men. The Tote, like the Exeter in Adelaide, is an unglamourous, untouched pub. It has shirked renovations, retaining its gritty character and grimy charm.

[286] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 136.
[287] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 137.
[288] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 254.

Cunningham quotes writer and previous Melbourne Writers Festival artistic director Marieke Hardy and her treatise to keep The Tote open, who dubs the pub a 'stinking, sweaty bitch mistress'.[289] But Hardy goes on to say,

> Nobody ever pulled out knives at the Tote, nobody pawed intrusively at passing women […] Young men will continue to be knocked down to their deaths on cigarette-stained footpaths outside lairy nightclubs and one by one the damp, dark, unassuming love music venues […] will be quietly packed away and left behind'.[290]

This segues into a section on Melbourne's music scene, largely situated in the past, Cunningham effusive over bands of yore such as Skyhooks, AC/DC and Crowded House (though the latter two could hardly be described as Melbourne bands, AC/DC having members from Scotland and South Australia and Crowded House being most made up of New Zealand emigres), but Melbourne's music scene is still healthy, despite the tumults brought on over the years such as the introduction of pokies to venues. However, there is a gender disparity in the line ups at venues like the Tote. Yet over the last five or so years, there has been significant movements to address this imbalance, namely the Listen campaign started in 2014 by musician Evelyn Morris which seeks to empower female and non-binary musicians and gig goers.[291]

Affective geographies

Melbourne's last chapter (prior to the Afterword) concludes with Cunningham passionately writing, 'If reading Melbourne's history, talking to its citizens and writing a book that hopes to capture a slice of its life has taught me one thing it is this: if a city's going to be worth living in, you have to fight for it'.[292] This brings me again to women's freedom: I consider attempts to walk

[289] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 257.
[290] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 257-258.
[291] 'About – LISTEN', <https://www.listenlistenlisten.org/about/> [Accessed January 10 2020]
[292] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 275.

despite the reminders of supposed danger, the fight to map the city based on one's own narratives, one's own affective geography.

Indeed, this is a one of the pitfalls of the NewSouth cities project that the books forms a part of; while the book's titles are sweeping, addressing the city as a whole, the text itself is a 'slice of life', encompassing the author's point of view: we are reading Cunningham's affective geography, and this shows. Much of Gerard Henderson's criticism was that Cunningham's text failed to be truly representative of Melbourne. While he never used the word memoir, perhaps Henderson's gripe was that the text fell too much into the memoir's generic conventions. Can a travel text, or a book about place, ever eschew the memoir – especially if one is addressing a place they feel a tie to, as Cunningham does towards Melbourne? I feel as though this is outside the purview of my study, but valid questions nonetheless, as they point towards a generic tension that exists within the text. NewSouth do categorise the book as travel/memoir on its back cover. But does this negate the text's representative title: *Melbourne*? Though this placename is not representative anyway, only representative of a place colonised. To the Kulin Nation, Melbourne, the city proper is Naarm. Indeed, to those living in the outer suburbs, Melbourne itself may be a civic imaginary: the CBD a place of power and wealth, far beyond the reaches of the working poor outmoored to the fringes of the metropolitan area. These suburbs serve both as boundaries and liminalities: gesturing towards what Dianna Wells first wrote about in *Meanjin*, and what Cunningham quotes in *Melbourne*.

Cunningham makes reference to her *Boundaries* collaborator's project near the end of the book, when she writes of her 'dear friend Dianna Wells' and 'her project of photographing Melbourne's liminal spaces: those in-between spaces that aren't city, suburb or country; spaces littered with the

detritus of various attempts at expansion'.[293] This work was published in a piece titled 'On Edge' in *Meanjin*. Wells's images of outer suburbs, those that sit on 'the 'edge', the moment of change from urban to country', haunt, their stillness, their everyday-ness, almost menacing as signs of urban life take on a quietness that is unsettling. The calm before the urban sprawl storm. The photographs are accompanied by an essay by Wells, where she writes of her experiences walking these spaces:

> I'm an inner-city dweller. Spending time in these outer suburbs takes me out of my comfort zone. As I walk along creeks, bike paths and freeways looking for the 'edge', I come across odd events. I see a man digging in the ground alongside a freeway and I realise that he has been following me; he disappears in the bushes when I notice him. I quickly call my partner to let him know where I am, then continue to set up my tripod […] while I'm doing this two young men do a series of wheelies in a Torana in front of me and I'm not sure whether to smile, clap or look busy. Two other cars drive up alongside each other in the park: words are exchanged, then the cars drive out of the park at high speed. A drug deal, perhaps? These things happen in the inner city too, but they seem more confronting on the edge, where new and old suburbs collide. Everything, it seems, is new here, and new codes of behaviour as well as a new suburb are being mapped out.[294]

Wells expresses the unsettling feeling one may get walking through, say, a deserted industrial estate – the impression that people come there to do things unacceptable in a populated environment – things that they do not want to be seen, things they want hidden. This generates a feeling of tension throughout her images and text.

This tension carries over to Cunningham's work with Wells, the 2016 chapbook *Boundaries*. The inside cover of *Boundaries* is a photograph of the King Street underpass in Southbank. It is a grim photograph: the light is overcast but under the bridge it is abnormally dark, it does not seem daylight. This looks to me like where I walked that day to the Boyd. The concrete is intimidating and unaccommodating to pedestrians. Cunningham's text opens with the boundaries that stood in

[293] Cunningham, *Melbourne*, p. 271.
[294] Dianna Wells, 'On Edge', *Meanjin* 69 (Spring 2010), pp. 20-25 (p. 24).

the way of their boundary walk as she details how it was impossible to walk the full distance. Cunningham and Wells planned to explore the City of Melbourne's current boundaries by foot, a walk of 'thirty-five kilometres of parkland, rivers, roads and freeway', yet this was not entirely possible. Some areas were out of reach to pedestrians, and some areas required permits.[295] These difficulties echo the boundaries that many women place upon themselves in their own city – some areas are inaccessible by foot, by personal ruling – we deem them unsafe.

Cunningham points out that the boundaries are 'current' – 'fixed almost twenty years ago'[296], demonstrating that the city is amoebic, it is shape-shifting. These boundaries are products of colonisation, European effort to restrain a foreign landscape and people; people who had flourished prior to European invasion, with complex agricultural and trade systems. Cunningham points out that 'maps both opened up the property market and erased the rights of the land's original inhabitants. Mapping and naming were a crucial moment in the Imperial project.'[297] Much of Cunningham's text discusses the history of the city of Melbourne, yet this is a history dominated by men and 'exploration', a euphemism for the brutality of colonisation.

After the introduction, the first section, titled 'Walking North', Cunningham speaks of her familiarity with the area, her local knowledge, as her and Dianna meet in Carlton Gardens for their first 'official' walk. She mentions that she lives nearby. Cunningham discusses heritage-listed cast-iron public urinals and points out that 'public urinals for men have been built for men since 1859,

[295] Cunningham, *Boundaries*, p.2.
[296] Cunningham, *Boundaries*, p.2.
[297] Cunningham, *Boundaries*, p.3.

but it was not until 1902 that public toilet facilities were made for women,'[298] further evidence of the gendered city.

They pop in to Melbourne Museum and discuss an etching by EL Montefiore, an 1837 piece called 'Melbourne by the Falls, and Cunningham reveals that 'the illustration takes in the view from the place once known as Freshwater Falls, now Crown Casino'.[299] Again, I remember that day in Southbank, walking round the back of the casino, its eerie emptiness. I consider the beauty that once inhabited that place, and how this has made way for commerce, and gambling addictions. Cunningham later comes to Crown and I am relieved that we are in agreeance. She writes,

> Certainly the pedestrian in me begrudges the casino's significant hold on this section of the boundary. The casino faces the river, not the street – an architectural gesture to be commended – but that means that if you're at the back of the complex you're forced through expensive shopping precincts and gambling halls. Walking around it is complicated by a series of car park entrances and exits.[300]

It seems my discombobulating experience navigating Southbank was not so special after all, as Cunningham, a Melburnian, has too found the paths in the area it frustrating. The expensive shopping precincts in Cunningham's text are illustrated by a photograph by Wells on the next page. This image shows the Crowns reflection – the word CROWN, backwards, in lights – in the Louis Vuitton shop window. The window features a display of a Louis Vuitton monogram print suitcase surrounded by baubles, which to me look like planets – a metaphor for the out-of-this-world expenses within the store, within the greater Crown complex? Looking even closer, there is also the reflection of a Mercedes-Benz, it's grille faint in the image but still recognisable. High rises dot the skyline. This is a tableau of wealth, of the unattainable, yet also one of containment. The frame

[298]Cunningham, *Boundaries,* p. 8.
[299] Cunningham, *Boundaries*, p. 7.
[300] Cunningham, *Boundaries*, p. 22.

of the Louis Vuitton shop window holds within it these commodities – luxury fashion, high rise real estate, European car. The wealth is contained within the image, unshared, behind glass.

This strikes me as a central concern of *Boundaries* – the tension between the built up and the natural environment, between what can be bought and what is outside the realm of commerce. Between what is wild, and what is contained. I consider again Cunningham's comment linking mapping to the imperial project, and wish to take this further – consider the map as a means of containment, as a way to keep things in line, to maintain the imperial project, and to maintain the capitalist project, and the patriarchal project. Tension is used as means of containment – fear is used as a means of control.

