Out of Bounds:

Three Expatriate Australian Women Writers

(1890-1990)

by

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ABSTRACT

Out of Bounds: Three Expatriate Australian Women Writers (1890-1990)

Expatriation by Australan women writers constitutes a specific brand of cultural displacement that has been productive of certain knds of texts and modes of authorship. This thesis offers a reading of the thematics of expatriation in the worl of Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead and Janette Turner Hosipital. From the expatriate's estrangement in *Maurice Guest* (1908), through the rites of passage of *For Love Alone* (1944) and the renegade's transgression in *I'm Dying Laughing* (1987), to the doubling and disappearances in *Borderline* (1985) and *The Last Migician* (1992), these three expatriate women writers persistently thematise expatriate mobility at the level of genre, narrative, figure, plot and character. These texts, read chronologically, offer a wider range of engagenent with identity and place than the construction of 'home' that has more usually preoccupied Australian critics. Their representations of gender, sexuality, writing and movement, as they are shaped by displacemen and colonialism and intertextually implicated in one another, deliver readings of origin but also of cultural diffrence, plural identities and internationality.

I propose that it was only at Federation that Australian expatriation acquired meaning, and that the advent of postmodernity has destbilised the meanings of expatriate and expatriate textual production, making Australian expatriation very mucha twentieth century phenomenon. Where the colonial expatriate once turned exclusively to Europe, the expatriate postcolonial woman has become a global traveller who continues to work within and through the transgressive politics surrounding the emergence of the twentieth century woman writer. This thesis investigates expatriatetextual production and reception as a method of historical and cultural grounding. A postcolonial interest in nation and identity, as well as feminist questions about location, writing and agency and psychoanalytic accunts of the dynamics of subjectivity extend and complicate this methodology.

The Australian expatrate woman writer maintains a 'double vision' of both the inside and outside of the national systems she reresents. Her texts disturb various boundaries of cultural classification and authority; insitutions that seek to ontain the transgressive danger of social, ethnic, gendered, sexual and textual hybridity. The itinerant Australia woman writer is a figure whose improper liminality is read as a category error, and therefore her texts, wich thematise this ambiguity, have been regarded as lacking definition or intelligibility. Richardson, Stead and Hospital's texts display a productive engagement with these problematics of marginality, readability and literar authority. Their work forms an important set of postcolonial women's writing which needs to forge legible saces for that literary production generated from the relation between the movement into print and into the worl.

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This thesis is dedicated with love to Jan Morrison

who loved to read, and to travel.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1994, the permanent judges' panel of the Miles Franklin Award, one of Australia's most prestigious literary prizes, excluded Elizabeth Jolley's *The Georges' Wife*, Frank Moorhouse's *Grand Days* and Maurilia Meehan's *Fury* from their shortlist. Their decision was evidently based on an attempt to maintain a particular interpretation of Franklin's will of 1954, which set up a legacy to establish an annual literary prize for the author of a published novel or a play that depicts "Australian life in any of its phases."[1] For the permanent panel, this stipulation apparently rendered ineligible any narrative in which a substantial portion of the action took place outside Australia. Although the politics of literary prizes are complicated, even murky, the exclusion of the texts of Moorhouse, Jolley and Meehan indicates the persistently complex status of place or location as criterion for Australian national identity. Texts that represent national landscapes, with the Australian 'inside' the nation-space, play an important role in the construction of a stable Australian literary canon, which has valorised texts that speak unequivocally about Australian national identity. This emerging canon has excluded, or seen as marginal, texts that explore identities and places 'outside' the nation. Texts that situate themselves 'outside' Australia interrupt institutional hierarchies of genre, geography and canonicity and, therefore, literary and national taxonomies. Texts by or about expatriation threaten canonical law with the categorical confusion between inside and outside.

The politics of the shortlist exclusions of 1994 were to be overshadowed by the Helen Demidenko-Darville controversy the following year. Helen Demidenko won the Vogel award (for a first novel) in 1993 for *The Hand That Signed The Paper*, a novel which deals with an account by second generation Ukrainian, Fiona Kovalenko, of her Ukranian family's role in the Holocaust. After a great deal of publicity about her authentic Ukrainian origins (including her

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[1] Bruce Bennett. "Expatriates," *Voices* (Spring 1994): 61-62. Andrew Riemer, *The Demidenko Debate* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996) 135-136. Laurie Hergenhan, ed. *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1988).

appearance at awards ceremonies in traditional dress), and the growing importance of migrant writing for Australian national identity and literature, 'Demidenko' won the Miles Franklin award in 1995. Soon after she was 'revealed' to be Helen Darville, daughter of English migrants. The revelation of her elaborate 'masquerade' was bound up with charges of literary hoaxing, anti-Semitism, plagiarism and fraudulent ethnicities, all of which provoked further heated literary and cultural debate about history, authorship, authenticity, migrant writing, institutional support and multiculturalism. In the context of the year before, the eligibility of *The Hand That Signed The Paper* seems to rest on the fact that the narrator, Fiona, was positioned 'inside' Australia, although the main action of the book took place in the Ukraine in World War II, and was not significantly about a phase of Australian life.

It is possible that the 1995 Miles Franklin award was a fascinating reaction by the permanent panel to claims made in 1994 about the parochialism of the Australian literary milieu in an increasingly multicultural and global context. Therefore, the awards in both 1994 and 1995 exhibit, albeit differently, a colonial uncertainty about location and identity, especially refracted through the figures of the expatriate writer and migrant writer. The award of the Miles Franklin to Helen Demidenko-Darville in 1995 more than usually demonstrated that when the constituitive 'outside' of the national canon is brought 'inside,' a certain explosiveness is possible. The tension between the national and international for Australian identity, evident in 1994 shortlist exclusions, finds unexpected expression over *The Hand That Signed The Paper*. Taken together, the Miles Franklin Awards of 1994 and 1995 demonstrate a shifting uneasiness about the constitution of Australian national identity and the textual renditions of that identity.

These contradictions and confusions are exemplified in the life-phases of Miles Franklin herself—both as novelist and political activist. Franklin is most often identified as the nationalist, patriot and public patron of the arts that she became later in her life. It is less well known that she was an expatriate in Chicago, London and the Balkans between 1906 and 1933. Twenty seven years must surely be considered a significant 'phase' of an Australian's life. *My Brilliant Career*, published in the auspicious year of 1901 (the year of Australian Federation), was championed by Henry Lawson, and was squarely claimed for

the realist-nationalist literary tradition constructed throughout the late nineteenth century.[2] Henry Lawson, Marcus Clarke and others offered stabilising accounts of place and history to the young colonies. At the end of the nineteenth century and through Federation their romanticised images of a patriotic landscape, claims about Australian talent and the 'fledgling' Australian tradition are part of the complex dynamics of colonial national identity.

Nevertheless, as Bennett points out, Franklin's writing from her years overseas demonstrates an experiment with pseudonyms, genres and a continual and uneasy contention with the meanings and representations of childhood and 'home.'[3] Franklin used the pseudonym, 'Brent of Bin Bin,' to sign six novels, begun before returning to Australia in the late 1920s. She also wrote an historical chronicle, *All That Swagger*, based on her family history and signed under her own name.[4] Neither the 'Brent of Bin Bin' novels, nor *All That Swagger* achieved the success of *My Brilliant Career*, which suggests that, for Miles Franklin, the distance from Australia instantiated a falling away from some original wholeness and source of creativity. It is the recognition and coherence that the national literary tradition lends Franklin's fiction that provides the context for Franklin's patriotic identification with Australia after her return, her reserve about her considerable textual production overseas, her requirement for Australian talent to commit to home and the construction of a literary tradition as mutually constitutive terms.[5]

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[2] Leonie Kramer, ed. *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*(Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1981) G. A. Wilkes, *Australian Literature: A Conspectus* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969); John Docker, *The Nervous Nineties: Australian Culture in the 1890s* (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1991); John Docker, *In A Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1984); Bruce Clunies Ross, "Australian Literature and Australian Culture," *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*(Ringwood, Vic.:Penguin, 1988) 4-26; Vance Palmer, *The Legend of the Ninties* (1954); Russell Ward, *The Australian Legend* (1958).

[3] Bennett "Expatriates" 62.

[4] Miles Franklin, *All that Swagger* (1936), Franklin's pseudonym 'Brent of Bin Bin' caused sustained speculation as to 'true identity.' The novels published under this name: *Up the Country* (1928), *Ten Creeks Run* (1930), *Back to Bool Bool* (1931), *Prelude to Waking* (1950), *Cockatoos* (1954) and *Gentlemen at Gyang Gyang* (1956), the last two appearing after her death.

[5] Miles Franklin, *Laughter, Not For a Cage: Notes on Australian Writing: with biographical emphasis on the struggles, function and achievement of the novel in the 3 half-centuries* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1956) 146.

Despite being an expatriate for twenty seven years, and well before A. A. Phillips' production of the term "cultural cringe," Miles Franklin proceeded to generate a now-familiar ambivalence that Australians reserve for their expatriate artists.[6] Franklin attacked Henry Handel Richardson for being a "permanent expatriate" and for writing fiction that the English admired.[7] Henry Handel Richardson, ten years Franklin's senior and an expatriate since 1888, also used a pseudonym and also experimented with alternative selves—such as musician, translator and cultural critic. Yet, for Richardson, the expatriate confusions of identity, and the melancholy tension of separation from origins, in fact provided a spur to successful creativity. Richardson's trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony,* an historical fiction now regarded as a centrepiece of the nationalist-realist tradition (written entirely in a sound proof room in London) problematises Franklin's 'natural connection' between home-nurtured talent and the definitions of 'home' for a unified literary tradition. Nevertheless, Richardson waited a long time for recognition and when recognition came from Australia, she was acknowledged for her 'Australian' novels, *The Getting of Wisdom* and *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony.*

Christina Stead was denied the Britannica Award in 1967 because her long absence from Australia put her eligibility (read her national identity) into question, although a proportion of her fiction is set in Australia. Again, definitions of Australian national identity are tied to location, both of the text and the author. In Stead's case, the concern about location certainly overlaid misgivings about the propriety of language and genre. Stead not only failed to reside in Australia, she also lacked Richardson's realist mode. Stead's fiction has consistently prompted anxieties about textual decorum and 'proper place.'

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6 A. A. Phillips, "The Cultural Cringe," *Meanjin* 9.4 (1950).

7 Miles Franklin wrote under more than one pseudonym. Miles Franklin was the author of *The Net of Circumstance* (1915) under the pseudonym Mrs Ogniblat l'Artsau (i.e. Talbingo, Australia). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature,* ed. Barry Andrews, William H. Wilde and Joy Hooton (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1985) 280.

The role of the expatriate writer in Australian cultural production still prompts heated debate about the relationships between location, national identity, national canon, authorship and literary reputation. For example, at the 1997 Melbourne Writer's Festival, *The Australian* reported on a seminar discussion of the Australian writer's relation to home under the title "Roaming Writers Deny Cultural Treason," extensively quoting the "treasonous" Frank Moorhouse and Peter Carey.[8] In the light of the implications of cultural betrayal and desertion to an alluring yet impure international context, both authors emphasised the role of location as one of a writer's most perplexing questions. Carey and Moorhouse claimed that 'roaming' was not 'deserting' and that the keen Australian sense of artistic loss was to do with the newness of the nation.

The advent of the seminar, and the report of it, reveal the ongoing contestation of the dialectical meanings and status of expatriation and nation.[9] The central concern of the contemporary debate is substantially represented in most previous discussions about expatriate writing: the romance of origins or the writing of 'home.'[10] It is time that Australian readers and critics consider the rich spectrum of textual manifestations of the effects of mobility, including and beyond constructions of the national, especially since the national is rarely itself figured in some 'pure' form. Accordingly, this thesis will examine how

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[8] Peter Carey won the 1998 Miles Franklin Award for *Jack Maggs*. He is reportedly planning a book based on the Ned Kelly legend. A number of male expatriate writers have engaged with epic narratives of Australian national identity: Patrick White, *Voss;* David Malouf, *The Great World* and *Conversations at Curlew Creek;* Martin Boyd, *The Langton Quartet*, among others. It is interesting to note that the bulk of contemporary electronic references to Australian literary expatriation relate to print media. By comparison, most book material relates to Australian business expatriation.

[9] When Moorhouse elected to speak on the relationship of expatriate artist and writers to notions of Australian-ness in a global context at a literary lunch in the same year, the audience aggressively objected, claiming they had come to hear about his latest book, not about the literary and cultural politics attached to the development 'elsewhere' of the Australian writer. Peter Collins, "Moorhouse in the Minefield" *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 Sept. 1995: 17. In an interview with Peter Craven, Moorhouse designated the Miles Franklin Award as the 'Anglo-Celtic Sydney Settlers Award,' with the implication that "it is there to honour some kind of pioneering spirit." Peter Craven, "Eyes on the Prize," *Sunday Age* 1 June (1997): 8.

[10] Norman Bartlett, "A Clutch of Expatriates," *Australians are Different* (Perth: Artlook Books, 1988); Adrian Mitchell, "Fiction," *The Oxford History of Australian Literature*, ed. Leonie Kramer (Melbourne Oxford UP, 1981) *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* was the first of the major Australian reference books to have an index entry for expatriate.

mobility and displacement manifest in broad narrative and figurative terms. With a focus on a poetics of displacement, I examine texts by three Australian women writers whose careers span the twentieth century – Henry Handel Richardson (1880-1946), Christina Stead (1902-1983) and Janette Turner Hospital (1940-). All three writers engage with different meanings and constructions of home, but not exclusively. It is the interrelation of *both* home and away, the national and the international, the inside and the outside, that shape this thesis.

Within months of the 1998 paperback publication of Janette Turner Hospital's seventh book, *Oyster*, the University of Queensland Press also produced a new, definitive edition of *Maurice Guest* which 'restores' 20,000 'original' words after 90 years.[11] These contemporaneous events mark the temporal boundaries of this thesis, from the period in which *Maurice Guest* was written and published (1896-1908) to the publication of Janette Turner Hospital's sixth book, *The Last Magician,* in 1992. Five novels provide the basis for my investigation into the contested meanings of gender, international movement, national and representational identity throughout the twentieth century: Henry Handel Richardson's *Maurice Guest* (1908), Christina Stead's *For Love Alone* (1944) and *I'm Dying Laughing* (1986), and Janette Turner Hospital's *Borderline* (1985) and *The Last Magician* (1992). These texts explicitly narrativise and thematise expatriation, and therefore directly bear on the emergence of Australian women as worldly subjects and producers of texts from Federation. It was not until the nationalist push in the 1890's and Federation in 1901 that Australia was sufficiently autonomous, in its own estimation, that one could name it a *patria*, and ex-patriate—from home to elsewhere (Europe), instead of from the colonies to 'home.' If, by the 1890s, expatriate was a term only beginning to

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[11] This impressive edition of *Maurice Guest* was produced as one of the first in the series of the Academy Editions of Australian Literature. The purpose of the edition is to provide a fully annotated text for teaching and research which involves the text in interesting constructions of the Australian literary canon. Bruce Steele and Clive Probyn's introduction positions *Maurice Guest* as 'foundational'—proving the capacity of critical editions to construct literary canons and resurrect literary capital. Henry Handel Richardson, *Maurice Guest,* The Academy Edition of the Humanities, ed. Clive Probyn and Bruce Steele (St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1998). The exhaustive annotations of *Maurice Guest* continue the work begun by John George Robertson in 1928-9 in his "Essay on the Art of Henry Handel Richardson," *Myself When Young* (1948; Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1992). This work of restoration and translation poses interesting questions about the politics of critical editions and their institutional authority.

have application in the Australian context, by the 1990s the received meanings of expatriate have destabilised. As Ros Pesman has suggested ". . . when an event ends, its history begins."[12]

In the late twentieth century, any understanding of the phenomenon of Australian expatriation should proceed in an international context. What Stephen Kern refers to as the "culture of time and space" in the 1890s represented a break with the balance of the nineteenth century.[13] The space-time compressions of the 1990s represent just as profound a shift. The "culture of time and space," with its historical developments and recomposition, and its impact on subjectivity, social relations and the cultural and political production of identity, centrally affects the material processes and textual representations of Australian expatriation. Why and how does expatriate literary experience become possible or necessary at particular twentieth century junctures? What kinds of knowledges, stories and theories are produced through the process of cultural displacement we call 'expatriation'? What are the complexities of expatriate situations of reading and writing? What impact does gender have on mobility and how does gender produce location? How do nationality, female authorship and displacement interact?

During the twentieth century, increasing numbers of people have become disengaged or dislocated from national, regional and ethnic locations and identities.[14] The twentieth century has produced unprecedented numbers of refugees as people have fled their home to avoid famine, genocide or incarceration. Immigration, a significant category of movement in the twentieth century, does not describe the situation of guest workers, illegal aliens, or any other workers who spend anywhere from a few months to an entire lifetime in another country without legalisation of their residential or national status. Poor people move in large numbers around the globe in search of work either by choice or circumstance. Although tourism, with its

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12 Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad* (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1995) 3.

13 Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1983).

14 My discussion here is indebted to Caren Kaplan's work: *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).

association of leisure time and privilege, is the world's largest growth industry, the numerical majority of people who move in this world do so in order to survive life-threatening events.[15] Mobility is not relativistic, or disconnected from economic and social vectors. Displacement and the way in which modes of displacement generate cultural practices must be considered in ethical light of 'who is acting and from where.' The political history of displacement in modernity encourages the critic to make distinctions between modes and kinds of displacement. Jane Marcus has called this the "ethics of elsewhereness."[16]

In her deconstruction of modernist discourses of displacement, Caren Kaplan alerts us to the fact that in the production of literary history since the nineteenth century, it is *exile* as a category of movement that has held a privileged position. She claims that exile has played an ongoing role in Western narratives of political formation and cultural identity stretching back to the Hellenic era. Exile became particularly implicated in high modernist artistic practice, when critical mythologisation of the artist in exile offered aesthetic practice as recompense for singularity, solitude, estrangement and alienation. The "strain of displacement" that produced significant modernist experimentations and insights does not account for refugees, emigrés and dispossession. [17] Not only, then, is exile a fortunate producer of artistic insight *via* estrangement, but all the major studies of expatriation or exile have been by men and about men.[18] In the bulk of Euro-American theory, the exile of the

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[15] Kaplan 4-5.

[16] Jane Marcus, "Alibis and Legends: The Ethics of Elsewhereness, Gender and Estrangement," *Women's Writing in Exile*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram (Chapel Hill and London: U of North Carolina P, 1989) 269-294.

[17] Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*. It is not possible to survey the extensive literature of European, modernist, male literary expatriation here. Joseph Conrad, Henry James and James Joyce are of great interest, however, and require serious consideration with respect to Australian expatriate writing.

[18] Andrew Gurr, *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature*(Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981); Stoddard Martin, *The Great Expatriate Writers* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992); Terry Eagleton, *Exiles and Emigrés: Studies in Modern Literature*(London: Chatto and Windus, 1970); Malcolm Bradbury, *The Expatriate Tradition in American Literature*(London: British Association for American Studies, 1982). Michael Seidel, *Exile and Narrative Imagination* (New Haven Yale UP, 1986); Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982); Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980). Another version of male modernist expatriate as "homeless exile" has surfaced in the shape of V. S. Naipaul, see Robert Nixon, "London Calling:

male writer has become the paramount model for the production of modern literature, which adopts exile as an ideology of artistic production and establishes a theory of exile as an enabling fiction. The work of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, Americans of the Lost Generation such as Henry Miller and Ernest Hemingway, Frankfurt School theorists like Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin and contemporary cosmopolitan intellectuals such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said have been mythologised and mystified in high modernist discourse in a way that ultimately absorbs their ethnic, racial and class differences, and eventually aestheticises homelessness and refugeeism.[19]

It is only relatively recently that systematic studies of the role of gender in modernism have been produced which have contributed to less romanticised views about privileged modernist estrangement. Female expatriate modernism, which provides a fascinating backdrop to this thesis, traces what Benstock calls "an internal seam in the fabric of modernism."[20] Even more particularly, "Sapphic modernism" is a term used to refer to the work of Gertrude Stein and Djuna Barnes, who subverted both patriarchal language and compulsory heterosexuality. These studies suggest some of the varieties of ways in which women moved in the twentieth century. Kaplan argues that the absence of women writers from the discussion of exile as "redemptive authorial practice," and the crucial issue of class in both exile and literary/artistic communities, suggest that the question of writing a 'home' may be more complex than models of exile and authorship have allowed.[21] I would add nation and sexuality to this absent knot of gender, displacement and authorship.

V. S. Naipual and the License of Exile," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 81. 1 (1988): 1-38.

[19] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*. Trans E. F. N. Jephcott (London: NLB, 1974). Said's works: *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978; London: Penguin, 1991); *Culture and Imperialism*(London: Vintage, 1994, esp. chapter on movements and migrations); "Reflections on Exile" *Granta* 13 (1984): 159-172; "Between Worlds: Edward Said makes sense of his Life," *London Review of Books* 7 May (1998): 3-7.

[20] Shari Benstock, "Expatriate Modernism: Writing on the Cultural Rim," *Women's Writing in Exile*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram (Chapel Hill and London: U North Carolina P, 1989)19-40.

[21] Kaplan 119.

For my purposes, the usual conflation of exile and expatriation into a voluntary masculine endeavour results in the erasure of historically specific conditions of political movement and literary production. Shari Benstock claims that "the semantic scale of exile is narrower, its boundaries more determined, its effects more painful [than expatriation]."[22] In addition, I suggest that exile is a problematic term because the hegemonic centre that defines the geography of exile is always shifting. Once the category of expatriation is demarcated, then it is less possible to traffic in modernist stereotypes and mystified constructions. I agree that the difference between expatriation and exile for some categories, such as the postcolonial women writer, can be ambiguous. This thesis consistently provides a context of literary production and reception in the case of each of the expatriate Australian women writers, precisely in an attempt to resist the "ahistorical universalisation and mystification of social relations that Euro-American discourses of displacement often deploy."[23]

There are two current senses of the noun 'expatriate.' The first refers to someone who is driven or banished from his native country. This approximates the meanings of exile and is not often used. When we speak of the 'Australian expatriate' we more usually have in mind the second definition: a person who withdraws from his native country and/or has renounced his allegiance. In the most common usage, therefore, an expatriate is a voluntary exile. I want to retain some degree of voluntarism in 'expatriate' as a term for this thesis, in order to keep some sense of class privilege in view.

It is important to note that the distinction between expatriation and exile is difficult to manage when considering the postcolonial subject, specifically the Australian white settler expatriate-exile. The very practices that sent Australian men to Europe to further their education created a culture of alienation and subservience that privileged travel and displacement, based in the hegemonic

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[22] Shari Benstock, *Women Writers of the Left Bank, Paris, 1900-1940*, (Austin: U of Texas P, 1986); Scott, *The Gender of Modernism*; Marianne DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1991). The consideration of class is also beginning to find representation.

[23] Caren Kaplan 3.

geometry of centre and periphery that conditions perceptions of 'self' and 'other.' The locations of, and language systems for, 'home' were being settled throughout the nineteenth century; Australians were still 'returning home' (to Britain) more than a century after invasion. Ros Pesman makes this summary:

> Australians were the periphery because their world was Eurocentric and they were denizens of an empire and then a commonwealth whose centre lay on the other side of the globe. Long before the creation of empires, centres were sacred places, the sites of knowledge, power, culture, authentication, recognition, redemption.[24]

The status of home for the colonial subject is anomalous because home is perceived in both directions. As such, points of cultural and social identity are somewhat indeterminate, feeding into confusions of here and there, home and exile. It is even more difficult to manage the distinction between exile and expatriate, and centre and periphery when the subject is an Australian woman.

There is a dialectical relation between expatriation and nation.[25] Displacement definitionally refers to a concept of placement, dwelling, location. If, in Benedict Anderson's famous phrase, the nation is an "imagined community," what is the status of the "native land" that expatriation and exile definitionally depend upon? Australia is the "lucky country" but with fears about the "tyranny of distance."[26] It is a white settler colony, with relations to Britain as the imperial centre, and America as the neo-imperial heart of a global economy. The relation of Australia's imagined community to its dispossessed indigenous people is vital since the violent and silenced indigenous history points out that the notion of home is an illusion of safety and coherence based on the exclusion of specific histories of opposition and resistance. The Australian struggle to achieve categorical self-identity—the drive to achieve a paradoxical

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[24] Pesman also points out that "The history of non-indigenous settlers begins in travel, in the journeys of the wanderers, exiles, adventurers and immigrants." Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995) 4-5.

[25] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983; London and New York: Verso, 1991); Homi K. Bhabha *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) and *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

[26] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966); Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1971).

singularity of collective identity—is simultaneously productive of heterogeneity with its variety of hybrid figures and competing sovereignties. Categorical imperatives such as nation dictate against mixture—lapses of purity, risk of impurity, anomaly and monstrosity. Expatriate, migrant and indigenous narrative exemplify just such risk and heterogeneity. Expatriate and migrant writing are in turn homogenised as areas of plurality, disruption, deferred meaning and process, and thereby safely contained by the centre, which desires the existence of the marginal but not marginal contaminations and contradictions. Australian hegemonic cultural-nationalism is the "other" to migrant and expatriate textual and cultural heterogeneity.

Homi Bhabha suggests that there is an ambivalence at the heart of concepts of nation. I argue that expatriation is similarly ambivalent—neither is singular nor unified, rather both are unstable and heterogenous in their manifestations. Bhabha claims that the nation is a curiously hybrid realm, a 'modern Janus:' "The locality of national culture is neither unified not unitary in relation to itself." Although nation seriously aspires to singularity, ideas about national identity have not to date been "definitively superseded by. . .new realities of internationalism, multi-nationalism or even late capitalism."[27] Eve Sedgwick has argued that "the existence of habitation/nation systems, and their great variety worldwide, tend to become most visible most readily as 'exceptional' stresses concerning exile and expatriation, sanctuary and guest workers etc." For example, Sedgwick compares the 'nationality' of "a Gypsy in Germany, that of a Turkish guest worker in France and that of a person who works in Johannesburg, lives in Soweto and has an official assignment to a 'homeland' s/he may never have seen." Sedgwick suggests that this demonstrates "how ragged and unrationalizable may be not only the rights and entailments, but the definitional relations of the habitation/nation systems of the modern world."[28] I extend Sedgwick's point about 'exceptional' stresses to argue that expatriates and exiles are "limit cases," cases that test the boundaries of national discourses of inside and outside.

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[27] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 1-2.

[28] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Nationalisms and Sexualities in the Age of Wilde," *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker et. al. (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 239-240. Sedgwick usefully teases out the implication of gender and sexuality in narratives of nation.

Expatriation is also definitionally bound to the patriarchal, whose law effects and enforces expatriation as well as exile: 'removal from *his* native land according to an edict or sentence, penal expatriation or banishment.' These definitions suggest provocative links between gender, the law, native land and banishment. As Joanna Sharp points out, although Anderson's study investigates the way in which communities imagine themselves, he does not conceive of the "imagined citizen," who might be female.[29] The citizenship status of women is called into question here, a matter which has historically effected the possibilities of female authorship, since origin and authorship have been legally and socially linked since the early modern period.[30] Ros Pesman comments that the woman had the important colonial task of being the custodian and transmitter of genteel European culture in Australia. Women are traditionally conceived of as the guardians and keepers of the inside—of home and family as a small analogue for nation—invisible, but essential. In the last twenty years, Australian social historians such as Kay Schaeffer, Beverley Kingston, Anne Summers, Richard White, and Roslyn Pesman and others have undertaken invaluable studies of the role of woman in narratives of Australian national identity and discourses of nationalism.[31] Critics such as Drusilla Modjeska and Susan Sheridan have carried this kind of work into the field of literature.[32] This is a body of work that Australian cultural studies is beginning to question and extend.

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[29] Joanna P. Sharp, "Gendering Nationhood: A Feminist Engagement with National Identity," *Bodyspace: Destabilising Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan, London and New York: Routledge, 1996): 97-108; 99.

[30] Carla Hesse, "Reading Signatures: Some Legal Contingencies of Female Authorship in France, 1750-1850," *Critical Matrix* 2.1 (1990). See also Sean Burke, *Authorship: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995).

[31] Modjeska, Drusilla *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945* (1981; North Ryde: Angus and Robertson-Harper Collins, 1991); Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Image and Identity, 1688-1980,* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983); Beverly Kingston, *Not That Kind of Girl*; Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1975).

[32] Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945* (1981; North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson-Harper Collins, 1991); Susan Sheridan, *Along the Faultlines: Sex, Race and Nation in Australian Women's Writing, 1880s-1930s* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995).

In brief, the position available to women in the Australian national imaginary was indoors, well-behaved, silent and alienated. In addition, as Kay Schaeffer demonstrates, women were repeatedly figured as the unforgiving landscape that their domestic and rural labour sought to tame, or as the 'Drover's Wife,' amidst Gothic alienation. Woman as a figure in the public realm, as writer, intellectual or artist, or even as representative of Australia in any substantial way, was precluded by a masculinist Australian tradition of mateship and the bush. This is the Australian version of the function of women as the foundation of the symbolic order without ever gaining access to it. The mainstream discourses of Australian society effectively excluded women writers. Drusilla Modjeska refers to the Australian women writers of the 1930s as being "exiles at home." The internal exile of women is a model Luce Irigaray used in the late 70s to describe the situation of women within patriarchal language.[33]

Irigaray has elaborated a theory of feminine enunciation which depends on a site she identifies as "elsewhere;" a location that signifies the exile of specifically feminine language and desire in patriarchal systems. Irigaray asserts that "if women are such good mimics then it is because they are not simply reabsorbed in this function, they also remain elsewhere."[34] If women speak and write, but maintain a problematic elsewhereness from their own discourse, they are already 'outsiders' in culture. Shari Benstock argues that the roles played by exile and expatriation in Modernist writing are not the same for men and women Modernists, for the reason that, for women, the definition of patriarchy already assumes the reality of expatriate *in patria*. For women the expatriation is internalised, experienced as an exclusion imposed from the outside and lived from the inside in such a way that the separation of the outside from inside cannot be easily distinguished.[35] Postcolonial women writers are triply

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[33] Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945* (1981; North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson-Harper Collins, 1991). Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans., Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985).

[34] Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1985).

[35] Shari Benstock, "Expatriate Modernism: Writing on the Cutlural Rim," *Women's Writing in Exile*, ed. Mary Lyynn Broe and Angela Ingram (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 20.

marginalised. Their geographic displacement distances them from the European centres of publishing and marketing. Their gender further limits access to metropolitan centres of production and consumption of writing from their own cultures. Finally, their relegation to the margins of their cultures because of their gender alienates them internally from the act of writing.

It is clear that sexual difference is an important, if not the only, difference between masculine and feminine expatriation. Ros Pesman has argued that although "from at least the end of the last century, young Australian women seem to have been infected with a passion for overseas travel:"

> It is men who have embarked on the heroic journeys of myth and literature, of exploration, of naming, of adventure, of quest, of discovery of self and the world. The Grand Tour was a male rites of passage, a psychological process of male acculturation and sowing of wild oats. Travel was male territory and its metaphors were male gendered . . . When women travelled they had no metaphors of their own . . . women's archetypal role is that of Penelope, the immobile point of stability, the guardian of the hearth, the audience for the telling of the tale.[36]

The material access to, and the narratives and metaphors for travel have been masculine.[37] In asserting the importance of sexual difference in this history of expatriation, I invest in a number of categories: the category of woman, the category of the female author, and the combined category of the expatriate woman writer. I will assess the function of category with other methodologies further on.

From the point of view of constructions of Australian national identity, and the prevailing discursive structures for representing travel, it seems unthinkable for Australian women to be artists and expatriates. Yet it was also eminently possible—a matter of exchanging one set of impossible or constraining identifications at home for something else abroad. If women were

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[36] Pesman 6, 1.

[37] An important theoretical context for this thesis is the recent work on women travellers in the 19th century: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) and Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonisation* (London: Routledge, 1991). The historical recovery and theoretical analysis of the role of Euro-American and non-Western women travellers challenged the hegemony of the masculine, gentleman traveller.

"exiles at home," then they should have been doubly exiled abroad, but it is clear that the women were well trained to deal with the alien, the foreign to "read the cues of adaptation."[38] Janet Wolff has claimed that "for the woman writer who is either geographically displaced . . . or culturally marginalised . . . it may be her very identity as a woman which enables a radical re-vision of her home and exile." She goes on to argue that "displacement . . . can be quite strikingly productive" generating new perceptions of place and relationships between places. Wolff suggests that dislocation can facilitate personal transformation, "which may take the form of 'rewriting' the self. . . discovering new forms of self-expression."[39] In this light, expatriation is conceived of as a positive disruption. Giving up the safe but limiting place of the family for another place that is unknown is a kind of self-displacement that is concurrently inside and outside, and provides what Teresa de Lauretis identifies as an "ex-centric" point of view. De Lauretis rewrites dislocation as a voluntary and politically necessary exploration 'beyond the bounds' that is both painful and fruitful.[40] Yet, Australian women's expatriation also operated as a brand of gender trespass that entailed a transgression of the boundary between public and private, inside and outside by an unspeakable desire. Such a subversion of hegemonic discourses was potentially dangerous and often explosive.

Throughout the twentieth century the Australian woman artist has sought overseas exposure and training, learning to make the negative movements of estrangement productive both artistically and economically.[41] In a number of instances, expatriation was an enabling process in terms of building materials,

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38 Pesman 10.

39 Janet Wolff. *Resident Alien: Feminist Cultural Criticism* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995) 9.

40 Teresa de Lauretis, "Eccentric Subjects."

41 Refer to Diana Brydon, "'Buffoon Odysseys:' Australian Expatriate Fiction by Women," *Aspects of Australian Fiction: Essays presented to John Colmer*, ed. Alan Brissenden (Nedlands: U of Western Australia Press, 1990) 73-85; Kate Lilley, *Christina Stead: Writing Expatriation, Diverse Voices: Essays on Twentieth Century Women's Writing from around the World*, ed. Harriet Devine Jump (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991) 160-184; Ros Pesman, *Duty Free*; Drusilla Modjeska, Stella Bowen: Herbert Blaiklock lecture, 1996; General books of interest on women and mobility by Janet Wolff, Rachel Bowlby, Elspeth Probyn, Caren Kaplan, Rosi Braidotti.

markets and reputation. Therefore, female authorship and expatriation was sometimes inextricably related, but not because authorship was an aesthetic recompense for estrangement and uncertainty. Where travel and the status of the traveller abroad offered one way for the male author to commodify authorship, the woman writer finally had access to publication. In the case of Henry Handel Richardson and Stead, this was due to direct aid from their husbands. Unfortunately, the structures of gender and compulsory heterosexuality travelled relatively intact. Even though Ros Pesman declares "we had no doubt that life was freer, more tolerant, and less repressive over there. [And] of course we were right, not because there was necessarily different, but because the constraints were not our constraints, the neighbours were not our neighbours," gender, sexuality, authority and national identity had to be constantly negotiated. [42]

This thesis argues that the Australian expatriate woman writer, by moving outside the nation-space and entering into writing, performs a category error. As such, the expatriate woman and her texts elude the boundedness of categories of gender, nation and certain genres. Her elusiveness from containment in 'proper place' locates her in the position of excess, hybridity, 'wandering,' imposture and risk, identified by Mary Russo as characteristic of female performance.[43] The expatriate woman writer's exteriority to national space and textual decorum (in other words, to unities of time, place and genre) defines the national and canonical 'inside' as inside. Her exclusion from canonical and national recognition is derived from this constitutive outsideness. The unresolved dialectic between the structural double of inside and outside is repeatedly enacted in her texts as marginality, ambivalence, disorientation, desire and lack. At the moment that the expatriate woman's text is transgressive, unintelligible and renegade (that is, predominantly defined through negation), it is also transformational, libratory and experimental.

In *Gender Trouble* and other texts, Judith Butler has pointed to the mechanics of categorisations (such as nation and gender) and their necessary failure as

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[42] Pesman 1.

[43] Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, Modernity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

In *Gender Trouble* and other texts, Judith Butler has pointed to the mechanics of categorisations (such as nation and gender) and their necessary failure as effects of institutions. Australian expatriate women writers (1890-1990) is a category which itself includes and excludes. Although the category (object of study) has the effect of implying that a poetics of displacement is the only interesting or explanatory aspect of texts by Richardson, Stead and Hospital, my aim is rather to cast new light and make new connections.

A project on 'women writers' often implies an attachment to a generalised notion of gender as a primary category of analysis.[44] As with nation, another foundational and fictional category, assumptions about collective identity mask power relations. Judith Butler's work provides a leading example of the vigilance with which the seamless category of "woman" (as a stable object of feminism) needs to be treated. She argues that gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional identities it has become impossible to separate out gender from political and cultural intersections. However, to problematise the assumption that the term "woman" denotes a common identity is not to refuse representational politics.[45] Rather than assuming the woman writer as a self-evident object of investigation, critics must acknowledge the idea of the woman writer itself has a history. Female authorship is an historical category, not a normative concept. Who writes and who signs should not be indifferent, which is not the same as suggesting the universal presence of a distinctively feminine aesthetic. Women's writing, like the category of 'woman' can not be discussed as a single category given the shifting axes of race, class, sexuality, subjectivity, cultural and historical context, different modes, conventions and functions.

The claim to gender specificity carries an irreducible charge of the troubling category of material experience. It seems to me that historical experience is

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[44] Feminist whose work has informed this project include: Teresa De Lauretis, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Susan Sheridan, Kate Lilley and Elizabeth Grosz.

[45] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) and the introduction to *Bodies That Matter* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

crucial to feminism. This thesis settles for some degree of essentialism in fraught areas of authorship and experience, positioning the link between textual representations and women's history in the context of history, contingency and struggle. In working on female rather than male expatriate texts, I participate in the wider feminist project of reading women writers together, both with and against one another, observing their use and reinvention of the gendered speaking position available to them in arenas of cultural production, as well as other aspects of cultural and political agency.

Theme is another mode of categorisation, and this thesis offers a thematic study of the expatriation, chronologically arranged. Theme is a recurrent element of narration and description, a sort of set-piece involving recurring subjects that appear again and again and often correspond to the conventional topos in rhetoric. The theme is often the 'point' of the literary work; its central idea, which we infer from our interpretation of the plot, imagery, symbolism. In her essay "Towards a Restricted Thematics," Naomi Schor claims that those textual practices that "suffer from what might be called, in the manner of Bachelard, an Ariadne complex," those readings that "cling to Ariadne's thread," should be termed thematic.[46] Schor comments that the persistence of thematics, even in poststructuralist readings, is a valorisation of continuity and "a guilty pleasure." For Schor, thematisation resembles weaving:

> The interweaving of all thematic series assumes in the Proustian daydream the form of a net in which the matter of the work is caught, or that of a network, both innervation and cybernetic, that enable us to circulate in it from link to link, knot to knot, "star" to "star" with the utmost freedom. [47]

In her pursuit of related questions of gender, reading, speech and writing, Schor proposes what she calls a "restricted thematics" because a "general" thematic reading tends toward an "infinite" reading. The field of possible themes must answer to the restrictions imposed by the call for literary specificity. Restricted thematics provide a system for establishing relations

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[46] Naomi Schor, *Breaking the Chain: Women, Theory and French Realist Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 3.

[47] Schor, Breaking *the Chain* 5.

between elements. Like genre, thematics cannot and does not account for an irreducible literariness of texts or the heterogeneity of discourse.

A number of theoretical developments of the last thirty years have made it possible to establish the work of expatriate Australian women writers as 'legible' objects of study as well providing a range of analytic tools with which to address it. The effect of Said's *Orientalism* in 1978 cannot be underestimated, inaugurating as it did, a combination of Foucault's poststructuralist insights with a Gramscian background into a new brand of postcolonial literary and cultural theory. Postcolonial theory poses questions about the constitution of identity, with a focus on historical specificity and the dynamic interconnections of nation, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, geography. Postcolonial studies investigate structures of alterity, marginality and hybridity, and sites of subversion, resistance and agency. Of course, colonial discourse and postcolonial theory produce accounts of geography, particularly in the relationship of metropolitan centre to colonial periphery.[48] Poststructuralism has also been very interested in "spatiality" as a submerged correlative to history, but the discussion on the "production of space" is tilted differently, as is the discussion of subjectivity.[49] The shape of Edward Said's life, and the texts he elects to read have also had important impacts on what is considered interesting to write, teach and read.

While postcolonial criticism can make overly general claims and totalising arguments that mask diverse and complicated experiences of domination and resistance—the alliances between postructuralism, cultural studies, feminist theory, that postcolonial discourse often signals are also very useful. My thesis is positioned at the intersection of feminism and postcolonialism in the main, but also uses the insights of postructuralist theories of narrative knowledge, with its focus on textuality, discourse and enunciation. Narrative knowledge is also indebted to psychoanalytic theory, which I have found integral to, but not

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[48] Edward Soja *Postmodern Geographies:The Reassertion of Space in Critical and Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989). Caren Kaplan cites a number of feminist geographers in this vein, in *Questions of Travel*, 143-187.

[49] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* and Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*. Elizabeth Grosz and Meaghan Morris have delivered feminist examinations of space.

the sole source of explanation for, the construction of identity in terms of sexual difference. I am interested in the specificity of different societies and periods and tailor methods and categories for the particular writer or period task at hand, using multiple categories when appropriate.

The postcolonial importance of location and subjectivity is shared by a significant portion of contemporary feminist theory, often referred to in shorthand as the "politics of location" which privileges a conjunctural approach to identity—favouring positionality over essences, and an awareness of the circumstances of the knowledge production by whom and for whom.[50] The politics of location is interested in theorising a feminine subjectivity that is neither essentialist nor radically indeterminate. Contemporary postcolonial feminism is interested in the issue of enunciation: its powers and possibilities, its location and sitings, and the relations and politics of discourse *vis a vis* sexual difference and gender, and other kinds of difference in the global-local context. The emphasis on location interrupts a global feminism by pointing to the different production of gender and sexuality in different situations. Location also emphasises a rearticulation of the particular and often the marginal.

The politics of location indicate an appropriate set of feminist positions for this project since the 'location' to which feminists refer is in fact part of travel—a series of encounters. Expatriation is a cultural configuration that intensifies the relations between text and context, location of writing and reading. Australian women's expatriation identifies questions of situated knowledges, national canon and identity. 'Location' is an axis that is multiply sited, like expatriation. The situated author is an excellent principle of locality, and I have grounded the expatriate female author in the production and reception of her texts, as well as some consideration of different strategies for occupying the site of authorship.[51]

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[50] Adrienne Rich coined the term "politics of location" in the early 1980s in *Blood, Bread and Poetry*. Other critics who articulate concerns of regional or local interests, diffference, exclusions, speaking positions: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ruth Frankenberg and Lata Mani, Caren Kaplan, Elspeth Probyn. The work of postmodern ethnographers such as James Clifford and Dean MacCannell has also been important.

[51] For discussion of female authorship see Nancy K. Miller, Peggy Kamuf, Judith Butler and Sean Burke.

Who writes of difference, travel and location? Expatriate women writers are a compelling group of writers on matters of difference, travel and location. This project began with an interest in the relationship between genre, dispossession and national identity. I wanted to consider further the role of gender and sexuality in this triumvirate, and then to consider more generally the effects of mobility on discourse and subjectivity. Little had been done on women and displacement before the appearance of Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram's *Women's Writing in Exile* in 1989. In terms of Australian women's expatriate writing, Diana Brydon is responsible for the almost lone article looking at Australian expatriate writers as a group.[52]

Why are so many Australian women writers expatriates? What is the connection between art and expatriation for women? Richardson and Stead, two large figures of the Australian literary canon, wrote difficult and substantial books that are infrequently taught. Hospital has also written self-consciously experimental texts. Is it geography, statelessness, literary criteria or sheer difficulty that explains this? I am interested in what effects mobility and international exposure produce in texts. Shifting interpersonal, political and geographical contexts relate to generic shifting in a way that demands investigation. These are writers for whom travel generated a complex system of representations.

I chose to work on the trio of Richardson, Stead and Hospital for a number of reasons. One was my interest in the differences and similarities across the twentieth century—I wanted to consider expatriation as an historical phenomenon, and the three authors are similar and different enough to provide a reasonable group. Each of the three exemplifies a diverse range of styles, from Richardson's Decadent late Romanticism, through Stead's quite anomalous version of realism, to Hospital's postmodernism. All three women sustained different and conflicted relations to authorship and authority, from the use of a *nom-de-plume* to metafiction. Certain over-arching concerns and

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[52] Diana Brydon, "'Buffoon Odysseys: Australian Expatriate Fiction by Women," *Aspects of Australian Fiction: Essays presented to John Colmer*, ed. Alan Brissenden (Nedlands: U of Western Australia P, 1990): 73-85.

at different historical moments. The historical dimension is important for illuminating change as well as continuity—and for working back and forward between text and context.

The thesis opens with a discussion of the nineteenth century *fin de siècle* and closes with the millenarian period one hundred years later. The discourse of *fin de siècle* appropriately concerns notions of beginnings and ends, since *fin de siècle* carries the nuance of decline yet also connotes the potential for *avant-garde* beginnings. Comparing the two 'ends' of century is an enlightening and seductive exercise, as Elaine Showalter, among others, has demonstrated.[53] The chronological structure of this thesis invites a formal and substantive comparison between Henry Handel Richardson and Janette Turner Hospital as examples of Australian expatriate women writers at the 'ends of century.' It is a structure that is committed to an historical theoretical practice, and is therefore wary of collapsing the specificity of context, fictional concern and practice. Ledger and McCracken refer to the "double-look of the 1890s and the 1990s" which can "only be reconstructed via the discursive practices available to us in the 1990s, which may of course include—but will undoubtedly exceed—those available in the last *fin de siecle.*"[54] Their doubled lens alerts us to the potential convergence of concerns at the cross-over between century, decade and millennia, as well as the pitfalls of construing parallels between periods in a way that ignores important discontinuities and dissimilarities.

I see the texts I examine as subject to categorical confusion. Rather than searching for a construction of Australia from "elsewhere," I am interested in the textual unwieldiness, belated hybidity and brilliant anticipation, multiple intertextualities, the presence of the nostalgic, the use of experimental language and a lack of textual decorum. In short, the 'cannot be made to fit' aspects of several of their texts answer to a poetics of displacement and a thematics of expatriation. I assess the cultural intelligibility and linguistic richness of the texts of Richardson, Stead and Hospital. I see a reservoir of textual energy and the production of "ex-centric" and original visions akin to migrant writing.

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53 Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* (New York: Viking, 1990).

54 Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken, eds. *Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 4.

the production of "ex-centric" and original visions akin to migrant writing. Nevertheless, the marginality of these expatriate women writers is relatively privileged compared with migrancy and forced refugeeism.

Stead knew of Richardson, and referred to her as "H.R.H." indicating her position in Australian letters by the time that Stead arrived in Europe. Janette Turner Hospital has plans to produce a book on Christina Stead, and the comparison between Hospital and Richardson has been made above. All three were outsiders of one kind or another (from family, cultural and intellectual restriction, religion), needing to escape narrow cultural definitions, and who found their marginality "in the world" productive or compelling. Sometimes they accept the Australian writer tag, and sometimes not.

I have omitted a consideration of the 1920s and the 1960s and 1970s. Expatriate modernism, although not Australian, and the babyboomer era of Clift and Johnston have been covered elsewhere. Stead's oeuvre covers a considerable portion of the mid-twentieth century. I have used the beginning of the chapter on Janette Turner Hospital to explain the post-war developments in literary discourse.

From *Maurice Guest* (1908) to *The Last Magician* (1992) there is a surprising continuity in themes and engagement, if not in style. All five texts examined here are linked by a thematics of expatriation and an aesthetics of displacement, rather than by a figuration of home. All five texts foreground expatriate characters who seek to escape oppressive cultural definitions, such as family, marriage, racial marginality. My analysis of the texts involves two main lines of approach. The first insists on some consideration, at varying length, of the context of production and reception for expatriate texts by Australian women writers. The second approach examines the thematisation of expatriation at the level of character, narrative and figure, genre and plot.

Maurice Guest displays an expatriate engagement with Europe and European practice. The text thematises unhomeliness as the experience of a provincial English expatriate. The text takes as one of its premises the dominant image of the artist at the end of the nineteenth century which was still that of the passionate outsider—passionate, eccentric and unconventional. Richardson,

herself an insider-outsider in Germany, produced in her first book a stunningly erudite and relentless study of masculinity, creativity, romanticism and alienation. The role of love as a vital homesickness or nostalgia resonates with expatriate experiences of on homelessness, lack, nostalgia and otherness.

The chapter on *Maurice Guest* has three main sections. In the first I examine what John George Robertson named the "foreign book." It is this foreign-ness that prompts me to read it over the construction of Australia in *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Richardson, positioned both inside and outside German culture, produced an English language text which established a critical distance on German debates of the *fin de siècle*, while variously saturated in the European field of literary and artistic production, exemplified by movements such as Decadence. Richardson's authorial positioning, characterised by the detached objectivity of Naturalism, is also characterised by her adoption of a male pseudonym to sign her fictional work. I assess the use of male pseudonym as a strategy of masquerade, through which the otherwise vulnerable expatriate Australian woman writer, as outsider, may claim a space for authority and publication. In the second section I argue that Maurice Guest is a quintessential outsider—whose English home and German destination both proffer a combination of the strange and the familiar. I employ Freud's notion of the uncanny (*unheimlich*) to investigate the instability of Maurice's expatriate alienation. Richardson engages with the precarious possibilities of the unconscious as foreign and uncontrollable territory. Maurice attempts to transform the undecidability of homely and unhomely through a passionate obsession for an expatriate Australian woman, the uncannily familiar and yet foreign Louise Dufrayer. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of Louise Dufrayer, a stereotypical *femme fatale* as well as an expatriate subject also managing the alienations of desire, alterity and absence.

Christina Stead's *For Love Alone* is the account of origin and the leaving of the paternal home. My chapter on *For Love Alone* is about expatriate desire and the process of expatriate mobility in a number of its forms. Stead's account of the creative young woman entering the world of men is a pivotal account of Australian female expatriation. I am interested in how Stead writes female ambition for freedom and transformation. I maintain an especial interest in the expatriate ocean voyage as the excluded middle of *For Love Alone*.

I use the anthropological concept of the rites of passage to structure "The Twin Imperatives of Desire and Mobility:" Expatriate Rites of Passage in *For Love Alone*. The rites of passage divide into preliminal, separation and liminality, transition and eventual incorporation and I divide the chapter into corresponding sections. I begin with an investigation of production and reception of *For Love Alone*, with an emphasis on genre, the ambiguities of expatriate market position and cultural production, and their relationship to the complexities of the 'love' of *For Love Alone*. Teresa Hawkins' preliminal rites concern the sea, both as a site of the female desire, the feminine sublime and truncated sexual awakening, as well as an eroticised, nationalised reminder of a postcolonial expatriation back to the imperial centre. The centrality of the sea in the text's economy of desire and mobility gives way to figures of the mastery of desire and distance through walking, masochism and writing as modes of separation and liminality. Section three investigates the sea voyage as the moment of transition between Australia and England. This is not directly narrated in *For Love Alone*, so I read "A Night in the Indian Ocean" in a supplemental way, positioning Stead's short story in the medial position between Sydney and London. "A Night" provides a brief but devastating construction of female sociality, colonial and class difference. This voyage concentrates on a dystopic female boundaryless and the threatening maternal. In Section four, Teresa Hawkins emerges from her various masochistic and pedagogical encounters to be incorporated transformatively into the world of which she always dreamed; the world of masculine mobility and worldly men.

I'm Dying Laughing looks at the darker possibilities of expatriation—crossing the line into notoriety, abjection, disorientation through political and personal betrayal. The different kinds of movement in *I'm Dying Laughing*are interesting for different kinds of twentieth century displacement, such as post-war refugeeism and political exile. The main character, Emily Wilkes, takes centre stage as a 'gargantua' around whom is figured the role of transgression, politics, writing, success and money. The utopian and transformative possibilities of *For Love Alone* are reconfigured in *I'm Dying Laughing* as instances of dystopia and transgression. I deploy the figure of 'the renegade' as a method of organising Stead's thematisation of transgression; of law, of limit, of textual decorum. *I'm Dying Laughing*is fascinated with excess and

transgression, and, again, the gendered possibilities of the sublime in *For Love Alone* are here deployed as the grotesque feminine. In Section one, I look at the double configuration of political renegade and female outlaw in the shape of Emily Wilkes, the expatriate political woman writer. Emily Wilkes is that contradictory creature, the American communist, and her contradictions—between autonomy and allegiance, greed and idealism, talent and gratuitousness—expand until there is no distinction between opposites to be made. The outside becomes terminally conflated with the inside, and an expatriate tragedy looms. The location offered by American national identity is in conflict with the location offered by socialist discourses, leading ultimately to an in-between dislocation of post-war Paris.

In Section two, I suggest that Stead's text (and Emily's text) is "renegade" in the sense that it is incomplete, messy and posthumously produced; written across multiple temporal and spatial locations, and received across three countries in a variety of discursive formations with different cultural meanings. *I'm Dying Laughing* is also a Menippean satire, a "renegade" genre in terms of classical taxonomies of genre, whose indeterminate status increases with a consideration of the effects of the female authorship of satire. The inside-outside, object-subject doubling and ambiguities of Stead's authorial position as female satirist, with Emily Wilkes as the female satirist she satirises and satirises herself, are organised by a focus on transgression and textual production, political and authorial ideologies. I use Bakhtin's work on carnival, menippeana and the grotesque to contextualise my examination of the grotesque woman as female satirist and literary fat lady—and her destructive inability to acknowledge appropriate limit or proper affiliation.

The doubling and mirroring of satiric subject and object in *I'm Dying Laughing* marks a characteristic of expatriate narrative, the repeated figuration of the relationship between inside and outside. It is a relationship that the experience of, and interest in, displacement, makes especially intense. Displacement splits the past and the present, the here and there becomes exaggeratedly divided, and, because fractured, can confusingly double and multiply into a complex collage of dislocated pieces. In *The Last Magician* and *Borderline* Janette Turner Hospital formally and thematically experiments with the representation of

displacement, and the importance of memory and origin for a fractured postmodern world.

The Last Magician and *Borderline* proffer a series of experimental textual modes for the expression of postmodern dislocation. Hospital's reflexive use of genre and mode, narrative position, tropological systems trope confusion and deracination. Both texts revolve around the mystery of a central absence, and the unravelling of that absence, as the central trope of dislocation, indeterminacy and incompleteness. Hospital extends the experience of splitting and multiplication in time and space through her interest in visual as well as verbal technologies of dislocated storytelling and experiences of transit and transitions. Using a self-conscious subject position as a 'global nomad,' Hospital's work begs the question as to whether 'expatriate' is still a viable category, since she thematises dislocation as the full-time experience of postmodernity—albeit exaggerated for the migrant, tourist, traveller and nomad. Nevertheless, she does not simply reify dislocation as an authentic postmodernity—she looks at the crucial role of history and memory for the deracinated subject. The particular vulnerability of gender—the double of at least one facet of the narrator—is the globally disappearing woman. The globally disappearing woman takes the weight of speculations about the romantic or transformative possibilities of a postmodern "tourism." The particular vulnerability of woman to violence and exploitative speculation "in the world" brings us back, quite circuitously, to Louise Dufrayer in *Maurice Guest*. Something important has changed in 1990: with respect to Hospital's work I take Ella Shohat's recommendation that "a relational approach to the study of cultures and identities would operate at once within, between and beyond the nation-state framework."[55]

If it is movement that defines and constitutes boundaries, rather than the other way around, the enabling and transformative passage of the Australian expatriate woman writer marks certain kinds of boundaries of the nation-space. Australian expatriate woman writers are therefore not just marginal to a

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[55] Ella Shohat, "Columbus, Palestine and Arab-Jews: Towards a Relational Approach to Community Identity," *Reflections on the Work of Edward Said: Cultural Identity and the Gravity of History*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart: 1996) 2.

national or canonical centre, or even just the constituitive 'outside' to nations and canons: they occupy the doubled inside-outside position. This position is what Deleuze refers to as 'the fold,' where the outside is the transmutability of the inside—they are folded together. The danger for the expatriate woman writer is that the position at the inside-outside is often undecidable, and issues of crossed category and proper place, as well as a precarious grasp over identity (abjection), can ensue. However, their texts produce an exhilarating resistance to confining and essential categories of nation, gender and genre and their attendant imperatives.

1

Strangeness and Spectacle: Expatriate Unhomeliness in *Maurice Guest*

I The Outsider, the "Foreign Book" and the Fake Name

In 1888, Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson, her mother and her sister left Victoria, Australia and travelled via London and Northampton to arrive in Leipzig in 1889. They had come to Leipzig for 'Ettie' to further her study of the piano at the *Königliches* Conservatorium. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the crossing of hemispheres, as well as the English Channel, was a considerable journey. It was a spatial expansion integral to the larger cultural expansion that faced the young colonial woman. Ethel Richardson was in Europe, like Australians before and after her, to complete an artistic training still unavailable in the colonies. Her voyage drew her away from the antipodean site of her childhood and adolescence, through England, which she disliked and which only made her feel as much an outsider and 'misfit' as she did at home, to *fin de siècle* Germany.[1] In Germany, Richardson discovered a productive European sensibility.

Richardson's autobiographical account of the years in Leipzig appears in *Myself When Young*. This unfinished account re-views Leipzig in terms of 'New Life'—a time of freedom and selfhood set against a difficult adolescence:

> I became a person in my own right. And a very different one from the aimless, ill-adjusted girl who had begun to feel herself the odd-man-out, and to judge people and things from that angle. Now I too was caught up in the swirl.[2]

The transitions from 'home' (Australia) to 'away' (Germany) allayed Richardson's feelings of being an outsider rather than strengthened them. Richardson's first novel, *Maurice Guest* (1908), published under the name

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1 Henry Handel Richardson, *Myself When Young: Together with an Essay on the Art of Henry Handel Richardson by J.G. Robertson* (1948; Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1992) 95.

2 Richardson, *Myself When Young* 77.

Henry Handel Richardson, explicitly figures England as a provincial backwater to a more powerful and virile European cultural scene, one that is engaged in contemporary debates about music, artistic practice, literature and philosophy. The valorising of German modernity interrupts the stereotypical dyad of colonial Australia and imperial England, as it moves the cultural source of authority away from London. 'Ettie's', therefore, was a journey away from colonial, yet eurocentric, origin to the centre of imperial power for that colony, and thence to a more powerful 'centre'—that of cosmopolitan European modernity.

Henry Handel Richardson's *Maurice Guest*, begun in 1897 and published in 1908, is a narrative of two expatriates living in Leipzig's *fin de siècle* student bohemia, who undertake obsessive and degenerative love affairs. It is predominantly the story of Maurice Guest, a young English expatriate who becomes romantically fixated on Louise Dufrayer, an older Australian woman. Maurice is exposed to the sublime and fatal exigencies of romantic passion, and the suffering that is entailed for someone temperamentally unsuited to the affair. In the course of charting the ultimately entropic and amoral aspects of their love, Richardson dramatises the ramifications of the Nietzschean philosophy of the artistic overman for a musician, or lover, of insufficient talent. Richardson unrelentingly examines the quenching of naive idealism in disillusionment and degeneration and its correlation of failure in Nietzschean terms. It was Richardson's grafting together of the "artist of insufficient ability" narrative and the "love story of such elemental force" that produced a generic hybrid which engaged profoundly with several strands of European realism and remained irreconcilable with the popular romances more usually recognised as the province of the nineteenth century woman writer.[3]

This chapter argues that *Maurice Guest* is a quintessential expatriate text in the sense that it exemplifies the hybrid situation of production and reception of texts by expatriate writers, as well as thematising expatriate experience as that of being simultaneously inside and outside cultural domains. The chapter works in three main sections. The first section examines the production of the 'foreign book' from two positions: an examination of the

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3 John George Robertson, "The Art of Henry Handel Richardson: An Essay in Appreciative Criticism (1928-9)," *Myself When Young: Together with an Essay on the Art of Henry Handel Richardson by J.G. Robertson* (1948; Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1992) 166.

influences of *fin de siècle* Germany and the literary traditions that constituted European realism and decadence, and the construction of signature as the male pseudonym Henry Handel Richardson, a mode of textual production integral to the mobilities and confusions of expatriate writing. The second section argues that Maurice Guest's expatriate experience is a process of becoming foreign to himself, with fatal consequences. The third section examines the role of Louise Dufrayer, another expatriate, as 'the foreign woman' integral to Maurice's fatal inability to negotiate cultural or sexual difference.

The "Foreign Book"

Emily Apter figures the turn-of-the century as a textual "revolving door." This description beautifully articulates the aesthetic characteristics, philosophical range and hybridisations represented in Richardson's text:

> As distinct from 'fin de siècle' or 'early modernism' each of which suggests a clear demarcation on either side of the 1900 divide, the turn of the century evokes a revolving door, allowing for quintessential nineteenth century genres and styles—realism, naturalism, decadence, symbolism—to be seen surviving into the early twentieth century. Though they clearly atrophy over time (overshadowed by the brilliance of formal experiment in the early *avant-garde*) it is precisely what happens to these genres as they endure that is of particular interest to me.

Apter goes on to suggest that the "realist-naturalist-decadent works," the "genres that endured," were "contaminated by psychoanalysis, criminology, social anthropology, trade books on collecting, fashion and social etiquette, Catholic primers and mass market journalism."[4] *Maurice Guest* reads like Apter's compendium of "realist-naturalist-decadent" facets with its representations of dissolution, exhaustion, corruption, virile melancholy, sado-eroticism, aestheticism and suicide. Richardson's first novel moves through Apter's "revolving door," displaying the combination of formal and generic endurance, with the "contamination" of decadent and early twentieth century concerns.

The origins of *Maurice Guest* lie in the European cultural field to which Richardson was exposed between 1889 and 1903. I foreground this cultural arena as part of an ongoing investigation by this thesis into the material

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4 Emily Apter, *Feminising the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn of the Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) ix.

conditions of production and reception for the Australian expatriate woman writer. Eleven years in production, *Maurice Guest* is the product of a multiplicity of locations (Australia, Germany, England) and cultural contexts. That Richardson was an Australian expatriate in an international milieu of late nineteenth century Europe provides some context for the hybrid complexity of *Maurice Guest*. For example, Karen McLeod describes the cultural palette Richardson brought to Leipzig:

> The full curriculum at her Australian school with classical and scientific studies as well as a good conventional grounding in the English classics, together with her 'facility for languages', meant that she escaped the deficiencies and narrowness of much English education at that time.[5]

Richardson was an Australian-born colonial subject with English and Irish connections, and her experience as an antipodean musician-turned-writer in Germany made for an expatriate subject position that was diverse, complex and strenuously detached. In approaching and reading European modernity, Richardson lacked a seamless cultural unity. Her education as a colonial woman, as well as her movement through turn-of-the-century England and Germany, made for a distinct hybrid mixture.

It is "one noon in 189-"(3) when we find Maurice Guest gazing at a poster advertising the performance of a Wagner opera in Leipzig.

> And it was only another step in this train of half-conscious thought, that, before a large lettered poster, which stood out black and white against the reds and yellows of the circular advertisement column, and bore the word 'Siegfried,' Maurice Guest should not merely be filled with the anticipation of a world of beauty still unexplored, but that word should stand to him for a symbol, as it were, of the easeful and luxurious side of a life dedicated to art—of a world-wide fame; the society of princes, kings; the gloss of velvet; the dull glow of gold. [6]

Wagner's "Siegfried" alludes to a European web of cultural and aesthetic associations. Maurice's identification with an aristocratic and decadent ease and fame are clearly ironic; this is the culmination of young Guest's first walk through urban Leipzig as a newly arrived provincial, and he is absorbed by the potential splendour of a life dedicated to music. This is one

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5 Karen McLeod, *Henry Handel Richardson: A Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). 16.

6 Henry Handel Richardson, *Maurice Guest* (1908; St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1998) 7. All page references are taken from this edition and henceforth included in the body of the text.

of a number of moments where Richardson destabilises a value system based on the exaltation of romanticism. Maurice's *naïveté* about his new spatial and cultural surroundings allows for an ironic comedy associated with a provincial abroad; a comedy based on demonstrating the distance between knowledge and ignorance, innocence and experience. Maurice, yearning for romantic freedom and fame, crosses from provincial England to a rich and dangerous brand of European modernity in which Wagner was a by-word for the long-standing cultural debate in late German romanticism that eventually included Nordau and Nietzsche; a debate that distinguished one as either a philosophical materialist or an idealist. McLeod claims that Wagner was "the artist who gave the fullest expression to the late Romantic fascination with love and ecstasy and death" and provided "emotional power, moral ambivalence and literary possibility." Wagner was a litmus test for one's position in German cultural life, and he, along with Lizst and Strauss, is prominent in the musical discussions and the life of the Leipzig conservatorium.[7]

Maurice Guest portrays an international, musical milieu, firmly grounded in Germany and the Germanic, in which representatives of different nations engage in artistic, cultural and national debate.[8] European artistic, philosophical and political production and debate at the *fin de siècle* were characterised by strong national and ethnic differences. Richardson figures Leipzig's international microcosm dramatically and linguistically, where the international language of music and youth and impressionability provided the link for the expatriate community of musicians:

> There was a medley of tongues, for many nationalities were represented in the crowd that surged through the ground floor and out of the glass doors, and much noisy ado, for the majority was made up of young people, at an age that enjoys the sound of its own voice . . . but most of these musicians were under the influence of a stimulant more potent than wine, which manifested itself in a nervous garrulity and a nervous mirth. (3)

Norbert Platz argues that late nineteenth century Germany was characterised by debate, experimentation and the influx of new ideas from abroad.[9]

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7 McLeod, *Henry Handel Richardson: A Study*, 16-17.

8 McLeod, *Henry Handel Richardson: A Study* 16ff. McLeod delineates the cultural field to which Richardson was exposed to in Leipzig (1890-1895), and Munich and Strassburg (1896-1903).

9 Norbert Platz, "Influence or Choice? Henry Handel Richardson's *Maurice Guest* and its relation to German Culture," *Anglistentag 1988 Göttingen* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag,

Russian, Scandinavian and French writers were widely discussed, many of whom Richardson read in German translation.[10] Platz argues that Richardson's perception of German culture is represented oppositionally in *Maurice Guest*: "on the one hand, writers and composers are mentioned who obviously represent the idealistic strand of the German cultural heritage."[11] This category included such writers as Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Nietzsche, and the European musical giants—Bach, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Liszt and Wagner. The opposing camp included contemporary German authors who were "manifesting a critical stance," such as Spielhagen, Schnitzler, Holz and Schlaf. Platz surmises that Richardson recognised in German culture an antagonism between idealism and certain strains of objectivity and naturalism, involving an opposition between music as "the epitome and apotheosis of the idealistic bent of nineteenth century German culture," and literature, characterised by the view that there was a realistic account to be delivered about the objective reality of the phenomenal world. Platz sees Richardson as the author of a fine piece of cultural criticism, which stages a detached debate amongst the terms of German culture, and between the media of the different semiotic codes of music and writing. In *Maurice Guest*, Richardson, not merely saturated by her European context, tries to see how romanticism and realism, idealism and materialism, sit in relation to each other.

In Richardson's account of her emergence as a writer rather than musician, the Leipzig years are a fundamental cornerstone for the 'foreign' book and its hybrid style:

> For the first time, too, I had books in abundance: Russian, French, Danish, Norwegian, in those admirable translations for the Germany of that time was famous . . . how I read! The hour-long grind of scales and exercises

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1988) 117. Platz provides a map of debates in German culture at the time, as well as an overview of Richardson criticism to 1988.

10 Henry Handel Richardson, "Some Notes on My Books," *Southerly* 23.1 (1963): 9.

11 German idealism and German romanticism considered the subject, or the 'ego,' as appropriate material for serious philosophical investigation. This was the product of several loose interpretations of Kant's notion of practical knowledge, and also owed some debt to Rousseau. Fichte, Schelling, Schiller, Hegel and Schopenhauer all worked within and developed a realm of speculative metaphysics with the materials left to them by Kant. The strains of philosophical idealism produced by them is contested by an eventual return to materialism in German philosophy in the nineteenth century, notably in the work of Marx, who gave a material basis to Hegel's dialectic of history.

> passed in a flash with, say, a play of Ibsen's or a volume of Tolstoy propped open on the rack.[12]

In John George Robertson's essay "The Art of Henry Handel Richardson," Richardson's husband makes this account of her reading:

> In the Strassburg years [1897-1903] *Henry's* reading was very wide (Her lists for 1898 and 1899 number well over a hundred books read in each of these years.) My work for *Cosmopolis* and *The Times* brought into the house the newest German literature, which she followed—the realistic movement, with intense interest. While the Strassburg library provided the opportunity of familiarising herself with the great French literature: Hugo, Stendahl, Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant, Zola, etc. also Tolstoi and Dostoievsky. She read each new work of Ibsen and Bjornsen: a new work by Brandes was an event . . . On all these things our little Strassburg circle could talk, and discussed them with similar interest. Of this there was little or nothing in London; and she felt spiritually isolated. [13]

Robertson's commentary indicates two things. The first is the studied generic coherence of Robertson's account of the apprenticeship of the artist. The other is an indication that the continuity of experience between Leipzig, Munich and Strassburg, in terms of cultural access and cultural discussion, is unavailable in London. It is in the isolation of London that Richardson finishes and publishes her first novel.

Robertson wryly states that *Maurice Guest* is a text that "obviously affords a hunting ground for the industrious searcher after 'sources'" because it was "a kind of mosaic of influences," as he confidently furthers just such industry.[14] In the main, Robertson's essay provides a gloss for less accessible 'European' meanings and sources. Robertson argues that *Maurice Guest* was "essentially a book of literary provenance, a book that owed some of its

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12 Richardson, "Some Notes on My Books" 9.

13 Robertson 113-114 (my emphasis).

14 Robertson 126. Marian Arkin argues that "the tracing of literary influence" has been one of the main preoccupations of Richardson critics. Marian Arkin, "A Reading Strategy for Henry Handel Richardson's Fiction," *World Literature Written in English* 30.2 (1990): 120-121. It is interesting to consider Hanne K. Bock's comments on Robertson's "thoroughness and perseverance in tracing sources" in her assessment of his correspondence with George Brandes. Bock has found corresponding evidence for notes he made several years later in preparation for a never-completed study of his wife's work. They are supported by an unpublished study by H. O Poppe (Vance and Nettie Palmer papers, NLA) which outlines the indigenous literary climate in England from the publication of *Siren Voices* in 1896 to 1908, when *Maurice Guest* appeared. Hanne K. Bock, "Henry Handel Richardson: Letters to Brandes," *Southerly* 43.4 (1983): 440-441.

power to the application of *foreign* technique" and that it demonstrated "a web of literary influences."[15] Robertson claims that "*Maurice Guest* was felt to be an essentially foreign book; indeed some of its first critics suspected that it might merely be a translation or adaptation from the German." Robertson demonstrates an anxiety about psycho-biographical readings of realist fiction in his identification of the text's proper themes, as well as correct literary terms of reference. He thereby makes the text, which inspires a "peculiar fascination," less "foreign" and therefore less unrecognisable. His reassuring 'translation' of the 'foreign' text is explicitly for English audiences, which sublates the Australian to the English reader. For example, note the pronominal subject position in: "We in England," "our literary tradition," "in our English literature," despite the fact that he speaks from both inside and outside this "Englishness," (he is Scottish and his wife Australian). For example, Robertson declares that "it is, in this *continental sense*, the greatest English naturalistic novel, the end or summary of the movement of which it is part. It is the last link in the chain which practically began with *Madame Bovary* in 1856."[16]

Robertson reassures English readers that both the 'scientific method' and lack of moral centre are continental, mostly aspects of the best French, Russian and Scandinavian naturalist-realist traditions, using French masters, such as Flaubert and Stendahl, for objective method; Germans, such as Goethe, for genre; and Russian, tempered by Scandinavian, for content. Although *Maurice Guest* is placed here as the culmination of a period of fictional naturalism, it is nonetheless seen by Robertson as the apprenticeship for the later fictional culmination of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* trilogy, explained as a more cohesive, more overtly English masterpiece. Robertson's critical work recognises and countersigns Richardson's in terms of his own field of German and Scandinavian literature. As such, his pedagogical essay demonstrates a curious logic of recognition, since it seeks to establish Richardson's singularity and innovation, while placing her within a legible and therefore reproducible category of continental fiction. As Attridge suggests: "a particular kind of

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15 Robertson 124. Dorothy Green's biography mounts a critique of Robertson, via its disagreements with A.D Hope's criticisms of Richardson's work. Green suggests that Hope's argument—that *Maurice Guest* is a "musical novel" and not a love story—are inappropriate. Dorothy Green, *Ulysses Bound: Henry Handel Richardson and her Fiction* (Canberra: Australian National UP, 1973) 161 ff.

16 Robertson 122-124 (my emphasis).

reading is implied here; a response, or recognition, which countersigns the work affirming and endorsing its signature."[17] Elizabeth Grosz has argued that:

> While the reader(s) countersign(s), the signature never ties the text to its origin nor provides it with a definite destination, a fixed or settled context or a controllable audience. The signature is the condition for a text's endless repeatability, its perpetual openness to repositioning, its capacity to be continuously re-read.[18]

Robertson's countersignatory essay seeks to stabilise and endorse Richardson by co-authorising Richardson's autobiography. His analysis has directed many ensuing readings of Richardson's fiction and life in Australian criticism, but, as Grosz suggests, it is an essay that paradoxically guarantees Richardson's work as that which may be continuously re-interpreted.