I want to move on to Cunningham's 2015 essay, 'Staying with the trouble', but hold on to these themes of tension, containment and control. In this essay, Cunningham writes of walking the entire length of Broadway, across several New York City boroughs with a group of friends. Her essay shares the title with feminist scholar Donna Haraway's 2016 text (which was preceded by a 2010 paper titled 'When Species Meet: staying with the trouble'), and Cunningham shares Haraway's concerns about climate change and ecological ruin.

Cunningham and friends attempt control, and to put parameters on their walk – they use Broadway as their metric, and largely stick to it. Cunningham is determined to stay on the path, yet the group digresses when their directions to a particular stop take them off Broadway. This is of no consequence, and adds to the joy of the walk. Indeed, Cunningham's essay savours walking as a psycho-spiritual exercise, one that can fill an existential need, rather than simply a means to get to a destination (though sometimes the two can be conflated). Her essay reminds of what can be

missed if not travelling by foot. Walking is an immersive activity, one that allows perception of detail otherwise neglected. She refers to Will Self in the introduction, as she lists several literary figures who share her wandering proclivities (Percy Grainger, David Sedaris, Virginia Woolf, Henry Thoreau, Sarah Marquis and Self) and the reasons behind their walking habits. She notes that Self's was rehabilitative – he began his walking practice after quitting heroin. For Thoreau on the other hand, Cunningham reminds, 'every walk was a short of "crusade"'.[301] The same could be said of Cunningham's walking practice – though maybe a 'crusade' may not be the sole reason for her ambulatory trips, there is a similar drive to her movement, a similarly activist-bent to her activity. Cunningham advocates walking and its power, referring to activists such as civil rights marchers who walked for their freedom.[302]

Cunningham sees the power in straying from the path, though. She remarks, 'random. The word interests me. As I get older, I no longer try to find meaning in order so much as draw meaning from randomness'.[303] Cunningham surrenders to the tension, moving away from maps, and containment, as she moves to discussion of walks off the beaten track, such as Machu Picchu, a place that reminds her that place can be ephemeral, and as she is reminded in Melbourne, cities are in perpetual state of flux, like those who inhabit them. She writes of her father's unravelling due to Alzheimers, 'sitting in a home losing words by the day, […] yet another reminder of how words can fail us'.[304]

[301] Sophie Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', *Australian Book Review* (May 2015), pp. 24-29 (p. 24).
[302] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', p. 29.
[303] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', p. 27.
[304] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', p. 27.

She considers the parallels between environmental and human degradation and trauma, as she describes experiments conducted by psychologist Martin Seligman in 1967, cruel experiments in which dogs are confined and electrocuted then unrestrained to demonstrate that after trauma, when untied, the dogs remain 'passive … defeatist'. I wonder if there is a correlation between the Meagher case and women's attitudes to walking the city. Some women feel the shock of the case more profoundly, causing them to confine themselves, demonstrating Cunningham's lesson from the Seligman experiments: 'helplessness can be learned'.[305]

Gender is raised when Cunningham refers to reading walking literature by Merlin Coverley, writing that, 'I noticed this casual aside from The Art of Wandering that the walker 'remains, despite notable exceptions, predominantly male'.[306] Yet Coverley, nor Self, nor French philosopher Frédéric Gros in his text, the overwhelmingly male *A Philosophy of Walking*, examine exactly why this is – they fail to consider how fear and social control contribute to women being hesitant to walk. Deirdre Hatton and Cathy Turner share this frustration, naming the walking canon a 'fraternity' that largely excludes the experiences of women.[307]

Yet Cunningham sees how walking can empower, how it can foster belonging and joy. She reflects on Coverley's sentiments, writing,

> I compare this bold statement with Rebecca Solnit's exploration in *Wanderlust* of the ways in which women are discouraged from walking, the oft-cited concerns for safety that are motivated by a desire for control. She goes on to posit that, 'Black men nowadays are seen as working-class women were a century ago: a criminal category when in public'.

[305] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', p. 27.
[306] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', p. 28.
[307] Deirdre Hatton and Cathy Turner, 'Walking Women: Shifting the Tales and Scales of Mobility', *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22 (2012), pp. 224-236 (p. 224).

I would argue that in Australia, black women are too seen this way – one is reminded of the case of Tania Day, a 55-year-old Yorta Yorta woman who fell asleep on a Melbourne train. The conductor called police and Day and was arrested for allegedly being drunk in public, and died in custody.[308]

Belonging is complicated, yet Cunningham reminds us to find joy when we manage to usurp these complexities, writing, 'I have a memory of a midnight walk one hot summer night, pacing down the middle of Nicholson Street, arms flung wide for no other reason than the joy of being alive, the freedom of walking without scrutiny'.[309] Yet this freedom is not awarded equally. Women as a group may share their concerns for safety in urban spaces, but that group is plural. For Cunningham, belonging is not complicated by race or class. She was born in Melbourne to parents of white Australian descent. She grew up in comfortable, middle-class Kew – though is quick to point out that the area is now much more affluent.

Staying with the tension

I consider Henri Lefebvre's notion of the 'right to the city'. LeFebvre suggests that 'the *right to the city* cannot be conceived as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*'.[310] Indeed, Cunningham's texts promote this right to urban life, but there must be consideration paid to how this right is complicated, by class, race and gender, particularly in the colonised city.

[308] Calla Wahlquist, 'Tanya Day died 17 days after falling asleep on a train. Now her family want answers', The Guardian (August 24 2019) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/aug/24/tanya-day-death-custody-inquest-family-want-answers> [Accessed December 12 2019]
[309] Cunningham, 'Staying with the trouble', pp. 28-29.
[310] Henri LeFebvre, *Writings on Cities*. trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Labas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 157.

Texts about walking often overlook one of the most overwhelming forms of tension between walking and belonging: if the way to belong is to walk the city, what of those who cannot walk? How do they belong? How can we convey this sense of physical belonging, of being in the city, of immersive physicality, without negating those whose ambulatory capacities might be complicated?

One could ask of the text – who is Cunningham addressing? Does the reader need to be familiar with Melbourne, with its thoroughfares, its cobbled laneways, its pubs and cafes, its boundaries? Is Cunningham writing to the city or asserting a right to the city – or both? And what makes up a city? Its inhabitants, its memories, its shared history, its land? Cunningham's text gestures towards the complexities of Australian cities and the palimpsest of the colonial space.

There is tension at play throughout the three texts: tension between the 'city' as a defined space, tension between those who live closer to this space, and tension between those who live farther afield. There is tension between the colonised and the colonisers: Cunningham, a white writer of presumably European extraction – is it collusion to write a text under the name given by the colonisers?

While I argue that Cunningham's walking practice is more politically charged than Self's (as she does walk the city as a queer woman), she also occupies a position of privilege as an educated, able-bodied, middle-class resident of an expensive pocket of the city. Her beloved Fitzroy is now gentrified, and consequently excludes many due to its higher cost of living. One could argue that these deeper concerns regarding economic dispossession are outside the scope of Cunningham's text, but these concerns are unavoidable. The way gentrification and privilege are only meekly

engaged with by the author imbue the text with tensions that highlight how the white Australian middle-class is often blind to its own overwhelming privilege in the city.

David Harvey, in his take on LeFebvre's Right to the City, points out that, 'quality of urban life has become a commodity, as has the city itself, in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy[311]'. While I do not dispute their cultural value or enjoyability, Melbourne's writers' festivals, art classes, yoga sessions, restaurants – these leisurely pursuits discussed in the texts are products of the aforementioned industries, all play their part in commodifying the city. While gentrification may make these pursuits more readily available, and may make streets appear safer, the violence of gentrification itself must be paid attention to. Harvey writes,

> Violence is required to build the new urban world on the wreckage of the old. Haussmann tore through the old Parisian slums, using powers of expropriation in the name of civic improvement and renovation. He deliberately engineered the removal of much of the working class and other unruly elements from the city centre, where they constituted a threat to public order and political power[312].

Gentrification and colonisation are bedfellows: they work together to violently excoriate the land under the 'guise of quality of life' and safety – but for who? Those who can contribute to urban space's economical functionality, to its commercial gains? There is tension between competing ideas of what a city is, or should be – what place does commerce have within the city? When Cunningham suggests that the city needs to be fought for, is she asserting a right to the city without commercial interference? Is this ever possible? What right does commerce have to change our paths? I end on these questions, as I do not have the answers, but I consider how Cunningham's

[311] David Harvey, 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review* 53 (2008), pp. 23-40, p. 31.
[312] Harvey, p. 33.

walking narratives sit with this tension, reminding that belonging is about structuring one's own urban boundaries, one's own histories, and one's own urban narratives.

CHAPTER 7 *The Bold Walk Home*

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I was spurred to tackle the topic of women's safety and urban narratives due to my own reticence to walk the streets at night, even before Meagher was killed. However, curiously, when I travelled overseas, I sometimes felt bolder – walking the streets later alone, unafraid to catch trains and subways and wait on platforms late at night, all by myself. I sometimes think is because I was unaware of the stories connected to these places that the local women had no doubt internalised.