Twenty years after the publication of *Maurice Guest*, Robertson was the first to undertake an extended genealogy of its sources and, while useful, this has had the effect of directing attention away from the possibilities of formal innovation or controversial content. Robertson's reading does not canvas dimensions of nationality, gender or sexuality although, in terms of gender, the essay 'outs' the author as a 'she,' although he still refers to her as "Henry."[19]

Richardson's expatriate, and therefore hybrid, cultural position is effectively demonstrated in the reception of *Maurice Guest* by the English press and their inability to recognise or place the novel. The reception of *Maurice Guest* demonstrates what has become obvious in my work on expatriate texts. Expatriate texts are often misrecognised, mis-placed in terms of the domestic market and mistrusted. Reviews often demonstrate how textual production is intimately involved in cultural rupture and cultural hybridity. Texts produced out of multiple cultural situations are often treated as illegible, unrecognisable and untimely. Proliferating confusions of signature, gender, art and nation all mark the production and reception of Richardson's text. Despite the fact that Maurice is an Englishman, we are

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17 Derek Attridge, "Before the Law," Introduction, *Acts of Literature*, by Jacques Derrida (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 183.

18 Elizabeth Grosz, "Sexual Signatures: Feminism After the Death of the Author," *Space, Time and Perversion* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 19.

19 Robertson 113.

repeatedly assured that *Maurice Guest* is *not* an 'English' novel. Richardson describes its reception in England in 1908, the year of its publication by William Heinemann:

> Morbid, depressing, dull, verbose, degraded, coarse, erotic and neurotic were some of the adjectives applied to this book, built on European lines, with which, in my ignorance, I had invaded pre-war England.[20]

What is the nature of the ignorance to which Richardson refers? It seems that *Maurice Guest* lacked English moral sensibility, and Richardson's adjectives are all mainstays of the negative reception of Decadent fiction in England. The unrelenting exposure of the innocent English hero to cultural and sexual experiences beyond his cultural training was both subversive and disturbing to an English readership concerned about the viability of domestic masculinity and overseas colonies.

Maurice Guest was released at a time of English cultural hostility to Europe, most often expressed as a contempt for all things 'French.' The leading decadent artists of the *fin de siècle* had a special relationship with European artistic production which, especially after Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895, became associated with all things dissolute and morally reprehensible. Karen McLeod demonstrates the confusion *Maurice Guest* generated by collating the early reviews. The negative press, overwhelmingly American and English, specifically pertained to the ambiguous narrative treatment of the two main characters as well as the "neurotic," "pathological" and "morbid:"

> The moral objections mingle strangely with the almost universal admission that Richardson's "vivisection" of human relationships is *accurate*. The novel was thought by some to be "inartistic" and "lacking reticence." The French were blamed . . . I have stressed the foreignness of *Maurice Guest*, the way in which it was outside the limits of English fiction at the time of its publication.[21]

In the quest to 'explain' the peculiar foreign-ness of *Maurice Guest*, Robertson ignored the role of Decadence in Richardson's praxis, possibly due to some less than respectable possibilities inherent in her detailed illustration of sexual 'perversions,' such as neurotic obsession, masochism and fetishism. As with her engagement with Nietzsche, Richardson's use of

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20 Robertson 11.

21 McLeod 228, 240.

Decadent themes and tropes is related to her imbrication in European representational modes. I will now demonstrate that some of the impetus to assume a male *nom de plume* relates not only to Richardson's strenuously intellectual cultural mediation, but also to her improperly unfeminine engagement with both Decadence and Nietzsche. In addition, the detached outsider-artist figure is essential to both Decadent and Nietzschean aesthetic programmes. It is the fate of the outsider, and of the outsider's relation to the 'inside,' that preoccupies the balance of this chapter.

By the time that Henry Handel Richardson arrived in Europe, the norms of the Victorian age had been thrown into crisis by the cultural fragmentation that characterised the *fin de siècle*: "empires were threatened, feminism was on the march and the first socialist parties in Britain were formed."[22] A recurrent theme of the cultural politics of the *fin de siècle* was instability figured as cultural collapse. Gender was arguably the most destabilised and destabilising category. Although sexual difference was only one of the ideological battlegrounds of the *fin de siècle*, gender issues often mediated contemporary cultural politics. One of the cultural and textual 'movements' of the nineteenth century *fin de siècle* that remained singularly focussed on representations of gender and sexuality was Decadence. David Weir situates Decadence on a late nineteenth century cultural map somewhere between a romantic bohemia and an *avant-garde belle epoque*.[23] Weir claims that Decadence provides a common ground for various movements which proliferate between romanticism and modernism: naturalism, symbolism, Parnassianism, aestheticism and the Pre-Raphaelites. The term is therefore useful as a conceptual focus for processes of cultural transition in the late nineteenth century. It is for this reason Weir refers to the inauguration of a "drama of unsettled aesthetics."[24] Richardson's *Maurice Guest*, begun 1896

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22 Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken, eds., *Cultural Politics at the* Fin de Siècle (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 4.

23 David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1995) xv. "Bohemia" has a sense, taken from the French, in which "bohéme" and "bohemian" have been applied to the gypsies since their appearance in the fifteenth century. "Bohemian" refers to a "vagabond, adventurer, person of irregular life or habits; a gypsy of society, one who either cuts himself off from society for which he is otherwise fitted. An artist, a literary man, an actor, despising conventionalities."

24 Weir xvi.

and published in 1908, must be located quite late in this 'process of transition.'

Decadence, as a wide ranging concept of decay and decline, interacts with the decline of the century. Decadence was first used in reference to a symptomatology of morbid French dissolution, a legacy from French Romanticism. This included symptoms such as over-refinement, narcissistic introspection, exquisite reverie, morbidity, a love for dissolution or death, sterile aestheticism, immorality, perversion, debility, flirtations with cruelty and other forms of violence. Richardson's text keeps a critical, ironic eye on these Decadent features and characteristics, awarding them carefully to one powerful character in particular, Heinz Krafft, who appears to be the spokesperson for Nietzsche, Wagner and probably Richard Krafft-Ebing.[25] Krafft espouses aestheticism and romantic individualism though the conscious refinement of the senses and a serious contemplation of death. He represents the cult of the artist figure as an individual with over-refined nerves, and an interest in exposure to experiences of all kind, especially perverse or extreme. The other Decadent character is Louise Dufrayer, who shares Krafft's worship of Schilsky as the artist-hero-genius. Richardson examines her neo-romantic exoticism, nerves, narcissism and excesses.

While *Maurice Guest* produces and reproduces Decadent characters, motifs and themes, it is also committed to a realist-naturalist prose the Decadents had rejected in favour of an aesthetics of the artificial and internal over the natural and external. Richardson's text is part of Weir's "unsettled aesthetics" precisely because it uses realist means to portray psychic reality, the relatively new 'reality' of internal states. Richardson worked with a prose aesthetic, neither classic realist nor modernist *avant-garde*, that allowed her to represent two factors in the construction of identity that classic realism excluded: the unconscious and the impingement of ideology on the individual. In the case of *Maurice Guest*, Richardson develops mimetic means from a range of European literature to examine human drives, sexuality in particular, as well as the operation of the Romantic sensibility as a specifically located ideology.

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25 Richard Krafft-Ebing, *Psycopathia Sexualis* (1903; New York: Paperback Library, 1965).

Maurice Guest is a text which, whilst committed to a formal perfection of the tenets of scientific naturalism, took as its main subject themes and symbolism familiar to us from Decadence and aestheticism as forms of late romanticism.[26] Richardson's prose rarely wavers from a disciplined realism—so that the conflict between realism (science and Darwin) and romanticism (religion and Christianity) is not obviously played out at the level of style. Rather the conflict is dramatised by Richardson at the level of character. Richardson's realism was devoted to the 'accurate' portrayal of behaviour and motive—a psychological realism. Michael Ackland argues that it was her translation work on Jacobsen that gave her "a firm grounding in that highly crafted naturalism, coupled with psychological penetration, which is the hall mark of Flaubert and his successors."[27] Richardson was interested in the uncertainties, the vagaries and the perversions of subjectivity that posed such a challenge to traditional English realism. Her detached, naturalistic narration formulates a number of points of view that often involve the brooding obsessions of different characters. The exhausting tragedy of *Maurice Guest* lies in the clash of these multiple visions.

The naturalist, through a scientifically rigorous analysis of society, investigated heredity and environment. Eagleton reminds us that "it is often forgotten in fact, just how rigorously determinist the period actually is" and that despite the familiar images of random impression and fragmentary sensations the "human subject is still the bearer of iron historical laws."[28] Eagleton sees naturalism as:

> Zolaesque spurning of anything as bourgeois as moral judgement, for a clinical portrayal of the subtly woven whole. The artist as scientist, then, dispassionately registering the most rebarbative of experiences, but the

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26 Fay Zwicky comments that "what actually emerges is evidently that Richardson adopted the manner and methods of the European naturalist school without having been moulded and affected at any deep personal level by the scientific, political or philosophical ideas which turned them towards naturalism in the first place." "Maurice the Obscure: The Provincial Expatriate in Search of a Voice," *European Relations*, ed. Bruce Bennett and John Hay, Perth: Centre for Studies in Australian Literature, University of Western Australia, 1985): 120.

27 Michael Ackland, *Henry Handel Richardson*, Oxford Australian Writers (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1996) 3.

28 Terry Eagelton, "The Flight to the Real," *Cultural Politics at the*Fin de Siècle, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 16.

> artist therefore as amoralist, and this as leagued with that very different aesthetic cult in the period, the artist as demonic and pervert, the Nietzschean yea-sayer beyond good and evil, the social pariah who would sell his own baby daughter for the sake of an exquisitely turned phrase.[29]

Eagleton sees the conflict of detached scientist and the Nietzschean amoralist (because of this very detachment) within the naturalist writer. Richardson projected this conflict into scene and characterisation. She used irony as a tool for detachment, but retained the pessimism of determinism. Heinz Krafft is a fine example of the interaction of Nietzscheism and ethical naturalism.

Nietzsche is one of the most important figures moving through Apter's "revolving door." *Maurice Guest* presents a contemporary reading of Nietzsche, for which Richardson's subsequent, post-war, comments do not account. He is part of the German cultural politics embedded in the 'foreign' English language text that inspired such *'peculiar fascination.' Thus Spake Zarathustra* is considered the text that enunciates the position of the artist and the dynamic drives that underlie the artistic endeavour. It had a strong influence on both Christina Stead and Richardson, as they note in accounts of their writing lives:

> You ask me if I was satisfied with the German translation of *Maurice Guest* (pub. 1912). At the time I was; now I am not so sure; and I always thought it a pity that its already excessive length had to be added to. But it is very difficult to say a thing briefly in German. That is why Nietzsche was of such infinite value to German literature. His style compares with the best in any language and shows that German does not *need* to be ponderous and long-winded. I have always loved him best as a poet—prefer to look on Zarathustra simply as a magnificent specimen of poetic prose.[30]

McLeod argues that Richardson responded to the open-mindedness inherent in Nietzsche's "emotional-intellectual programme."[31] She dramatised her own, relatively sceptical, interpretations of Nietzsche throughout her fiction; her use of quotations from Nietzsche as chapter

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29 Eagleton, "The Flight to the Real," 15-16.

30 Letter from Henry Handel Richardson to Nettie Palmer, September 30, 1930. Karl-Johan Rossing, ed., *Letters of Henry Handel Richardson to Nettie Palmer*, Essays and Studies on English Language and Literature 14 (Upsala: English Insitute Upsala University, 1951) 17-18. All page references to the correspondence will be from this publication, and included, with the date, in brackets in the body of the text.

31 McLeod 16-24.

headings in *The Getting of Wisdom* is defended by both Robertson and herself as ironic. Her critical, ironic take on the artistic *Ubermensch* is visible, I think, in the characterisation of Krafft and Schilsky, the exceptional beings. Richardson's work also displays an exploration and valorisation of notions of suffering. Suffering, or passion, indicated that the individual, even the obscure individual, was involved in the conflict and struggle integral in the 'will-to-power.'

Richardson, like Stead after her, investigates the consequences of Nietzschean concepts for those without the extraordinary qualities of the Nietzschean great man. John George Robertson, Richardson's husband and a German-Scandinavian scholar, never enthusiastically embraced Nietzsche. In 1896 he wrote "I confess I find little in Nietzsche's writings but a morbid exaggeration of the individualistic movement of our time." In October 1898, he doubts whether much literature has so far been affected by Nietzsche, but he is altogether much more polite about him, and speaks of him as "the most radical aristocrat that ever wrote," whose work displays "a paen of triumphant optimism" which ran counter to German tragedies of renunciation. By the time Robertson published his *History of German Literature*, in 1902, Nietzsche has a central place in his period, although Robertson's admiration for his prose did not stop his uneasiness about the writer.[32]

Artistic failure, usually through the lack of appropriate temperament, is one of the central themes of *Maurice Guest*. Failure in music and in love is due to a lack of 'will,' according to the Nietzschean temperament, and creates torment. Richardson dramatises the tragic situation of passionately desiring the thing you do not have the will or talent to acquire, and even if you got it, to keep. Both Stead and Richardson wrote about failure and obscurity, tragedy, death and meaninglessness, flight and freedom, and the overwhelming demands of the creative life. Both understood that sublimation and the repression of the sexual instincts drive irrationality, and both saw the role of hardness and cruelty in the will to power as the other side of instinct and its suppression.[33]

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32 McLeod 25-26.

33 Green 173ff. Green's views about Nietzsche are related to her efforts to dismantle arguments by A. D Hope and Vincent Buckley. Her counter-arguments about Nietzsche's lack of 'importance' are moralistic and short-sighted, judging Nietzsche on how he was read for fascist ideas, rather than the philosophical work itself.

How is the female expatriate artist positioned with respect to Nietzsche? Can the relation be one of anything other than keen ambivalence? I think that these expatriate women artists were attracted to Nietzsche's philosophical programme because he thematised the position of the creative outsider, one best advised to 'escape' as a way of dealing with alienation. One of the ways in which Richardson dealt with the asymmetrical relation between artistic production, mobility and femininity, was to assume a male pseudonym; one that granted her the freedom to roam in late Romantic, Decadent and Nietzschean territory, to make her own 'cultural crossing,' passing for a male author of realist training and European sensibility.

The Expatriate Writer and the 'Pen-Name'

I situate Richardson's adoption of a male pseudonym in terms of what Ruth Blair has called the "pragmatics of publishing." To this end I examine Richardson's correspondence with Georg Brandes, Paul Solanges and Nettie Palmer, as well as the Hugh Walpole preface of the 1922 edition of *Maurice Guest*, all of which refer in some way to the production and reception of Richardson's fiction. I look to signature theory to discern the conceptual interaction of signature, female authorship and *Maurice Guest* as an expatriate text. These concepts suggest the precarious and potentially transforming possibilities of masquerade and female spectatorship as they relate to identity, writing and mobility.

In her essay "Sexual Signatures," Elizabeth Grosz argues that the trace of the signature cannot simply be identified with the proprietary mark of the author, instead it is an effect of the text's mode of materiality. As a product, the text is an effect of a labour, and the signature participates in that labour, and cannot be reduced to a mere play of textuality. Referring also to the role of production and reception as part of the labour, or materiality, of the text, Grosz claims that:

> In paying attention to the production of the text (including that production which is commonly subsumed under the text's reception), we are perhaps able to see more clearly how the question of sexuality—that is, sexual specificity—is relevant to the question of textuality.[34]

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34 Elizabeth Grosz, "Sexual Signature: Feminism After the Death of the Author," *Space, Time and Perversion* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996) 20.

In this sense, Richardson's pseudonymous signature (as an aspect of textuality) is indeed embedded in the question of sexual specificity raised by the disguise of gender through signature and the questions about gender in the narrative of *Maurice Guest* itself. Richardson's male signature not only signs the text by a mark of authorial propriety, but also signs the (sexed) subject as the product of writing itself, of textuality; it functions as a double mark, a hinge, folding together (and parting) the author/reader or producer and the text or product. Grosz reiterates the importance of the "specificities and positionality of the speaking, writing, reading subject, not only the position he or she occupies in textual production, but also *the way in which the authorial position is occupied.*"[35]

It is precisely this "way in which the authorial position is occupied" that is important in the deployment of a male pseudonym to sign the expatriate Australian woman's text. In the light of Grosz's argument, the use of a pseudonym to sign *Maurice Guest* is part of the process of the production of the expatriate text, of the labour that "leaves its marks in its product" since it is directly related to the *way* in which the authorial position is occupied, as part of the positionality of textual production. It is as an outsider, a woman and an Australian, that HHR comes to writing in the intellectually felicitous environment of Germany in 1896.[36] The felicitousness was gendered, however, and HHR's first novel is positioned, through locations of publication and adoption of pen-name, as a book by an Englishman, of vague origin and of European education. The authorial position is an ambivalent one. It proffers a performance of male authorship, but at the same time the claim that there might be a 'true' identity, kept 'secret' by *nom de plume* is interrupted by the way in which the productions of sexuality and textuality clearly operate together.

Pseudo is the prefix that denotes "false, counterfeit, pretended, spurious." Pseudonym is defined as a false or fictitious name, especially one assumed by an author, bearing a name other than the real author. What or where might a 'real' author be? Does the pseudonym act as a mask or disguise for the ambiguous category of woman writer? Or does pseudonym perform yet

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35 Grosz, "Sexual Signature" 22 (my emphasis).

36 HHR refers to Henry Handel Ricahrdson, an abbreviation I use periodically throughout the rest of this section.

another unstable surface, on top of the ontologically uncertain categories of 'woman' and 'writer.' What are the consequences of the ambition or need to sign 'as a man'? What, in fact, is it to write 'as or like a woman?'

Richardson's use of a 'pen-name' is intricately connected to her disguise of her national, colonial and sexual identity. The adoption of a 'writing' disguise relates to the mobilities and ambiguities of expatriate writing. I see Richardson's male pseudonym operating as a disguise, or masquerade; one that enabled her to instantiate a cultural and textual distance from both parent and adopted culture. This is evident in *Maurice Guest, The Getting of Wisdom* and *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Richardson's famous narrative detachment is further evidence of her expatriate desire for distance, and a pseudonym allows for a complex instantiation of distance through the performance of an ironised masculinity. The ironic distance installed on gender, sexual and national identity is part of the 'traces' of the text, part of the reiterated processes of Richardson's authorship.[37]

I see Richardson's 'pen-name' as a deliberate veil that liberates new possibilities of textual performance. Her male author imposture stands in relation to textual and sexual risk-taking, particularly in terms of fictional substance. In addition, her masquerade as a male author raises interesting questions for the received psychoanalytic understanding of masquerade: that femininity is always and only an infinite series of masquerades, there is no 'original' or 'real' feminine. If femininity is a masquerade, then Ethel Florence Lindesay Robertson *née* Richardson already participates in the masquerade of femininity by virtue of her sex. To this she adds the masquerade of male authorship. The missing link here is a consideration of the medial position of female authorship in terms of the nature of masking, phallic power and the writing woman.

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37 Peggy Kamuf, *Signature Pieces: On the Institution of Authorship* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988). In her work on Stendahl's *The Red and the Black*, Kamuf has commented on the encrypting of proper names as a signature piece—a device repeatedly associated with the subject:

> Because Beyle (Stendhal) always signs by signing not "Beyle" but some other name, it is not so much his signature that is encrypted as encrypting that is his signature . . . its deliberate veiling, or its disrespect for orthography that makes possible *the ironic distance installed in the narration* (my emphasis).

Richardson's literary career started with an early division of signature into a modality of sexual difference according to labour: feminine-translator, masculine-novelist. There is one actor or subject, Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson (by birth) and two persona, one of each gender and hierarchically arranged. Persona one is Ethel Florence Lindesay Robertson (married name of translator) and persona two is Henry Handel Richardson (hybrid invented name of novelist). As Richardson moved from the production of translations to the production of fiction she used a male pseudonym. The 'secret' of her 'real' gender and national identity was a successfully and ferociously kept secret, until, in the case of Nettie Palmer, 1928.[38] These dynamics of signatorial identification reveal the mode and extent to which the expatriate colonial woman writer was inscribed into the prevailing social order, and the ways in which Richardson sought to disavow that fact through elaborate rituals of secrecy and detachment.

Hanne K. Bock has made available the correspondence between John George Robertson, Henry Handel Richardson and Georg Brandes, the leading Danish critic and cosmopolitan man of letters (Nov 4, 1896 - Nov 23, 1913). Bock's translation and assessment has thrown light on "the joint nature of the Robertsons' literary enterprise, the extent of Richardson's interest in Scandinavian literature, [and] her carefully kept anonymity."[39] Although the field of Scandinavian naturalism that these letters touch on is of interest, it is the preservation of anonymity and construction of more than one distinct authorial persona that is most salient here. I wish to extend Bock's point, that "she must still have at this time distinguished between her various activities and their related identities," and suggest that Richardson deliberately sustained plural signatorial identity, demarcating her works of non-fiction and fiction into masculine and feminine signatures.[40]

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38 John George Robertson wrote to his mother from 5 Lyon Rd Harrow, 20.10.1908:

> Heinemann says he is being bombarded for information about the author and for the author's photograph! . . . So far the secret has been well kept, but the interest is not yet dying down . . . When you write, please do not refer at all to this part of my letter. E. is as sensitive as Jim was, about anything being said on the subject. And be very careful you do not leave this letter lying about. We rely on your secrecy.

39 Bock 438.

40 Bock 442.

Brandes had reviewed the translation of *Niels Lhyne* generously, identifying the translator as "Mrs Ethel Robertson."[41] In her correspondence with Brandes, which amounts to three of the eight letters (five are from Robertson to Brandes, in which he freely refers to his "wife"), Richardson's signature correlates directly with the nature of the work referred to in the letter. When writing about her translation work, or her interest in Brandes' work, 'HHR' signs with her married name (E.F.L.R—Ethel Florence Lindesay Robertson). However, the 1910 letter, which accompanies a copy of *The Getting of Wisdom*, omits references to her works of translation, which had constituted the basis of their acquaintance, and is signed Henry Handel Richardson. The tone of the 1910 letter is formal, and does not acknowledge previous or suggest future contact.

Issues relating to the nature and effect of the plurality of signature echo throughout Richardson's correspondence with Nettie Palmer. The editor of this correspondence, Karl-Johan Rossing, who describes Richardson as an "egocentric author," whose "lack of modesty" is related to her tendency to forget her "natural position in her marriage," considers the 'HHR' pseudonym as a veil to penetrate, to "get behind," in order to discover the "sex," if not the "secret," of "full identity":

> Although Henry Handel Richardson was known and discussed in Europe ever since the appearance of her first book . . . it was not until Mrs Palmer in 1927 took up her cause in Australia that her works were introduced in her native country, viz. in an article under the heading "Readers and Writers" in the *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*. This was in July. In a review three months later, *she had got behind the pseudonym* 'Henry Handel Richardson' as far as to discover the author's sex. The full identity was not revealed at this early stage. HHR's publishers and a friend in Australia seem to have been the sole possessors of this secret.[42]

The correspondence between Richardson and Palmer (Dec. 1927—Oct. 1945) provides a number of insights into Richardson's position on her own authorial positioning. One of the most interesting points in the following

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41 Georg Brandes, "*J.P. Jacobsen I Udlandet*," rev. of *Siren Voices*: *Niels Lhyne*, by J.P Jacobsen, trans., E. F. L. Robertston, *Politiken* 5 Mar. 1897. The translation of this and following are in Bock 439. In *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*(London: Heinemann, 1903) Brandes devoted a whole volume to the emigrès of the late eighteenth century and the role they played in instigating the Romantic Movement. He added that it would take many collaborators, to chronicle the literary migrations of the tweniteth century.

42 Rossing 31 (my emphasis).

example concerns the use of the 'real' as opposed to 'married' name. Richardson's 'real' name is a invented hybrid of family names, most particularly her father's Anglo-Irish surname. A 'haunting' is established through the memorial use of the name of the father-uncle, which reinstates the law of the father in conflict with the equation of name and self-presence for the woman writer ("it is my real name"). The explicit use of, and identification with, the name of the father seems to posit no problem for what must be the ambivalent equation of father's name and self-presence for Richardson. In 1930 she wrote to Palmer:

> 8th February, 1930
> Dear Mrs Palmer,
> I am sending you under separate cover a copy of St. John Ervine's article in the *Daily Express*, together with my disclaimer of his quite uncalled for use of my married name. *In all that concerns my books* I decline once and for all to be known by this. I have worked my hardest for years to establish the *other*, which is also, as you know, my *real* name. (15, my emphasis)

The name of the 'other' is the 'real' name, but, it seems only "in all that concerns my books." If the use of the proper name, one that is not potentially exchangeable for another name, works as a mark in the institution of identity and, as such, organises and authorises certain readings, then the organisation and authorisation of any reading of Richardson's texts must, she insists, occur under the sign of her 'real' name, her pseudonym, and the name of her uncle and father.

The ownership of name and its correlative, the guarantee of origin and originality, is given exotic, talismanic qualities by Richardson, who continues to argue that her pseudonym does not 'falsify' any dimension of her writing identity.

> May 5th 1930
> With regard to my pseudonym, one could really think from the fuss made by people about it that no novelist before me had ever written under a name that—well, I can't say was not her own: That is the whole point of the thing. Richardson is my name and very much so. And I intend to cling fast to it. I have an almost Eastern belief in the virtue and potency of names and have never been able to see why a woman should change hers at marriage. (16)

Rossing notes that on September 30th, 1930: "The *disclosure of her identity* is still working in her mind and she shows this by underlining her surname as an artist—in fact her original name"(18). Throughout her letters to Nettie Palmer, Richardson claims that 'HHR' (as she refers to her authorial

identity) is her 'real' name, making a link between art (invented name) and authentic self. Yet she also refers to HHR as an entity outside herself—in the third person, and by initials, indicating that she knows that HHR (her own authorship) is a commodity in the publishing industry. Watch the pronouns in the following letter of October 5th 1933: "Mrs Kernot told me, too, that you spoke of H.H.R on the wireless. May not one know a little about it?" (28). Another example might be: "the portrait that has gone to my native place was painted in, I think, 1911 (it may have been '12) and does not in the least resemble the present HHR, who is old and scraggy and wrinkled" (October 29, 1934; 30). Richardson locates herself both inside and outside her 'real name,' an ambivalent, even ambiguous, position. It is an expatriate position.

Richardson's signatorial positioning is contradictorily argued through a series of claims: claims of authenticity, desire for control of authorial identity, desire for recognition, and even a certain feminism (relating to the taking of Robertson's name at marriage). The possibilities of disguise and masking are explicitly foregrounded in a letter in which HHR congratulates Nettie Palmer on her journalism:

> April 15th 1936.
> How well you do it! On the few occasions I have been tempted with journalism I have toiled and anguished in the sweat of my brow—But then, to have to speak in person is to me the most abhorrent of tasks. I must have a mask to hide behind.

Does this mean that Richardson saw her authorial identity as her 'real' self, whilst also seeing that original name as a 'mask to hide behind?' Is writing a mask, installing the desire of detachment? Is the mask of pen-name matched by the rigorously detached third person narration that drives all of her work, compared to Palmer's 'in person' journalism?

In the autobiographical "Some Notes on My Books" Richardson displays her gift for the realist textual dynamics of secrecy and disclosure in this anecdote pertaining to *Maurice Guest:*

> Finished at last, the manuscript was packed up and sent to William Heinemann ("Why to me?" Mr Heinemann asked me some years later, and at my incredibly naive reply, which I hesitate to repeat, his face was a study). For three months after its dispatch I heard not a word. Then my husband wrote, on behalf of his "friend," was invited to call, did so and was flatteringly received. But when I learned that the book had to be reduced by some 20,000 words, I resolved to see Mr Heinemann myself.

Richardson uses a characteristic narrative deferral here: as she releases the previous suspension of identity, she establishes another ellipsis through the parenthetic note about her reply to Heinemann's inquiry as to her choice of him as publisher. Richardson continues her compelling account of the revelation of her person:

> So one day I made my way to 21 Bedford St and climbed the steep stone stairs to his sanctum. On giving my name in the business department below, I thought I noticed a slight stir; but Mr Heinemann's surprise was open and unadulterated. At that time I looked younger than I actually was; and this, and my sex, brought his natural stutter to a high pitch. Perhaps also my unfashionable attire. I can still feel his eyes travelling me up and down, from my quaint hat to my stub-toed shoes, these plainly visible beneath a skirt some inches off the ground, at a time when nearly all women wore trains.
>
> At this interview, the question of my pen-name was discussed. I was bent on keeping my identity a secret. There had been much talk in the press of that day about the ease with which a woman's work could be distinguished from a man's; and I wanted to try out the truth of this assertion. Well, the laugh was with me. And not only over *Maurice Guest*. When *The Getting of Wisdom* followed, I was congratulated as a man on my extraordinary insight into a little girl's mind. [43]

This anecdote displays a series of complex interconnected positions that inform the field of Richardson's signature. The presentation of the young, quaintly dressed woman to the unsuspecting publisher on the matter of how her text (assumed to be *his* text) is to be edited involves a rhetoric of unveiling and display, of literary experiment and proper respectability. Richardson re-constructs the inspection of the full-length view of her body and her costume, she is anatomised *by herself* as the young and modernly attired woman's body. The disguise of writing identity, specifically a gendered identity, which allowed the knowing woman writer to have the last laugh, is unmasked with her 'appearance' at the office. The Nietzschean ironies built into *The Getting of Wisdom*, which Richardson was starting to write as she finished and published *Maurice Guest*, bore fruit for both that book, and the critical reaction to *Maurice Guest*.

Richardson's correspondence with Paul Solanges demonstrates again that in all that concerned her books (in this case, the French translation which would give her access to a wider European market) she was the male author

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43 Henry Handel Richardson, "Some Notes on My Books," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 16.3 (1940). Rpt in *Southerly* 23.1 (1963): 334.

Henry Handel Richardson. Ruth Blair has translated this correspondence, and her assessment of Solanges' interest and Richardson's masquerade bears out the importance of writing as a zone in which Richardson loved to both perform and control through distance. Although, as her correspondence with Mary Kernot illustrates, it is with reference to her fiction that Richardson guarded her secret of femininity. She writes:

> We [Richardson and Solanges] carry on a fiery correspondence. But, alas, he hasn't an idea that I'm a woman, and a very awkward day is fast approaching when I shall have to face him and tell the truth. It's so much easier to be a man, and saves so may complications. I always felt half one, and am sure I went wrong in the making. [44]

The revelation of truth is described as 'facing,' and partnered here by the intriguing declaration of sexual ambivalence ("I always felt half one"), as well as the more pragmatic concern for 'complications.' What are the complications masculinity saves Richardson?

In his introduction to the 1922 edition of *Maurice Guest*, Hugh Walpole consistently credits 'Mr Richardson' with a text of astounding "truth." He claims that: "Louise is a creation of such undoubted truth that it is easy to see that Mr Richardson *must have known her*, but we all have also known her"(viii, my emphasis).[45] Walpole recommends Richardson's celebrated combination of realist objectivity and psychological insight:

> Never, for a single moment, from the first word of the book to the last, does the author moralise or draw conclusions from his story. He is conscious of only one thing—that he must tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This at the last he has done. (ix)

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44 Henry Handel Richardson to Mary Kernot, December 22, 1912. HHR Letters to Mary A. Kernot, 1911-1946, Mitchell Library ML MS 45.

45 The Hugh Walpole introduction of 1922 fronted a Heinemann reprint, the first since the 'second impression' in 1909. It is reprinted in the Minerva edition of *Maurice Guest* (Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1992) vii-x. Walpole claims that "the question of truth and the novel has been very much confused during the last ten years." He contextualises this confusion as the combination of the fashion for an over-detailed realism (judged from a modernist move away from naturalism) as well as what I take to be certain modes of literary modernism that were swelling at the time of the novel's publication in 1908, and which were in full swing in 1922. See the discussion of the status of the 1922 edition in Clive Probyn and Bruce Steele, eds. and introduction, *Maurice Guest*, by Henry Handel Richardson (St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1998) xxxix-xlii.

The cult of general and particular, and recognisable truths established by Walpole's introduction is matched in inverse proportion by the veiled authorial identity, (the 'he' is a 'she') and the radically subversive ironies generated by such an occlusion. From a certain point of view, the author may be truthful about everything except himself/herself.

Signature

Signature is defined as the name (or special mark) of a person, written with his or her own hand, as an authentication of some document of writing. The action of signing one's name is a symbolic indication, used to mark out or designate. Traditionally, the signature has been understood as a site that indicates a writing subject, a self-present subject inaugurated through language. In summary, the signature concerns the designation of authenticity (the assumption that 'true' identity inheres in the mark of the individual) through the signing of the proper name.[46] Postructuralist thinking (particularly in the area of linguistics) has rendered the received humanist notions of writing and subjectivity and the way in which they interact or mutually delimit each other, highly problematic. Discussion of signature and authorship are duly beset by arguments about essentialism.

Neither Barthes, Foucault nor Derrida, all of whom have worked on signature, has adequately demonstrated what the consequences of signature theory might be in terms of the sexed subject. Theorists as different as Peggy Kamuf, Nancy K. Miller, Elizabeth Grosz and Judith Butler have contributed work to the sexually differentiated signature. Peggy Kamuf's *Signature Pieces* is preoccupied with signature, authorship and the gender of writing. Kamuf suggests that the 'place' of the signature has been ignored since the "place" is not a place at all, but

> an always divisible limit within the difference between writer and work, "life" and "letters". Signature articulates the one with the other, the one *in* the other: it both divides and joins. It is this double-jointedness of signatures that will be lost to any discourse that continues to posit an essential exteriority of subjectivity to the text they sign.[47]

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46 Donald E. Pease, "Author," *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: Chicago U P, 1995) 113.

47 Kamuf viii.

Kamuf goes on to argue that the signature in literature has been overlooked because it is an exposed condition, an uncertain operation. The uncertainty of operation stems from an unstable set of assumptions that supposes the signing subject is identifiable (able to be singled out) and self-present. The signature is guaranteed as paradoxically singular and yet it is also reproducible (iterable) as a singular mark. Added to this is the (expatriate) ambivalence of being both inside and outside the text, since "at the edge of the work, the dividing trait of the signature pulls in both directions at once: appropriating the text under the sign of the name, expropriating the name into the play of the text."[48] The institution of authorship, argues Kamuf, has been produced to dress the vulnerability and ambivalence of the signature in various garbs—psychological, historical, formal, ideological. The institution of authorship must maintain a rigid and hierarchical line on property and the classification of subjects that the uncertain status of the signature destabilises.

Derrida identifies signature in three ways: as the author function through the signing of the proper name; as style or the idiomatic marks of distinctiveness; and finally as the implication of the 'folded' nature of the subject and beyond the text. This fold involves the necessary and irreducible implication of the text's outside with its inside and vice versa. Grosz sees this both/neither, inside/outside play as a form of space, a textual space, that links both a specific individuality and the reproduction of that singularity, and prohibits any definitive separation of one from the other.[49]

Richardson does not include ironic distance in her reasons for the adoption of a pseudonym. Her explanations alter in the following circuit: proving that the critics cannot detect the woman writing, or a 'man's' style, which may indicate a feminist activism that seeks to mask feminine identity as a way of at least temporarily dismantling female roles; the use of her 'real' name, not that of her marriage and the need for a mask.[50] In her autobiography, where she must approach the 'speaking in person' of journalism, Richardson reveals her hatred of being stared at:

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48 Kamuf 11-13.

49 Grosz, "Sexual Signature"

50 Catherine Craft-Fairchild, *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth Century Fictions by Women* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 1993) 53.

> No, what did for me, and utterly, were the eyes, the thousands of eyes, all fixed like gimlets on my miserable self, stuck up aloft before them and their helpless prey. The whole time my fingers automatically carried on, I could think only of getting out of range of those eyes, somewhere, anywhere, where they could not follow me . . . For the aversion to being stared at settled into a definite idiosyncrasy, which I never succeeded in conquering.[51]

We may infer that the pseudonym acts as a disguise, stemming from a hatred of publicity and public performance, but not reputation. The unconquered aversion to the specularity of visible performance may mask an instability in, and uncertainty about, identity. Cross-dressing, masquerade or male impersonation offers a way to elude the male gaze and make it possible to function, even temporarily, as a subject. This is fascinating in the context of the autobiography which officially 'outs,' or unmasks the woman writer, and authorises certain versions of her writing life. If Richardson declares her pseudonym in her autobiography, she also maintains it (the real name) to sign the account of the historical, national and gendered specifics of her life.

It is interesting that Richardson hated to be stared at. Whilst masquerade protects the feminine subject from the direct gaze, it also permits the feminine subject directly to look and know. Such female spectatorship has inevitable consequences for female subjectivity with respect to agency. The issue of 'looking' by the expatriate woman writer recurs in all the texts dealt with in this thesis, and is of specific interest in Richardson's novelistic treatment of Louise Dufrayer and Ephie Cayhill in *Maurice Guest*.

The use of a pseudonym, as both the 'real' and 'false' name, constitutes a mode of masquerade; a form of disguise that is required by the uncertainty of expatriate mobility, and also continues to provide for kinds of mobilised freedoms. Masquerade has historically been connected with possibilities of licence and free movement. I suggest that the salient features of a masculine disguise (transvestism) concerns where the female subject is allowed to go, what she is allowed to see and how and what she is allowed to know. Expatriation, migration and tourism pose a number of possibilities concerning mobility, visuality, identity, specularity, danger and knowledge that the female subject might mediate through the adoption of a mask or

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51 Richardson *Myself When Young* 93.

veil. I contain my speculations here to masquerade in the historical sense of masking and disguise, although I note the fascinating possibilities of extending the consideration of male pseudonym as 'mask' for female author into a discussion of femininity as masquerade. If, in psychoanalytic terms, the masquerade that *is* femininity (according to Joan Riviere) is founded on a fallacy of the peeling away of layers of artifice in order to access an 'authentic' or most 'real' surface, then possibilities of the 'real' name or 'true' identity emerging in the field of the signature may also be fallacious—there may be no monolithic authentic presence for the subject in writing.

Pseudonym is the false name which disguises a 'true' name, in this case the 'real' name of the author. Pseudonym therefore also indicates the 'real' identity and 'real' gender of the author. If the use of the pseudonym is a form of masquerade then it is a masquerade (veil) of English male authorship which hides expatriate Australian female authorship. This masquerade of male authorship is a textual strategy for the 'out of place' woman who finds a stable set of affiliations in a 'fake' name, and the male authorship that was 'easier' because it avoided complications pertaining to freedom, intellectual curiosity, and sexual and national confusion. The mask of the pen-name allowed Richardson to mediate a complex expatriate identity characterised by a hybridity of influences, an unfamiliar nationality and ambivalent gender and sexuality.

II Becoming Foreign: Expatriate Masculinity and the Unhomely Woman

Maurice Guest's situation in Richardson's novel is one of the mobile 'outsider,' a position he perceives for himself 'at home' in provincial England, and finds again in Leipzig's musical *bohème*. I argue two positions with reference to Maurice's expatriate situation. The first concerns what Freud refers to as the 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*—unhomely) in psychoanalytic practice. Freud's reading of E. T. A Hoffman's *The Sandman*, a German text of the Romantic school, identified the 'uncanny' as a literary genre and aesthetic sensation featured in romantic and Gothic representation. I want to foreground notions of 'home' and 'homeliness' within the structure of the uncanny in terms of its relevance to the expatriate subject. If the uncanny postulates a home that turns out not to be home and a self that turns out to be some other being, then the uncanny articulates the dilemma of expatriate

identity in two important ways, from within and from without. The uncanny undecidability of the homely or unhomely, the inside or the outside, makes for an uncertainty about the status of the self with reference to home or origin. In *Strangers Within Us* (1991), Kristeva draws a connection between the role of the strange foreigner and the relation between the improper unconscious, which subtends one's sense of proper self, that is, one's sense of belonging, of being properly in place. Kristeva queries the location and content of the foreign and strange, ultimately suggesting that difference is within—the stranger is aspects of ourselves. Framing this concept another way, Anthony Vidler suggests that:

> [T]he uncanny emerged in the late nineteenth century as a special case of the many modern diseases, from phobias to neuroses, variously described by psychoanalysts, psychologists and philosophers as a distancing from reality forced by reality. It's space was still an interior, but now an interior of the mind, one that knew no bounds in projection or introversion.[52]

The second position identifies Maurice as a fetishist within an occularcentric economy, one who attempts to stabilise his displacement and disorientation through fetishistic fixation. The structure of the fetish, like the structure of the uncanny, involves the ambivalent oscillation between avowal and disavowal, and other analogues, such as homely and unhomely, self and other. Maurice fails to stabilise his desire and identifications in the international confusions and mobilities of culture and sexuality. His death is a death of cultural crossing, that is, he fails to 'fix' himself with respect to the fetishistic object and suicides, still the 'outsider,' an alienated 'stranger in a strange land.' In pursuit of that which he can never entirely possess, certainty, home, possession and genius, Maurice becomes 'foreign' to himself. His suicide signals a loss of masculine self-possession to unconscious drives and the enigmatic and unhousing force of both the foreign and the feminine. Maurice's temperament means that in the Decadent context of Leipzig's artistic circles, he is "overmastered" and, even more intriguingly, "overmanned" by an obsession with a woman. Maurice's suicide signals this loss of self-possession to powerful and determining unconscious drives.

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52 Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992) 6.

The Fortunes of Richard Mahony, Richardson's trilogy (first volume published in 1917, trilogy published in 1930), focuses at some length on the disillusionment and disintegration of an idealistic, restless and obsessive anti-hero. Richardson's portraits of expatriate masculinity, in the shapes of Maurice Guest and Richard Mahony, sketch starting positions in idealistic romanticism. As such, chapter two of *Maurice Guest* fleshes out Maurice's provincial English origins, providing a framework for the *bildungsroman* (*kunstlerroman*) of an inexperienced provincial English boy with ambitions to be a musician, fuelled by romantic ideologies of the (male) artist as lone hero, and suitably filled with "wild longing and strange desires" in his search for worldliness, education and wisdom. In line with these genres, the chapter also makes explicit the son's identification with the father:

> In Maurice Guest, it might be said that the smouldering unrest of two generations bursts into flame. As a young man, his father, then a poor teacher in a small provincial town, had been a prey to certain dreams and wishes, which harmonised ill with the conditions of his life. When, for example, on a mild night he watched the moon scudding a silvery, cloud-flaked sky; when white clouds sailed swiftly and soft spring breezes were hastening past; when, in a word, all things seemed to be making for the same place, unknown, afar-off, where he was not, then he, too, was seized with the desire to be moving, to strap on a knapsack and be gone, to wander though foreign countries, to see strange cities and hear strange tongues. (14)

Romantic wanderlust and visions of a sublime elsewhere, exclusively the province of male experience, are crossed with the uncanny unrest between generation, articulated in so many fictions of the revenant in the nineteenth century. Maurice's generic and gendered position is critically, because ironically, embedded in the romanticism of Goethe and Nietzsche's wanderer, 'the stranger' of much of late nineteenth-century fiction and sociology such as that of Georg Simmel. Maurice's expatriation to Leipzig occurs because of his desire to train as a musician, thus romantic ideologies relating to the pedagogical importance of art (particularly music, in Germany) and travel are grafted together. Maurice's expatriate masculinity is codified through both late romanticism and genres like the *bildungsroman*, which structure his temperamental restlessness and idealism. Maurice is characterised throughout the early part of the novel by his desirous restlessness and constant movement. His English pragmatism about work keeps him inside, but he is often constructed in his relation to the external world: the woods, the skating pond, the street outside Louise's house. In the paralysed, later stages of his relationship with Louise his corruption and 'feminisation' is exemplified by his choice to remain 'inside' and static.

In *Maurice Guest*, however, Richardson's version of *bildungsroman* experiments with the genre of the idealistic youth as a narrative of truncated development. The 'getting of wisdom' integral to a novel of education gives way to an attempt to master the inner worlds of sexual drives, fantasy and the unconscious. The result is fatal. Richardson twists away from traditional *bildungsroman* in the sense that Maurice dies young and unsuccessful. He is no Nietzschean superhero and has little wisdom except about his loss of authority with regard to his own mental states and his fatal split between inside and outside. Maurice Guest and Richard Mahony can be said, therefore, to exemplify the accretions of *bildungsroman* that are present at the *fin de siècle.*

The Unconscious: the Foreign Territory of German Modernity

In her work on psychoanalysis and narrative obsession, Emily Apter articulates the interrelation between realist-decadent fiction and psychoanalysis as follows:

> I began with an interest in the *fin-de-siècle* ethos of morbid sexual obsession permeating realist narrative and the early history of psychiatry alike, and ended with a constellation of abstract analytical and political concerns: the poetics of reification and specularity, the relation between theories of the gaze and the textual representation of scopophilia ('love of looking'), the gendering of perversion.[53]

Apter's summary of her interests reads like a thematics of *Maurice Guest*. The triangulation she identifies between morbid sexual obsession, realist narrative and early psychiatry is an especially useful point of departure. My examination of the structural uncertainties of the uncanny-unhomely as that which is both strange and familiar, and as the coexistence of the strange in the familiar, is the first building block in a larger argument about the interconnection of a series of expatriate male perversions based in ambivalence: scopophilia, fetishism and masochism. These are apposite perversions for the suspended nature of the expatriate subject who hovers at the threshold or boundary of self and other, native and foreign, there and not there, especially as the term perversion is etymologically related to turning or twisting away, as well as lingering and repetition.[54] For the

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53 Emily Apter, *Feminising the Fetish* ix.

54 Emily Apter, "Perversion," *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed.

expatriate man, the *femme fatale* becomes an *idée fixée*, an object type who directs the path of the subject of perversion in finding an antidote to the wound of separation. Fetishism, in particular, is the perversion of separation and absence. *Maurice Guest* thematises deviant masculinity, wherein the male expatriate is diverted, and ultimately shattered, by the disruptive force of perversion and cultural difference.

Early psychoanalytic works, such as Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) drew on Darwinian concepts and other branches of the natural sciences to construct paradigms of sexual 'type' and their corresponding perversion and inversions. This concept of 'type' informs what is also prevalent in *Maurice Guest;* deterministic notions of a given 'temperament' or 'nature,' that work in turn with figurations of nation and national identity as social readings of type in Leipzig's international community. Maurice 'turns away' from a correct English reserve in his relationship with the fatal woman, he turns from what is familiar towards the unfamiliar, which seems in the first instance to be a profound experience of recognition and familiarity.

The view that there are aspects of our mental life to which we are not privy was widely held throughout the nineteenth century; adumbrations of the Freudian unconscious can be found in Schopenhauer, Fichte, Leibniz, Schelling and Nietzsche. Pre-Freudian work on the analytic subject had an impact on the work of Henry James, for example, whose texts, which often thematised the innocent abroad, demonstrate the general effect of early psychiatry on what the novel aimed to show. In the case of realism, the issue of how consciousness might be demonstrated was superseded by the need to deal with a series of behaviours that were unconscious, not self-mastering. Interiority, or psychological state, became more and more the matter of realist narrative experiment. Realist, then *avant-garde* and modernist narratives, were drawn again and again to provide some account of, or insight into, personality, sexuality and experience.

In 1939, Henry Handel Richardson wrote to Oliver Stonor: "I read Freud and his works so early in life—before his *name* was even known in England—and his theories have become commonplace to me."[55] Richardson's claim

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Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) 311-314. Apter provides an excellent queer-feminist analysis of the contemporary interpretations of "perversion."

55 Henry Handel Richardson to Oliver Stonor, 18 May 1939, quoted in G.A Wilkes,

suggests that she was familiar with Freud during her years in Leipzig and Strassburg in the 1890s.[56] Freud's early period of research—between about 1895 and 1910—parallels approximately the period in which *Maurice Guest* was produced (1896-1908). Much of Freud's early work culminates in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in English in 1900, in which he demonstrated his theorisation of the unconscious and of the role of sexuality in the constitution of the subject. Subsequent notions of subjectivity and the self altered tremendously in both analytic practice and philosophy, with flow-on effects in a range of cultural spheres such as literature, social policy and science. By the turn of the century, psychoanalysis was beginning to offer another explanatory model for social and political relations. Interestingly, the unconscious was often represented as a foreign territory. Richardson, as Ackland demonstrates, continued to be interested in her access to the other country of the noumenal through her continuing interest in spiritualism.[57] The connection between the psychic otherworlds of spiritualism and psychoanalysis, and structures of expatriation and return can only be suggested at this point.

For the purposes of this reading of *Maurice Guest*, I situate psychoanalysis as an emergent misogynist discourse providing radical insights into subjectivity through the postulation of the unconscious, repression, drives and the early libidinal life. The kinds of insights offered by psychoanalysis, in combination with philosophy and aesthetics, provided the conceptual backdrop for Richardson's portrait of destructive passion and failed art. Psychoanalysis, as the new mode of inquiry into the nature of gendered identity, sexuality and development, was a situated knowledge for Richardson, and, as such, I stress its specific historical and discursive setting—noting the tendency of psychoanalytic discourse towards the ahistorical and essential. What is the interaction between gender, sexuality and the social, where the social includes and disrupts psychoanalysis? This feminist reading seeks to deconstruct a normative mode of masculinity, to

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Australian Literature: A Conspectus (North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969) 60.

56 Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*, ed. and trans., James Strachey, vol. 2 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1895: London: Hogarth Press, 1955). This work on clinical psychical modes, particularly in early research on the bodily symptoms of hysteria, established the discipline of psychoanalysis as one still interrelated with, but nevertheless distinct from, philosophical investigations into the subject.

57 Ackland 6-8.

see expatriate masculinity as reactive, fragile, never fully attained, an interesting correlative of the role of the feminine. A psychoanalytic feminist reading of the interlocking domains of subjectivity, sexuality and sexual difference is balanced in this chapter with a cultural materialist assessment of production and reception and an acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of texts in the shape of genre, mode, figure and signature.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud investigated the psychical significance of dreaming, exploring whether we can find 'meaning' such as we might find in other psychical structures. Freud saw dreams as a substitute for thought processes, full of meaning and emotion encrypted through modes of compression, condensation and displacement. Dreams are a disguised fulfilment of wishes or desires which have undergone repression such that their contexts remain foreign to, forbidden by consciousness. As such their sometimes unrecognisable transformations supply an unstable point of emergence. Maurice's dreams are quite legible in terms of Freud's typologies of dream interpretation, and therefore seem intelligible and smooth in contrast to the kind of writing Freud thought might transcribe the detours produced by repression, and other distortions of desire. If dreams suture the gap between the conscious and unconscious with strange apparitions, their transcriptions are of great interest. Maurice's dreams interrupt the predominant naturalism of Richardson's narrative method, subverting the demarcation between the real and the phantasmatic, and demonstrating a slippage between waking and dreaming. Maurice's rich fantasy life is demonstrated through his daydreaming in the first chapter, as he wanders around Leipzig.

In *The Architectural Uncanny,* Anthony Vidler writes that:

> For Freud, "unhomeliness" was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarised, derealised, *as if in a dream.*[58]

The detours of Maurice's first dream offer re-presentations of his newly arrived impressions of Leipzig the previous day where "The falling dark made the quaint streets look strangely alike; it gave them, too, an air of fantastic unreality"(18), a nightmarish streetscape is echoed later in the text: "at night, familiar things took on an unfamiliar aspect, the well-known

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58 Vidler 7 (my emphasis).

streets might have been the untrodden ways that led to a new world"(340). The dream repeats the 'wandering' through the streets of Maurice's first day in Leipzig but now he is "apparently in search of something he could not find." The object of the search is eventually located in the centre of a crowd where Maurice cannot see it. Although he attempts to break through and see it, he is stopped by the 'strangeness' of the word "Moloch," and the "very strangeness of the word added to the horror," and he flees with the rest of the crowd "never daring turn his head, lest he should see the awful thing behind him."[59] The dream contains an initial compulsion to "at all costs . . . get nearer to the mysterious thing" although the crowd "strove to keep him back"(20). The dream object is never 'seen' although the compulsion, is *to see*. The object is never reached and Maurice retreats in terror, the dream altering from a desire to reach the object, to the need to retreat from it. The word "Moloch" also invokes feelings of dread and strangeness, in the face of which Maurice runs in terror.

Maurice's second dream provides another set of images of ambivalence and uncertainty, this time directly figuring the feminine. It involves a revolving figuration of Ephie, Louise and Madeleine, where the women substitute for each other, holding armfuls of lilac. The lilac, which recalls a sexualised scene between Maurice and Ephie the previous day, is transmuted into the detail of the bizarre shapes of the initially laden, "fantastic" lilac bushes, described as paradoxically gigantic and small, "broad and slender"—words later used of Louise's physique (92). Maurice delights in these bushes before he realises their *largesse* is an illusion, they are bare. Ephie appears laden with lilac, Ephie becomes Louise, towards whom Maurice cannot move: "He would have given his life to be able to advance and take what she offered him; but he could not stir, could not lift hand or foot, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth" (117). Louise's own steps slow as she approaches Maurice and just as she reaches him, she turns into Madeleine, who laughs at his disappointment. For Maurice "The revulsion of feeling was too great; and he turned away, without taking the flowers she held out to him" (100). Louise never truly arrives, Maurice never reaches her, and never knows

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59 The name of the Caananite idol to whom children were sacrificed as burnt-offerings, hence applied to an object to which horrible sacrifices are made. Kaja Silverman cites Theodor Riek, *Maoschism in Sex and Society*, trans. M. H. Beigel and G. M. Kurth (New York: Grove Press, 1962) for his work on a Moloch phantasy involving sacrifices to an ancient barbaric idol. The sacrifice involves the inspection of male genitals and ends with all being savagely sacrificed. Kaja Silverman, *Male Trouble*, ed. Constance Penley and Sharon Willis (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 53-54.

her. The Louise-Maurice paralysis is the centrepiece of the lilac dream, and anticipates the intolerable gridlock of their later relationship, where neither moves to exit their destructive relationship. The lilac dream presents Maurice with something that is familiar—the lilac from the previous day in Ephie's arms, but moves to the defamiliarising action of the women transforming into each other. Maurice's dreams repeat desire and frustration figured as flight toward, then immobility, followed by alienation, uncertainty and terror.

Both dreams involve 'fantastic' elements, as well as the uncanny blurring of boundaries. The Romantic literature of the fantastic often staged the estranging *mise en scène* of the 'Other' of culture (often the unsaid and unseen), figuring the experience of absence and loss. Robert Miles in his survey of Gothic fiction argues that the Gothic is best understood as a "coherent code of representation of the fragmented subjectivity; subjectivity dispossessed of its own house and in a condition of rupture, disjunction and fragmentation."[60] Richardson's thematisation of dispossession, disorientation and alienation represents Maurice's expatriate displacement, and contextualises his need to stabilise himself in relation to a new culture and to his own unconscious.

Maurice's first dream is described as "strange" and the "strangeness" of the word "Moloch" is part of the "fantastic unreality" of the city-scape/dream-scape. The use of the qualification "strange" is particularly interesting. "Strange" derives from *étrange* (external, foreign) and denotes "other than one's own; some other place or neighbourhood; situated outside one's land; not of one's own kin or family; added or introduced from outside, alien, altered, queer, surprising, unfriendly, unfamiliar." The etymology of "strange" relies on spatial metaphors concerning home and homeland, and on charting the distance between inside and outside, self and Other. As an expatriate student Maurice is an untried youth away from home, from family and from the familiar. His dreams exemplify his defamiliarisation. However, instead of the troping of Maurice as an alien to others, Richardson concentrates on his experience of mobility and strangeness, of himself to himself (inside) and of the external world (outside).

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60 Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 8.

The stranger is, by extrapolation, one who belongs to another country, a foreigner, one who is not a native of, or has not resided long in, a country, town or place. A stranger may also be a guest or visitor, one who does not belong to the household. Again the house is the locus of the familiar. Richardson's choice of name for her 'stranger' is Guest, a Teutonic word, deriving in part from the Latin *hostis* ('stranger')—which in some classical usage indicates 'enemy.' 'Guest' can also mean 'friend': one who is entertained at the house or table of the other, or an object considered an omen for the coming of a stranger, or a temporary inmate of an inn, boarding house or hotel. 'Guest' operates somewhere in the uncertain semantics of stranger, enemy and friend, which are persistently linked by the spatial metaphor of inside and outside. For example:

> Only he was left; he was again the outsider. And now, as he stood there in the deserted square, which, a moment before, had been so animated, he had a sudden sinking of the heart: he was seized by that acute sense of desolation that lies in wait for one caught by nightfall, alone in a strange city . . . he reminded himself with some bitterness that he stood, an unheralded stranger, before a solidly compact body of things and people, on which he had not yet made any impression. (12)

The stranger remains outside, as the animate becomes uncannily inanimate. The interplay of space in *Maurice Guest*, specifically the movement between the internal and external, subtends the etymological charge of homeliness as that which relates to the welcoming house and benevolent interiority. The 'strange' and the 'outside' are both fundamental elements of the unhomely experience. What if the interior, once familiar, becomes strange? In other words, what if one becomes unfamiliar to oneself?

Although it has been established that the material was on his mind from 1913, Freud's essay on 'the uncanny' was not published until 1919, more than ten years after the publication of *Maurice Guest.* [61] The German romantic writer and music critic, E.T.A Hoffman (1776-1822), whose writings provide the basis of Freud's speculations, produced tales such as *The Sandman* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to Axel Clark, Richardson's diary entry of June 5, 1888 reads: "Want to copy this out from Longfellow" and there follow her notes on Longfellow's

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61 Sigmund Freud, *An Infantile Neuroses and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition: The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1917-1919; London: The Hogarth Press, 1955) 218.

translation of Hoffman's *Des Kapellmeister Johannes Kreislers musikalische Leiden*, part of the larger *Kreisleriana*."[62] Michael Ackland establishes that Richardson was reading Hoffman through the late 1890s and early 1900s.[63] Although *Maurice Guest* was written before Freud's work on the uncanny, but after his work on dream interpretation, Richardson knew Hoffmann's Gothic and fantastic fiction.[64] It is nevertheless to Freud that every critic of the uncanny must turn.

Freud steps into the domain of literary and cultural aesthetics when he conceives of the uncanny effect in literature as a feeling of "dread and creeping horror" present in "certain persons, things, sensations, experiences and situations." The key argumentative section of Freud's essay on the uncanny is his etymological demonstration that *unheimlich* in fact implies the term *heimlich*—in short *unheimlich* exhibits a double semantic capacity to mean its opposite, creating an antithetical double meaning. If one meaning of *unheimlich* coincides with the primary meaning of *heimlich*, then the homely and unhomely exist within each other. In other words, the strange and familiar can exist simultaneously. Freud's definition of the uncanny moment is precisely this recognition of the familiar in the unfamiliar.

I want to highlight this ambivalent lexical movement in terms of the unstable simultaneity of the significations of strange and familiar. The postulation of the unhomely home, the home which is not home, places the very notion of an uncertain and estranging home in the centre of this argument about expatriate narrative and theme. Freud's definition of *heimlich* appends '*heimisch*,' meaning native. This invites speculation about the un-*heimisch*, the non-native, for my purposes the expatriate operates as non-native, as stranger or foreigner. As Robyn Lyndenberg has noted, the disruptive power of the uncanny is provoked by and constructed on the uncertain ground of the foreign territory, a ground fertile for the production of the uncanny. Maurice, 'buried alive' in his provincial English

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62 Axel Clark, *Henry Handel Richardson: Fiction in the Making* (Sydney: Simon and Schuster, 1990) 164 , 281.

63 Ackland x-xi.

64 Renate Lachmann, "Remarks on the Foreign (Strange) as a Figure of Cultural Ambivalence," *Russian Literature* 36 (1994): 343.

home sustains a complex relation to the foreign, characterised by his spellbound attraction and repulsion by the uncanny in its foreign and feminine form, as, at least in part, a projection of his own foreignness.[65]

Freud's reading of *The Sandman* provides the scaffolding of his eventual position: that the *unheimlich* effect is produced as a result of an infantile complex, which although hitherto repressed, has been revived by an impression, so that something which has been hidden "returns to view." Freud states that "It may be true that the uncanny (*unheimlich*) is something which seems strange but is secretly familiar (*heimlich-heimisch*), which has undergone repression and returned from it." Freud himself 'returns' to Schelling's gloss of *unheimlich*: "everything is uncanny which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light." In line with this Freud reiterates that the uncanny is "in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind."[66] This suggests that the 'uncanny' object or situation is secretly comprehensible to the subject.

Maurice felt himself trapped and alienated in provincial England, a culture he associates with his long-suffering mother, and sought an idealised 'home' away from the mother-land, in musicianship and late German Romanticism:

> The home in which he grew up was one of those cheerless, middle-class homes, across which never passes the breath of the great gladness, the ideal beauty of life; where thought never swings itself above the material interests of the day gone, the day to come, and existence grows as timid and trivial as the petty griefs and pleasures that intersperse it. The days drip past, one by one, like water from a spout after a rain-shower; and the dull monotony of them benumbs all wholesome temerity at its core. (15)

Yet Maurice remains personally and aesthetically estranged. Maurice's journey from English innocence to decadent European experience drives him to cultural and social rupture, when certain forms of moral rectitude attached to national identity have been 'overmastered.' His repressions and negations shift with his geographical and cultural mobility. When all that he has been familiar with falls away, he is indeed in an ambiguous position:

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65 Robyn Lydenberg, "Freud's Uncanny Narratives," *PMLA* 112.5 (1997) 1075.

66 Freud, "The Uncanny," *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, ed. and trans James Strachey, vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1919; London: Hogarth Press, 1955) 245, 249, 241, 245.

'outside' himself, divided from as well as driven by his 'inside.' Louise Dufrayer, the enigmatic *femme fatale*, is the focal point of Maurice's disorienting expatriate experience of being both inside and outside. Louise, as the female stranger, is deeply familiar and also shockingly and perpetually strange:

> This deep white skin, the purity of which was only broken by the pale red of the lips; this dull, black hair, which lay back from the low brow in such wonderful curves, and seemed, of itself, to fall into the loose knot on the neck—there was something romantic, exotic about her, which was unlike anything he had ever seen: she made him think of a rare, hothouse flower; some scentless, tropical flower, with stiff, waxen petals. And then her eyes! So profound was their darkness that, when they threw off their covering of heavy lid, it seemed to his excited fancy as if they must scorch what they rested on; they looked out from the depths of their setting like those of a wild beast crouched within a cavern; they lit up about them like stars, and her face took on the pallor of early dawn. (38)

The moment of Maurice's "abrupt" recognition of Louise Dufrayer arrives soon after he arrives in Leipzig. It is a moment characteristic of the uncanny because it surfaces unexpectedly, and the point of emergence cannot be detected:

> What such a moment holds within it, is something which has never existed for us before, something it has never entered our minds to go out and seek—the corner of the earth, happened on by chance, which comes most near the Wineland of our dreams; the page, idly perhaps begun, which brings us a new god; the face of the woman who is to be our fate—but, whatever it may be, let it once exist for us, and the soul responds forthwith, catching in blind haste at the dimly missed ideal. (37)

The abrupt break moves Maurice's idealistic specular investments away from the physical landscape of Leipzig and its environs and on to the body of the woman. She becomes the substitute for the romantic landscape Maurice felt was missing on his first day in Leipzig, where he notes the absence of a sublime Alps. "Maurice had looked at the girl before him with unconcern, but the next it was with an intentness that soon became intensity, and feverishly grew until he could not tear his eyes away" (38). Maurice's feverish looking is the central modality of his desire for the exotic woman—he dares to look and look: "he did not lower his eyes, and for not doing so, seemed to himself infinitely bold." When he looks away, after she "let her eyes rest absently on him" (38) it was "as if a sudden gulf had gaped between where he now was and where he had previously been" (39).

The exotic Louise herself declares to Madeleine, a paradigm of sensible Englishness: "You will never know what it is to be taken out of yourself, taken and shaken, till everything you are familiar with falls away" (227). Maurice 'homes in' on the unhousing Louise Dufrayer, who desires to be shaken until nothing is familiar, to be taken out of herself (made foreign to herself). She is clearly not a stable 'mobile home.' Louise, turns out to be unmasterable and unhomely, a sound object of obsessive neurosis. She was never a 'home,' never once familiar and then alien; she was always both strange and familiar at the same time:

> If she had said she was a visitant from another world, Maurice would not, at the moment, have felt much surprise; but hearing the name of this distant land, on which he would probably never set foot, a sense of desolation overcame him. He realised anew what an utter stranger he was to her; of her past life, her home, her country, he knew and could know nothing. (122)

When Maurice first sees Louise, the shock of recognition is described by the narrator in generalising terms of the third person, as a moment that is: "upon us with the violent abruptness of a streak of lightning, and like this, they, too may leave behind them a scarry trace" (37). Richardson's description is violent, evoking an abrupt division between past and present. The shocking familiarity of Louise for the young man is described as: "The curious way in which he felt towards her, the strange overwhelming effect her face had on him, took no account of outside things" (58). Even quite late in the novel, for example, Louise's "bodily presence still affected him [Maurice] with a sense of strangeness" (426). The strangeness of feeling is aligned with the small importance of the outside world or the social. It concerns itself with the overwhelming nature of the inside, the internal, the unconscious, that which is hidden from view:

> Strange, that so small a thing, hardly bigger than one's two closed fists, should be able to exert such an influence over one! For this face it was—the pale oval, in the dark setting, the exotic colouring, the heavy-lidded eyes—which held him, it was this face which drew him surely back with a vital nostalgia—a homesickness for the sight of her and the touch of her—if he were too long absent. (706)

"Strange" is repeated, with the explicit figuration of Louise's face as 'home' for which one is sick with nostalgia (read as painful return). A poetics of displacement drives the choice of 'nostalgia,' 'homesickness' and 'absence.' The notion of the woman's face as 'home' is reiterated—the love for this 'home' is a "morbid possession":

> The power her face had over him was undiminished, though he now found it neither beautiful nor good; thought he knew the true meaning of each deeply graven line. . . This then was love?—this morbid possession by a woman's face. He, having neither the strength nor saving occupation, had bartered all he had, and knowingly, for the beauty of this face. And as long as it existed for him, his home was beside it. (706)

Maurice's desire for this 'home' drives him to knowingly trade "all he had;" and this did not include "strength or saving occupation." Maurice's attraction to Louise is based on recognition, concerned with her melancholy, for which he experiences "occult sympathy" and "morbid pity." However, the attraction is also based on the fascination of difference—older, sexual, extreme, a genius for loving. Louise is the double (the expatriate woman) that cannot be the double, the impossible ghost of self-identity that haunts Maurice. The *unheimlich* woman is uncanny and fascinating for Maurice because of the absence of complete mirroring or possession. This provokes a to-ing and fro-ing between the two as he seeks congruity, and is instead entranced and appalled by incongruity.

It is clear that the central misogyny involved in the notion of the *unheimlich* woman is the aversion to 'real' female genitalia—a point Freud takes to be self-evident—he candidly explains that masculine aversion to female genitalia has to do with its status as the 'original' unhomely home:

> It often happens that neurotic men declare that they feel something uncanny about the female genital organs. This *unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance to the former *Heim* (home) of all human beings, to the place where each of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning. There is a joking saying that "Love is home-sickness"; and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, while he is still dreaming: "this place is familiar to me, I've been here before" we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals, or her body.[67]

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67 Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," 245. In their readings of both Hoffman and Freud, feminist critics such as Sarah Kofman and Hélène Cixous emphasise the efforts of the male characters to appropriate the maternal and divine secrets of procreation. They note that, in Hoffman's tale, it is better to blind Olympia than to risk being castrated, and point out Freud's related and conspicuous neglect of the female figure and its connection to the motif of the gaze. If Freud only views the specular area of male narcissism, then feminist readings must respond to the difficulties of a theory that privileges male response to the uncanny trauma of a woman's lack. Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and it's Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (the uncanny)," *New Literary History* 7.3 (1976): 525-548. Sarah Kofman, *Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud's Writings*, trans., Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985).

One of the many links to be made between fetishism and the uncanny hinges on the relationship to the maternal body as origin, and the postulation of 'home,' and whether, for the male subject, the retention of that 'home' is possible, or must be repressed or at least disavowed, in relation to the threat of castration. That there might be a lack or uncertainty of origin is compensated for through scopophilia/fetishism, both modes of mastering the instability and lack involved in unhomeliness.

As Freud conceives of it, the uncanny is a male-oriented affect, centred upon fears of castration. Such affective experiences are feminising in the sense that they are characterised by a sense of objectification and disempowerment, which makes for the loss of subjectivity, involuntary repetition and unmanning. Sarah Kofman makes a very stringent and pertinent point about the connection between the enigmatic woman and the uncanny:

> To be sure, this type is fantasised by men as the very 'essence' of womanhood, as the eternal feminine; despite its 'incongruity,' it corresponds best with men's desires, since it represents the lost part of their own narcissism, projected outward, so to speak: men's fascination with this eternal feminine is nothing but fascination with their own double, and the feeling of uncanniness, *Unheimlichkeit*, that men experience is the same as what one feels in the face of any double, any ghost, in the face of the abrupt reappearance of what one thought had been overcome or lost forever.[68]

As an unworldly expatriate, Maurice's national and cultural discontinuity might be renegotiated and eventually grounded though Louise, whose mysteriousness and impenetrability he hopelessly invests with his desire born of lack. The question of lack is structurally exaggerated by displacements such as expatriation:

> The desire to know remained, became a morbid curiosity. Sometimes without a word, he took her face between his hands and looked into her eyes, as if to read in them an answer to the questions he was afraid to put—looked right into the depth of her eyes, where the pupils swam in the oval of bluish white, overhung by lids which were finely creased in their folds, and netted with tiny veins. But he said not a word, and the eyes remained unfathomable, as they had always been. (596)

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68 Kofman, *Enigma of Woman* 56.

Scopophilia: The Looking and Learning Perversion

Maurice is the tourist, migrant, *flaneur*, innocent abroad, who deals with his new cultural field visually. The visual is his primary mode of apprehension, and the scene of his drive towards knowledge and mastery. As a masculine subject, the drive for mastery pivots on his ability to negotiate difference—sexual, social, cultural. The greatest irony is that Maurice's drive towards mastery through the visual results in his loss of cultural bearings, and eventually, self-mastery—underpinned by those rationalist ideologies that sustain notions of unity, self-presence and self-knowledge. He is lost in the dark continent of sexuality and the unconscious—which manifest themselves as a morbid sexual obsession for the unmasterable, unrelinquishable body of the dark woman, in a decadent German musical bohemia. The sensible, pragmatic, *English* Madeleine provides the external focalisation of the strange otherness of the young man morbidly in love with the older, decadent woman:

> It was not only that he was paler and thinner than of old, his boyish manner had deserted him; and when he forgot himself, his eyes had a strange, brooding expression . . . 'Otherworldly almost,' thought Madeleine. (425)

Maurice's expatriate looking is how we first meet him. And then, "Maurice had looked at the girl before him with unconcern, but the next it was with an intentness that soon became intensity, and feverishly grew until he could not tear his eyes away" (38). Maurice's feverish looking becomes the central modality of his desire for the exotic woman—he dares to look and look: "he did not lower his eyes, and for not doing so, seemed to himself infinitely bold." When he looks away, after she "let her eyes rest absently on him" (31) it was "as if a sudden gulf had gaped between where he now was and where he had previously been" (39). Specularity, identity and division characterise this moment, a Lacanian summary of the nature of the libidinal force we call 'the gaze,' which searches the visual field for the fantasy of psychic wholeness and which, in fact, only instantiates alienation and self division. In contrast to Sartre's notion of 'the look,' Lacan's account of 'the gaze' operates as a consolidation of Freud's account of 'scopophilia' (love of looking). According to Lacan the 'gaze' is the instantiation of the visual drive, and as such, it is in excess of the phenomenology of seeing. It is a libidinal drive which propels subjects toward imaginary identifications, which results in fallacious notions of unity as and through the external

image. Therefore the 'gaze' always seeks to mitigate against 'lack' (lack of wholeness, self-presence, loss of maternal) and always takes place in the field of the Other. Grosz explicates Lacan's point—that the gaze is situated outside, like the phallus, like desire itself, and is to be understood as a mode of desire rather than a perceptual mode.[69] The particular field of the Other in the case of Maurice is the foreign, but nevertheless shockingly recognisable, Louise (Maurice's desire for the certainty of her recognition). The general field of the Other is *fin de siècle* German modernity, which is established as Other to a repressed Victorian and puritanical Englishness. The visual is the central register of desire in Richardson's text, operating in excess of both demand and need. The primacy of the visual in the orientation of Maurice's identity is demonstrated through his specular relation with Louise, who becomes the object of intense 'looking.' She becomes Maurice's 'centre,' his unstable absent present, his unhomely home.

Elizabeth Grosz comments that "voyeurism and exhibitionism are the active and passive forms of scopophilia, the drive to look" which have "direct links to the desire for mastery—the conversion of the position of passivity into activity." Grosz connects the drive to look with the desire to know (epistemophilia): "Scopophilic impulses play a key role in the quest for knowledge and mastery of the world."[70]

Maurice sees Louise for the second time at Schilsky's performance, an instance which reveals that the text uses Maurice's fixated looking as an opportunity to anatomise the woman's body. Maurice saw that "without fear of discovery, he might look as long or as often as he chose" (33). The close-ups of Louise represent her as an object of Maurice's gaze and also sense of smell (multi dimensional):

> Maurice, *lost in her presence,* grew dizzy with the scent of her hair . . . he would have liked to plunge both hands into the dark, luxuriant mass; still better, cautiously draw his hand down this whitest skin, which, seen so near, had a faint, satin-like sheen. The mere imagining of it set him throbbing and the excitement in his blood was heightened by the sensuous melancholy of the violin. (40, my emphasis)

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69 Elizabeth Grosz, "voyeurism/exhibitionism/the gaze," *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary,* ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) 449.