At the time of Meagher's death, I was spending a semester abroad, studying at the University of Leeds. From the other side of the world, I keenly followed the story of the crime online and discussed it with my flatmates and friends. But unlike other overseas locales, Leeds was no liberating oasis: it was similarly haunted by stories that made me fearful of my safety. While I was there I lived in Lupton Flats, student accommodation in Headingley, an inner-city suburb, famous for its cricket ground. The flats, however, were a somewhat infamous landmark, as in the late 1970s, the body of a woman who was murdered by serial killer Peter Sutcliffe, also known as the 'Yorkshire Ripper', was found on the grounds. Lupton was situated around the corner from the Arndale Centre, a small shopping centre on Headingley's main drag. According to stories relayed to me, Sutcliffe sat in the Arndale's KFC and watched his victim walk down Wood Lane, and followed her to Lupton, where he killed her with a screwdriver. A newspaper article attributes the university's night bus service to the crimes – after dark, students still on campus can pay one pound and be dropped at their door. I used the night bus frequently, understandably discouraged from walking home after dark. The crimes still haunt the city, and the manner in which it was spoken

about reminded me of the Meagher case; it was woven into cultural narratives about female vulnerability, reinforcing the way women's bodies are policed through storytelling. The English writer and artist Emma Bolland demonstrates this as she writes about how women's bodies were policed at the peak of Sutcliffe's crimes:

> Leeds was experienced as a traumatized city. […] the incompetence and prejudice of the police's response to this only heightened the atmosphere of anxiety […] the police issued statements advising women to undertake a self-imposed curfew, not to venture out after dark. Much as the abuser forces his guilt into the bodies of the abused, so the police relocated its own responsibilities (as did Sutcliffe) into the mutilated bodies of the murdered women, and via proposition of a curfew, into the bodies of all women. The legacy of living in a traumatized city lives on in a continuing and heightened fear of 'city', fear of place, that builds on a pre-existing culturally and socially ingrained fear.[313]

When Bolland refers to a 'pre-existing culturally and socially ingrained fear', she is gesturing towards how these cultural narratives about women and safety are reinforced by authority figures – how women are constantly warned to exercise vigilant in public spaces, and when crimes such as those committed by Sutcliffe, or Adrian Bayley who killed Jill Meagher, occur, these narratives are built upon, made stronger. The title of her paper that this quote is drawn from – 'Every Place a Palimpsest' – refers to the layering effect that these acts have upon the city, the way place is imbued with memory upon memory. Yet these memories can be deployed to restrict certain groups in the community, and impinge upon their mobility, and their right to the city. Women are seen as potential victims, rather than citizens desirous to get to their destination by foot.

In this chapter, I want to return to Adelaide and consider my own narratives and experiences in my own city; I want to consider times when I have been frightened to walk the streets of my home city

[313] Bolland, Emma. "Every Place a Palimpsest: Creative Practice, Emotional Archaeology, and the Post-Traumatic Landscape." *GeoHumanities* 1.1 (2015), pp. 198-206 (p. 200).

due to these layered pre-existing fears that Bolland refers to, but I want to return to Hille Koskela's notion of the bold walk.

However, in this chapter I will also digress to Melbourne at times as I look at the writing of Australian feminist commentator Clementine Ford about Jill Meagher's death. I leave Ford until this chapter as while she now lives in Melbourne, I constantly link her to Adelaide, as she spent formative years in the city and attended the University of Adelaide, like myself. But she is also one of the loudest voices in Australia speaking (and writing) on feminism and space and violence, and her work corresponds to Koskela's, in that she promotes a boldness and queries dominant narratives about women and space.

Clementine Ford

Clementine Ford devotes a chapter of her 2016 text, *Fight Like A Girl*, to Meagher's death, titled 'When Will You Learn?', recalling the paternalistic attitudes that pervade reportage around crimes of a sexual nature committed by men against women: gesturing towards the cultural narratives that I referred to earlier. Ford's book blurs genre, it is both memoir and polemic, a manifesto according to the blurb, and according to Ford's Author's Note, 'an exploration of my experience as a girl in the world'.[314] Ford discusses the likelihood of a women being raped by someone they know being much greater than being assaulted by a stranger on the street, however, her text recalls a Melbourne milieu that was also discussed in Anna Krien's text *Night Games*, a city obsessed with Australian Rules football and too infatuated with its stars to face up to their misogyny. In this chapter, she

[314] Clementine Ford, Fight Like A Girl (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2016).

uses the example of the AFL player to explain Australian discourse around gender and sexual assault. She discusses how these men are lauded as heroes, put on a cultural pedestal, promoted as role models to small children, yet cases of rape and sexual assault perpetrated by professional footballers crop up with an alarming regularity. Ford makes the point that when these sportsmen commit acts of sexual assault, the public, and media personalities, typically engage in victim blaming, suggesting that the female victim is somehow culpable for the attack. Professional sportsmen are held in such a high regard in Australian society, that it is presumed that the woman was doing the chasing, keen to bed a high-profile celebrity, yet left feeling bitter after the man wanted no more to do with her. This, of course, is a fallacy, yet these opinions prevail in social media threads and on morning television panels, suggesting a dominant cultural narrative around women and victim blaming. Ford reiterates, 'it's very difficult to have straightforward conversations about rape culture, particularly in a society that relies on victim blaming to avoid looking too closely at patriarchal dominance'.[315]

Ford runs through the 'tongue-clucking, finger-wagging'[316] discourse that Australian women have grown up with:

> You know the drill. Don't walk alone at night. Don't wear revealing clothes. Don't drink too much. In fact, don't drink at all. Don't talk to strange men, but don't ignore men who are probably just trying to have a conversation with you – can't a man even having a conversation with a woman these days without being unfairly maligned as a rapist…[317]

As I read this 'drill', I find myself returning to the haunting CCTV footage of Jill Meagher. She walked alone at night. While I do not, some may consider her bare legs in her stiletto heels

[315] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, p. 246.
[316] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, p. 236.
[317] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl,* p. 237.

revealing. She drank that night. She tried to ignore a strange man, but he dragged her into a laneway, raped and killed her.

But even if we try 'to do the right thing', women can't win. Ford continues the dialogue, showing it for what it is, invoking the dialogue of the 'good guy', 'What do you mean, you won't let me walk you home? But I'm just trying to get you home safely, I'm not a threat to you, how dare you make me feel like I'm a threat to you!'[318]

The laughter the laughter the laughter

I am reminded of this double bind when I consider a night out in Adelaide about five years ago. While riding my bike home on a Friday evening after dinner with friends, I stopped at a red light at the intersection of Rundle Street and East Terrace. Two men who looked to be in their late thirties were walking down East Terrace and stopped at the lights. They could have crossed – the green signal had just disappeared – but instead, they stopped. I could feel their eyes on me, watching me on my bike: a lone woman. To them, out of place. They began to make jokes, speaking at me, rather than to me. 'Can I get a dinky? Can you give me a dinky?' I ignored them, staring straight ahead, willing them to take my coldness as a cue to stop, but instead it egged them on. 'Parla no inglese?' one of them joked. 'Don't you speak English?' I ignored them still. He continued. 'Don't you know what a dinky is?' he said accusingly. I sighed. 'Please, just stop. I'm just trying to ride my bike.' He was taken aback. 'What?! I'm not harassing you!' I felt exasperated. 'Yes, you are,' I replied. 'I didn't invite this.' Thankfully, the lights turned green and I was able to ride away. I could feel myself shaking, and I gripped the handlebars. I felt unsafe, the butt of a joke. To this man, my

[318] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, p. 237.

mobility was a joke: I was a woman alone, thus, a subject of ridicule. It was only five minutes home from there, but I felt vulnerable. I got home cranky and chided my partner for not meeting me in the city for a drink as he said he might.

In the scheme of things, this could be considered a trivial incident. I was unharmed, and one could argue that the men were just 'mucking around', but it left me feeling confused. Was my being on a bicycle inviting this behaviour? Did I look strange? Or was it the fact that I was alone in the city at night? I just wanted to get home safely and not be bothered.

Ford points out the safety behaviours that women employ to avoid trouble, which she calls,

> a bag of tools to protect ourselves. We learn to carry our keys between our fingers when we walk to our cars or front doors at night-time. To listen to music with one ear and footsteps with the other. To cross the street to avoid walking past a man or a group of men, even if it's just to prevent what soon becomes the inevitable expectation that they'll say something about our bodies and what they want to do with them. We become stoic and stony-faced when these words are thrown at us, pretending that we didn't hear these men commanding us to show them our tits, suck their dicks, sit on their faces, lose some weight, stop being such a stuck-up fucking-cunt-bitch-didn't-want-you-anyway-you-fat-whore, to fuck ourselves, the laughter the laughter the laughter. Stare straight ahead, keep walking, cross the street, arrange your keys between your fingers. Notice as another small part of yourself is ground down.[319]

That was what ground me down: the laughter. The two men didn't necessarily say anything terribly derogatory to me, nor did they direct explicit slurs at me. And I do wonder if the man speaking to me genuinely believed that he was not harassing me. But the laughter stung. I was reminded of every time a car of men would yell something at my friends and I as we walked down the street. They would laugh uproariously as they drove off.

[319] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, p. 257-258.