70 Elizabeth Grosz, "voyeurism/exhibitionism/the gaze" 447.

It is at this concert that the 'lost' Maurice begins to focus even more closely on Louise, particularly on her eyes. Lacan asks: what the voyeur is trying to see, to what is his gaze directed? At the same moment the also scopophilic Louise watches Schilsky perform. She watches Schilsky with the "patience of a rapt saint," which calibrates it differently to how she is herself watched and inhaled, Maurice's "desire to know," one of the organising drives of the 'desire to look' begins to effect his masculinity. His looking can be compared with the later, obsessively jealous desire to know: "overmanned by the desire to learn, from her own lips, more about her past" (596). Maurice attempts to view and re-view, read and re-read, in order to fix the "unfathomable" feminine, even though it was exactly her mysteriousness which attracted him to begin with.

Within the specular economy of *Maurice Guest*, Maurice and Louise seem to share between them the sexually differentiated modes of scopophilia, with (phallic) masculinity, voyeurism and sadism as one set, and (castrated) femininity, exhibitionism and masochism as another. The active form involves a subject looking at an object, and the passive form where the subject desires to be looked at by another subject. I am not convinced that these distinctions, constructed along the axis of sexual difference, operate strictly, in fact. Such strict distinctions are interrupted when Louise herself indeed looks at what she desires. This begs the question addressed by many feminists within theories of the visual. For example, do the neat correlations between sexual difference and modes of the visual really hold or are there actually sexually coded positions of desire within visual functions that can be taken up regardless of gender?

Maurice's voyeurism, what Lacan and Freud both see as the masculine (oedipal) modality of the gaze, becomes fixed on Louise, the spectacular and spectacularised woman, and she is partially constructed through the rhetoric of the touristic sublime. *Maurice Guest* evokes Maurice's voyeurism regularly. His repetitive and increasingly obsessive 'looking' is as anatomised as the object at which he 'looks.' That is to say that there is as much attention for voyeurism as the exhibit which draws the voyeuristic gaze (meta-looking). Maurice finds a photograph of Louise "which was a source of great pleasure to him. Here no laws of breeding or delicacy hindered him from gazing at her as often as he chose" (84). His other voyeuristic activity in the first third of the text, when he is still unknown to Louise, involves gazing from below at the windows of her apartment in the

Bruderstrasse. This vigilance is an almost cliched voyeurism, akin to the keyhole or peep-show where some part of the object is obscure. Hidden or veiled, one can, or perhaps must, look and look, without permission, repetitively, excessively: "Sitting opposite her, he shaded his own eyes with his hand and scrutinised her closely." This is another anatomisation of Louise's face and eyes through partial obstruction (362-3).

In a text so interested in performance, and related politics of visuality and performative, the opera theatre provides a classic nineteenth century occasion for seeing and being seen. Maurice says that their seats to Wagner's "Die Walküre" are "first rate for seeing" (132) although Madeleine responds characteristically that "You can see too much," referring to 'behind the scenes.' Maurice is absorbed in trying to discern Louise in the crowd, within a larger context of by-plays between Schilsky and Ephie. The next instance that the text offers as a scene of specularity and specularisation is *Carmen*, an occasion which occurs between the expatriates after six months of close interaction, and just before Maurice makes his declaration of love. Maurice stares at Louise in the darkness, trying to 'fathom' the dark lady and the nature of his feelings towards her. Another occasion of scopophilic obsession is the ball to which Maurice accompanies Louise, as she begins to emerge from her mourning for the loss of Schilsky. Upon seeing Louise in evening sheath:

> Strange thoughts coursed through the young man's mind. His first impulse had been to avert his eyes; in this familiar room it did not seem fitting to see her dressed so differently from the way he had always known her. Before, however, he had followed this sensation to the end, he made himself the spontaneous avowal that, until now, he had never really seen her. He had known and treasured her face —her face alone. Now he became aware that to the beautiful head belonged also a beautiful body, that, in short, every bit of her was beautiful and desirable. And this feeling in turn was overcome by a painful reflection: others besides himself would make a similar observation: she was about to show herself to a hundred other eyes. . . . (386-7)

There are a number of threads to be followed here—the uncanny lexicon of "strange" and "familiar," the fetishistic aversion of the eye at the same time as the of avowal of a 'true' seeing, and the jealous fear of Louise's exhibitionism, (a match for his voyeurism) her parade of her surface in a dress that "glistened all over its surface, as if it were sown with sparks" (386).

In the last third of the book Maurice and Louise oscillate between positions of domination (active) and servitude (passive). Maurice, in particular, discovers violence through an obsessed desire for mastery, possession and certainty. In these instances Maurice follows the logic of active masculinity and voyeurism in demonstrating his capacity for sadism (and Louise's for masochism). The text is not coy about these sado-masochistic possibilities; for example, the scene in which Maurice confronts Louise with the nature of her involvement with Heinz Krafft and begs her to deny it, and she declares finally that Krafft's stories are true: "Why should you alone not know that I was only jealous of a single person in the place and that was Krafft" (660). The scene reiterates the trope of Louise as "beast," and to an ambience and rhythm of violent, sado-erotic sexuality:

> The first taste of his greater strength was like the flavour of blood to a beast of prey. In her mind she might defy him, physically he was her master; and he struck her again and again . . . The knowledge that, under her dressing-gown, she had nothing on but a thin nightgown, gave him pleasure; he felt each of the blows fall full and hard on her firm flesh. (680)

The narrative describes Louise's defiant confirmation "'It's true'" as "exaltation." She continues to incite Maurice to violence, desiring to be 'mastered.' Louise moves between the desire to subordinate her will to his, and the use of her own sexual mastery.

Maurice as fetishist: the "morbid, overmastering desire"

Sadism is categorised as part of a psychoanalytic 'set' that includes voyeuristic masculinity. Maurice's feverish 'looking' leads me to suggest that he also occupies another position in the 'set,' that of the male fetishist. Fetishism operates in the field of the visual, and supports the primacy of the visual in the realm of identification and sexuality. The fetishist manages, through the mobile structure of avowal and disavowal, to sustain the fantasy of the hidden maternal phallus (signifying maternal power and identity) that he has, at one traumatic moment, realised is absent/castrated. He has managed to veil this realisation of traumatic lack, a lack which suggests the possibility of his own castration, with a substitution, or a chain of signifying substitutions. This compromised position between the recognition of female castration and its denial (its undecidability) suggests how fetishism is intricately connected with scopophilia, and how vision, fetishism and the castration complex are interconnected domains in the

constitution of the masculine subject. The other two connections I want to stress are between the oscillating structure of the uncanny and the inside/outside problematic for the displaced or expatriate subject.

In the essay on "Fetishism" of 1927, Freud defines fetishism as an exclusively masculine perversion "which consists on deriving sexual gratification from the association of a female sexual object with a fetish, generally a partial object."[71] This object is contiguous with the female genitals. Maurice's fetishistic fixations tend to objectify Louise's eyes, or, occasionally, her arm and hands. It is notable that Louise's eyes should be the 'object' contiguous with the maternal phallus, since the fetish is about the constitution of the subject through 'looking' and poses questions about seeing/not seeing (disavowal). The fetish operates to 're-focus' the scopophilic gaze. The number of careful descriptions of Louise Dufrayer's eyes, especially their deep setting and dark colour, form an example (368):

> No doubt, for each individual, there existed in one other mortal, some physical detail which he or she could find only in this particular person . . . It was her eyes. Not the size, or their dark brilliancy, but the manner of their setting: the spacious lids that fell from the high wavy eyebrow, first sloping deeply inwards, then curving out again, over the eyeball; this, and the clean sweep of the broad white lid, which, when lowered, gave the face an infantine look—a look of marble. (707)

Louise's eyes are the final point of unfathomability in the face that has such a 'strange hold' over Maurice. In *The Story of the Eye*, Bataille has written about the eyeball in terms of transgression and permeable limits. Maurice, the narrative and the reader re-focus and re-focus until the close-up of Louise evokes the veins in her eyes. The role of 'seeing' in the garnering of knowledge and certainty interacts with the fetish for the woman's eyes ("the girl with the Italian eyes"), in which the tighter re-focusing actually results in a cul de sac of information, and the fetish becomes that which unfixes. Michael Ackland points out that the following excerpt is another of Maurice's substitution dreams. Maurice has this dream after Dove's 'Bachelors Ball.' The displacement involved in disavowal is exemplified by the move from face to arm:

> The most disquieting thing, however, was, that though he could not materialise her face, what invariably rose before his eyes was her long,

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71 Naomi Schor, "Fetishism,"*Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) 113.

> bare arm, as it had lain on the black stuff of her dress. At first, it only came when he was battling to secure the face; then it took to appearing at unexpected moments; and eventually it became a kind of nightmare, which haunted him. He would start up from dreaming of it, his hair moist with perspiration, for, strangely enough, he was always at the point of doing it harm: either his teeth were meeting in it, or he had drawn the blade of a knife down the middle of the blue-veined whiteness, and the blood spurted out along the line, which reddened instantly in the wake of the knife. (406)

The violence represented here, especially the bestial teeth and vampyric knife, is part of sadistic fantasy which works with descriptions of Louise's 'undead' combination of deathly pallor and intense vitality. This textbook decadence represents the violent imbrication of sadism and fetishism.

The Instability Of Expatriate Identity: The *unheimlich* and the fetishistic

Maurice's desire for certainty and recognition is worked through a fetishistic fixation which repeats the ambivalent structure of 'unhomeliness.' My argument about Maurice as a young expatriate abroad reads his "morbid possession" by Louise as a desire for fixity and self-certainty through a mastery of (knowledge of/vision of), the body of the decadent Other. Maurice, as migrant subject, moves through the mobile instabilities of knowing and not knowing, between certainty and uncertainty, sustaining incompatible beliefs about that which he desire to see and know the most: Louise as virgin/whore, his/not his, saint/sinner. Maurice's 'overmanning' jealousy, his desire to know the facts of Louise's sexual past demonstrates how fixation unfixes expatriate masculinity. Maurice's repeated and enlarging desire to know (the answer) is compulsive, culminating in the appalling way in which Maurice himself tells Louise that Schilsky is back in town:

> Standing thus, he saw with a flash of insight that, though he went as far as steam would carry him, he would never, as long as he lived, be safe from overthrows of this kind. It was something elemental which he could no more control than the flow of his blood. (446)

The realisation of repetition compulsion, of the incarceration in temperament and elemental overthrow returns us to the earlier determinist language of "the face of the woman who is to be our fate," but there is also a subtextual reference to heredity and the generational unrest, to uncontrollable blood:

> Was his nature one of so little stability? He began to consider himself with something approaching dismay, and though, all this time, he had been going on a kind of mental tiptoe, for fear of rousing something that might be dormant in him, he could not help probing himself, in order to see if the change he observed were genuine or not . . . Am I a person of this weak, straw-like consistency, to be tossed about by every wind that blows? Is there something beneath it all that I cannot fathom (338)

Maurice's fear locates itself through notion of uncontrollability, unknowability, through the emergence of something that has lain dormant, and has been agitated by a cultural and sexual situation too foreign. Just as the son in Ibsen's *Ghosts* understands the legacy of disease from his father, Maurice understands that nothing can be done for his temperament, he is doomed to repeat his obsessions, he is not 'safe' from his own unconscious. He is lost in the foreign country of sexuality and the unconscious—which manifest themselves as a morbid sexual obsession for the unmasterable, unrelinquishable body of the dark woman, in a decadent German musical bohemia:

> The real truth, the last reaching truth about her, it would not be his to know. Soul would never be absorbed into soul; not the most passionate embrace could bridge the breach between them; to their last kiss, they would remain separate beings, lonely and alone. (601)

Maurice's expatriation from England to Germany, in combination with his dormant temperament, destabilises a chain of identifying categories. The dialectic of uncertainty, the transgression of a proper English masculinity is finished in an unhousing death of cultural crossing. In this section I have argued that Maurice's expatriate masculinity is constituted through a series of perversions relating to separation and an uncertainty about origin and proper place. Uncanny ambivalence, generated from the blurred boundaries between the familiar and the unfamiliar, offers a potential for subverting strict codes of gender and sexuality, but also highlights the ramifications of an expatriate insufficiency of knowledge.

As a newcomer and stranger Maurice is outside cultural information and experience, things are strange and desirable to him. He comes across a mysterious stranger and attempts to convert his outsider status to insider status, with the result that his insides (unconscious drives) erupt. This confusion of inside and outside worsens because Louise is *unheimlich* — she is strange and familiar, a site of uncertainty and ambivalence which Maurice attempts to master in a number of ways, but fails. The instability of

the boundaries between inside and outside, native and foreign, self and other, same and different fatally escalates. Maurice ends up suiciding as the only act of masculine self-possession left to him.

III The Expatriate Woman, The *Femme Fatale* and the Female Subject

Maurice Guest's expatriate identity comes to hinge upon his relation to Marie Louise Dufrayer, the expatriate Australian woman who is the subject of his obsessive, and eventually fatal, fixation. In this section I suggest that Louise operates as a sign of the Other because she symbolises an alterity often troped as the enigmatic feminine. In addition to the Otherness of sexual difference, Louise possesses qualities such as 'genius,' that Maurice's 'type' does not, and Louise's difference remains impassable and impossible.[72] Nevertheless Maurice's choice of Louise as fetishistic object rests on an uncanny sense of recognition—a recognition of another expatriate, unanchored in the world, also looking to be 'fixed' through the recognition of love. Louise is therefore familiar and unfamiliar, she is the paradoxical site of Maurice's uncanny uncertainty as well as his struggle for certainty and knowledge. The second half of the argument of this section explores the destabilising possibility that Louise, the expatriate woman as exotic and mysterious object, possesses a kind of subjectivity that disrupts her singular function as an outmoded stereotype of dangerous feminine mystique. In short, Richardson installs the caricature of the fatal woman, but also subverts it, and it is this ambivalent installation and undercutting that creates the subversive core of her text.

Although *Maurice Guest* is produced at the cusp of naturalism and aestheticism, it nevertheless clearly favours the scientific, detached method of realism, learnt from Flaubert, which works through post-Darwinian obsessions with classification and typology. Richardson's text establishes no departure from a deterministic discourse of 'temperament,' and obviously invests in concepts of type that presume stable, ahistorical characteristics that constitute distinct typologies of personality and psychology. This commitment is realised in the dramatisation of the 'problematic'

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72 Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989). In very general terms Battersby explains how categories like the genius and the sublime are traditionally gendered masculine.

temperament, an interesting project in this relatively early period of psychoanalytic thinking. Both Maurice and Louise have irrevocably to deal with the 'type' script of the person that they are (their 'natures' and their nationalities), and the 'type' of person they are attracted to. In the *fin de siecle,* biological determinism was itself a way of fixing 'Others' by those interested in the fixity of inherited and biological features. This is an important point in any assessment of Richardson, particularly in terms of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony,* which demonstrates the role Walter Lindesay Richardson played in his daughter's imagination in the shape of his medical profession, his interest in spiritualism and especially his later degenerative illness.

The Expatriate woman: what matter Australian?

For Louise Dufrayer, the pursuit of music was an excuse to leave an uncongenial rural provincial Australian backwater. Although the dimension of her musical gift is unknown (Madeleine claims she is talented but indolent), art was certainly an escape route for Australians of the right class. It was well understood that you could not train in the colonies. As the financially independent Australian woman in Europe, the unconventional Louise is 'at home' in Leipzig's musical Bohemia, a cosmopolitan, urban situation. Although we cannot gauge much of her past, Louise proves adaptable to bohemia's less strict moral climate, and Leipzig also provided a milieu saturated in sublime theatricality, as well as discourses of genius and performance, which seems to suit the actress in Louise.

Louise's characteristic restlessness is explained with recourse to national characteristics. For example, her insatiability and changeability is linked to her experience of extreme climates as a child in her native Australia:

> And the quick picture she drew, of how, in her native land, the brief winter passed almost without transition into the scathing summer; her suggestion of unchanging leaves, brown barrenness and arid dryness; of grass burnt up to cinders, of dust, drought, and hot, sandy winds; all this helped him to understand something of what she was feeling. A remembrance of this parched heat was in her veins, making her eager not to miss any of the young, teeming beauty around her, or one of the new strange scents; eager to let the magic of this awakening permeate and amaze her, like a primeval happening . . . so now her attitude towards this mere change of nature disquieted him; she overenjoyed it, let herself go in its exuberance. And, as usual, when she lost control of her nerves, he found himself retreating into his shell, practising self-control for two. (432)

The traditional pairing of woman and nature intersects with this portrait of "native" land. The woman is extreme; like her native climate, her nerves (a remembrance of parched heat) 'over'-respond to the "new strange scents" of the foreign European spring. When faced with this excessive "exuberance" Maurice responds with a compensatory English reserve, "retreating into his shell" rather than joining Louise in an unrestrained physicality, a national as well as sexual characteristic. Maurice has this reaction when Louise states that she is Australian:

> If she had said she was a visitant from another world, Maurice would not, at the moment, have felt much surprise; but hearing the name of this distant land, on which he would probably never set foot, a sense of desolation overcame him. He realised anew what an utter stranger he was to her; of her past life, her home, her country, he knew and could know nothing. (122)

The fatal woman of *Maurice Guest* is an expatriate also; an antipodean from Queensland, Australia. In addition, Louise is mobilised as a generic 'southern' or Latin woman. However, an Italian-Greek-Spanish past would make her accessible to Maurice in terms of European geography, if not language. The Italian-southern-foreign woman is the dark woman and the older, sexually experienced woman who embodies the relation between sex, beauty and death. Maurice attempts to come to grips with decadent European culture in the form of Louise as Fatal Woman, with her decadent morbidity and intensity, rather than imperial Victorian pragmatism. In Maurice's journey from innocence to experience, the body of the sexual older woman from the new, older world becomes the ground of contestation for fame and recognition.

Otherness, in a variety of forms, was a preoccupation of the *fin de siecle*. Between the Victorian and the modern periods cultural representations of the new woman, the decadent, the dandy, the vampire and the prostitute exemplified the fascination in this period for manifestations of the (often monstrous) Other. Fictional mapping of the domain of the Other in the late British imperial period involved a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projections, which Said describes as the conversion (transformation-translation) of the strange and the unfamiliar into the known. The naming of the Other enabled a preservation and defence of the not-Other. Otherness was clearly a way in which one might explore and deal with identity and place in the world. Novelistic representations of the enigmatic woman or stranger, to take Richardson's example, were part of

this process. Although the not-other was 'naturalised,' both sides of the binary distinction were nevertheless *made*, constituted through mechanisms of cultural projection, and in interactions with all kinds of difference—national, ethnic, sexual. For example, Louise's Australian-ness intersects with her femininity as a conflated mode of Otherness. The obsession with classification was an attempt to make the unknown world—the pathological, the alien and the abnormal—better known. Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (*Entartung* appeared in two volumes in Berlin in 1892-3, published in English in 1895) was a work which developed theories of degeneracy, decline and hysteria as a means to classify abnormality or perverseness, which in turn became a means to enforce normality and morality through the scientific demarcation of characteristics considered challenging to the *status quo*. Nordau took decadent European literature as material for this study, confirming that it examined the abnormal, the pathological, the alien.

Louise's role in *Maurice Guest* demonstrates, as well as interrupts, some stock facets of the *fin de siècle* culture of femininity. The nineteenth century *fin de siècle* was a period fraught with anxiety about Otherness, particularly in the form of gender and sexuality, a fact borne out by the mania for the classification of sexual norm and deviance, sexual 'dis-ease' and the prevalence of fictions of sexuality. The categorisation of woman in that period produced a typological spectrum which included the New Woman, the fallen woman, the fatal woman, the vampyric woman. Freud saw sexuality as gender specific, but measured from normative masculinity. Every woman was first 'a little man'; the woman was only secondarily feminine. Nevertheless, the raw material of Freud's early investigations was predominantly spoken testaments from female patients, and he never ceased to be fascinated with the enigmatic character of the feminine in its difference and possible lawlessness. Feminine sexuality, presumed to be the entire field of femininity, was the proverbial 'dark continent,' its lacks and drives unrepresentable and outside meaning. For example, Maurice reflects that Louise's "thoughts seemed always to be set on something larger, vaguer, beyond" (450).

The *Femme Fatale*

A significant figure of Otherness in *fin de siecle* literature is the *femme fatale*. The *femme fatale* was marked off from other categories of femininity

in the period, such as prostitute, fallen woman, New Woman, suffragette and so on, although some of her stereotypical characteristics inevitably merge across categories. Was the *femme fatale* a 'symptom' of a cultural 'condition' preoccupied with defining, classifying and above all, constructing different types of sexuality? Models of threatening womanhood signalled cultural anxiety about defining femininity and sexuality, in a way that was quite specific to the decades 1880-1900. The sexually fatal woman represented death, darkness, chaos—all that lies beyond the safe, the known, the normal. A time-honoured example is the threat that the feminised 'dark continent' of Africa posed to masculine imperialist England. The *femme fatale*, an internal phantom, threatened to draw the male into an Other world—to the chaotic wilderness of the outside edge of the frontier because she represented a space outside normality, order, light, masculine logic, reason, culture. She was abnormal because she was aggressive, deathly, masochistic and punishing in turn. The *femme fatale* was a site at which sex and death inevitably merged.

The characterisation of Louise Dufrayer participates in tropes of the unfathomable woman whose sexuality was fatal for those unfortunate enough to be trapped in its insatiable orbit:

> He was invariably worked on afresh by the blackness of the lustreless hair; by the pale, imperious mouth; by the dead white pallor of the skin, which shaded to a dusky cream in the curves of neck and throat, and in the lines beneath the eyes was of a bluish brown. Now the lashes lay in these encircling rings. Without doubt it was the eyes that supplied life to the face: only when they were open, and the lips parted over the strong teeth, was it possible to realise how intense a vitality was latent in her. (463)

In *Maurice Guest* the characterisation of Louise is constructed from a number of different points of view: the narrator, her own point of view and the version of her provided by other characters. The narrative patiently apportions point of view in line with its modes of detachment. In terms of the gaze of others, Maurice's version is the most significant, as the last section indicates. When Maurice first sees Louise Dufrayer, she is absorbed in playing the piano for Schwarz. Maurice's first impression, which creates a voyeuristic space for the reader, features the kind of intense anatomisation prevalent in this naturalist realist text:

> This deep white skin, the purity of which was only broken by the pale red of the lips; this dull, black hair, which lay back from the low brow in such wonderful curves, and seemed, of itself, to fall into the loose knot on the

> neck—there was something romantic, exotic about her, which was unlike anything he had ever seen: she made him think of a rare, hothouse flower; some scentless, tropical flower, with stiff, waxen petals. And then her eyes! So profound was their darkness that, when they threw off their covering of heavy lid, it seemed to his excited fancy as if they must scorch what they rested on; they looked out from the depths of their setting like those of a wild beast crouched within a cavern; they lit up about them like stars, and her face took on the pallor of early dawn. (38)

The terms in which Maurice understands Louise are substantially laid out at this first contact. This visual consumption of the beautiful woman performer contains a number of familiar descriptions which bellow the *femme fatale* stereotype. Richardson's portrait makes use of contrasting black and white. The hair is dull, without reflective sheen, not giving out energy, but with a life of its own, a metonym for an intense inward life. Richardson's sentence mimics the curvaceous fall of the hair through the rhythmic use of punctuation and assonance. The romantic-decadent notion of woman as flower is followed through, but the flower is tropical, exotic, oriental, rather than the later roses and lilacs. Louise's attraction is one of exoticism, a staple aspect of otherness and Australianness. Louise's dark eyes are dwelt on at length. They are deeply dark and deeply set, both scorching and mysterious, vital and opaque. Louise's eyes are a well which haunt Maurice, since he cannot fathom them, try as he might. Popular decadent metaphors of bestiality (wild beast) and deathliness (pallor of early dawn) are employed for their effect on the "excited fancy" of the young expatriate. The blazon suggests that Louise can be seen but she cannot be known; there will be no penetration of the darkness suggested by her eyes and hair, nor of the fatal melancholy of the pallid skin. In straining to recall her exact appearance at this encounter with the "Wineland of his dreams" (38), Maurice later imagines that her eyes look out from the golden petals of the yellow rose that had fallen from her belt whilst she was playing for Schwarz. These eyes then transform into moons of a bluish light, and it is only then that he can picture her whole face, a "Medusa face, opaquely white, with deep, unfathomable eyes" (38). It is at this moment of haunting that Maurice realises that his "peace of mind" is gone, gone to the Rose of Sharon he later dreams about: "a giant flower, with monstrous crimson petals." Louise has moved through a chain of substituting images, starting with the flower, then the bluish moon, and finally the white face and black eyes; a Medusa face, nocturnal and exotic. Her eyes, most importantly, are unseeing. Louise's eyes do not see or recognise Maurice, she is lost in the life of performance.

In her 1986 book, *Idols of Perversity*, Bram Dijkstra includes a chapter titled "Poison Flowers; Maenads of the Decadence and the Torrid Wail of the Sirens."[73] In this chapter the reader can find what amounts to a checklist of the main stereotypical features of the *femme fatale* as Louise. Dijkstra lists the 'fantastic' features of the feminine in *fin de siecle* texts as follows: the temptation of female beauty to male striving, female abandonment, melancholy, "palpitating expanse of instinctive physical greed," earthiness, woman as eroticised flower (become a nightmare), chameleon eroticism, dance as an ecstatic form of primitive movement and insatiable urge, hysteria, exhaustion, highly strung nerves taut with suppressed passion, predatory hunger, bestiality, invalidism and the fetish of sleep. Djikstra also points to the vogue of hauntingly deep-set eyes with fashionably feverish dusky rings left by dissipation and too many sleepless nights, which indicate a less than virtuous past.[74] Dissipation, degeneration, experience, fever, insatiability are all aspects of the fatally sexual woman. In short, the *femme fatale* caricatured hyperbolic fears and fantasies about the sinister potency of the feminine, the possibly murderous seductiveness of the dissembling feminine, and the destructiveness of mysterious and insatiable desire.

Louise's stereotypical position as the fatal woman is marked by her own and others' references to herself as "Lulu," the eponymous heroine of Franz Wedekind's play about an infamous *femme fatale*, performed in Germany when Richardson began her text.[75] *Der Erdgeist* (1895, staged in Leipzig in 1898) featured the notorious Lulu as a sexually voracious, appetitive feminine whose deadly fascination was generated directly from her sexuality. To take the theatrical parallels one step further, Louise, according

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73 Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in* Fin de Siècle *Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP , 1986) 235-257.

74 Cf. *Maurice Guest* 368.

75 Frank Wedekind (1864-1918) German actor and dramatist, based mainly in Munich, and a direct forebear of the modern Theatre of the Absurd. Wedekind employed episodic scenes, fragmented dialogue, distortion and caricature which formed the transition from the photographic realism of his age to the Expressionism of the following generation. His characteristic dramatic theme was the antagonism of the elemental force of sex to the philistinism of society. In the "Lulu" cycle; *Die Erdgeist* (1895; *Earth Spirit*, 1914) and *Die Büsche der Pandora* (1904; *Pandora's Box*, 1918), he extended the theme of sex to the underworld of society and introduced the eternal, amoral *femme fatale*, Lulu who is destroyed in the tragic conflict of sexual freedom with hypocritical bourgeois morality. *Die Erdgeist* was staged in Leipzig in 1898, where Richardson presumably saw it.

to biographical research, was also modelled on Elanora Duse, known as *La Duse*, an Italian actress with whom Richardson was fascinated after a performance in 1898.[76] The category of 'actress' is interesting, suggesting automatic connections between femininity and dissembling. The actress is alluring and dangerous because of the way in which her deliberate (transgressive) visibility is bound up with possibilities of artifice and masquerade—all features of Joan Riviére's theorisation of the masquerade of femininity. Louise often assumes the role of exhibitionist—the feminine version of voyeurism—where the subject does not look, but whose desire is invested in being the object of the gaze; being the object of desire for the Other. For example:

> But they had not gone once round, when they were the observed of all eyes . . . . At one end of the hall was an immense mirror: he saw that Louise, who was flushed, held her head high and talked to him without pause. In a kind of bravado she made him take her round a second time; and after the third, which was a solitary progress, they remained standing with their backs to the mirror . . . Louise only smiled—a rather artificial smile that had been on her lips since she entered the hall. (389)

The ball was a great occasion for just this brand of inspection. Louise, "flushed" with bravado parades three times around the hall and comes to rest where her back can be reflected to the room, not looking at herself but squarely in the gaze of Others. Her "artificial" smile is reminiscent of Hoffman's Olympia, the exquisitely beautiful, but entirely mechanical doll.

Heinz Krafft argues that Louise understands 'instinctively' about the performative aspect of her physical beauty (643ff.) He insists the beautiful woman should eschew any striving for rational thinking or deep understanding, and follow the dictates of taste and tact only. Louise's talent for suffering and an exquisite superficiality pleases the aestheticist Krafft. Krafft's position on femininity, art and morality follows an inquiry from Madeleine as to whether anything can be done for Maurice's increasingly anti-social demeanour. It is a notoriously misogynist diatribe, an excursus on femininity, nationality, morality and art that is received in ironic silence by Madeleine. Their interaction dramatises a mock Nietzschean position on

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76 Elanora Duse was involved with Gabriele D'Annunzio, the author of *Il Fuoco* (1900, *The Flame of Life*), a scandalous decadent Italian text. Andrew Reimer reports that Richardson read *Il Fuoco* three times in 1900. Andrew Reimer, "D'Annunzio and the Romantic Agony," *Reconnoitres: Essays in Australian Literature in honour of G. A. Wilkes*, eds. M. A. Harris and E. Webby (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1992).

the feminine, aestheticism and the cult of beauty and artifice in conflict with what might be loosely termed ideologies of the New Woman. The Viennese Krafft sets himself up as the spokesperson for Bohemian Europe to the philistine, because pragmatic, English. Krafft sets up a binary economy between the English and German-Austrian which opposes morality to immorality, morality to art, talent to genius, puritanism to Bohemianism. Krafft's sexual 'deviance' has been more than broadly hinted at, as has his amorality, his musical talent and love for Schilsky. In short, Krafft is a cipher for European decadence and attendant theories of genius and artistic production. He is a model late romantic, well versed in the aesthetic benefits of self-absorption, perversion and melancholy.

When Madeleine suggests that Maurice and Louise's obsessions are unnatural and excessive, Krafft responds with the idea that this 'madness' of sexual obsession might be the artistic salvation of Maurice. He exhorts the role of the beautiful, sexual woman with a "genius for loving" in the formation of the impressionable, amoral artist. Louise's danger is a vital aspect of her attraction for the artist, because it is a form of the sublime. The sketch Krafft gives of Louise as the "flower of her kind" involves the idea that such a flower should display a special talent for passion and renunciation, and that her accretion of sexual experience improves rather than 'contaminates' her, and makes her suitable for consumption by a connoisseur. Louise, understood as purely sexual and instinctual, is entirely travestied by Krafft's misogynist cliches. Madeleine baldly reminds Krafft that he too was madly infatuated with Louise when he first met her, and that he was not theoretical then. Krafft's speech about Louise must be seen as an ironic dramatisation of the decadent reading of successful femininity—told to the New Woman who scorns it and the versions of fatal femininity it favours. Madeleine's insistence that Louise is fickle, vampyric, unnaturally excessive, unstable and a decadent influence on Maurice charts another set of possibilities about Louise. However, the destabilising operation of Richardson's textual irony is exemplified here, when both Krafft and Madeleine are ironised as the decadent and new woman respectively.

The *femme fatale* is a multiple sign, the meaning of which rests on what else, besides woman, was considered to be culturally invasive or politically other in culture at the time. The constitution of *femme fatale* as a sign represented male anxiety about the enigmatic language, consciousness and history of female power. Even the New Woman continued to find the old

problem of female erotic power perplexing, engaged, as they were, in arguments about female freedom. Richardson was interested in the unconscious, in sexuality, freedom and even female genius, and she responded to the cliche of the dangerously desirable, fatal woman by bringing her inside the known, by creating some kind of motive force for her actions, some modicum of psychological-sexological explanation.

Louise: The Almost Subject

I have gone to some lengths to establish the ways in which Louise Dufrayer operates doubly in *Maurice Guest* as the *fin de siecle femme fatale* and as the seductive unhomely woman. However, though Richardson uses the generic category of fatal woman, I think it is one she also markedly interrupts. Louise, like Maurice, has a "problematic" nature. She is a subject who suffers, not just as part of the melancholic and dissipated schematic of the femme fatale, but a powerful and flawed subject worthy of sympathy. The extent to which Louise is treated as a subject, and not just as the object, of Maurice's fatal obsession, is the extent to which she is the disturbing and subversive core of Richardson's text. Most subversively, Louise is given a point of view, albeit limited. Richardson's characterisation of Louise maps the Other, but partially from inside the Other's perspective, suggesting that the Other may even be partially like us. This is not always straightforward, as Louise oscillates in status between subject and object. The construction of this 'almost subjectivity' is bound up with Louise's "escape" from the usual moral restitution which normally punishes the fallen woman at end of nineteenth century novels.

Ambivalence accompanies Louise's 'unfixed' status as either subject or object. It is an ambivalence that may be explained by the contradictory gender ideologies attached to the number of points of view. True to the seeming detachment of scientific naturalism, the narrator is not much help in defining a clear moral position on Louise (and Maurice). Madeleine, Krafft and Schilsky all offer different versions of Louise. Krafft's view about Louise has been dealt with above. Schilsky is both exasperated and fascinated by Louise's single-mindedness and extremity, but she is not fatal. It is Maurice's gaze that most often allows the reader to observe Louise, and it is a fanatical gaze. Maurice begins with one kind of culturally recognisable objectification of Louise, which slowly alters, but never finally dissipates, under the strain of his relation to her as a 'real' person. His portrait of her

alters from a chivalric insistence on spiritual virtue and innocent vulnerability to match her physical beauty, to a less idealistic, supremely painful knowledge of her 'flawed nature.'

Madeleine can see, but does not sympathise with, the hold that Louise exerts over men whose 'type she embodied:'

> Beautiful she had never thought Louise; she was not even pretty, in an honest way—at best a strange, foreign-looking creature, dark skinned, black of eyes and hair, with flashing teeth, and a wonderfully mobile mouth—and some people, hopeless devotees of a pink and white fairness, had been known to call her plain . . . Hers was a nameless charm; it was present in each gesture of the slim hands, in each turn of the head, in every movement of the broad, slender body. Strangers felt it instantly; her very walk seemed provocative of notice; there was something in the way her skirts clung and moved with her, that was very different from the motion of other women's. And those whose type she embodied went crazy about her. (111)

Madeleine judges Louise's beauty in terms of *honesty*, which refers to the untrustworthiness of its unknowability; its lack of obvious truth. In line with these concerns, Madeleine comments on Louise's strangeness, her foreignness. Madeleine admits that there is no language for Louise's attractiveness—"hers was a nameless charm." The name which cannot be found relates to the charm of sexual experience and availability. The lack of language to describe Louise's 'effect' stems from the absence of a language for female desire.

Louise's first words for herself in *Maurice Guest* are part of a letter she sends Schilsky from Dresden, which he, as part of a homosocial *mise en scene*, gives in turn to Krafft in order to disprove the claim that "Lulu is getting you under her thumb" (80). It is a cajoling, masochistic letter in which she refers to herself as 'Lulu,' and threatens, presumably in some fun, to throw herself under the train if he does not meet her at the station, a reference, no doubt, to *Anna Karenina*. Louise's next interaction with Schilsky, when he is busy composing, is more revealing of her desperation: "in a miserable swell of doubt and jealousy, such as she could never subdue, she asked: "Were you practising as well?"(126) She demands his total attention, and he claims "You are never satisfied." She replies that "Just to-day I wanted you so much. This morning I was so depressed that I could have killed myself" (128). These constitute direct claims about female desire made palatable by the cliches about insatiability and melancholy inevitably attached to the figure of the fatal woman: "She stood irresolute, not

venturing to touch him again, looking hungrily at him"(128). The "hungry-beast" description comes up a number of times, as does the extremity of her emotional state. Schilsky, unlike Maurice, has known the effect of Louise's face for a long time, and it has lost some of its power—but there was still "the absolute physical agreement that always overcame their differences" (130). Louise is shown here to have obsessive feelings for Schilsky that Maurice, in turn, has for her: "she gazed, with adoring eyes, at this face that constituted her world" (130). Maurice's feelings for Louise are mirrored again in her feelings for Schilsky when, after Schilsky has left, she cries to Madeleine:

> Do you think one can change one's feelings so easily? Don't you understand that to love a person once is to love him always and altogether—his faults as well—everything he does, good or bad, no matter what other people think of it? (267)

Louise's dangerous grief after Schilsky's departure anticipates Maurice's debased trauma when Louise leaves him. Maurice solves his 'actively,' through suicide, rather than Louise's more passive and extended morbidity. Maurice has not the temperament to exist entirely 'outside' the frame of civilised behaviour—a landscape he enters when he strikes Krafft (655). However, the drama of temperament cannot be so strictly classified along the axis of sexual difference. Louise and Maurice are active and passive in turn. For example, Louise cries to Maurice:

> Peace of mind! I have never even been passably content. Something is always wanting. To-night, for instance, I felt so much energy in me, and I can make nothing of it—nothing! If I were a man I should walk for hours bareheaded, through the woods. But to be a woman . . . to be cooped up inside four walls . . . when the night itself is not large enough to hold it all! (147)

Louise's desire is announced here as a masculine form of freedom—unrestricted movement in the outside world. Louise's desires are circumscribed by social forces as well as her nervous disposition. Louise's desire is often described as an oscillating and uncertain combination of sudden "overabundant" vitality (for example, dancing and sex) and then paralysis. Louise's inertia is effectively described through a series of interiors: her bedroom, the room at Rochlitzerberg, the interior of the Opera House.