Elizabeth Stanko refer to the 'bag of tools' as self-regulation, stating that 'anticipating risk and danger' forms a part of this. She refers to women's 'safety talk', 'a display of *situated, locally-produced* knowledge about safety and security'.[320] Stanko demonstrates this through case studies that she has collected through interviews with American women about their fear of violence, yet the remarks are consistent with those of Australian women. The women relayed behaviours such as avoiding dark alleys, considering where they parked their car, walking in pairs, walking at a fast pace (*'look like you're busy'*) and the aforementioned keys in the hands.[321]

I consider another incident in the Adelaide CBD, this one more sinister, yet it occurred in broad daylight. About nine years ago, I was working at an optician, and taking my lunch break. I was dressed in the modest 'corporate wardrobe' that made up the uniform: a sensible charcoal coloured lambswool cardigan, a button up blouse underneath, tucked into a demure, loose-fitting charcoal coloured pencil skirt that sat below the knee. I was wearing flats. It was around one pm, and I was walking back to the store down a side street that ran off Grenfell Street. A scruffy man that I had seen loitering around Pirie Street earlier that day was lying on his side on the footpath. He was easily identifiable by his face tattoo, large musical notes on his cheek. I glanced at him, quickly, and he leered at me and said menacingly, 'what I'd do to you if there was no one around'.

I picked up the pace and walked briskly back to work, glad the back entrance to the optical lab was unlocked and I could enter the store quickly. I was spooked, but I tried to mask this as I told my colleagues what had been said to me. They urged me to call police. I thought this was an

[320] Elizabeth Stanko, 'Safety talk: Conceptualizing women's risk assessment as a 'technology of the soul', *Theoretical Criminology* 1 (1997), pp. 479-499 (p. 488).
[321] Stanko, pp. 493-494.

overreaction, but they pointed out that this man might follow through with his threats one day, saddling me with the impossible task of stopping him via a trepid phone call. So, I rang the police and described the man with the musical face tattoos to the woman on the other end of the line. She sounded jaded, as she told me, almost rote, that the man was known to them and they would send out a patrol. Great.

Thankfully, when this happened to me, people were around: the CBD was busy with office workers on their lunch hour, couriers making deliveries, shoppers heading to the Mall. And it was the middle of the day, and a part of the city I knew well. Again, in terms of harassment, the comment is unexceptional. I was not shadowed and hassled persistently. He didn't swear at me, or make explicit mention of lewd acts. But I think about that man's comment often, particularly when I hear stories of women who did encounter strange men when no one was around; strange men who followed through with their threats. Women like Jill Meagher. Like Anita Cobby. Like Masa Vukotic.

The city as solace

Yet despite these incidents, I still love riding my bike, and would rather cycle than walk somewhere at night. And I still love walking during the day – though I still am afraid of walking on my own at night, despite my research. I still enjoy experiencing the city on my own and find strolls through the nearby Botanic Park meditative. Ford enjoys walking too, and discusses the psychological benefits of being alone in urban space in a chapter that deals with her struggles with mental illness. She writes that in order to find solace, 'she took to walking in the late-summer afternoons. I embarked on long stretches of pavement pounding throughout Edinburgh Gardens […] I sat under

trees and counted my breaths until the sky began to turn the ghostly purple of dusk…'.[322] Ford's reflections on walking feel indebted to Virginia Woolf, as she writes of the therapeutic benefits of her strolls, replacing Bloomsbury with the Inner North:

> I seek help from a number of different sources now, the most enjoyable of which are the long walks I take around my neighbourhood. I traipse for hours up and down the streets, admiring the flowers in people's gardens or marvelling at the rich, dense clouds that spread like mottled bruises across the Brunswick sky.[323]

Ford's walks are not only bold – in that she relishes what Koskela calls the 'pleasure to be able to take possession of space'[324] – but also meditative, seeking comfort in public space that so often is constructed as dangerous for women, such as a public park. I return yet again to Victorian Police Homicide Squad chief Mick Hughes's comments that women shouldn't be 'alone in parks' following the fatal stabbing of teenager Masa Vukotic in a Doncaster park in 2015. I realise I have repeated Hughes's words a number of times throughout the dissertation, but sentiments such as those expressed by Hughes have a tendency to play over, and over, and over, in my mind, reminding me of my vulnerability, forcing me to take responsibility to avoid assault.

Like Meagher's death, Vukotic's murder was also mobilised by the media – and one could argue, by authorities – to contain women, to further a narrative that reinforces the public/private gender binary. However, as Koskela reminds,

> the fact that some women are bold and confident shows that women are not only passively experiencing space but actively take part in producing it. They reclaim space for themselves, not only through single occasions such as 'take back the night' marches, but through everyday practices and routinized uses of space.[325]

[322] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, p. 134.
[323] Ford, *Fight Like A Girl*, pp. 134-135.
[324] Koskela, 'Bold Walks and Breakings', p. 308.
[325] Koskela, 'Bold Walks and Breakings', p. 316.

Ford's walks act as resistance, actively producing space through representation: to assert the right to the city, one must be bold, and reclaim space that is so often overlaid with stories of violence against women.

As Koskela emphasises, this is only done through use of the space, 'a way of de-mystifying it. If one does not use the space, … 'the mental map' of the place is filled with indirect descriptions, the image of it is constructed through media and the stories heard'.[326] We must emphasise the beauty in personal connection to public space, admiring the gardens, enjoying the sunshine on our skin. We must relish public space rather than fear it.

I consider writer Olivia Laing's thoughts on the city, a reminder to relish time in urban space alone, and to think critically about violence and fear. Laing writes:

> I don't believe that the cure for loneliness is meeting someone, not necessarily. I think it's about two things: learning how to befriend yourself and understanding that many of the things that seem to afflict us as individuals are in face a result of much larger forces if stigma and exclusion, which can and should be resisted.
>
> Loneliness is personal, and it is also political. Loneliness is collective; it is a city. As to how to inhabit it, there are no rules and nor is there any need to feel shame, only to remember that the pursuit of individual happiness does not trump or excuse our obligations to each another. We are in this together, this accumulation of scars, this world of objects, this physical and temporary heaven that so often takes on the countenance of hell. What matters is kindness; what matters is solidarity. What matters if staying alert, staying open, because if we know anything from what has gone before us, it is that the time for feeling will not last.'[327]

Laing's city is complex: it is not heaven or hell. Yet it is one that considers happiness and solidarity for all a priority. It banishes the notion of rules, thereby allowing women to use the city as they see fit, allowing them to reclaim space, to be bold, to walk.

---

[326] Koskela, 'Bold Walks and Breakings', p. 308.
[327] Laing, Olivia. *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone*. (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2017), p281.

Conclusion

> In the early hours of Wednesday morning her body was discovered, lifeless, and we are all reminded, in the worst way possible, that violence against women isn't a distant threat. It is deadly. Predictably enough, Victorian police were soon 'reminding' Melbourne citizens to take responsibility for their personal safety and 'carry phones'. As if this would have prevented Dixon's murder. It is salt in the wound we have grown accustomed to: it arises whenever something like this takes place. It is easier – in many ways – for us all to believe that there is a specific set of behaviours that if we adhere to we will avoid anything untoward occurring. It is a fiction. It ignores the abysmal fact – as many have pointed out – that the home is actually the most dangerous place for lots of women. Murder and rape and violence do not just occur in parks late at night. They take place in homes far more often. These crimes are not always committed by strangers in the dark: more often they are carried out by someone who knows the victims. After Alison Baden-Clay was killed by her husband, no one told women to be 'careful' at home. Last month, after the horrendous Margaret River shootings no one suggested that Cynda Miles, or her daughter Katrina, had been unwise to have been at home. It is why 'being careful' is an unrealistic safeguard: it is a nebulous proposition that takes the onus off perpetrators. It is a myth that seeks to hold victims accountable.[328]

Journalist Georgie Dent's reporting on the death of Eurydice Dixon offers a nuanced take on the crime that is rarely seen in the Australian media landscape. Sure, she is writing for *Women's Agenda*, which obviously leans towards commentary that supports gender equality, but Dent's article raises many of the issues that I have discussed in this dissertation regarding the contradictory discourse surrounding women's safety. She reminds that for all the public hand wringing regarding women being careful in public places, we take some focus from the pressing issue of violence in the home. However, both issues and the discourse that surround them, point towards societal problems regarding gendered violence and misogyny that are complex and ingrained in the community. There are no 'behaviours' women can adhere to that will put a stop to either concern.

[328] Dent, Georgina. Eurydice Dixon & the myth of women "being careful". June 15 2018. *Women's Agenda* (June 15 2018), <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/eurydice-dixon-the-myth-of-women-being-careful/> [Accessed January 12 2020]

By the time I write this conclusion, a long and emotional five years after I began my PhD, the name Jill Meagher has been supplemented by others in the public imaginary, some of which I mention in this thesis, some of which came later in my research: Prabha Kumar, Masa Vukotic, Eurydice Dixon, Aiia Marsawe. These names have also come to represent the apocryphal female murder victim: the innocent woman who was in the wrong place at the wrong time, albeit a public space, at night – a realm women have always been warned to avoid, their presence a trespass, a transgression. This is by no means as exhaustive list, rather that these crimes were covered substantially by the media. There are many women who have been killed on Australian streets who the media choose not to report on – First Nations women, migrant women, women who perform sex work, women who have substance abuse issues, women with a history of mental illness or women with a disability. Furthermore, only recently, with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, first in the United States, and now internationally, has the discussion of police brutality become mainstream. This discussion has demonstrated the fallibility of the police. Many women tend to see the police as protectors, but for women of colour, this may not be the case. The omission of these women in the public conversation about violence demonstrates the argument I make in Chapter Three regarding Meagher as an 'ideal victim'. I am interested in these omissions, of who or what we fail to mention when relaying cultural narratives regarding women and safety in public space, or speaking about our own lives and how we travel through the city.