Another formulation of illicit female desire is through spectatorship of musical performance. Louise actively looks at Schilsky's performance, at *Die Walkure* and at *Carmen*. Apart from theatre, Louise's active spectatorship is evoked in one of the most fascinating scenes of *Maurice Guest*—the confrontation of Ephie by Louise. When Madeleine tells Louise that Schilsky had been unfaithful to her, Louise becomes obsessed with actually seeing her rival in order to discern the truth of the claim. She will 'know' when she sees her. She 'makes' Maurice bring Ephie to her. Her reaction to the young girl is the most extraordinary moment of specularity in the text, and it is worth quoting in full:

> Now she forced herself to see every line of the face. Nothing escaped her. She saw how loosened tendrils of hair on neck and forehead became little curls; saw the finely marked brows, and the dark blue veins at the temples; the pink and white colouring of the cheeks; the small nose, modelled as if in wax; the fascinating baby mouth, with its short upper-lip. Like most dark, sallow women, whose brief freshness is past, the elder girl passionately admired such may-blossom beauty, as something belonging to an entirely different race to herself. And this was not all: as she continued to look into Ephie's face, she ceased to be herself; she became the man whose tastes she knew better than her own; she saw with his eyes, felt with his senses. She pictured Ephie's face, arch and smiling, lifted to his; and she understood and excused his weakness. He had not been able to help what had happened: this was the prettiness that drew him in, the kind he had invariably turned to look back at, in the street—something fair and round, adorably small and young, something to be petted and protected, that clung, and was childishly subordinate. For her dark sallowness, for her wilful mastery, he had only a passing fancy. She was not his type, and she knew it. But to have known it vaguely, when it did not matter, and to know it at a moment like the present, were two different things.
>
> In a burst of despair she let her arms fall to her sides; but her insatiable eyes gazed on; and Ephie, though she was now free, did not stir, but remained standing, with her face raised, in a silly fascination. And the eyes, having taken in the curves of cheeks and chin, and the soft white throat, passed to the rounded, drooping shoulders, to the plumpness of the girlish figure, embracing the whole body beneath them; she felt as if her clothes were being stripped from her, and she left standing naked. Louise saw the changing colour, and interpreted it in her own way. His—all his! he was not the mortal—she knew it only too well—to have this flower within his reach, and not clutch at it, instinctively, as a child clutches at sunbeams. (306).

This scientifically precise and highly sexualised anatomisation of Ephie charts the difference between the women. Ephie is characterised as being from another 'race,' so different is she from the strange darker woman. The most intriguing moment of this extract arrives when Louise ceases to look as herself and looks instead 'as' Schilsky—'she saw with his eyes and felt with his senses.' Is this a moment of male impersonation? This 'crossing'

into the male gaze authorises continued feminine spectatorship, much as the crossing into a masculine signature also offers authority.

For the female to look and know is to insist on her subjectivity and desire. Louise can look *as herself* when comparing physical beauty, a mode that Madeleine, for example, undertakes with Louise. In addition, Louise's earlier observation of Schilsky in performance is mediated through a religious, ecstatic rhetoric—a viable form of female spectatorship of the body of Christ. When, however, the sexual nature of the relation is being defined, Louise must look 'as a man,' indeed as Richardson must write 'as a man,' in order to be present at the revelation of sexuality. In a highly sexualised passage, Ephie's body is laid open for the reader's consumption. The titillation of Louise-looking-as-Schilsky is heightened with the return of the gaze to Louise ('her insatiable eyes gazed on') when Ephie stands entranced in front of her as Louise strips her naked with her eyes, 'embracing the whole body beneath them' to understand that she had given herself to Schilsky.

Louise ascertains that Ephie, and not herself, was Schilsky's 'type'—Ephie was recognisably childish, subordinate, vacuous, vulnerable, without dark and wilful mastery. The rhetoric of 'type' organises certain relation to power between genders: Louise's 'mastery', her capriciousness and sexual experience is an important component of her attractiveness: "She was branded with wounds. The fierce demands in her, over which she had no control, had once more reared their heads and got the mastery of her, and of him, too" (572). Maurice sees this, and is driven to try and master the situation through the impossible eradication of precursor. He cannot bear what he sees/knows about Louise's experience:

> It's the knowing that tells, Maurice. You would have that still to learn. You don't realise it yet, but afterwards, it would come home to you . . . afterwards, you would think differently. (448)

Louise's passionate assertiveness is comprised of a complex masochism; she manipulates through passivity as well as vitality. The tragedy of Louise is her inability to be happy, her desire for the Nietzschean superman, with a whip in his hand. For Louise the unrest of desire is never gone:

> Yet not for a moment had she harboured his idea of regular occupation; she knew herself too well for that. In the fever into which her blood had worked itself, she could settle to nothing: her attention was centred wholly

> in herself; and all her senses were preternaturally acute. But she suffered, too, under the stress of her feeling; it blunted her, and made her, on the one hand, regardless of everything outside it, on the other, morbidly sensitive to trifles. (515)

There are a number of moments of Louise's point of view that proffer her as a subject, rather than object, of the narrative of sexual obsession. Louise is subject to such an obsession herself, but not for the man who is obsessed with her.

Conclusion

> Hours followed, when she no longer sought and gave recklessly, in a wild endeavour to lose the oppressive sense of twofold being. Her wish that to bond him that, absent from her, he would only half exist. And before these outbreaks, the young man was helpless. His past life and such experience as he had gathered in it, grew fantastic and unreal, might all have belonged to someone else. (519)

The compassionate insight of this description of Louise's sexual life with Maurice late in the novel subverts the stereotype of the hyperbolically feminine, enigmatic woman who is devoid of subjectivity and agency. Louise's 'reckless' and profligate desire is explained as her desire to 'lose the sense of twofold being,' to dissolve herself into a world of transcendent sensation. This desire to lose the demarcations of the self makes Maurice powerless as well as alienating him from his own sense of self. This desire for incorporation on Louise's part has the paradoxical effect of division from 'his past life and such experience as he had gathered in it.' As Maurice acts increasingly to keep the face that was his home, his isolation and distance from his identity increase. Louise wants sex to mitigate loss and absence, to work as a management of lack, as well as an obliteration of the self. Early in their relationship, Louise says to Maurice "You will never know what it is to be taken out of yourself, taken and shaken until everything else falls away" (268).This represents rare commentary on Louise Dufrayer's interior life and motivations.

Richardson sketches the experience of the expatriate woman who craves ecstatic self-loss and incorporation in passionate sublimity. This facet of expatriate subjectivity shadows the story of Maurice, whose status as an outsider is confirmed in his obsessive desire for a home 'in' for the impenetrable woman. However, he is caught up in Louise's dislocating desire for obliteration: "He lost touch with reality and dreamed dreams of

imperceptible threads, finer than any gossamer"(58). For Maurice such alienation culminates in a loss of masculine self-possession. The unbridgeable gap to the Other, and eventually to any workable sense of himself, is fatal for his temperament. The radical aspect of the survival of the actively desiring, sexual woman is matched by the unblinking way in which Maurice's demise into abjection and death is charted.

Although *Maurice Guest* is constructed with a kind of relentless objectivity, it also displays the textual tensions and turbulence connected to its emergence at the end of one tradition and the beginning of another. Richardson's detachment amounts to an absenting of authorial subjectivity, but the narrative distance testifies to narrative desire. Desire, alterity and distance is thematised in *Maurice Guest* as part and parcel of the expatriate experience for both Louise and Maurice. Desire and distance are part and parcel of the adoption of the patronym to sign. The adoption of the male signature enacts a masquerade of gender crossing that "succeeds only in producing the final indecipherability or irreducibility of fictional directions it mobilises and maintains."[77] Cross-identification, or the action of transfer, is the structuring dynamic of identity, and one especially important in expatriate life. Richardson's text investigates this transfer at the level of signature and expatriate masculinity. The 'signing-over' of female to male authorship indicates that the displacement of identification might be the very condition for the possibility of Richardson's fiction.[78]

Despite the masculine signature, we must add Richardson to Emily Apter's list of female authors who wrote "comparably fetishistic fictions combining the sexological sociological memoir with realist-naturalist stylistics" and who were interested in representations of sexual obsession and perversion.[79] Richardson, who unequivocally demonstrated her Australian origin in *The Getting of Wisdom* and *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, produced a text in 1908 which displays a strenuously intellectual engagement with European literary form and cultural debate. In addition to its production and reception on more than one location outside Australia, and in addition to the textual

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77 Judith Butler, "'Dangerous Crossing': Willa Cather's Masculine Names," *Bodies That Matter: At the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London and New York: Routledge) 163.

78 Butler, "Dangerous Crossing" 149.

79 Emily Apter, "Feminising the Fetish" x.

hybridities that are therefore in evidence, it is the thematisation of expatriation at the level of narrative and figure that makes *Maurice Guest* indispensable to this thesis.

Christina Stead's prose also reflects an international turbulence and tension. Stead's early work is temporally close to the texts of expatriate modernism—yet she reads as though caught between modernism and something else. Diana Brydon has pointed out that texts such as *For Love Alone* rescript the centrality of the male point of view and the silence of the woman by telling a story of active female desire. Nevertheless, Teresa Hawkins, the protagonist of *For Love Alone* shares with Maurice a relation to ambition, abjection, passion, masochism and fixation, which provokes speculation as to how expatriation functions in both instances.

2

"The Twin Imperatives of Desire and Mobility": Expatriate Rites of Passage in *For Love Alone*

I Genre, Desire and a Passage of Arms

> "If you think my life is real to me—it's only a passage," she cried rudely. "To?" They stood on the footpath waiting to cross to the safety island where she could catch the downtown tram. "To our secret desires," she said huskily. "To Cythera, perhaps;" and "'night passage,' isn't it? To Cytherea, or whatever island—but I always think of coral atolls, submarine volcanoes, the pearl gulfs of the north, a kind of Darwin's voyage of discovery, as the voyage to Cytherea."[1]

So speaks Teresa Hawkins, one of the "restive, tumultuous breed of women"(192), of her desire to make a passage "for love." Here, she echoes the incantatory prologue, 'Sea People,' which invokes Australia as the exoticised, feminised island continent at the opening of *For Love Alone*; something like the Cythera of which Teresa fantasises, and which she paradoxically leaves when she expatriates to London in order to fulfil her desire to have "love, learning and bread"(87)—to know men and to write.[2] Passage can mean transition in the sense of migration, but also a transition from one state to another. Teresa uses 'passage' to refer to a colonial and postcolonial ocean crossing, a voyage across the sea from one port of the imperium to another.

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1 Christina Stead, *For Love Alone* (1944; Sydney: Angus and Robertson-Sirius, 1987) 192-193. All pages references are from this edition and will henceforth be included in the body of the text.

2 *For Love Alone* does not present England or Europe as simply utopian. For Teresa and Jonathan there is some ambivalence in leaving Australia: "Their land of the sun seemed to them a sparkling land, set in blue seas, and much preferable, but they had to go, called out by the sea, driven forth on its ships, they could not stay in the busy port of Sydney and not take all the choices it offered of distant seas"(189). This reading of reluctant expatriation dovetails with Stead's claim about her relation to the sea driving her expatriation, rather than the lure of England.

Teresa's citation of Watteau's painting of Cythera, a painting based on an historical Cythera in the Seine, where "men and women of the French court joined secret order"(193), is her response to Jonathan's comment that "You are in touch with real things. I'm going to be coddled for another two or three years, *prolonging the adolescence of the race*" (192). Teresa desperately wants to be rid of her adolescence, a marginal state symbolised by her sexual inexperience. She believes that a voyage of discovery to a utopian island of secret knowledge and sexual permissiveness is a suitable rite of passage, marking a transition from the marginality of adolescence to the full subjectivity associated with being in the world as an adult heterosexual woman.

For Love Alone dramatises the transition from late adolescence to womanhood of its central character, Teresa Hawkins. Teresa's prolonged adolescence is converted into womanhood when she eventually reaches her goal, to partner a worldly and worthy man, and is free to exhibit and express her desire. This transition, or intensification, involves a number of different processes of expatriation from parochial Sydney society, with its belated Victorian social regulation, to London. Teresa's journey, or, in fact, number of different journeys, move her towards social, sexual and intellectual freedom. Teresa wants to triumph over the marginality of her status as a self-educated, working class woman in a suffocating colonial culture, as well as the liminality of what she perceives as her damaging lack of sexual expression. She uses the language of love to express her ambition to pass through to adulthood: "I want to love"(192).

Based on a reading of Arnold Van Gennep, Maria Anastopoulos has claimed that:

> Anthropologists have for over a hundred years observed and discussed particular ceremonies, held in both primitive and more civilised, ancient and modern societies, which mark the transition of an individual or groups of individuals from one stage of life to another in terms of personal development towards maturity, occupational commitment or social integration. Such special acts have been characterised as rites of passage.[3]

In 1908, anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's produced this tripartite schematic of the rites of passage:

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[3] Maria Anastasopoulou, "Rites of Passage in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*," *The Southern Literary Journal* 22.2 (1991): 19.

> in which an individual is spatially distanced from the environment of his previous life; transition rites, in which the individual spends a period of time in this spatially marginal or liminal space where he/she performs certain ceremonial acts signifying the preparation for the integration into the new state of life; and finally rites of incorporation, which signify that the crossing of territorial frontiers has been successfully achieved and the individual is united with the new world.[4]

This chapter uses these divisions to mark Teresa's process of expatriation, moving from pre-liminal rites, through movements of separation and liminality, transition and finally incorporation. In order to balance these thematic schemes, I assess aspects of textuality, such as the production and reception of *For Love Alone* in terms of genre, and the further relation between hybrid genre and the 'love' which is the complex motive force for transition and maturation. I read the love of *For Love Alone* as a term for the multiform forces of Teresa's desire, of which mobility is a crucial arm, since mobility drives forward the rites of passage. Teresa's desire, for which Stead supplies an extraordinary language, is usefully interpreted in context of genres of 'awakening.' Awakening and the feminine sublime are examined here as part of a more general typology of the oceanic sublime in the experience of the young colonial woman who passionately renounces everything in order to expatriate from a repressive social, but not natural, order. The pervasiveness of the ocean, and the contestation of the meanings of love, are central aspects of Teresa's pre-liminal rites, and also anticipate the sea voyage to England that is never directly narrated.

Teresa's rites of separation and liminality include a series of 'passages:' her truncated 'escape' to Harper's Ferry, her 'walking to England,' and her authorship. The rites of transition can be seen in the sea voyage narrative, "A Night in the Indian Ocean," which is a short story that appears in *Ocean of Story*, and which bears an obvious kinship with *For Love Alone*. *For Love Alone* focuses mainly on dialogues between Teresa and herself, and Teresa and men, since it is the world and the role of "freeman and woman" in which she is interested and for which she is ambitious. Her focus on the restless man in the world, and the world in the man, demonstrates this. Of the world, she decides, women have little to tell her. "A Night in the Indian Ocean," a narrative of the expatriating voyage, examines female sociality, but

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4 Gennep, Arnold van, *The Rites of Passage*, trans., Monica B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Coffee, intro., Solon T. Kimball (1908; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1960) 11.

it is not of the utopian variety envisaged by feminist theorists of the female rites of passage.[5] Stead critically interleaves class, femininity and dysfunctional maternity, rather than representing a feminine community where successful transition (menstruation, loss of virginity, birth, menopause) relies on the strengthened positivity of female social bonds.

I conclude the chapter with Teresa's almost defeated arrival in heterosexual utopia, in pedagogical dialogue with a cosmopolitan man and free to experiment with her sexual power. When Teresa achieves her entry into the world of men, she is incorporated both sexually and as a writer. The last journey of the book finalises this last transition to incorporation and the continuing process of striving and maturation. Teresa's colonial, gendered and sexual liminality is converted into heterosexual transformation and a continued desire for intensification. In arguing that Teresa's expatriation towards "love, learning and bread" can be read through the structures of rites of passage, I am not suggesting that Teresa Hawkins just 'grows up.' The shift is more profound than the mere exit from adolescence through modes of suffering and initiation. Teresa represents the experience of a number of Australian women artists who found expatriation necessary to combat stultification and lack of recognition of ability, to gaining the tools for artistic practice, and to establish modes of publication and production. Teresa's pioneering search for a language for female desire and ambition is organised under the sign of "love." Nevertheless, what is exhilarating about *For Love Alone* is what has bitterly soured in *I'm Dying Laughing*, the image of a rebellious and talented woman who wants it all.

Written in Australia, France and the United States, *For Love Alone*, which forms part of Stead's imaginative reterritorialisation of her own rites of passage, is the product of multiple locations of writing and an array of literary influences. Hazel Rowley reports that in 1941 Christina Stead was working on the text of what was later to be published as *Letty Fox* (1946), but she was also casting about for ways to make money out of her writing. In November 1941, Stead sent Columbia Pictures Corporation an outline entitled "Was it Heaven or was it Hell?" Although Columbia Pictures

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5 See Anca Vlasopolos, "Staking Claims for No Territory: The Sea as Woman's Space," *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*, eds., M. R. Higonnet and Joan Templeton (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994) 72-88. Maria Anastasopoulou, "Rites of Passage in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*," *The Southern Literary Journal* 22.2 (1991): 19-30.

indicated they were not interested in the idea, Stead stopped work on *Letty Fox*, and began to shape the film outline into a novel, *For Love Alone* (1944). Stead's scripted conception of *For Love Alone* in the early 1940s was a melodramatic romance of extremes based on material that had been on her mind since the early thirties:

> With *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* doing the rounds of publishers, Stead had begun a novel loosely based on Keith Duncan. As indicated by the rather shrill title, *The Young Man Will Go Far*, she had lost nothing of her hostility (Later, scarcely less sarcastic, it became *The Travelling Scholar*, then *The Beauties and the Furies*) . . . The novel was abandoned, but remnants reveal it to be an early working of the material of *For Love Alone*. Oliver Gillybrand, a precursor to Jonathon Crow, is 23, dark, poor and a 'new-minted bachelor of arts' at Sydney University. He goes for long walks with Sara, a young writer. Then he wins a travelling scholarship to England. They write to one another.[6]

The themes of walking, education, writing and poverty, so important to the 1944 text, are evident in this early outline. Substantially written in 1942-3 in Santa Fe and New York, and published in the United States in October 1944, *For Love Alone* was Stead's sixth major publication. There is further manuscript evidence that Stead had a schematic plan to write about the different stages of women's lives. *The Man Who Loved Children*, *For Love Alone* and *Letty Fox* can be viewed as a triptych that treats the subject of growth, awakening and eventual worldliness of the young woman, within the context of another of Stead's overarching concerns, the struggle with poverty and obscurity.

Like *The Man Who Loved Children*, *For Love Alone* was not exactly a comforting fable of stable family life suitable for the morale of the American Home Front, and its critical reception in the United States and Britain was poor.[7] Its market profile in wartime America was potentially the source of much confusion: Rowley argues that the title was "suggestive of the drugstore rental shelf," which dovetailed with its material production, "a cheap, wartime edition."[8] So, aspects of its textuality, such as cover and title,

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6 Hazel Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* (Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1993) 137.

7 Douglas Stewart, Rev. of *For Love Alone*, by Christina Stead, "The Red Page," *The Bulletin* 13 Feb. 1946.

8 Rowley 314. Rowley cites Edith Roberts, *Book Week*Oct. 29 (1944): 14. Rowley also reports that the cover of *For Love Alone* was designed by Isidor Steinberg, a commercial artist friend of Stead's.

promised straightforward romance, but in fact delivered something quite different. Stead had come up with a title—*Spring Tide*—which Stanley Burnshaw rejected. "It was For Love Alone," a line from a calypso about Edward VIII's abdication from the throne in order to marry Wallis Simpson, was a suggestion from Pascal Covici at Viking. It was a title more in keeping with the romantic melodrama of the script outline than the eventual novel. Stead stated in an interview with Joan Lidoff that the title of the novel had always embarrassed her. Though the author thought "it was the wrong title" she nevertheless accepted it so as not to upset "a dear friend" who had designed the book's jacket.[9] The jacket illustration showed a bare-breasted girl leaning out of her window on a starry night, which no doubt reinforced the impression of *For Love Alone* as a popular romance. The title that Stead reportedly preferred was "something to do with love letters" which were a feature of the *For Love Alone* material in early draft form.[10] The epistolary content of *For Love Alone*, covering by the far the greatest span of time in the novel, is an expatriate mode *par excellence*, tying together representation, gender, national crossing and the dynamics of identity. [11]

The market placement of the text by the expatriate woman writer has often operated to occlude hybridity or transgressions of genre; to smooth instabilities and unrecognisabilities of mode or type. If, as Patricia Parker claims, genre delineates "proper place," then expatriate experience is often one of being out of place or displaced, and expatriate genres and modes often deliver 'improper place,' or confusingly hybrid types.[12] Homi Bhabha suggests that "hybridity intervenes in the exercise of authority not merely to indicate the impossibility of its identity but to represent the unpredictability

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9 Joan Lidoff, "Interview with Christina Stead," *Christina Stead* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1982) 195.

10 Joan Lidoff, "Interview with Christina Stead" 196ff.

11 For discussion of the epistolary genre, and love letters in particular, see Catherine Belsey, *Desire: Love Stories on Western Culture*(Oxford: Blackwall, 1944, 1994); Linda Kaufmann, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986) and Jacques Derrida, *La Carte Postale* (The post card: From Scorates to Freud and beyond) trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987).

12 Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender and Property* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987). Parker constructs an argument about the relationship between romance genres, female authorship, genre as proper place and improper dilatoriness. Parker also notes the importance to romance of topos, mobility, love objects and quests—all relevant factors for this reading of expatriation in *For Love Alone.*

of its presence."[13] So the self-identity and authority of 'pure' genre as 'proper place' is challenged by the pluralising, displacing and distorting characteristics of expatriate textual modes. These textual 'impurities' provide the basis for a larger argument about how expatriate hybridity poses a threat to the authority of 'pure' national identity.

The market designation of romance as the genre of *For Love Alone* is not altogether inappropriate which is confusing; the novel certainly partakes of modalities of romance, but not in the popular sense of a 'love story.' The prose romance, with its debts to chivalric romance and the Gothic novel, was often set in an historical past and deployed characters sharply delineated as heroes or villains. The protagonist was often relatively isolated from the social context. Adventure was emphasised, particularly in masculine romance, and frequently cast in the form of the quest for the ideal. By the late nineteenth century, there had been a general elision between romance and the love story. Masculine romance was consigned under the rubric of adventure story and the 'romance' became a genre increasingly written and read by women. In order to encompass masculine ambition and scale, Teresa Hawkins' quest is heroic as well as romantic, and sometimes mock-heroic, involving the ironic combination of heroism and obscurity, and the disturbing shapes of an emerging female heroism.[14] The genre of epic, working through the heroic and mock-heroic, is evident in the Homeric theme, articulated by the epic question, in epic register, which inaugurates the narrative proper and identifies the suitably epic issues of nationality and origin: "Oh, Australian, have you just come from the harbour? Is your ship in the roadstead? Men of what nation put you down—for I am sure you did not get here on foot?"(2)

For Love Alone delivers a generic hybrid of epic-romance. A feature of both genres that concerns me here, one that I see as mediating their contradictions, is the double operation of desire and mobility in the form of the quest narrative.[15] The quest is an important arm of the *bildungsroman*.

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13 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York, Routledge, 1994) 114.

14 Susan Sheridan points out that it is because Teresa is the narrative's single focus that the heroic is evoked. Sheridan refers to "the double heroic associations of an epic journey into life and a quest for love." *Christina Stead* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988) 60.

15 Susan Sheridan assesses the merits of feminist genre criticism, particularly in relation to

Teresa's quest for "love, learning, bread" is plotted against her development into adulthood from late adolescence, including her formative experiences in the social world and her struggle for social and discursive individuation and autonomy. Sheridan argues that the love plot (romance), the female novel of development and awakening (epic), are further complicated by the figure of the female artist. The focus on the female artist necessitates the negotiation of the interrelationship of art, love and development. *For Love Alone* searches among a number of different literary structures and forms for an adequate mode to organise the emergence, and will to knowledge and art, of the postcolonial woman as expatriate writer. It is the processes of postcolonial rites of passage that I use to organise this generic hybrid, especially as they foreground desire and mobility.

My comments on genre are subtended by my interest in the material situation of production and reception, and I stress the fact that it is not the strict laws of genre and the modes of feminist revision that are interesting here. Rather it is the multiplicity and hybridity of generic energies derived from a variety of locations of writing and reading, and harnessed in the search for an adequate set of conventions to express female desire and development, that are relevant. *For Love Alone* draws on a broad, even undisciplined and uncritical, base of masculine genre that Stead did not *strategically* revise. Her formulations of genre, or modes such as the sublime and the grotesque, are not revisionary. While she did want them to accommodate Teresa's experience, this is quite different from the strategic revision that seeks to include the experience of all women, of femininity. This in turn frames a familiar aspect of Stead's work—conflicted ideologies of femininity. Her lack of strategic revision means that there is a strong presence of a strange excess in her work, an excess that characterises mimicry. Teresa is treated as though she could simply enter the world and become a universal and transcendent subject, even an historical subject (a

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the novel of development or existential quest. Sheridan's disagreement is specifically with Elizabeth Abel, et. al., ed., *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (Hanover: UP of New England, 1985). Abel argues that *bildungsroman* have failed to account for specifically feminine experience, because "human development" has meant "male development" and that genre revision is the consequence of the fact that gender modifies every aspect of *bildungsroman*narrative structure. Sheridan's objection to genre criticism lies in is overreliance on psychoanalytic models over the "heterogenousness of writing, concepts of social structure and change." In short, genre criticism falls into the trap of an essentialist ahistoricism that neglects textuality and the specificities of time and place. Sheridan argues that potential modes of resistance and subversion are cancelled out by too broad a conception of "revision."

male subject) by the mere fact of her worldliness. As Yelin comments "Stead implicitly repudiates the limits of gender . . . rejecting feminine limits associated with Penelope and claims for her protagonist such traditionally masculine prerogatives as mobility, especially the ability to travel or go into exile."[16] However, a lack of fit between genres of male genius, or the male subject as the subject of sublime experience, and the ambitions and secret life of Teresa Hawkins, is produced. This asymmetry is what Homi Bhabha refers to as the "almost the same but not quite" shape of mimicry that continually produces slippage, excess and difference through its ambivalence. Bhabha claims that mimicry is the sign of the inappropriate, of a difference or recalcitrance that is disturbing because it works as both resemblance and menace.[17]

In the case of the expatriate woman writer's texts, the designation of genre, often involves misrecognition. This misreading of genre is related to attempts to make the text by the mobile woman writer recognisable to different national literary canons and markets. In terms of the inter-relation of expatriate woman writer and genre, Stead's production of epic-romance-*kunstlerroman* is interesting, as is Teresa's meditative "Seven Houses of Love," which also, if differently, represents female development in the context of love and sexuality. Teresa looks for, and then partially attempts to invent in her own writing, a genre of literature that represents something of her own desirous subjectivity, with its specificities of gender, education, class and geography. What kind of genre might evoke the centrality of love and desire of a young Australian, postcolonial woman? The "Sorrows of Women" project lies somewhere between epic, romance, *bildungsroman* and autobiographical testament. Teresa's, like Stead's, is a confused and multiple text, evidence of what Susan Stewart so intriguingly nominates as a "distressed" genre.[18] Throughout this thesis I reiterate a focus on the role of gender and genre in the identification and classification of mobile writers through their hybrid, ambiguous texts; an identification which testifies to the connection between improper place and improper text.

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16 Louise Yelin, "'Buffoon Odyssey?' Christina Stead's *For Love Alone* and the Writing of Exile," *Yale French Studies* 82. 1 (1993) 83-203.

17 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 86-87.

18 Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containments of Representation* (Durham: Duke UP, 1994).

What is this thing called Love?

> Since school she had ravaged libraries, disembowelled hundreds of books, ranged through literature since the earliest recorded frenzies of the world and had eaten into her few years with this boundless love of love, this insensate thirst for the truth of passion. (76)

Teresa's "boundless love of love" and her "insensate thirst for the truth of passion" involves *reading* in the first instance, and later, writing (letters and testament). The extreme, and sometimes ironic, rhetoric Stead uses to evoke this reading tropes sublime experience as well as a violent consumption: Teresa's desire to "know" the "frenzies of the world" had "eaten into her few years." The female subject's desire for knowledge is collocated here with "frenzy" and "hunger." The language of sublime experience suggests that, in reading, Teresa seeks to disappear into the enormity of something greater than herself. Her desire and ambition displaces itself into the "boundless" and "insensate" possibilities of escape through reading. In addition, Teresa's ravaging, disembowelling and ranging across texts is part of a search for the unrepresented and even the unrepresentable—direct accounts of female desire. Teresa is a young Australian woman of Eurocentric reading who expatriates to England in search of a worldliness she cannot adequately find in books "by women": "her world existed and was recognised by men. But why not by women?"(76) Her textual activities thereby form a productive part of a larger structure of desire and mobility. The principled mantra that sustains her quest for worldliness is "for love alone;" it is alone for love, and only for love, that Teresa reads, writes, walks and longs to escape because love as she conceives of it, and the empowerment she feels it represents, have been perpetually "elsewhere," since for the female postcolonial reader, reading has offered an alienating dream of scenes from elsewhere.[19]

Love is the seemingly explanatory word that holds together the issues of autonomy, identity, creativity and the art-love controversies of the female *Kunstlerroman*. Yet love is an entirely imprecise central problematic or point of meaning. The multiplicity of the meaning of love in *For Love Alone* explains how and why Stead's text accommodated romance, epic and

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[19] Nick Jose, "The Dream of Europe: *For Love Alone*, *The Aunt's Story* and *The Cardboard Crown*," *Meridian* 6.2 (1981): 113.

the *bildung*. The multiple definitions of love also permit and horribly complicate Stead's handling of "the oppositional thematics of love and independence" familiar in *kunstlerroman* because, as Sheridan argues, "love is conceived of as a passion, a kind of knowledge and a kind of power" and is therefore able to accommodate love, art, independence.[20] Love, in short, is an epistemology. But what kind of knowledge is love? How does it propel and inform the feminine subject? In my view, love is a word that is phantasmatic, shifting and conflicted, and in *For Love Alone* it persistently collects, but does not clarify, ongoing confusions about sex, marriage, freedom, economics, labour, honour and fidelity. In her monograph on Stead, Diana Brydon directs our attention to one of Teresa's letters to Jonathan:

> Language is simply not large enough and although English is said to have the most synonyms and the most words altogether, it still lacks hundreds of thousands of words. The words, joy, love, excitement, are bald and general. That is why love stories I suppose sound so dull, for the heroine or hero cannot just feel love, it must be one of a hundred kinds of love he feels. (253)

In the first of her seven houses of love, this is Teresa's testamentary advice:

> Say the word 'love' and receive all floating ideas, as, say, a belly-handled jar or the belly of a jar itself, the song *En Revenant des Noces*, Maupassant's story of the pregnant woman, picked up on New Year's Eve, love of a little girl for a dark, curly-bearded man, Jesus, say, a boy in an open-necked blue shirt, Childe Roland to the dark tower came, gipsy love, Sunday afternoons, shadows under a tree on a dirt road some warm day. (420)

This is a free associative set of images, in keeping with the generally surreal nature of the testament. By the time she writes this document, Teresa has spent some time testing what love is not.

Love is a tremendous social and affective force, one that is subtended by a definitional range between "libidinal investment," "a motive in imaginative literature" and "animal instinct between the sexes and its gratification." Plato defines "love" in terms of a longing for the beautiful, but the beautiful is importantly only as a condition for the possibility of conception and creation: "not the love for the beautiful only. . .the love of generation and of birth in beauty."[21] Plato's definition warns of the dangers

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20 Sheridan, *Christina Stead* 77.

21 Judith Butler, "Desire," *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds., Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995) 373. Butler quotes Plato, *Symposium*,

of narcissism, of self-love as non-generative. Kaja Silverman declares that despite the fact that psychoanalysis is the theory *par excellence* of the affective, it is really sexuality, desire and aggressivity rather than love that have formed the centre of dicussion: "love has always seemed to lack respectability as an object of intellectual inquiry."[22] Silverman found it difficult to find a definitive model for conceptualising love: "all that emerged with absolute clarity from the pages of Freud's writings was that love was intimately bound up with the function of idealisation."[23] Idealisation is bound up with the subject's identificatory processes and a prime mover in the affectivity of love.

"Love" becomes the catchment area for an array of discourses and discursive positions that Teresa absorbs, contests and puts into play, including literature, art, popular wisdom, paternal admonition and the academic discourse of Jonathon Crow. As such, love is caught up in the complex mediations of language and idealisation. The contestation of the meanings of love, of the name of the "hunt she was on" are "not found in books by women." Nor does Teresa just accept patriarchal definitions of love and desirability. I agree with Nick Mansfield's argument that love does not survive as one monolithic meaning, singled out: "love is never a single thing . . . it switches quickly and imperceptibly." The word love does not signal a stable object of the novel's purpose. There is no attempt to clarify love or smooth out its contradictions. Mansfield's analysis lines up with Silverman in the sense that love is involved with the complexities of language and idealisation. Jenny Strauss concurs: "the confusions concerning love, lust and marriage are real confusions, causes not of mere mistaken identity, but identities overlapping and intertwining."[24]

The Works of Plato, trans. Jowett., ed., Irwin Edman (New York,: Modern Library, 1956) 374 .

22 Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 1.

23 Silverman 1.

24 Nick Mansfield, "'This is Not Understanding': Christina Stead's *For Love Alone*," *Southerly* 52.1 (1992): 84. Jennifer Strauss, "An Unsentimental Romance," *Kunapipi* 4. 2 (1982): 92.

A Passage of Arms

That love is the primary topic for novelistic consideration is evident from the opening chapter of "The Island Continent"–"Brown Seaweed and Old Fish Nets." This scene, with the Watson's Bay foreshore in the background, profers the first of Teresa's many pedagogical interactions with the worldly man concerning the meaning, ownership and power of "love." The narrative shifts between an ironisation of Andrew Hawkins "the handsome man, the family god"(13), and of his adolescent daughter "the unappeased young girl, relentless, ferocious"(14). As the irony shifts, so does narrative sympathy, but it is relatively clear that the father's narcissistic teasing of his less experienced daughters is, indeed, a torture, since he ranges over a wide set of definitional fields, excluding the girls from the discourse of love. The definition of love is narcissistically measured by him from his own experience. This cultural presence of the Father results in the illegitimation of female desire as anything except the daughter's desire for the father. That patriarchal interdiction is represented here as access to language, for example, the right to use words like 'love' and 'honour.'

Andrew Hawkins, who claims that all he wants is "to be loved in his own home,"(9) harks back to the vital and repugnant power of Sam Pollit's monstrous egotism in *The Man Who Loved Children*. Both men powerfully dramatise the effective practices of the 'law of the father,' demanding access to all bodies and even thoughts, and dictating the meaning of discourse, especially discourses of desire. Teresa's father dominates conversation both physically and verbally, his body "too broad and full," with a dilatory blazon of his own semi-nakedness. In his opening anecdote, Andrew Hawkins produces a white and blonde Aryan-colonial supremacist portrait of himself through a comparison with unidentified people of colour who, like his daughters, serve only to witness him: he works descriptively from his 'beautiful' and alluring feet, through his skin, hair, hands and legs. It is the admiration Hawkins receives for his physical beauty that fits him to be both the subject and object of love, to the exclusion of his less aesthetic daughters.