Again, I am reminded of my own privilege, and that of the authors that I have discussed within the text. It was not my intention to focus on white female authors, yet often these are the literary voices that enjoy a platform in Australia. Cunningham and Ford write of the joy and solace that walking the city brings them, and are afforded the ability to do this with little attention paid to familial responsibility, physical disability or suburban sprawl. They have the time to walk the city and the

proximity to pleasant walking spaces. An extension of this project would allow further interrogation of these privileges and how they intersect with ongoing colonisation, gentrification and economic disadvantage by solely examining the work of First Nations voices, or culturally and linguistically diverse writers.

In this thesis, I have examined Australian women's relationship with the city, and argued that highly publicised violent crimes complicate this relationship by invoking cultural narratives that perpetuate fear of crime in public places. When I refer to 'cultural', I mean contemporary urban Australian – not only urban in a physical, geographical sense but also in that way that our culture is now also online – we are assembled both on the landscape and on data networks. The internet has changed the way we 'gather', creating a virtual polis that is largely dependent on narratives generated offline, as it proliferates news and opinion – often masquerading as each other. This affects our concept of 'the local' as our public spaces are also online, made of noughts and zeroes rather than bricks and mortar.

This thesis examined these narratives and how they manifest in mainstream media, and employed literary texts as a counterpoint. There is a Matroyshka doll type structure of my argument – that the Meagher case leads to these discussions of female vulnerability which in turn reveals how women are seen as lesser, as weaker. We must pull back these layers to reveal these complex narratives about Australian society, and we must recognise them in order to question them.

Stories about women and violence in public space speak to greater concerns regarding space, gender, race and class. They speak to how Australian society operates and how narratives surrounding crime are mobilised to control. These narratives are demonstrative of prevailing

Australian attitudes towards gender and space. There is control masquerading as concern within these narratives, and they form part of a wider discourse around gender and freedom.

Jill Meagher's death demonstrated how women's bodies are policed on Australian streets. Many news outlets chose to discuss Meagher's high-heeled shoes, as if to possibly implicate her choice of footwear in her demise, but they also turn to her 'smiling face', and her friendly nature. Australian writer Elspeth Muir enacts the paternalism that is at the core of these discussions, in her 2016 memoir *Wasted: A Story of Alcohol, Death and Grief in Brisbane.* She tells the story of her younger brother's passing in 2009, when he fell from the Story Bridge in Brisbane after a night out with friends. She considers his death – alone, at night, in the city – but points out that she was the one who was considered vulnerable in the family, because she was the girl. She considers the paternalistic attitudes regarding her own agency and assumed vulnerability that were forced onto her from a young age:

> I was sixteen the first time I realised that my body was a problem. I was staying with my family at the beach and I wanted to go out at night with my friend to buy an ice cream. We were only allowed out if we were accompanied by one of my brothers. I had been responsible for them throughout my childhood and now they were in charge of protecting my safety. I was furious and ashamed.[329]

These narratives try to obfuscate their subjugation with benevolence, the notion that 'we only say these things because we care'. It is as if to suggest that female fragility is somehow complimentary, as if femininity is a privilege rather than something that gets in the way. Yet femininity is representative of a role to be played, and this role is built on subjugation. Consider what standard notions of feminitity represent: beauty, gentleness, softness, fragility, submission. The discourse surrounding the Meagher case reflected in this tone of misguided benevolence – suggesting that

[329] Elspeth Muir, *Wasted: A Story of Alcohol, Death and Grief in Brisbane* (Melbourne: Text, 2016), p. 39.

the streets are unsafe for women and women must avoid solo expeditions, lest they fall peril to the same fate.

It has been interesting to watch the dialogue around Eurydice Dixon and Aiia Maarsawe's deaths with this theoretical lens, as progress seems to have been made in relation to the public discussion around safety and responsibility. The killing of Dixon prompted a public reaction that had not been seen since Meagher's death. The reaction of the community was just as visible as when Meagher had been killed six years earlier. Vigils were staged across the country, as crowds gathered to grieve publicly. Were they grieving Dixon, or the message that the murder itself sent to women – the notion that we are inherently unsafe outside of the home? Rather than question Dixon and Maarsawe's decisions to venture home alone after dark, there seemed to be substantial public outcry regarding women's safety.

Allow me to offer context: Eurydice Dixon was killed on June 13, 2018. 22-year-old Dixon had performed a comedy show at the Highlander bar in Melbourne's CBD. At the time of writing, the Highlander bar's website still lists Dixon on an old gig guide, showing that from March 28 to April 7, at 6:15pm, she performed her set titled 'At Home I Feel Like a Tourist'[330]. I wonder if like me, Dixon is a fan of the Gang of Four song. Friends said she seemed happy with her performance, and after bidding them goodbye, she set off home to the flat she shared in Parkville with her father and brother. As she walked across a soccer pitch in Carlton's Princes Park, 900 metres away from home, she was attacked. Her body was found by a passer-by in the early hours of the next morning. She had been raped and strangled to death. A few days later, Jaymes Todd, a 19-year-old man from Broadmeadows, was charged with her murder.

[330] 'Highlander Bar'. <http://highlanderbar.squarespace.com/blog/> [Accessed 15 January 2019]

On January 16, 2019, 21-year-old Aiia Maarsawe was killed after she disembarked a tram at Bundoora, where she lived in university accommodation. She had been out with friends, and had caught public transport home from the CBD. She had called her sister in Israel and as she was speaking on the phone, walking home, she was struck by a metal pole and rendered unconscious. She was then raped and beaten to death. Her killer, Codey Herrmann, was charged with her murder.

Both women, like Meagher, were very close to home when they were killed. Both women employed safety behaviours prior to their being attacked, using their phone as they walked in an attempt to stay safe. Dixon had text messaged her partner of only a few months, Tony Magnuson, 'Almost home safe. HBU?' As previously mentioned, Maarsawe was on the phone to her sister when she was attacked. Reports state that her sister Rona heard Aiia scream and yell at her attacker in Arabic, 'You piece of shit'.[331] As mentioned previously, I too employ my mobile phone as a safety device, and many women I know do too. Yet like CCTV, the phone cannot intervene.

There are so many questions we can ask in retrospect. What if Dixon's partner had accompanied her home? Would Todd had still preyed on her? Would she still be alive? But what if her boyfriend (assuming this is what their relationship would be described as – assuming Dixon would tag Magnuson as her boyfriend) lived on the other side of the city, and needed to get home? What if one of Maarsawe's friends had offered to drive her home? What if she had caught a cab, or an Uber home to the door of her building, instead of the tram?

[331] Karen Percy, 'Aiia Maasarwe's killer Codey Herrmann visited her apartment building twice before murder', *ABC News* (October 1 2019) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-01/aiia-maasarwe-killer-codey-herrmann-plea-hearing/11563756> [Accessed January 12 2020]

As women, must we impede upon others to get home? Must we hassle friends, family and acquaintances to drive us home, or accompany us on the tram, or walk us to the door? What if they are busy? How do they then get home when they have walked us to the door? Why must we assume this emotionally draining responsibility? Furthermore, these notions of responsibility rely on essentialist understandings of gender that reiterate the flawed conception of women as inherently weak and vulnerable, and men as strong saviours.

Men in these relationships are inconvenienced too by these narratives: they are made to act as bodyguards, forced to accompany the women that they are involved with. And what if their female partner wants to walk alone? What if she enjoys communing with the crisp night air? What if she likes walking alone with her thoughts, quiet and contemplative? What if a man too relishes this pleasure? What if he wants to walk home alone, or what if he needs to get home early? What if he cannot stick around the pub to chaperone his girlfriend, or female friends home? What if these women are bigger, and more physically strong than he is? What if he needs a chaperone? What if he has been previously been a victim of assault, and is fearful for his own safety? What if he has a physical disability that affects his mobility, and he cannot walk a woman home, or physically defend her from attack?

The discussion following Dixon and Maarsawe's death has shifted somewhat since Meagher's murder, but these questions are not yet answered. There is palpable anger that women cannot move freely through public space. These women were just trying to get home safely after a night out with friends. In Maarsawe's case, she was using public transport – government infrastructure – to do just that. In an article for the *New Statesman*, Kathleen Farmilo draws a link between Dixon's

murder, and the then-unsolved disappearance of Qi Yu, as symptomatic of an Australian culture of misogyny[332].

These issues are acknowledged by politicians but there is a little change at a legislative level. But how is the government going to stop these men? What can they do? At a vigil for Dixon, then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull discussed how men need to change, stating:

> Not all disrespect of women is violence against women but that is where all violence against women begins. And so ensuring that we start from the very start, ensuring that our sons and grandsons respect the women in their lives, is vitally important. We start with the youngest men, the little boys, our sons and grandsons, and make sure that they respect their mothers and sisters and all the women in their lives.[333]

But so often this responsibility falls on women. Men frequently invoke their love for their mother in relation to how they demonstrate respect for women. And, so often, their mother, or sister, or partner, or daughters will be employed as a foil to any claims of misogyny.

So, can we make the city better for women? The concept of 'gender mainstreaming' presents a conundrum. Urban planning that acknowledges gender frequently operates within an essentialist framework. We need to make the city safer for everyone. We need to ask, what does the city do? What do we need it to do? How does an Australian city differ from its international counterparts?

---

[332] Kathleen Farmilo, 'What the murder of Eurydice Dixon reveals about Australia's attitude to women', *New Statesman*, July 7 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2018/07/what-murder-eurydice-dixon-reveals-about-australia-s-attitude-women> [Accessed August 20 2018].

[333] 'We need culture of respect for women, Turnbull says in Eurydice Dixon tribute', *Guardian* (June 18 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jun/18/we-need-culture-of-respect-for-women-turnbull-says-in-eurydice-dixon-tribute> [Accessed August 20 2018].

Chapter Two discussed cultural narratives regarding gender in Australia, and I would like to acknowledge how patriarchal Australian culture disadvantages these men too. They cannot fit into these prescribed roles. Their bodies are unruly as well; they may not fit masculinist ideals. This is not intended as sympathy for the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. Plenty of male members of the community deal with family violence, addiction, mental illness, poverty and discrimination and do not attack random women on the street. However, in an effort to compress the story, to flatten the narrative into something less complicated, we fail to acknowledge how these perpetrators are all united by factors that disallow them social capital. Would a focus on social inclusion that is not reliant on the gender binary, and engages with a prevention rather than cure approach to social problems, make for safer streets?

There is a reluctance to fully engage with how gender constructs compound these issues. In a column for right wing publication the *Spectator*, Corrine Barraclough disputes feminist critiques of Dixon's murder, bemoaning Clementine Ford and writes that, 'Gender theory doesn't solve crime and it never will'.[334] A cursive look at Barraclough's other columns for the website show regular pieces titled 'The week in misandry'. Barraclough is a male apologist, but she seems unable to view how the patriarchy exercises its control over men, too. But gender theory can help us ask questions of taken for granted notions around gender and social control.

In some circles, attitudes such as Barraclough's and their resistance to discuss gendered crime are thankfully now being satirised, proof that they are stale. Satirical 'newspaper' *The Betoota Advocate* poked fun at the comments of police officers like Hughes, posting a story with the

[334] Corrine Barraclough, 'The unifying message of Eurydice Dixon'. *Spectator* (20 June 2018), <https://www.spectator.com.au/2018/06/the-unifying-message-of-eurydice-dixon/> [Accessed January 10 2019].

headline '"Women Need To Be More Careful" Says Man Who Passed Out In Pub Car Park On Friday Night', complete with a before-and-after style image of a tidy twenty-something man smiling at the camera beside an image of the same man asleep in a carpark with a tinnie in his hand. The spoof article quotes 'local man, Gordon Leonard (25)' who says that, 'I hope my sisters are smart enough to avoid going anywhere near caucasian middle-class men between the ages of 18-60 after 6pm'.[335]

* * *

Like many PhD candidates, I squirmed when asked the dreaded question, 'so, what's your thesis about?' I'd offer a vague 'oh, Literary Studies', hoping that would sound too academic and bore them into changing the subject, but they'd push further – what type of literature? 'Australian', I'd respond. But the questioner would always continue probing, asking what texts I was studying, and what period of Australian literature. 'Well,' I'd say, 'it's about women and the city.' They'd be confused. What did that have to do with books? Yet as soon as I mentioned the name 'Jill Meagher', particularly to women, their facial expression would shift from quizzical to something resembling resignation, tinged with grief. They'd speak mournfully about the case, then mention the other names: mispronouncing Eurydice, or bringing up 'that Israeli girl'. I didn't want to correct people. I just didn't want to talk about it. It raised too many uncomfortable questions that I still do not have the answer to.

And besides, men will hassle women who identify as feminists to include them in the conversation, to educate them, rather than simply do the research themselves. They will derail conversations

[335] Clancy Overall, ''Women Need To Be More Careful' Says Man Who Passed Out In Pub Car Park On Friday Night', *The Betoota Advocate* <https://www.betootaadvocate.com/breaking-news/women-need-to-be-more-careful-says-man-who-passed-out-in-pub-car-park-on-friday-night/> [Accessed January 10 2019].

regarding gender equality and women's rights. This has happened to me many times, for example, at a barbecue I chatted to a friend of a friend – a man, who I assume to be in his late thirties or early forties. He asked me what I did, and I was hesitant to divulge too much, so I told him I was studying. He prodded, what was I studying? I told him I was doing my PhD in English, hoping that would not interest him, but he pushed for further information. I tried to explain my doctoral research to him. He used this as an opportunity to discuss how much he dislikes Rosie Batty. I asked him why, and he failed to produce an answer. I was perplexed. I never mentioned Batty, nor her story.

These men cry 'not all men', yet fail to challenge the men they know who are more open with their misogyny. They stand by and listen silently as friends make sexist jokes, or tell lewd or humiliating stories about their female partner. They worship sportsmen who have been convicted of crimes against women. They take credit for women's work. When offered a pay rise, or a promotion, they do not urge their superiors to reconsider their female peers. They shun men that do not match up to societal standards of masculinity, or bully them into conforming.

This spate of high profile crimes is of interest as it intersects with changing gender politics in Australia, and the emergence of a significant movement protesting violence against women, and misogyny in the public sphere. This movement is not unique to Australia, as one could also look at the Times Up movement that has emerged in Hollywood, and the concurrent Women's Marches too in the United States.

As the notion of misogyny has become more embedded in the lexicon, crimes against women are now seen through this lens, as a reflection of male attitudes towards women, though this lens continues to evolve since I began this study. Yet we still tend to map these stories of crimes, stories

we are told about our own gendered vulnerability, on to our own spaces, generating these meta-geographies of fear – taking from one, and placing it on another. We superimpose these tales on to our own space.

This thesis asks many questions, but I want to close with the key concerns. We must consider what we define as quality of life. How can we hold this definition in good faith yet continue to actively tolerate curtailing urban women's freedom? We accept these parameters that are placed on women. We accept these narratives, penned to contain. What can we salvage from these events? What can we learn from these breakings? Can we adopt new, bolder, narratives as models for using the city, allowing literary narratives to be as influential culturally as those proliferated by the media?

Bibliography

3AW Radio, 'Jill Meagher CCTV Footage', YouTube, September 25, 2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiBck13rpcA> [Accessed 30 March 2016]

AAP, 'Beaumont children: why a 52-year mystery still has so much resonance across the country', *West Australian* <https://thewest.com.au/news/australia/beaumont-children-why-a-52-year-mystery-still-has-so-much-resonance-across-the-country-ng-b88731808z> [Accessed January 10 2019].

'About – LISTEN', <https://www.listenlistenlisten.org/about/> [Accessed January 10 2020].

Ardener, Shirley, 'Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women: An Introduction' in *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, ed. by Shirley Ardener (London: Crown Helm, 1981), pp 11-34.

Aubusson, Kate, 'Women Who Walk Alone at Night Invite Predators, Says Mayor of Albury after Alleged Rape', *Sydney Morning Herald,* May 1 2015 <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/women-who-walk-alone-at-night-invite-predators-says-mayor-of-albury-after-alleged-rape-20150430-1mxcph.html> [Accessed January 10 2017].

Australia in Detail: Women Travellers', *Lonely Planet* <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/australia/women-travellers> [Accessed March 10 2020].

Australian Government Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Women and Crime' (2015) <https://www.aic.gov.au/crime_community/demographicgroup/women.html> [Accessed 13 January 2016].

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Australia's 18 to 24 Year-Olds Most at Risk of Violence' (2013) <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/4906.0Media%20Release12012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4906.0&issue=2012&num=&view=> [Accessed 1 May 2015]

Barker, Chris, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), p. 131.

Barr, Olivia, 'Mourning place' in *Spaces of Justice: Peripheries, passages, appropriations*, ed. by Chris Butler and Edward Mussawir (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), pp. 73-93.

Barraclough, Corrine, 'The unifying message of Eurydice Dixon'. *Spectator* (20 June 2018), <https://www.spectator.com.au/2018/06/the-unifying-message-of-eurydice-dixon/> [Accessed January 10 2019].

Bastin, Giselle, 'The 1970s Gossip Girls: Gossip's Role in the Surveillance and Construction of Female Social Networks in Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*', *Antipodes* 23 (2009), pp. 115-120.

Beaumont, Matthew, 'The Politics of the Visor: Looking at Buildings Looking at Us', *City,* 22 (2018), pp. 63-77.

Berrington, Eileen, and Helen Jones, 'Reality Vs. Myth: Constructions of Women's Insecurity', *Feminist Media Studies,* 2 (2002), pp. 307-23.

Bolland, Emma. 'Every Place a Palimpsest: Creative Practice, Emotional Archaeology, and the Post-Traumatic Landscape', *GeoHumanities* 1 (2015), pp. 198-206.

Bourke, Jake, and Jordan Tunbridge. 'Priest Sparks Outrage at Melbourne Primary School over comments Relating to Jill Meagher's Rape and Murder.' 3AW 2015. Web. August 1 2015.

Boyd Community Hub, *City of Melbourne*, <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/hubs-bookable-spaces/boyd-community-hub/Pages/boyd-community-hub.aspx> [Accessed May 3 2016].

Brennan, Bernadette. *A Writing Life: Helen Garner and Her Work* (Melbourne: Text, 2017).

Brice, Chloe, 'Jill Meagher: Conviction Documentary Reveals How Killer Adrian Bayley Was Caught', *ABC News* (September 27, 2016) < https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-27/conviction-inside-the-hunt-for-jill-meaghers-killer/7864120> [Accessed January 20 2017]

'Brunswick', *Homely* <https://www.homely.com.au/brunswick-moreland-melbourne-greater-victoria> [Accessed March 1 2020].