While he defines "real love" as beauty, heat, warmth, compared to the "cold" and "frozen" Teresa (still called by her childhood diminutive, "Trees"), he talks disingenuously about "ideal love" which is "a thing of the brain," and "not earthly," which he thought he was exuding, but he finds it

was really about the attractiveness of his body all along. Hawkins claims that idealism and idealistic love (involving letter writing), is disembodied, something that Teresa does indeed discover with Jonathon Crow. She clings to the courtly concept of her honour in this scene, reinforcing her ongoing idealistic investments, which were probably garnered from nineteenth-century romances. In relation to the script of these romances, Teresa elects the active and adventurous code of the knight errant, rather than the passive of the damsel in distress, which involves her cross-gender fantasies. This scene contextualises these choices by representing Teresa's ambivalent position with respect to her father. The narrative, adverting to Teresa's point of view, testifies to the beauty, impressiveness and desirability of the father and his authoritative worldly discourse. Teresa, identified by him as being like him ("in you I saw myself"), but barred from the admiration and love he inspires, seeks to take up a masculine role in order to contest her father's right to dominate and legislate the discourses of love, beauty, desirability and sex.

Teresa has come to the conclusion that sexual knowledge, the kind wielded here by her father as a knowledge of the world, is the key to subjecthood and autonomy. Teresa desires male power and has no problem with the nature or application of that power. However, as the dichotomous economies that underpin sexual difference cannot be reversed in any simple way, and thus grant the essential feminine an essential masculine power, something unforseen occurs in the process of taking up the masculine position.[25] This inability of the feminine directly to imitate the masculine also describes the interactions of gender and genre. It is in looking unstrategically to mimic male power, authority and authorship that Stead's work produces an ambiguous excess. Stead does not 'revision' genre or gender for the purposes of especially contextualising feminine subjectivity. At all points she uses masculine genres and clearly has a conflicted and ambivalent romance with masculine power and authority. In this way Stead offers an interesting position in relation to Simone de Beauvoir's notion that women must move toward the public realm, because the human subject is neutral, and that as soon as equal status (visibility, influence, worldliness) is achieved, liberation will be achieved.

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25 This kind of model applies to Christina Stead's handling of genre, especially in *I'm Dying Laughing*.

Hawkins continues his lecture on normative heterosexuality by recommending to Teresa a model of correct femininity based on what men desire, producing her, as she indeed remains, as a patriarchal subject. He advises that sexually attractive women have beauty and modesty, they smile, support, understand and exist for the man. The acceptability of Teresa's femininity is measured in her responsiveness to him as a desirable object, she is unfeminine and unattractive because she ironises him, and does not want to be touched or seduced by him. In fact, Teresa both has and has not refused to be seduced by her father. She experiences a profound heterosexual paradox in the sense that she is affectively invested in men, who nevertheless refuse the dimensions of her desire for them.

In exemplary patriarchal fashion, Hawkins applies a double standard to Teresa: while he taunts her with her lack of knowledge, he also sets himself to guard her against sexual temptations or experience, which he lyrically evokes as utopian paradise because it is a garden of masculine freedoms:

> On the other side of the barrier of sex is all the splendour of internal life, garden full of roses, if you can try to understand my meaning, sweet-scented, fountains playing, the bluebird flying there and nesting there . . . the perfumed, sunny, lovely paths of sex. (12)

When Hawkins says "You don't understand the world and your Andrew"(8) he implies to his daughter that he is the world, with a purchase on love prohibited to the feminine and the less beautiful. Not understanding "the world" spurs Teresa to reply "There is simply nothing of which I am not aware"(12), referring to her reading, her insight and her secret life. Again her father exposes her lack of sexual and therefore worldly experience: "You don't know what you are saying" driving Teresa to declare that "Everything between us is a misunderstanding." He rejoins with a mockery of her: "witch, beggar, old maid," and she finally threatens to kill her father. This might be a literal but also a discursive killing, in an effort to find a voice and presence in the discourse and practice of love and desire. Escape is the only alternative to killing him. She begs him to "let me live," since she is being "killed" by his definition of her as hate (negation) and himself as love (positivity). Andrew Hawkins' excursus on love, beauty, proper femininity and sex excludes his daughter. The effect on Teresa is to mobilise her: "she brooded, considering her enemies under her brows and made plans to escape (14). From this scene on Teresa moves further and further away from the scenes of family life. Even when she is working and living at home, she

ceases to engage with the social relations of the family, and finds other, better disguised, patriarchal tournaments.

Teresa's libidinal life, so taunted by her father and brother, fuels and expresses itself in her ideas for the "Palace of Love," and her other "strange designs" based on "the wild things she most admired"(13). Teresa's fantasy life is a strange, hyperbolic, rhythmic set of unconventional expressions. However, Hawkins' taunt about Teresa's "storm" is a cruel recognition of what she considers to be the self-evident connection between repressed desire and madness: "ants in her pants and bats in her belfry"(13). The presentation of Teresa as unbending (wilful) yet also flighty (mobile) is first represented here. It is her will that underpins the rigid discipline of her years of saving money that finally allow her to her escape. Teresa herself sees this discipline as a test of will, the kind of will that the Nietzschean outsider must possess.

In summary, feminine experiments with ideality and language may be sanctioned if they are placed under the rubric of love. In some ways, Teresa's quest is only recognisable to herself if it is "for love." But, as Susan Sheridan comments, properly highlighting the recurring problematic of sexual difference in Stead's work:

> considering Stead's own construction as 'the woman who loved men,' we might take as her own Teresa's statement in *For Love Alone* that love, like insanity, sees everything—that it is a mode of knowledge, not at all romantic in the way designated feminine, but 'pervasive, strong, intellectual and physical.'[26]

Teresa's love-epistemology is not "romantic in the way designated feminine," but is caught up with will, with desire, the kind of motive forces that have traditionally existed in the masculine domain, and prompted male endeavours. Teresa's desire for romance, for the world, steels her to reject teaching, and the 'timidity' trap of her father's house. Teresa's notion of romance involves love and sex, but also those facets of Walter Scott's masculine romances: quest, adventure, travel, reading and new worlds. The

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26 Sheridan also refers to another quotation: "*Love is blind* is the dictum, whereas, with me at least, Love sees everything. Like insanity, it sees everything; like insanity, it must not reveal its thoughts"(460). Susan Sheridan, "The Woman Who Loved Men: Christina Stead as Satirist in *A Little Tea, A Little Chat*, and *The People with the Dogs*," *World Literature Written in English* 32.1 (1992): 8. Sheridan quotes from *For Love Alone*: (459, 45).

epic journey to Narara, a mimicry of several quests she might have read about in "books by men," inaugurates this set of cross-gendered desires. It is important to add, however, that while Teresa's notion of romance is not akin to that which is 'designated feminine,' her experience of, and attempt feasibly to live and represent feminine desire, is a crucial aspect of *For Love Alone*. Teresa wants the right to desire and be a subject, but as this passage of arms with her father demonstrates, she is hamstrung by a set of misogynist discourses that position submission and stasis as the most important quality of the feminine. Active desire, like mobility, is presented as the exclusive province of masculinity.

Desire: "The Magnificent Fret"

For Stead, love was the indispensable motive force for living and especially for writing. Stead believed in the ceaselessly unforseen originality of love in all its forms. Stead seems to have subscribed to the very modern formulation that sex was the wellspring of human subjectivity, signifying the central but hidden essence of one's nature. Love could translate productively into modes of masochism, repression and sublimation—like the transformation of sexual drives into other 'cultural' or 'moral' activities, an example of the displacements and deferrals of desire. However, an examination of her statements about love indicates that she may have always been referring to desire.[27] In this sense, interrogating the meaning of love in *For Love Alone* leads inevitably to identifying narrative mechanisms of desire. The difficulty here is that while love and desire are clearly connected, they are not synonymous. Their asymmetrical relation is as much born of the difficulty of defining desire as the related trouble with conceptualising love. The problem with interpretations of desire is summarised by Judith Butler in this way:

> If we consider the discourse on desire since Plato, it seems that language is bound up with desire in such a way that no exposition of desire can escape becoming implicated in that which it seeks to clarify. This means that language is always less than "clarifying" when it comes to desire. Desire

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27 The principle of love as creative struggle relates to desire in that desire is the excess or residue left usatisfied through the gratification of need or instinct and left unspoken by the articulation of demand. Desire is the site in which demand and need are not fully reconciled and they remain a permanently vexed affair.

> will be that which guarantees a certain opacity in language, an opacity that language can enact and display, but without which it cannot operate.[28]

This constitutive opacity of desire in language (the way in which desire slides through displacement and deferral), makes it supremely difficult to decide in what desire consists. The inseparability of language and desire means that every effort to write about desire only exemplifies this inseparability. At the very least, desire and desirability are adjudicated through cultural specificity, as Andrew Hawkins' colonial-imperial anecdote about the indigenous Other demonstrates (5). The historicity of desire is bound up with signifying relations, signs, forms and symptoms; for example, the texts that Teresa so voraciously examines for examples that match her own experience. Desire is a culturally figured and culturally produced activity that takes place in relation to cultural and textual norms.[29] *For Love Alone* questions the historical exclusion or absence of female desire, and the subterranean role of desire in the constitution of female subjectivity in a particular time and place.

For Plato, to desire is to be moved.[30] He identifies two kinds of movement; self-moving and externally moved. If one is moved by oneself, one remains a disembodied soul. If one is moved by what is outside oneself, one acquires a human body and form, an embodied desire and embodiment is the appetitive character of desire. *For Love Alone* focuses on Teresa's passage from disembodied to embodied desire, in Plato's gender neutral terms. Teresa's striving and journeying is both internally driven by imagination and reading, and externally moved, born of her dislike for teaching, her suffocation in her family, her pursuit of Jonathon. Stead also focuses repeatedly on the mobilising role of concrete appetitive desire—for food, warmth, water and sex. Desire is a constantly mobilising force, physically, intellectually and linguistically. In the early Christian era, Augustine positioned desire as the motive force that leads to God, and metaphorised

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28 Judith Butler, "Desire" 370, 369.

29 Judith Butler reminds us that, since Plato, desire has been thought of in many ways: in terms of its origin in the body, or in a more expansive set of passions; in terms of its ends, those that we considered more sensuous, those considered more spiritual, and an ambiguous range in between. Butler, "Desire" 369.

30 Butler, "Desire" 369.

desire in the mobile paradigms of ascent and descent, the moving towards an ideal.

Hegel distinguishes human desire from animal needs: human desire is historical, deferred and unsatisfiable by definition, with the exception that:

> human desire is capable of achieving its own self-certainty through the relations to the desire of an other, human, historical desire. Self-certainty is an assurance about one's identity in relation to an ego-ideal, the (narcissistic) equation of the self with ideal realised through one's reflected image in the mirror or in the other.[31]

This is an important consideration in Teresa's choice of Jonathon Crow as the idealised object of her chivalric quest. Jonathon Crow represents what Teresa passionately desires; he seeks learning and bread, and he (attractively if sadomasochistically) needs to be convinced of the love arm of the triumvirate. He is poor and obscure, he is a writer. He is Teresa's useful emancipatory mirror. If he can escape then so can she. Jonathon and Teresa make an interesting dyad, similar yet antagonistic. Sexual difference makes an irreducible difference in the pursuit of freedom, futurity, sexual expression and education. Teresa's desires are twofold: for the 'other,' and for access to language and the systems of meaning (inflected by class, gender and nation). Both desires represent a larger desire for the 'outside' world. There is a third possible reading of Teresa's desire: if Hegel's value inheres in self-certainty then one identifies with the other only to the extent that one re-discovers one self in him or her—desire is finally for oneself. In *I'm Dying Laughing*, Emily Wilkes provides an example of this in her account of her first love: "Oh no—you're full of love, you're sending out a beam and someone gets in the way and you think it's him; it's you lighting him up."[32]

Jacques Lacan attended the seminars Alexandre Kojève gave on Hegel in Paris in the 1930s, and the Hegelian position is evident in Lacan's interpretation of human desire as the desire for recognition—the desire to

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31 Juliet Flower Macannell, "Desire," *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 63-64. Macannell works from Alexandre Kojéve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel Lectures on The Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed., Alexander Bloom, trans. James A. Nichols (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1969) 26-7, and Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baille (London: Georege Allen and Unwin, 1910).

32 Christina Stead, *I'm Dying Laughing: The Humourist*, ed. and pref. R. G. Geering (1986; Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1989) 30.

have one's own desire recognised by the other, the possibility of having oneself reflected back to oneself is the inaugurating lure of desire, the lure of reflexivity, of mimetic reflection. For Lacan, desire is marked by the desire of the Other, and thus creates an inevitable displacement of desire through the other, or a series of Others. *Desire is defined as displacement*, as an endless chain of substitutions and the subject is constituted in this dislocation of desire (my emphasis). Lacan's formulation, that "desire is for the desire of the Other" works in at least two ways: the desire for the Other's desire—to be its object, but also to mime its ways, and, in miming, to assume an identity other than one's own. The role of displacement and dislocation in the structure of desire emphasises the importance of mobility in and to desire. For example, the mimicry of the desire of the other is mobilising. Teresa's 'crossing' is pursued as part of a desire to be the *object* of Jonathan's desire, but also a mimicry of *him* and his modes of desire: repression, sublimation and mascochism. Teresa's mimicry of Jonathan is an aspect of her pursuit of an identity of her own, in the world.

Lacan sees desire and the constitution of the subject as founded in lack. Alternatively, Michel Foucault sees desire as excessive and productive. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari refuse the theory of desire founded on lack and, in effect, reject Freud's concept of repression.[33] For them, desire is not just revolutionary, desire *is* revolution, which is commensurate with Teresa's idea that "love is feared, it dissolves society"(236). If desire is not based on lack, then it is affirmatively always in movement, always reforming itself, and Deleuze and Guattari theorise desire as an affirmative process of flows and lines of flight.[34] For my purposes, the most important aspect of both models of desire is that desire *moves*.

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33 In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Delezue and Guattari produce a critique of psychoanalysis. For them Freud's theory of the oedipal complex serves to confirm the dominance of hierarchical thought. The concept of an original event or trauma is unimaginably reductive. The father's principle—the principle of the origin as identity is firmly rejected. Joseph Allen Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1998) 72.

34 John Lechte, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Postmodernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 102-105. Lechte identifies the opposition of a Freudian hermeneutics of desire, repression and oedipalised femininity, and Deleuze and Guattari's desire "as flow". Feminists have usually used Hegelian and psychoanalytic notions of desire as lack to explain women's position within patriarchy as objects of men's desires—however, a number have turned to Nietzsche's notion, which links desire directly to power and resistance, Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989) xv-xvi.

Lacan uses another metaphor to represent desire: he refers to desire as a "ferret," figuring its status as driven, furtive, subterranean and resistant. What Lacan calls a "ferret," and Deleuze and Guattari call "lines of flight," Teresa calls "love." I demonstrate in this chapter that Teresa's love-desire, unable to be directly articulated, works through a series of interactive, substituting tropes in a rhetoric of mobility. Desire is love, is will, is movement in *For Love Alone*: it is the oceanic sublime, walking, writing, talking and crossing, it is the desire for desire. The fantastic logic of Teresa's desire crosses detachment with excessive desire, and the quest for mastery with ecstatic self-loss. Teresa's desire demonstrates the inter-implication of artistic sublimation and the mechanisms of narcissism, de-sexualisation and diversion of libido. In turn, the role of desire and division to the expatriate subject is yoked to the transgressions of feminine desire in its cross-gendered choice of the role of the questing subject.

II Preliminal

Female Desire and The Oceanic Sublime

Water provides 'kinaesthetic' images of unsatisfied desire in *For Love Alone*. The ocean is the tantalising promise of, and analogy for, the drives of heterosexual desire and physical-intellectual mobility. Water is partnered with heat, feverishness and thirst in the first quarter of the text to evoke longing and lack, the promise of immersion and satiation. Malfi's Wedding is a virtuosic account of the heat of a Sydney Harbour February mixed with Teresa's adolescent confusion, creativity and alienation. Restlessness and an almost constant autoerotism works through linguistic and imagistic rhythms and patterns of tension and climax. For example:

> The bay, the ocean, were full of moonstruck fish, restless, swarming, so thick in places that the water looked oily, their presence, the men thought, with other signs, meant storms at hand. (61-62)

The ocean and foreshore landscape constantly work to express the adolescent restlessness and longing that Teresa feels at nineteen. Their potent expression as a series of scenes—at afternoon, at night and in the heat—intensifies her later suppression of them, when the marine world recedes as Teresa moves to the city-scape that is colder, oppressive and concentrated.

The genesis of this move is a pact made in the marine world, and it is typically sexualised:

> She listened to the sea, thought of it rolling in, and herself began to roll, like a ship, moving quite ignorantly as women move with their lovers. "A storm, far out to sea, coming in," she muttered. "Lover, learning, bread—myself—all three, I will get."(87)

Teresa's inhabitation of the kinaesthetic world of water and desire is carried out in secret, as a counter-discursive move to her father, who opens the Watson's Bay landscape and its corollary in the discourse of love and desire, as its sole heir and spokesperson (pp. 5-12). Teresa's rival autoerotism and creativity is sustained in private, away from the paternal sun god, and in concert with the tides and rhythms of the ocean to which she claims she is so attuned. Teresa's imagined 'night of the senses' is furnished with marine images: "her flesh was a strange shade in that light, like the underside of water beasts" (73). The rhetorical links between water, intercourse and night is played out in her images of Cythera, a reference to the lovers' island of classical mythology which recalls her earlier invocation of Australia as a great Ithaca.

> "To our secret desires", she said huskily. "To Cythera, perhaps," and "'night passage' isn't it? To Cythera, or whatever island—but I always think of coral atolls, submarine volcanoes, the pearl gulfs of the north, a kind of Darwin's voyage of discovery, as the voyage to Cythera." (192-3).

This 'night passage' (sea voyage) evokes the *night* of the senses (intercourse) and the *sea*-animal figures of the sexual act in a specifically antipodean "passage" to "our secret desires." The night passage is both the rites of passage involved in an actual sea voyage and the first night of intercourse.

Despite her hyperbolic trances of adolescent desire, Teresa is also aware of the dangerous consequences of sexuality, in this case a woman's suicide because of an unwanted pregnancy:

> Across the harbour, on the oyster-coloured water, a large Manly ferry full of lights moved southwards towards the city. She felt the swarm of lovers as thick as locusts behind her when she turned into the beach path. Tied up to the fourth pile of the wharf was a rowing boat covered with a tarpaulin. Under the tarpaulin was a woman's body; she had been fished out of the sea just outside of the cliffs that afternoon; it did not cause much comment. They lived there among the gardens of the sea, they knew their fruits; fish, storms, corpses, moontides, miracles. (64)

Although the death is naturalised as a part of the "gardens of the sea," a social world inimical to unrestrained feminine sexuality is present in Teresa's sea world, cast in relief against the embodiment and freedom of Watson's Bay. Repressive Victorian social codes are also present in the classroom scenes that interleave themselves in the first quarter of the book, as Teresa's frustration and desire to escape escalate. The colonial social codes legislate women's sometimes fatal imprisonment in discourses of engagement, marriage and family.

Just as the island's identity depends on water in "Sea People," so does the young woman's in "The Island Continent," extending the parallels between national, geographical and sexual identity. The second half of "The Island Continent" dramatises Teresa's decision that, in order to fulfil her marine desires, she must first actively cross, or master, the element through which she identifies those desires. In order to fulfil her ambition for love, education and work, she must adopt the available maps—masculine and heroic voyage narratives—which means that she must deny and therefore master her fluid embodiment. The shift to the city-text of Sydney in the early 1930s displaces feminine sexuality and embodiment into an urban set of morphologies and social relations, including the transcendent masculine stronghold of Sydney University.

"Marine Lover"

After her permanent return to Australia in 1974, Christina Stead was interviewed a number of times. One of the points she reiterates is a stringent disavowal of any alignment with feminism. She declared that she 'loved men' and that one was a writer, woman or no. Her negative attitudes to feminism seems related to her belief that political feminism somehow equated with gender separatism, and interfered with a natural heterosexuality. The ambivalence of Stead's rejection of political feminism, while retaining a profound interest in political revolution, and the 'truth' of women's lives, is echoed in the ambivalence of her eager agreement that Frederich Nietzsche was an important influence on her work. The attraction Nietzsche held for Stead is obvious in *The Man Who Loved Children* and *For Love Alone*, as Hazel Rowley and Rebecca Baker have demonstrated.[35]

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35 For further discussion of the role of Neitzsche see: Hazel Rowley, "A 'Wanderer': Christina Stead,"*Westerly* 33.1 (1988): 15-21; Hazel Rowley "Christina Stead: The Voyage to Cythera," *Span*26 (1988): 33-45; Rebecca Baker, "Christina Stead: The Nietzsche

For Stead, Nietzsche's influential works were *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (which had such an impact on Henry Handel Richardson thirty years earlier) and *Human, All Too Human* (subtitled *A Book for Free Spirits*). Nietzsche's attractiveness for the young Christina Stead can be summarised by this assertion from Cathryn Vasseleu:

> With his incorporation of aesthetic values into western narratives of subjectivity, Nietzsche announces himself as a philosopher who is willingly seduced by art. Art is nothing less than the will to power, and it is in terms of being an artist that man (specifically) achieves his unique powers of self-creation.

Nietzsche's master principle of the self-creating individual stresses the importance of the individual's will to power as an effect of the experience of corporeality that resists being overcome by reason. Vasseleu goes on to make the point that:

> while the self is an aesthetic phenomenon, it is also the effect of an ethical disjunction between a present disposition, and an other being yet to be embraced. There is an ambivalence towards this other, which plays through Nietzsche's ethics of self-creation, expressed perhaps most strikingly in the breaks and convergences in Nietzsche's attitudes towards women and towards the sea .[36]

"The other being yet to be embraced" neatly describes what Teresa understands to be her own desire, not only for her future self, but "some faceless, memberless heavy shadow stood somewhere near, keeping her company, a man yet unborn in her life"(19). In Vasseleu's assertion, the self-created Other that must be embraced is structured in a category that includes future self, woman and the sea. How can Teresa face this Other, if she is this Other? Is Teresa ambivalent about the sea, or does Nietzsche's ambivalence not extend to her. It is the maternal aspect of the sea that haunts Nietzsche and his inability to return to his origin in the uterine space. Vasseleu's investigation of the metaphors of water in Nietzsche's work means working through the metaphorising of woman-sea as Other, as the alterity which generates his metaphors of self-affirmation. The enthusiastic adoption of Nietzsche by the woman writer is therefore not unproblematic, since the

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Connection," *Meridian* 2.2 (1983): 116-120. Rowley explores the "Wraith and Wanderer" figuration in Stead, and its genesis in Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human*. I follow Rowley in not ruling out an ironic undertow in Stead's reading of Neitzsche.

[36] Cathryn Vasseleu, "Not Drowning, Sailing: Women and the Artist's Craft in Nietzsche," *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory*, ed. Paul Patton (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1993) 71.

feminine is the ground of self-creation and mobility, rather than figure. Stead, like Richardson before her, identified with the outsideness and strangeness of the artist, and independence of will that created the conditions of possibility for creative powers, and disregarded the gender crossing required to be Zarathustra, looking from the cliffs of his land towards the sea and the infinity of the sublime.[37]

Luce Irigaray, feminist philosopher and psychoanalyst, has engaged at length with Nietzsche in her 1980 text *Amante Marine* (*Marine Lover of Frederich Nietzsche*). Broadly speaking, Irigaray's project has been to analyse the potential for sexually specific subject, and for the articulation of a specifically feminine subjectivity.[38] When Irigaray refers to feminine specificity, her main project is to reveal the "oppressive fiction of a universal subject." She works with a conviction that the subject is exclusively male and that "masculinity and subjectivity are coextensive notions."[39] Patriarchy is a symbolic order which does not recognise sexual difference; there are only men, either phallic or castrated. The other sex is defined in relation to men, but not to itself. Irigaray's project, long under fire from anti-essentialist feminists, involves providing a conceptual linguistic and erotic space in which feminine subjectivity may begin to articulate itself, and argues for the necessity for women's symbolic representation. Carolyn Burke says of Irigaray's effort to think or symbolise a language which is appropriate to the expression of feminine desire that:

> It is as if she were speaking from another territory—the ocean, or the other side of the looking glass—where the familiar rules of logic have been reversed, deconstructed and subject to a sea change. [40]

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37 In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Zarathustra's embarkation takes place from the shore of 'the blessed isles.' Standing high on the ridge of the blessed isles, Zarathustra is confronted by the significance of his choice to take to the sea. Zarathustra describes the sea, not as an infinity of an other, but as an infinity of one's own. Vasseleu argues that Nietzsche oscillates between these possibilities of becoming the sea and being borne by water: "The figure which appears in the latter and distinguishes it from the former, is the boat which carries the mariner over the flood he both feels himself as being and resists becoming." Vasseleu 74-76.

38 Margaret Whitford, "Reading Irigaray in the Nineties," *Engaging with Irigaray* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 16. Whitford is quoting Naomi Schor in this instance.

39 Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray," *Engaging With Irigaray*, ed. Margaret Whitford et. al. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 62.

40 Carolyn Burke, "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," *Engaging with Irigaray*, ed. Margaret Whitford et. al. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 39. Elizabeth Grosz suggest that *Amante Marine* was one of the first of Irigaray's texts "concerned to explore a mode of

Schor suggests that "fluid is highly valorised in her elemental philosophy," and that Irigaray links feminine fluidity with flux, non-identity, proximity. Schor's project is to assess the feminist charges of essentialism that must accompany such a linking together of feminine specificity and the female body, especially with its inbuilt references to maternity.[41] I will return to the interrelated notions of maternity, the nocutrnal and the fluid in my reading of "A Night In the Indian Ocean."

The use of the work of Irigaray to explicate some aspects of the novels of Christina Stead seems initially like the conjunction of two wildly opposed elements. Where Irigaray is *the* philosopher of sexual difference, Stead's texts produce a more de Beauvoirean notion of femininity, where women must aspire to emerge from the domestic into a public and economic sphere of activity, as neutral subjects. Where Stead was vociferously heterosexual and male-identified, Irigaray works for a recognition of a maternal genealogy, mother-daughter relations and an elaboration of lesbianism. Nevertheless, Stead and Irigaray were both materialists. Irigaray has been criticised by materialist feminists for what they see to be her essentialist and ahistorical accounts of the feminine. In addition, Stead, like Irigaray, was interested in articulating feminine desire, she was interested in the body, and in sexual pleasure as a source of alternative knowledge and identity. This is reason enough to use Irigaray in the context of *For Love Alone*, especially when she reads Nietzsche for his figuration of the feminine other as oceanic.

The figuration of water, sexuality and madness in the account of the young woman's rites of passage can be found in Stead's *For Love Alone* (1944), Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1916) and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1897). In all these texts a persistent connection between the feminine, the sexual,

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women's materiality and corporeality which has been unable to find adequate representation in phallocentric paradigms." Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions* 168.

41 Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which is Not One" 71. Schor argues that Irigaray's engagment with science, in the form of the repressed feminine element of water and the dynamics of fluids, establishes a fundamental materialism about what belongs to the body and the world of matter. "Physics here is placed in the service of Irigaray's radical materialism, her desire to return to the pre-Socratic (but also the post-Nietzschean and Bachelardian) apprehension of the four generic elements as foundational which is—I repeat—not the same thing as essentialism."

the sublime and the sea is formulated.[42] It seems to me that these women writers grappled with the 'unrepresentable' and the excessive facets of female experience, such as feminine desire. In this sense they were attracted to the sublime utterance, which itself attempts to represent excess, and yet also involves its production. As Peter de Bolla comments "The discourse of the sublime . . . in its function as an analytic discourse or expressive experience, becomes increasingly preoccupied with the discursive production of excess."[43] The figuration of limit and excess is treated relatively positively in *For Love Alone* whereas by the time Stead writes *I'm Dying Laughing*, the treatment of limit and its transgression has rotated into figurations of the grotesque, as a kind of sublime aesthetic.

Longinus claimed that "sublimity is a kind of eminence or excellence of discourse."[44] The sublime effect in Longinus' terms is one of ravishment. Yet the threat of loss of control is conceived of as excessive, and often troped as the threatening and potentially uncontainable feminine other. According to Wieskel: "already in Longinus, *hypsos*, or height is a presiding metaphor, we are uplifted as if instinctively; and our proud flights exalts our soul."[45] *Hypsos* aims at transport (*ekstatsis*) and height. Barbara Freeman sees *hypsos* as the state of transport, and exaltation as the mark of sublimity. The sublime is that which occurs at the very limits of symbolisation, since the sublime is not an object but rather the subject's response to whatever it cannot grasp. The notion of the transport of the self in its confrontation with

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42 Virginia Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*, was published in 1915, which places it closer in time to the texts of expatriate modernism than Stead's *ouevre*. The comparison between Woolf and Stead in terms of sexual difference, a poetics of mobility and the thematisation of feminine movement (women writing, walking, sailing) is of great interest. *The Voyage Out*, an account of the young woman's entrance into the world, narrates an ocean voyage between England and South America, and then the voyage inland, up a South American river. Rachel, the young female protagonist, moves ever outwards, becomes diffuse and borderless the further she moves from England. This movement outwards parallels her movement towards heterosexual sexual experience which is ultimately refused through her death. Rachel Vinrace figuratively 'drowns' as her fatal fever, caught on the voyage up the river, is described in terms of submersion, storm and madness.

43 Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Reading, History, Aesthetics and the Subject* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 12.

44 'Longinus,' "On Sublimity," trans. D. A. Russell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) 7.

45 "*Hypsos*, of height, grander than its spectator, and yet invites the spectator's identification and narcissism to be concerned with hypsos, transport, the grand discontinuities." Thomas Wieskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 4-5.

a perception of infinity is directly related to Teresa's desire for mobility. *Hypsos,* especially in Teresa's contemplation of the ocean or her dreaming about ideal lovers, in short, her dreams of an elsewhere she cannot exactly visualise, drives forward her desire for 'passage,' for transition and intensification.[46] The encounter between Teresa and the sublime is a model for the expatriate woman's encounter with and response to an alterity that exceeds, limits and defines her.

Freeman suggests that:

> the feminine sublime is neither a rhetorical mode nor an aesthetic category but a domain of experience that resists categorisation, in which the subject enters into relation with an otherness—social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic—that is excessive and unrepresentable.[47]

Writers such as Stead have responded to and redefined the canonical tradition of the sublime that has been haunted by misogyny. Patricia Yaeger argues that the romantic sublime is a genre that is, historically and psychologically, a masculine mode of writing and relationship. However, as a pre-fabricated structure, as a literary genre or moment concerned with empowerment, transport and the self's strong sense of authority, the sublime is a genre the woman writer needs. The sublime is a usefully recuperated (but not necessarily revised) genre since it offers a vehicle of female power and ecstasy: "women as writers and heroines, are clearly in need of feisty, voracious, volatile vocabularies of empowerment."[48]

Throughout the history of the sublime, the sea has often served as its most appropriate, if not exemplary, metaphor.[49] The sea fulfils the criteria of

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46 Stead, *For Love Alone.* See for example, 61-2, 67-9, 73-7, 84-5, 92-3, 100-101.

47 Barbara Claire Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995) 2.

48 Patricia Yaeger, "Toward a Feminine Sublime," *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 198.

49 Freeman 28-29. Freeman provides some traditional representations of the oceanic sublime in order to deomstrate how Kate Chopin's *The Awakening,*constructs a dramatically different version. For Longinus and Burke the sea is a major source of sublime sentiment whereas for Schopenhauer the ocean outranks all other forms of natural display—oceanic immensity yields the most complete impression of the sublime. Both Teresa and Edna Pontellier move beyond Kant's injunction about spectatorship and the sublime, and in fact immerse themselves *in* the ocean. In Teresa's case this signals an immersion in discourses of love, desire and idealisation .

limitlessness, horizon crossing and the infinite depth of the sublime. In *The Romantic Sublime*, Thomas Weiskel comments that Freud was "definitely and remarkably immune to the sublime moment, whose "oceanic" and daemonic guises he brilliantly exposed."[50] J. A. Boone trains a more critical eye on Freud's account of femininity when he analyses Dora's dreams of oceanic freedom. Boone claims that in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* , Freud characterised the libido as a powerful "stream" that always threatens to spill over into unsuspected "collateral channels" when its "main bed has become blocked."[51] Teresa's oceanic desires undergo systematic sublimation. Instead of the sea as topos of unboundaried female desire, providing a context for her 'awakening,' like Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening*, Teresa's adolescence (her virginity) and hence her marginality, is prolonged and the oceanic sublime renounced after her failed crossing to Harper's Ferry. Teresa keeps moving through rites of transition—in the form of walking and writing letters—as a displacement of her desire for the sea as 'home.'

"She Had the Heart of a Sailor"

This chapter focuses on Teresa's rites of passage because it offers an account of displacement in cooperation with gender, sexuality, nation and class. Until the advent of the airplane, the sea crossing was an inevitable aspect of movement between north and south, both the colonial voyage in, and the migrating or expatriating voyage out. "The Island Continent" establishes the way in which Teresa Hawkins, the expatriating protagonist, is almost always already 'at sea,' such is her imaginative and actual saturation in the life of the foreshores of Watson's Bay. Water and mobility go hand in hand in this text, practically in terms of the expatriating sea voyage, as well as tropologically. Whilst the account of Teresa's 'voyage in' is excluded, it is proleptically figured as walking, talking, reading and writing, and recounted to some degree 'on the other side.'

Teresa claims this colonial maritime genealogy:

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50 Weiskel 6.

51 Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," trans. James Strachey (1905; rpt New York,: Basic Books 1962) 36.

> It was an accident, perhaps some early song, some tale of Britain, that made her think she could escape by sea. It was perhaps the first vision printed on her mind as a child of the sailors who, from de Quiros to Cook, had sailed all the seas and discovered Australia, and England's sea history, and the voice of the sea behind the language. She loved the sea with a first and last love, had no fear of it, would have liked to sail for two years without seeing land; she had the heart of a sailor. How could she be satisfied on the dull shore? (224-5)

For Love Alone constructs a set of interactive figures in a rhetoric of desire and mobility. The most diffuse yet prevalent of these figures is the representation of water. The ocean is not just the necessary precondition for the questing sea voyage; it is deployed by Stead as a way of referring to Teresa's developing adolescent desire in many of its manifestations—as autoeroticism, mobility, the sublime and sublimation. Teresa's movement along the harbourside, then towards the city, and eventually across the ocean, signals a gendered movement from sea to land environments, from feminised to masculine economies.

Stead describes her relation to the sea as a kind of *ur* -belonging. Stead naturalises her movement towards the sea by laying claim to a sense of belonging, which mitigates against any question of 'leaving Australia,' a claim she persistently made against any traditional ideas about the Australian artist and the necessity of expatriation.[52]

> And the sea—we were all closely connected with the sea. It was part of our lives. Now the sea is a continent with no passports; it's a country in itself. We felt we belonged to the sea. It wasn't a question of leaving Australia, nothing to do with that at all . . . and the sea was in a sense my country, and I knew that.[53]

Stead suggests that she did not so much *leave* Australia, or even *go* to England, as much as move towards and across her other native territory, a territory natural for Australians to claim, since they were islanders and

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52 Susan Sheridan sees "the necessary self-exile of the artist from 'his' provincial home" as a "particularly potent myth in Australian literary culture." Sheridan, *Christina Stead* 59.

53 Rodney Wetherell, "Interview with Christina Stead," *Australian Literary Studies* 9 (1980): 432 and 435. Anca Vlasopolos argues that the sea is a non-territory and therefore an essential country for women. Conversely, Stead exhibits entirely territorial, even nationalistic impulses towards the sea as a country in itself, a continent like Australia, and her country. "Staking Claims for No Territory: The Sea as Woman's Space," *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*, eds., M. R. Higonnet and Joan R. Templeton (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994)

immigrants. The sea, like Australia, is a continent with no passports, it is a country "in itself." Stead claims dual citizenship, to the 'continents' of Australia and the sea, which do not preclude one another as her 'country.' What kind of nationalism is this, this figuring of the sea as a national territory? In *For Love Alone*, the sea is Teresa's touchstone for desire and as such it is the point of origin for her journeying, her quest for love and her eventual expatriating voyage.

"Sea People" is the prologue to *For Love Alone*, which is otherwise comprised of two main sections, also with maritime reference: "The Island Continent" and "Port of Registry." "Sea People" provides an exemplary instance of the textual construction of an external subject position, in which the text produces a national account (inside) for an international audience (outside). The explanation of the southern hemisphere to the northern establishes a textual position which is simultaneously inside and outside the national locus, the expatriate's position. This subject position is familiar in travel narrative, where an explanation of the lie of the sea, sky and land is part of a necessary orientation for the non-indigenous traveller. Such orientations often work through inversion or reversal, among other modes of cultural comparison. The valorisation of the utopian island continent and its southern hemisphere world works through its difference from a pre-existing norm; in other words, though exoticisation:

> In the part of the world Teresa came from, winter is in July, spring brides marry in September, and Christmas is consummated with roast beef, suckling pig, and brandy-laced plum pudding at 100 degrees in the shade, near the tall pine-tree loaded with gifts and tinsel as in the old country, and old carols have rung out all through the night. (1)

The explanation of Teresa's part of the world moves through a series of culturally transplanted rituals from the 'old' country; September spring brides and a hot Christmas—with its colonial rehearsal of pine Christmas trees and old carols, as well as the strangeness of season and climate. The rehearsal is uncanny, mixing the familiar with the strange. Australia is both European and fantastically otherworldly. The keynote themes of marriage and 'consummation' also find their way into this comparison.