Buckley, Dan, ‘Priest apologises for ‘idiotic’ comments on Jill Meagher’, *Irish Examiner* (March 31 2015) <https://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/priest-apologises-for-idiotic-comments-on-jill-meagher-321260.html> [Accessed January 10 2017]

Builders Arms Hotel, <https://buildersarmshotel.com.au/> [Accessed June 10 2020].

Calligeros, Marissa, ‘Parks Not Safe for Women, Says Homicide Squad Boss’, *The Age,* March 20 2015, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/parks-not-safe-for-women-says-homicide-squad-boss-20150319-1m2rgc.html> [Accessed January 10 2017]

Christie, Nils, ‘The Ideal Victim’, in *Revisiting the 'Ideal Victim'*, ed. by Marian Duggan (Bristol University Press, 2018), pp. 11-24

Cixous, Hélène, ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory & Criticism* 2nd Ed. ed. by Vincent B. Leitch (Gen. Ed.) (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), pp. 1942-1959.

Cobley, Paul, *Narrative* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2014).

Commonwealth of Australia, ‘Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles’ <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/support-subsite/files/life-in-australia/lia_english_full.pdf> [Accessed February 10 2020].

Conviction, dir. by Terry Carlyon (DD & B Productions and ABC TV, 2016).

Coverley, Merlin, *Psychogeography* (Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, 2012).

Craig, Natalie, ‘A city divided’, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (February 5 2012) <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/a-city-divided-20120202-1quub.html> [Accessed March 20 2016].

Crosbie, David and Axelle Marjolin, ‘The Australia We Want (Second Report)’, Community Council for Australia (2019), 1-60 (p. 11). <https://www.communitycouncil.com.au/sites/default/files/Australia-we-want-Second-Report_ONLINE.pdf> [Accessed 10 November 2019].

Cunningham, Sophie, *Boundaries* (Melbourne: City of Melbourne, 2016).

Cunningham, Sophie, *Melbourne* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2012).

Cunningham, Sophie, ‘Staying with the trouble’, *Australian Book Review* (May 2015), pp. 24-29.

Darke, Jane, ‘The Man-Shaped City’, in *Changing Places: Women's Lives in the City*, ed. by Chris Booth, Jane Darke and Susan Yeadle (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1996), pp. 88-99.

De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Dent, Georgina, 'Eurydice Dixon & the myth of women 'being careful'', *Women's Agenda* (June 15 2018) <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/eurydice-dixon-the-myth-of-women-being-careful/> [Accessed September 10 2019].

Derrida, Jacques, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

Derrida, Jacques, and Bernard Stiegler, 'Spectrographies' in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 37-51 (p. 38).

de Saint Phalle, Catherine, *On Brunswick Ground* (Melbourne: Transit Lounge, 2015).

Dickie, Madelaine, 'Pilbara Palyku mob share opulent illustrations; tense questions', *National Indigenous Times*, September 26, 2018, <https://nit.com.au/pilbara-palyku-mob-share-opulent-illustrations-tense-questions/> [Accessed March 1 2021].

Dixon, Miriam, *The real Matilda: woman and identity in Australia, 1788 to the present* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999).

Domosh, Mona and Joni Seager. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001).

Elder, Catriona, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2008).

Elkin, Lauren, *Flaneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Vintage, 2016).

Farmilo, Kathleen, 'What the murder of Eurydice Dixon reveals about Australia's attitude to women', *New Statesman*, July 7 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/feminism/2018/07/what-murder-eurydice-dixon-reveals-about-australia-s-attitude-women> [Accessed August 20 2018].

Fenster, Tovi, 'The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life', *Journal of Gender Studies,* 14 (2005), pp. 217-31.

Fivush, Robyn, 'Speaking silence: The social construction of silence in autobiographical and cultural narratives', *Memory* 18 (2010), pp. 88-98.

Florance, Loretta, 'Easey Street murders: $1m reward to catch cold case killer who left toddler alone in cot', *ABC News* (January 16 2017)

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-15/million-dollar-reward-for-easey-street-cold-case-murders/8183434> [Accessed March 20 2018].

Ford, Clementine*, Fight Like A Girl* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2016).

Ford, Clementine, 'Five years on, have we absorbed any lessons from Jill Meagher's murder?', *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 22 2017, <http://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/news-and-views/opinion/five-years-on-have-we-absorbed-any-lessons-from-jill-meaghers-murder-20170921-gylxpr.html> [Accessed March 5 2018].

Gage, Nicola, 'Missing Persons Week: Kirste Gordon's parents recall day she disappeared from Adelaide Oval', *ABC News*, July 30 2017 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-30/parents-reflect-on-disappearance-of-daughter-kirste-gordon/8754968..> [Accessed January 10 2019].

Gardner, Carol Brooks. 'Safe Conduct: Women, Crime, and Self in Public Places', *Social Problems* 37, (1990), pp. 311–328.

Garner, Helen, 'I', *Meanjin* 61 (2002) <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/i/> [Accessed March 10 2018].

Garner, Helen. *Monkey Grip* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1978).

Garner, Helen, 'Vox', *Monthly* (November 2012), p. 14.

Gibbs, Anna, 'Fictocriticism, Affect, Mimesis: Engendering Differences' *TEXT*, vol 9 (2005) <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april05/gibbs.htm> [Accessed January 10 2019].

Gros, Frédéric, *A Philosophy of Walking* (London: Verso, 2014).

Habibis, Daphne, Penny Skye Taylor, and Bruna S. Ragaini, 'White People Have No Face: Aboriginal Perspectives on White Culture and the Costs of Neoliberalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43.7 (2020): pp. 1149-68.

Hage, Ghassan, *Against paranoid nationalism: Searching for hope in a shrinking society* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2003).

Halperin, David M., 'How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies,* 6 (2000), pp. 87-123.

Hartley, John, 'Culture', *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Tim O'Sullivan, John Hartley, Danny Saunders, Martin Montgomery, and John Fiske (London: Routledge 1994), p. 68.

Harvey, David, 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review* 53 (2008), pp. 23-40.

Hatton, Deirdre and Cathy Turner, 'Walking Women: Shifting the Tales and Scales of Mobility', *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22 (2012), pp. 224-236.

Hengehold, Laura. ‘When Safety Becomes a Duty: Gender, Loneliness, and Citizenship for Urban Women’, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 39 (2011), pp. 48–69.

Hemmings, Clare, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. ed. by Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan and Robyn Wiegman (Duke University Press, 2010).

Henderson, Gerard, ‘Sandalista Watch - Sophie Cunningham's Melbourne’, *Sydney Institute Quarterly* (2012), pp. 3-8.

‘Highlander Bar’, <http://highlanderbar.squarespace.com/blog/> [Accessed 15 January 2019].

Hunt, Nigel, ‘Cold case: Police offer $1m reward for information on Rhianna Barreau’s disappearance on October 7, 1992’, *Sunday Mail*, March 7, 2015 <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/cold-case-police-offer-1m-reward-for-information-on-rhianna-barreaus-disappearance-on-october-7-1992/news-story/9c28f9d560d0e17b3bee16b7d5e2e8ee..> [Accessed Jnaury 10 2019].

Hyde, Rory, ‘The Pool in Venice, a preview’, *Landscape Australia* (April 1 2016) <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/the-pool-in-venice/> [Accessed March 20 2018].

Indermaur, David and Lynne Roberts, ‘Perceptions of crime and justice’, in *Australian social attitudes: the first report*, ed. by Shaun Wilson, Rachel Gibson, David Denemark and Mark Western (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), pp. 141–160.

Innes, Martin. ‘Signal Crimes and Signal Disorders: Notes on Deviance as Communicative Action 1.’ *British Journal of Sociology* 55.3 (2004), pp. 335-55.

Innes, Martin, ‘“Signal crimes”: detective work, mass media and constructing collective memory’, in *Criminal Visions, Media Representations of Crime and Justice*, ed. by Paul Mason (Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2003), pp. 51-72 (p. 51).

Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961).

Jones, Ruby and Jessica Harmsen, ‘Australia's murder capital: Why can't Adelaide bury the myth?, *ABC News*, December 15 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-15/why-cant-adelaide-bury-murderous-capital-reputation/9249142..> [Accessed January 10 2019].

Jose, Jane, *Places Women Make* (Mile End: Wakefield Press, 2016).

Kirkby, Diane, ‘‘Beer, Glorious Beer’: Gender Politics and Australian Popular Culture’, *The Journal of Popular Culture,* 37 (2003), pp. 244-56.

Komar, Kathleen L., ‘Feminist Curves in Contemporary Literary Space’, in *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet and Joan Templeton (Amherst: University of Massachusets Press, 1994), pp. 89-107.

Koskela, Hille, ‘‘Bold Walk and Breakings’: Women's Spatial Confidence Versus Fear of Violence’, *Gender, Place & Culture,* 4 (1997), 301-20.

Koskela, Hille, ‘‘The Gaze without Eyes’: Video-Surveillance and the Changing Nature of Urban Space’, *Progress in Human Geography,* 24 (2000), pp. 243-65.

Laguna, Sofie, ‘Australia in three books’, *Meanjin* (Autumn 2016) <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/australia-in-three-books/> [March 20 2018].

Laing, Olivia. *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2017).

Lambert, Olivia, ‘Women reveal harrowing stories of sexual harassment and abuse they cop on Melbourne streets’, *news.com.au*, March 29, 2017 <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/women-reveal-harrowing-stories-of-sexual-harassment-and-abuse-they-cop-on-melbourne-streets/news-story/9e15de77fe471d8e71822cdd5ffd61d8> [Accessed September 9 2017].

LeFebvre, Henri, *Writings on Cities*. trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Labas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

Levin, Sam, ‘Millionaire tells millennials: if you want a house, stop buying avocado toast’, *The Guardian* (May 16 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/15/australian-millionaire-millennials-avocado-toast-house> [Accessed August 20 2018].

Little, Janine Mary, ‘Jill Meagher CCTV: Gothic Tendencies in Narratives of Violence and Gender Justice’, *Feminist Media Studies* 15 (2015), pp. 397-410.

Malouf, David, *A spirit of play: the making of Australian consciousness* (Sydney: ABC Books, 1999), p. 98.

Massey, Doreen, *Space, Place and Gender* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

Meagher, Tom, ‘The danger of the monster myth’, Our Watch (May 18 2015) <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media/Latest-news/The-danger-of-the-monster-myth-by-Tom-Meagher?feed=LatestNewsFeed> [Accessed August 20 2016].

‘Megan Cope on *Monkey Grip*’, *Chart Collective* (November 13 2014) <http://www.chartcollective.org/post/2014/11/13/megan-cope-on-monkey-grip#:~:text=Monkey%20Grip%20is%20a%20story,least%20once%20in%20our%20lives.> [Accessed March 1 2020].

McEvoy, Marc, ‘Jane Jose on why women should be more involved in designing our cities’, *Sydney Morning Herald* (January 1, 2016) <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/jane-jose-on-why-women-should-be-more-involved-in-designing-our-cities-20160101-glxqkr.html> [Accessed 5 May 2019].

McGuire, Michaela, *A Story of Grief* (Penguin: Melbourne, 2013).

McKew, Molly and Katherine Ellinghaus, ‘‘Someone’s Been Fucking Using This for Meat Again’: 18 Berry Street and Melbourne Sharehousing in the 1970s and 1980s’, in *Urban Australia and Post-Punk: Exploring Dogs in Space*, ed. by David Nichols and Sophie Perillo (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2020), pp. 141-56.

McLaren, John, *Melbourne: City of Words* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013).

Morgan, Sally, and Ambelin Kwaymullina. ‘Solid Rock, Sacred Ground: Cultural Vandalism in the Pilbara.’ *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 26.1 (2007), pp. 9-15.

Muir, Elspeth, *Wasted: A Story of Alcohol, Death and Grief in Brisbane* (Melbourne: Text, 2016).

National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, ‘Spirit Slides’ <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/spirit-slides> [Accessed 1 June 2020].

National Museum of Australia, ‘DEFINING MOMENTS: Black Saturday bushfires’, <http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/defining_moments/featured/black-saturday-bushfires> [Accessed August 10 2017].

Ortner, Sherry B., ‘Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?’, *Feminist Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 5–31.

Overall, Clancy, ‘‘Women Need To Be More Careful’ Says Man Who Passed Out In Pub Car Park On Friday Night’, *The Betoota Advocate* <https://www.betootaadvocate.com/breaking-news/women-need-to-be-more-careful-says-man-who-passed-out-in-pub-car-park-on-friday-night/> [Accessed 10 January 2019].

‘Quick facts’, *Our Watch*, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/understanding-violence/facts-and-figures> [Accessed 10 May 2020].

Pearson, Erin, June 15 2018, ‘“We don't feel safe”: Police minister, lord mayor voice fears after Eurydice Dixon's death’, *The Age*, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/we-don-t-feel-safe-police-minister-lord-mayor-voice-fears-after-eurydice-dixon-s-death-20180615-p4zlr5.html>

Percy, Karen, ‘Aiia Maasarwe's killer Codey Herrmann visited her apartment building twice before murder’, *ABC News* (October 1 2019) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-01/aiia-maasarwe-killer-codey-herrmann-plea-hearing/11563756> [Accessed January 12 2020].

Plan International Australia and Our Watch, ‘A right to the night: Australian girls on their safety in public places’ (2016), 1-10 <https://www.plan.org.au/~/media/plan/documents/resources/a-right-to-the-night.pdf> [Accessed 9 September 2016].

Potter, Emily and Kirsten Seale, 'The worldly text and the production of more-than-literary place: Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* and Melbourne's 'inner north'', *cultural geographies* 2019, pp. 1-12.

Powell, Anastasia, Caitlin Overington, and Gemma Hamilton, 'Following #Jillmeagher: Collective Meaning-Making in Response to Crime Events Via Social Media', *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal,* 14 (2018), pp. 409-28.

Prowse, Nycole, 'Possibilities from the Peripheries into the Urban Labyrinth: Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip*' in *Claiming Space for Australian Women's Writing*, ed. by Devaleena Das and Sanjukta Dasgupta (Cham: Springer International Publishing 2017), pp. 213-226.

Rose, Gillian, 'Spectacle and Spectres: London 7 July 2005', *New Formations* (2007), pp. 45-59.

Saunders, Kay, and Raymond Evans, *Gender relations in Australia: domination and negotiation* (Sydney: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

Sayer, Mandy, 'Mandy Sayer interviews Helen Garner', *Sydney Review of Books* (March 12 2019) <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/mandy-sayer-interviews-helen-garner-1989/> [Accessed June 1 2019].

See, Carolyn, 'Paradise, Australian Style', *New York Times* (April 4 1982) <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/04/04/books/paradise-australian-style.html> [Accessed March 20 2018].

Self, Will, *Psychogeography: disentangling the modern conundrum of psyche and place* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007).

Simic, Zora, ''Unmistakably a Book by a Feminist': Helen Garner's Monkey Grip and Its Feminist Contexts', in *Everyday Revolutions*, ed. by Michelle Arrow and Angela Woollacott (ANU Press, 2019), pp. 139-60.

Smith, Rosalind, 'Dark Places: True Crime Writing in Australia', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature: JASAL* 8 (2008), pp. 17-30.

Smyrk, Katherine, 'Loss on Hope', *The Big Issue* (September 22 2016) <https://www.thebigissue.org.au/blog/2016/09/22/loss-on-hope/> [Accessed March 15 2017].

Stanko, Elizabeth, 'Safety talk: Conceptualizing women's risk assessment as a 'technology of the soul', *Theoretical Criminology* 1 (1997), pp. 479-499.

Stewart, Kathleen, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

Sullivan, Rebecca, 'The post about #EurydiceDixon Australian women are sharing on social media' *news.com.au*, June 15 2018,

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/the-post-about-eurydicedixon-australian-women-are-sharing-on-social-media/news-story/5131bf8ff310bd2fd0fe600c888e5295> [Accessed July 1 2018].

Summers, Anne, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The colonisation of women in Australia* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2016).

Summers, Anne, *The End of Equality: Work, Babies and Women's Choices in 21st Century Australia* (Sydney: Random House, 2003).

Summers, Anne, *The misogyny factor* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2013).

Terzis, Gillian, 'Death Trends: Hashtag Activism and the Rise of Online Grief', *Kill Your Darlings* 22 (2015), pp. 9-24.

'The Black Pub of Melbourne', The Museum of Lost Things (May 29 2018) <https://www.museumoflost.com/black-pub-melbourne/> [Accessed June 10 2020].

'The French Window', *National Gallery of Victoria*, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/5657/> [Accessed March 20 2019].

The Go-Betweens, *Here comes a city* (London: EMI, 2005).

Thompson, Jay Daniel, and Rebecca Louise, 'Sexed Violence and Its (Dis)Appearances: Media Coverage Surrounding the Murders of Jill Meagher and Johanna Martin', *Outskirts: feminisms along the edge,* 31 (2014) <https://www.outskirts.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/volume-31/jay-daniel-thompson-and-rebecca-louise> [Accessed April 7 2016].

Treagus, Mandy, 'Playing Like Ladies: Basketball, Netball and Feminine Restraint', *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 22 (2005), pp. 88-105.

Tumarkin, Maria, *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy* (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005).

Vashti, Lorelei, *Dress, Memory: A Memoir of My Twenties in Dresses* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2014).

Wahlquist, Calla, 'Tanya Day died 17 days after falling asleep on a train. Now her family want answers', The Guardian (August 24 2019) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/aug/24/tanya-day-death-custody-inquest-family-want-answers> [Accessed December 12 2019]

Walsh, Richard, 'Narrative Theory at the Limit', in *Theory Matters: The Place of Theory in Literary and Cultural Studies Today*, ed. by Martin Middeke and Christoph Reinfandt (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 265-79.

‘We need culture of respect for women, Turnbull says in Eurydice Dixon tribute’, *Guardian* (June 18 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jun/18/we-need-culture-of-respect-for-women-turnbull-says-in-eurydice-dixon-tribute> [Accessed August 20 2018].

Weinstock, Jeffrey, ‘Introduction: The Spectral Turn’ in *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* ed. by María del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 61-67.

Wells, Dianna, ‘On Edge’, *Meanjin* 69 (Spring 2010), pp. 20-25.

Wood, Charlotte, ‘Helen Garner's Monkey Grip makes me examine who I am’, The Guardian (October 25 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/oct/25/helen-garners-monkey-grip-makes-me-examine-who-i-am> [Accessed September 10 2019].