The prologue thematises inversion: "The other world—the old world, the land hemisphere—is far above her as it is shown on maps drawn upside-down by old world cartographers"(1). The 'above' status of the northern

hemisphere (merely a bias of geography) is destabilised as the prologue continues to claim an elemental, ancient and fertile existence for the southern island, but based on classical European hegemonic modes. Stead called the island continent "a great Ithaca," which pits a classical reference for an ancient continent against the northern "old" world. The southern world is troped as superabundant and maternal: "a fruitful island of the sea-world" where "overhead, the other part of the Milky Way, with its great stars and nebular, spouts thick as cows milk from the udder, from side to side, broader and whiter than in the north"(1). This valediction, working through superlatives, provides what Susan Sheridan has called "a positive twist to the colonial-expatriate myth" through the characterisation of Australia as a "locus of legend as rich as the old world."[54] The claims of priority are couched in the terms of the old world, since the *terra nullius* construction makes it impossible to perceive indigenous language and culture and the priority of Aboriginal presence.[55]

The Pacific Ocean and the southern night sky are different from a northern norm, threatening disorientation and excess, but almost gorgeously baroque: "The skies are sub-tropical, crusted with suns and spirals, as if a reflection of the crowded Pacific Ocean, with its reefs, atolls and archipelagos"(2). The multiplications of sea and sky still offer guidance: "people look toward the water, and above to the fixed stars and constellations which first guided men there"(2). This is the first example of a recurring double of marine and the nocturnal, a recurring inversion. Night-day, sea-land are mapped over the north-south dichotomy, and are gendered. The island continent is feminised as "her," so that the text figures the strange hybrid of "island continent" as the mother-land, nocturnal and marine. This confuses the core etymology of expatriate as *ex-patria*, out of the father-land. In the terms of this prologue, Teresa moves from maternal (Australia) to paternal (European) space, from one parental origin to another. As a colonial, the confusion lies in whether hers is a voyage 'in,' travelling to the "scarcely noticeable island up toward the North Pole," or a voyage 'out,' across the sea (to which she belongs) away from a point of origin, eschewing the desire and sub-tropical excess, the water and heat of Australia.

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54 Sheridan, *Christina Stead* 60.

55 For a more detailed discusssion of this see Louise Yelin, "'Buffoon Odyssey?' Christina Stead's *For Love Alone* and the Writing of Exile," *Yale French Studies* 82. 1 (1993): 83-203.

The geography that this prologue produces proceeds by orientation from water rather than land—it is water that dominates. The island's identity depends on water, the sea defines the land:

> The island continent lies in the water hemisphere. On the eastern coast, the neighbouring nation is Chile, though it is far, far east, Valparaiso being more than six thousand miles away in a straight line; her northern neighbours are those of the Timor Sea, the Yellow Sea; to the south is that cold storm sea, full of earthwide rollers, which stretches from there without land, south to the Pole. (1)

The incantatory effect is derived from syntax as well as the diction of exploration, which uses the exotic place name in a large scale, but foreign, geography. The "island imaginary" is doubled with an evocation of massive scale "the many thousands of miles of seaboard," which provides a contrast to the northern figuration of the island as a small but powerful imperial microcosm.

As the sea dominates this opening geography, the prologue ends appropriately with the following rhetorical question to lead the reader into "The Island Continent": "Oh Australian, have you just come from the harbour? Is your ship in the roadstead? Men of what nation put you down—for I am sure you did not get here on foot?"(2). Teresa Hawkins repeats this formulation to Jonathon Crow, with the statement that "each Australian is a Ulysses" (222), claiming both Australian-ness and the elsewhere-ness of the wanderer. The quotation collocates national identity and Ulyssean sea travel, as well as the impossibility of walking. However, *For Love Alone* figures walking as a major component in a central structure of desire and mobility and excludes the medial narrative of sea travel.

It is precisely because *each* Australian may not be a Ulysses that Teresa refers to her voyage to London as her "buffoon Odyssey." The feminine subject may not exactly or even successfully mimic the masculine quester, and therefore the heroic sea voyage does not appear in the intercontinental position between London and Sydney. "A Night in the Indian Ocean" does not at all match Ulyssean scripts. Although Homer's Odyssey is an "animating myth" for Teresa, neither Ulysses, Penelope nor Circe can provide the terms or language for Teresa as a questing sea-farer and actively desiring, mobile woman.

In *For Love Alone*, a plurality of different sea voyages coalesce: Darwin's taxonomical voyage; Zarathustra's voyage of self-mastery; and the Jamesian international journey. Stead was well read in Homer's heroic epic, the eighteenth century picaresque and the nineteenth century romance novel with its interest in location and positionality. Her own narrative produces a representation of the young woman's move to leave both home and nation—the postcolonial rites of passage.

At the end of *The Man Who Loved Children* (1940), Louie Pollitt leaves her father's house and sets out to "walk around the world."[56] At the end of *Letty Fox* (1946) Letty has caught her man and figures herself in terms of commercial shipping: "The principal thing is I got a start in life; and it's from now on. I have freight, I cast off, the journey has begun."[57] *For Love Alone*, which also draws to a close with an open-ended imagination of the continuation of a journey, invokes these two peregrinating impulses of walking and sailing. Teresa and Louie, unlike Letty, are protean writers, ambitiously pursuing their desire to be "in the world." Letty's worldliness, of the commerce of sexual adventure, also concerns "love"—the word so often cited by Teresa as the impulse, the motive, the desire to move, to take passage, and make a transition from one state of development to another. Teresa's rites of passage really commence with a rite of separation, in the shape of the quest to reach Harper's Ferry in the hope of transforming her life as one of the "bloodless rout of women."

III Separation and Liminality

Harper's Ferry: "the grand perilous journey"

As a result of her acquaintance with Jonathon Crow, Teresa begins to see other possibilities for her life. Her most important question to herself is "Could I love that man?"(129) as Crow had "strange moods"(125) and "both aroused and intimidated her"(127), yet "his university talk was wonderful to her. . . she too wanted to get her degree and go abroad"(128). Teresa moves from thinking that "running away was not such an easy thing"(82) to "I

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56 Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970) 523.

57 Christina Stead, *Letty Fox: Her Luck* (North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1991) 517. Compare with p. 492 in *For Love Alone*.

must leave school, it will show whether I have any chance of success or not"(134). This is the first of a series of tests of will and courage that Teresa sets herself, in order to prove herself 'worthy,' in the chivalric sense, and to achieve her goal of 'loving' and a life of passion. As a result, escape is necessary. Teresa's tests take the form of a series of crossings, or rites of passage. They are epic in register and often mock-heroic in proportion. The first of the crossings is a rite of separation—the escape from teaching by an attempt to walk to Harper's Ferry Crossing. Teresa's first crossing is the beginning of her 'voyage out:' "this first train journey was only the first stride on her grand perilous journey." Teresa was "outward bound," feeling that "chains evaporate as soon as you try to throw them off" and "it [freedom] was only a matter of running away." The syntactical repetitions of "Alone, she found the way out, which alone does not lead to blindness, years of remorse and hungry obscurity"(137) thematise the heroic isolation of Teresa's rites of transition.

Teresa remembers a sunlit day from a few summers ago at Harper's Ferry, and plans to walk there and then go back to Sydney and "get a room somewhere . . . begin as a typist and save up to get her degree and go abroad"(139). Teresa's memories of Harper's Ferry Crossing are tied up with adolescent idyll in "the heat" when "the aromatic oils of the hardy plants intoxicated the air," when she declares to the flirtatious Tom Carlin that she might be the one to initiate love-making. She nonetheless claims that she chooses Harper's Ferry because it was a

> lonely, dark, dread, endlessly solitary, inhuman place and [Teresa] had heard that a murder had been committed near there. She had a vision of a dreary wild crossing, ancient trees; beyond that nothing, but it was her way. (139)

The pastoral memories of Harper's Ferry and her aunt Teresa's orchard are repudiated for a Gothic set of landscapes, which dovetail with Teresa's impressions on the train, that of the Gothic sublime:

> She had never felt so well in her life. She could hear laughter, from the hills shouldering off their forests, from the rivers slipping away down, the cries of the bitter trees struggling against each other, rooted in one spot, killing the small things in their shade . . . she felt at once a horror of the rooted forest and its secular, aimless, but stern struggle, and a joy, veritable jubilation in the road which had been cut through the wild. (137)

As Thomas Weiskel points out: "What we wish to isolate and analyse is a moment—call it a sublime or original moment—in which a burden (of the past, but not exclusively) is lifted and there is an influx of power . . . excited in the encounter with landscape, the 'natural' sublime."[58]

The interlude at her aunt's house involves a close interaction with Ellen, her cousin, which does not partake of the nurturing female community several feminist critics ascribe to the female rites of passage. I will also argue this point with respect to "A Night In the Indian Ocean." The interesting exception to this is her aunt's summary of Teresa's long-dead mother as brave, serious, clever and wilful. Teresa's heroism is tagged to her absent mother. Teresa hates and is shamed by her cousin, because of her fear of ending up like her: "over-educated," 29, single, and willing to marry "the neighbour's son." Teresa's interaction with women on this rite of separation works through negation. Teresa refuses the negativity of Ellen's entrapment and marginality; social, sexual and geographical. She sees it as cowardly and insufficiently ideal. Teresa's arrival as an adult exposes her to the social and sexual milieu of Narara Valley where she witnesses the gracelessness of rural poverty and the marriage market. The social conventions and repressions of sexuality find expression in the standard gothic aspects of the valley—ghosts and madmen:

> Just after they had passed the shuttered cottage in the wood, a human yell pealed out through the wood, marvellously loud, ringing through the air as if carried by the high airs and after two or three shouts, dying slowly, groaning away into the empty grass paddocks beside them, as if tingling in the grass roots . . . the cry peeled again, a little farther behind, but ringing tremendous, from the things on the land, from some martyred and bleeding field, or a giant old tree being murdered in the wood there . . . Was it the howl of empty Creation, horrified at being thee with itself in its singleness? Or is it the cry of the chase I am on, said the young girl? (159)

The debt to gothic texts such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is obvious but it still indicates the dangerous realities of solitary female escape.

Teresa sets out for Harper's Ferry the next day, and is thwarted in her attempt by the presence of an old man exposing himself to her on the road. The meaning of the sexual pursuit by a man, and the frightening embodiment of male desire, eludes Teresa. She calls it "this madness on the

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58 Weiskel 11.

road" (165) and asks "why would an old man publish his shame?"(166) This is a brand of worldly knowledge her father has not mentioned, and which is not available in books by men. She turns back from the "queer, queer valley" (166) to her aunt's house, where Lance waits for her and tells her she can get out of teaching, which makes her escape at least partially successful. Louise Yelin reads this episode as the eruption of a "specifically sexual vulnerability that raises questions about Teresa's or any woman's capacity to wander, travel, or go into exile."[59] After this cautionary experience, Teresa uses Jonathon as a goal and as a way of mediating the dangerousness of solitary wandering. Her wandering has a telos "for love," not merely escape.

The attempted walk to Harper's Ferry is a trial of separation, and the first of Teresa's elected solitary journeys that prefigure her eventual expatriation to England. This is thematically apposite, as a passage might often be a ferry crossing. The isolation and liminality of her position at Harper's Ferry is sustained throughout the three years it takes to save the steerage fare, before her actual voyage of transition. The excesses of the oceanic and Gothic sublime, evident in the first quarter of the book, now give way to Teresa's sublimation of her desires into masochistic self-control, staging what Sheridan refers to as "the compulsive repetitions of talking (dialogue and internal monologue) and walking."[60] These sublimating disciplines are rites of liminality, based on the question "What would Johnny do?"

"Walking her Way to England"

In a letter to Stanley Burnshaw on 18th November 1941, Christina Stead explained a manuscript for a play she wanted him to read. The material for the play is drawn from "the novel" and Stead suggests that "after the first draft is done, I tear it to pieces, (always) generally rewriting the end, but always making ten or more different beginnings—plus studies of character, hence the mad appearance." Apart from an insight into Stead's working processes, the "mad appearance" aspect of which she directly disavows in her late interviews, this correspondence is notable because the play outline sketches the following characters: Letty Fox, "the narrator, 18-19, a young girl," Teresa, "passionate pilgrim, 20, something of a mystic," and Jonathon

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59 Louise Yelin, "Buffoon Odyssey" 186.

60 Sheridan, *Christina Stead* 65.

Crow, "a professional bachelor, a student, thin, dark, egoist, 22."[61] It is the "passionate pilgrim" who is "something of a mystic" that interests me here. The model of storytelling pilgrimage which thematises journeying and storytelling had been explored by Stead in *Salzburg Tales* (1934). Teresa, the pilgrim, also possesses a "mystic" quality, a strange power. Female mysticism was one of the few sanctioned modes of female visionary ecstasy, linking this "modern day Teresa" with George Eliot's prologue to *Middlemarch* and to the *jouissance* of St Teresa of Avila.

It is walking which gradually substitutes itself for water in the economy of mobility and desire in *For Love Alone*, although there is some overlap as Teresa walks and speculates along the harbour foreshore. The mobile and expressive 'marine' economy of the Harbour is displaced into an urban landscape of asceticism and self-denial, where Teresa increasingly identifies with Jonathon Crow and mimics his practices of self-abnegation. Walking becomes associated with Jonathon's masochism-idealism as he strives to conquer the body through its sublimation into academic rhetoric, especially economic discourses of desire. Teresa also learns to displace her desire, but when she decides not to gain her degree, she becomes increasingly autodidactic, masochistic and writes letters full of personal treatise, as an alternative form of training for the Jonathan marathon.

In her essay "Walking, Women and Writing: Virginia Woolf as *Flâneuse*" Rachel Bowlby explores mobile gendered relations present at the conjunction of the woman desiring, voyaging and writing. Bowlby suggests that:

> The figure of the *flâneur* epitomises a distinctive nineteenth-century conception of the writer as walker, a sort of man about town with ample leisure and money to roam the city and look about him . . . The place of the walker as writer is marked out as a masculine identity which places women already as part of the representation.[62]

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61 Christina Stead to Stanley Burnshaw, 212 E 16th St New York, 18th November 1941. Quoted with permission from Stanley Burnshaw.

62 Woolf opens *The Voyage Out* with the Ambroses' stroll through London towards the *Euphrosyne*, the vessel that will take them and their niece Rachel Vinrace to Santa Marina in South America. This opening invokes the *flâneur*, a figure absorbed by Woolf and delivered anew as feminine writer-adventurer. As Bowlby comments:

> It is sometimes as if the figure of the masculine *flâneur* has been pushed off satirically down a *cul-de-sac*, as someone from whom the adventuring woman had nothing at all to fear (still less to desire), on the streets or on

Can 'flâneur' be a meaningful category in the context of Sydney and London in the 1930s where the walkers no longer have the class prerogative of 'strolling,' they are in fact, often poverty-stricken and obscure, walking because they cannot afford transport.

For Love Alone centralises the solitary walker in a number of guises, all in the grip of productive, unsatisfied desire. Jonathon Crow is a working-class man who walks every where as part of a economic asceticism. Teresa mimics him in her effort to save to follow him overseas:

> she was afraid to give in on any count and in some way the endless walking, walking, meant England. She was walking her way to England. In three years to the day, less Sunday and Christmas Day and one or two other holidays, she would have walked 2,772 miles and by the time she had sailed she would have walked 3000 miles . . . these three thousand miles represented seventeen pounds, three shillings and fourpence and perhaps a bit more, saved to take abroad. (278)

The walking woman prefigures the sea-voyaging woman and this prolepsis dovetails with wider structures of expatriate displacement. Walking in the city crowd, and other forms of transit in public places, constitutes a transgression of the feminine script to be contained, inside and private, except in the case of tourism and shopping. Teresa Hawkins, as a version of the *flâneuse*, crosses these lines by specularly and speculatively engaging with the public world, striving to actively choose her love object. These turns and transgressions have consequences for femininity since they require, or result in, a dangerous crossing or translation into the chosen love object, in this case constituting a cross-dressing. Wolff comments that:

> In 1831, when George Sand wanted to experience Paris life and learn about the ideas and arts of her time, she dressed as a boy. . . 'I flew from one end of Paris to the other. It seemed to me that I could go around the world'. . . The

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> the page. Yet the street is not empty of men, of their way of representing women or of a woman's of seeing herself as represented by them.

Where Rachel Bowlby sees "*flâneuse*" as a meaningful category, Janet Wolff argues that the solitary female walker is invisible, as are women in modernity more generally: "There is no question of inventing the *flâneuse*; the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century." Rachel Bowlby, "Walking, Women and Writing: Virginia Woolf as Flaneuse," *New Feminist Discourses*, ed. Isobel Armstrong (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 29. Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) 146.

> disguise made the life of the flâneur available to her; she knew very well . . . women could not stroll alone in the city.[63]

One hundred years later we find Teresa as a member of the Depression workforce, where walking to work signified a denial of expenditure on the luxury of a tram from Circular Quay to Central. Teresa mimics ascetic denial in order to translate herself into Jonathon Crow, to emulate the active structures of desiring he represents in order to achieve genuine mobility, and escape the divisions and limiting containment of the femininity she sees around her and experiences in the paternal home. Teresa struggles to undertake escape in her own terms, wanting what Wolff terms the prerogative of the "heroes of modernity" who share "the possibility and prospect of lone travel, of voluntary up-rooting, of anonymous arrival at a new place. They are, of course, all men."[64]

Gender-Crossing

"Walking, Women and Writing: Virginia Woolf as *Flaneuse*" includes a consideration of the figuration of the haemaphrodite as walker, a concept offered in Plato's *The Symposium* and related by Bowlby to the gendering and peripatetic structures of *A Room of One's Own*. The haemaphrodite, who has a perverse boundary crossing body because of its ambiguous gender, is also an ambivalent figure of translation when in motion. Teresa's walking is part of a test of faith she sets for herself in the mode of chivalric quest asceticism, the sublimations of which include isolation, hunger and chastity. In taking up the spiritual-ecstatic script of her namesake, Teresa of Avila, Teresa accesses a culturally recognised version of female desire as

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63 Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse" 148.

64 Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse" 146. James Quick is cast as an avid solitary walker and exemplary modern man. Quick's walking is representative of a mercantile twentieth century- it lacks the class leisure of Benjamin's *flâneur* yet his gender ensures the right to be in the public sphere. Melissa Hardie has suggested that "the perspective of the *flâneur* is inflected through the institution of national and cultural difference . . . The worn-out *flâneurs* are being replaced with the odd category of the 'strange American.'" Melissa Hardie, "Eating the Monument: Djuna Barnes," Diss. Sydney University, 1992. Quick's role as American tourist-expatriate financier makes him that desirable subject in *For Love Alone*, the truly wordly man. Although both he and Crow stride around the streets of major cities, it is Quick that the narrative supports as genuinely cosmopolitan. Jonathon Crow's unworthiness is underscored in his dealings with Quick, and finalised in Teresa's closing glimpse of him in the streets of London: "The vile-faced man, the bent-backed man, walking crowded with all the apparatus of melodrama was Jonathon Crow!"(501). Crow has become that figure related to the flâneur in the literature of modernity, the stranger.

disembodying self-abnegation. Teresa increasingly denies her feminine body through starvation and over-exertion. As her body gradually disappears she begins to be represented as both *La Belle Dame*, and the knight of the poem, "Death and the Maiden."[65] Teresa is masochistically cross-gendering for a man and for her larger hope of freedom, passion and love. This version of courtly romance reverses the object-subject order, in which a *heroine* crosses, or translates herself, into the structures of an active if unfulfilled and productive desire for the object.

> "What would a man do?" thought the girl, "Would he let this accident stand between himself and his love? Would he if he loved me? No. And I am worthy of him. Nothing will stand between me and him. I will make him love me." (244)

Freud's blind spot about the possibility of the female taking up the masculine position is challenged here, with Teresa "behaving as behaves a gallant and brave man who passes through the ordeals of hope deferred, patience and painful longing, to win a wife" (250). According to the medieval romance script that Teresa chooses to make sense of her situation and her desire to escape, she must convert the impressive energy of her earlier fantasies and creative designs into repression:

> When she looked in the mirror and saw this pasty face, the face of a devout monk who had felt love-pangs and denied them, she believed she had no right to pity, or indulgence or love. . . she had evolved the curious idea that she would only win Jonathon Crow by bridling passions as far as she was able, because of Jonathon's own self-denial. (256)

In "On Narcissism" Freud poses the possibility of an 'active' solution to the impasse of narcissistic object choice: "a libidinal mechanism through which the female subject can protest her forced identification with lack." Silverman reports that Freud "suggests *some surprising gender displacements* may take place when this subject loves another as what she would like to be."[66]

> The female subject may also opt for what I characterised as the "active" solution to the crisis of femininity, and—rather than giving that position to

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65 Compare with Lorna Sage, "Inheriting the Future: *For Love Alone*," *Stand* 23.4 (1982). These heroic and chivalric scripts are texts which make sense of her 'crossed' desire.

66 Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," trans. James Strachey, vol. 14 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1914; London: The Hogarth Press, 1955) 33-34 (my emphasis).

> the cold abstraction of exceptional femininity—put a man in the place of her ego-ideal. She can, in other words, project herself altogether outside the double-bind . . . by selecting as an ego-ideal someone of the opposite sex. Freud says of such a woman that she typically chooses to love someone who represents the "narcissistic ideal of the man whom [she] had wished to become."[67]

In this case the ego-ideal cannot be even partially mapped onto the proprioceptive body of the subject who orients herself in an imaginary and erotic relation to it: "The female subject is 'farther' away from the 'mirror' within which she would like to recognise herself than is her male counterpart."[68] Yet this identificatory flexibility through idealisation may be potentially transformative rather than lost in personal insufficiency and failure. However, Teresa's version of mortification (St Teresa of Avila's sublimation of desire into mystical idealism) may mean that she cannot complete the transfer she desires and thus is readied for suicide rather than worthiness and conquest. Teresa's fixation with the distant figure of Jonathon is paradoxically mobilising and killing, testifying to what Freud sees as the extremely strong nature of transference love. Freud states that:

> the imaginary relation, the one constituted through narcissistic identification, is always tenuous precisely because it is an external object that is determined to be oneself; this failure to close the distance between the ego who identifies elsewhere and the elsewhere which is the defining site of the ego haunts that identification as its constituitive discord and failure . . . narcissistic identification becomes the proleptic site of transference.[69]

Is Teresa's masquerade an enabling displacement? At what cost is this translation performed, and does it leave any feasible or enduring terms for

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67 Silverman, *Threshold* 34. Silverman cites Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," *The Standard Edition*, vol. 22, 132-33 (my emphasis). Silverman suggests that the crisis of femininity is the access to self-love through another's love for her.

68 Silverman, *Threshold* 34-35. "When the subject does not have easy cultural access to an idealising image of the self, he or she can become very adroit at identifying heteropathically with alternative imges." This is often a reaction to the impossibility of an exemplary and exceptional femininity, which is what Teresa desires. Freud claims that idealisation is the object of the drive and sublimation the aim. Idealisation, therefore, involves the exaltation of the object while sublimation requires the deflection of drive away from a sexual to a more culturally esteemed aim. Silverman see sublimation as an idealisation and identification *at a distance from the self.*, which dovetails with my argument about Teresa's "crossed" desire. Silverman *Thresholds* 34-35 and 73-74 (my emphasis).

69 Judith Butler, "'Dangerous Crossing': Willa Cather's Masculine Names," *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 152.

women's desire and mobility? The indeterminacy of these problematics is subtended by Stead's ironic handling of her heroine:

> With her high nose and forehead, Lance's drooping cheeks, her small mouth and salty eyes, cropped hair and this brindled costume, she looked exactly like a loutish page in some medieval canvas. (239)

In this scene, when Teresa hurries to see Jonathan's steamer leave the harbour, Stead's powerful command of the sublime and of the excesses of desire, rotates into her command of the grotesque as a figure of excess. This grotesque image of Teresa as marginal and pathetic is savagely ironic and perfectly profound.

Writing as Crossing

Part of the liminal stages of Teresa's rites of passage to maturation is her production of writing. Desire and mobility are coded into Teresa's letters to Jonathan. In their thwarted form, desire and mobility are aspects of the grotesque marginality and failure she perceives in Jonathan's rejection of her in London. In terms of 'rites of intensification,' Teresa's love letters proleptically figure her ocean passage, and her testament is readied as a death rite ("to work her way out another way"). Writing is cognate with walking and talking in Teresa's expatriate economy of desire and mobility. Her "Testament," in particular, indicates again the important relation between sublimity and sublimation as motive forces in *For Love Alone*.

In a chapter called "Modern is as Modern Does," Teresa declares to Jonathon that she will write a book "about the sorrows of women" based on the Miss Haviland story, and she proposes to call it "The Testament of Women" or "The Seven Houses"(371). This writing is to be a posthumous testament, since Teresa believes that she must "work her way out another way, slowly to die, eventually to get away from his [Jonathon's] mortal fascination."(360) At this point she had "really written some pages" and it is a writing that begins to fill the role of the weekly letter to Jonathon: "she worked over them early and late, to beat Jonathon's university education with her own subtlety"(248), "she picked up all kinds of strange learning, wrote to him about Maimonides, Spinoza, tapestry, the real nature of love"(254). The sustaining dialogue between Teresa and Jonathon, in his absence, required an asceticism and disembodiment of her love, her bodily desires evaporating into text, as a form of crossing over to his position. The strange learning

pertains to the eclectic reading and writing of the expatriate Australian woman writer.

Teresa asks James Quick to read some of Jonathan's material, which he does with disgust(412). When Quick comes around to speak to her about Crow's document, he catches her writing, and asks if her can see her work. Quick begins to read "The Seven Houses of Love" which Teresa intends to leave as a testament to her experience as one of the "pale leaves of sterile women, floated off the tree of flesh . . . timid, disconnected but full of agony"(420). The document records "A system by which the chaste can know love", presumably a system for experiencing love without sex, and in Teresa's particular case, dying a virgin. "The Seven Houses" reads like a Blakean, Neitzschean, Wagnerian roll-call: "Pastorale, Bacchanale, Klingsor's Garden, Creation and *La Folle du Logis* (alternating houses) Heaven and Hell (identical houses), the Last Star or Extinction (The last one is a terrible one)"(420). The Testament presents a developmental set of instructions, based on the stages Teresa identifies in her own life, that move the reader through ideal love, to physical experience, into a set of unrequited extremities of desire and romantic agony, couched in sublime, gnomic, and sometimes aphoristic language. With respect to the opacity of this text, Butler makes the useful observation that the writing of and on desire are ones which seek, in the end, to cancel themselves as writing in order to better approximate the desire they seek to know. The automatic writing of the surrealists, akin to Teresa's document, it seems to me, is a good example.[70]

'Pastorale' charts mental images of love, 'Bacchanale' moves to the body and "scenes of festive and dark violence" (420), 'Klingsor's Garden' is unhappy lust, involving "night wandering, wandering by the sea" and then "the body burns to die in the desert"(421). The fourth house, alternating 'Creation and La folle du logis,' reads very like a Dali image:

> Suddenly a shooting star rushes up from earth, not downward; out of the body thought extinct and in dust. A shrub grew beside the bones left, the bush becomes a galaxy, the bush once waving idly upwards into a fiery kite hitherto unseen, it is that that flashes up into the blood-rose sky. It is the leaden birds that fall down, singed, dead, they grovel and creep, what is left of them in the sand, die of hunger. The earth bursts out at their touch, thousands of sores, open wounds, scars opening and shrivelling with heat, it

70 Butler, "Desire" 369.

> is desire of the suns of millions of years buried there, coming out again. Sun is born, dies each day, where is he? Buried in the earth, he bursts out, wishes to bolt upwards after the other, the phoenix, was it? All the buried suns burst at one time, plagues on earth, the earth dies, the sky swarms. (421)

Heaven and Hell describes a paradoxical struggle of "relation with a single human being... love as hatred and humiliation... no one is admissible to heavan under this searchlight, not if one is less than an angel." The last house is the last star "to die by the last effort of the will and body. To will, the consuming and consummation. To force the end. It must be dark; then an extraordinary clutching of reality" (421). Teresa ends this testament with the idea that this is an "affirmation of a unique kind"(422) related to her coming martyrdom. Ironically, Teresa's preparations of posthumousness also set the stage for her "discovery" of her "life-saving" love for James Quick, and her true phoenix-like rise (424ff).

IV Transition

Margaret Fink's 1984 film of *For Love Alone* invents a voyage at sea that takes the young Australian, Teresa Hawkins, from Sydney to London in the mid 1930s. Stead's 1944 text contains no such medial account of the transitional journey linking "The Island Continent" (Australia) with "The Port of Registry" (Britain). In Fink's film, Teresa meet the American, James Quick, during this sea voyage—a sunny, historically accurate voyage, where the healthy characters eat nice dinners, and wear nice clothes. A handsome and cosmopolitan Quick offers worldliness in the form of discourses on employment, political ideas and dirty limericks while falling for the heroine. The lineaments of this narrative of expatriate shipboard romance can be found in the later work of Australian women writers such as Barbara Hanrahan, Glenda Adams and Jessica Anderson, but not Christina Stead. Why was this mode of shipboard romance required by the 1984 film, which otherwise based itself with some accuracy on Stead's text? Conversely, why does Stead's text, which builds Teresa's rites of expatriation with such attention, leave untold the journey between Australia and Britain?

It is evident from conversations between Teresa Hawkins and Jonathon Crow early in "Port of Registry" that the voyage narrative absent in *For Love Alone* exists separately as "A Night in the Indian Ocean," a short story finally published in the 1985 collection *Ocean of Story*. R. G. Geering

suggests that "A Night in the Indian Ocean" was a piece "incorporating earlier revisions . . . written probably in the late 1920s in London or in the early 1930s in Paris."[71] Hazel Rowley claims that Paris is the likely place, since "the manuscript is typed on the back of American Foreign Discount Corporation paper, Stead's Paris office between 1929 and 1932."[72] Both Rowley and Geering stress the autobiographical connections between the story and Stead's own expatriating voyage of March-April 1928. Substantial traces of the short story are obviously woven in the early part of "Port of Registry," but it is worth noting that the story, which preceded Stead's production of *For Love Alone*, did not originate as an editorial excision.

Although "A Night in the Indian Ocean" bears little resemblance to the utopic sea voyage in the film version of *For Love Alone*, its language and some of its concerns bear an important relation to Stead's novel. If you constellate the short story in the medial position of *For Love Alone*, Stead's short sea voyage narrative is both heavily anticipated by the figurative and narrative economy of "The Sea People" and "The Island Continent", and retrospectively (if only partially) narrated in "Port of Registry." "The Island Continent" deploys what I call the "nocturnal maritime sublime." This aesthetic of the 'amorous deep' works through the Sydney Harbour locus for Teresa's late adolescent desires, autoerotic experiences and musings about sex and death. These include violent, high romantic notions of dissolution:

> She floated in the water and thought she should not be afraid to go down at sea. To burn at sea—yes! But to go down! People had floated for thirty six hours on a smooth ocean. You let yourself go—you can even sleep floating, but the ocean she dreamed about under her lids was a wide smooth expanse under the moon, a halcyon sea. (67)

The night voyage in "A Night in the Indian Ocean" uses and refuses both these aspects of "The Island Continent." In the main, its focus turns out to be a scene between two women, in contrast to the bulk of *For Love Alone* which involves Teresa's isolated speculations, her repudiation of the models of femininity around her, and her passionate dialogue with men and male texts. The early parts of "The Island Continent" deliver certain short scenes between women, but in the main, Teresa looks to men and

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71 Christina Stead, *Ocean of Story: The Uncollected Stories of Christina Stead* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin , 1985) 540.

72 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 71-2 and note 573.

masculine texts for knowledge about sexuality and freedom (see again p. 76). In her interactions with Aunt Bea, Ellen, Mrs Percy, Anne, Miss Haviland, aunts and cousins, Teresa is actually desiring exceptionality, singularity, isolation. She seeks the masculine quest in order to set the boundaries of her autonomy and power, and to trespass in the male territory of sexual initiative and freedom.

When Teresa finally arrives in London she eagerly tells Jonathon the details of her "night passage," and the tale of her voyage is therefore activated as part of their heterosexual dialogue. Crow is both repelled and fascinated by the tale of the alcoholic heiress, which dovetails with his curiosity about the sexual potency of the wealthy woman. Crow reports this of his own voyage:

> I saw what the real other half were like. Middle-aged women and old hags, flaunting their paint and powder and the youngsters smeared over with lipstick showing their breasts in their sun suits—starting their cocktail parties in the corridors at eleven in the morning (299) . . . She was a high stepper, I suppose? All those women in first class have no morals. You mean there was something between her and the steward? (301)

Despite his emphasis on corruption and impropriety, Crow is interested in, and returns to, the cross-class relation between the heiress and her steward. The steamer is one of the few places of sustained proximity between classes. His misogynist constructions of "the real other half" emphasise the collocation of money and sexuality in a kind of enviable profligacy.

My interest here is not so much to see how *For Love Alone* might have been a different novel if the short story had been included as the medial voyage account. I do not regard *For Love Alone* as an incomplete parent text. However, there is enough textual information, evident above, to view "A Night in the Indian Ocean" as the absent ocean journey in *For Love Alone*; an interesting absence for a text tremendously focussed on water, the expatriate quest and the gender, class and national forces that produce and constrain the subjectivity of the young postcolonial woman. This section therefore works in a deconstructive mode, looking to absence of narrative piece as a way of centring a wider reading of *For Love Alone*. The relationship between the novel and short story can be characterised through one important difference; where *For Love Alone* sustains an active feminine gaze in relation to the desired masculine object, "A Night in the Indian Ocean" constructs an interactive gaze between women. Teresa says to Jonathon as part of her report of her voyage "don't you think its funny they

don't allow women to see women?"(304) Like the scene with Bea and Anne in *For Love Alone*, this is a rare moment of female sociality. The "A Night In the Indian Ocean" version of the expatriating sea voyage disrupts the focus in *For Love Alone* on heterosexual pedagogy and expatriation, which has decentred the question of any female knowledge other than Teresa's. "A Night in the Indian Ocean" centres an 'unstable' pedagogical scene between women which develops in terms of sex, economics, oppression, class and a powerful ambivalence about the maternal.

The "Law of the Boat"

The first water crossing Teresa makes in *For Love Alone* is on a ferry to Malfi's wedding. It is a "brassy and livid day" and Teresa is wearing a "remarkable robe." She contemplates the enormity of the "step between being an unattached girl and getting married:"

> She went on think about married women and old maids. Even the frowsiest, most ridiculous old maid on the boat, trying to shoulder her way into the inner circle of scandalmongers, getting in her drop of poison, just to show that she knew what was what, was yet more innocent looking than even a young married woman. . .As for the secret lore they passed round, about their husbands, she could never know that. . .Teresa would never endure the shame of being unmarried; but she would never take what her cousins were taking either, some schoolfellow gone into long trousers. (16-17)

Teresa's animating struggle is laid out here; her ambition to "love," to be passionate, exalted and knowledgeable, and her equal desire to love greatly, not just anyone. The "lore" of the married woman is mainly the intimate knowledge of men. A version of this "lore" and its laws is embodied in the class-inflected tableaux of Mr Manoel, the Portuguese deck hand, and Gladys, the "taboo Venus" who had "the freedom of all the sheds and boats"(20-22). This "lore" finds its counterpart in what Teresa refers to as the "law of the boat," which resides in the discourses of engagement and marriage, and the correlative systems of exclusion, inclusion and correct behaviour, circulated aboard the ferry that takes her to work.

> For the law of the boat was that while every girl might start on her trousseau, that is publicly, two or three mornings after her engagement, even her secret engagement, provided her secret engagement was properly given to rumour, a girl was vapid, a dreamer, silly, even pretensious, who worked on her trousseau (in these circumstances called glory-box, bottom drawer or hope chest) before her engagement. (108)

The "law of the boat" legislates a number of categories, from "the Great Unwanted," to the woman "before the diamond ring," to the "Engaged Girl." The law of the boat also distinguishes between love and marriage, and refuses to recognise a life independent of the economic and social imperatives of marriage. Teresa's inappropriate introduction of the notion of love, and the act of love, and her suggestion of the use of the word "lover," are met with doubt and suspicion: how are these related to engagement, marriage and trousseaux? Elise, one of the engaged girls, is reading *How she Became a Happy Bride* and *The Secrets of Men's Love*, and states that "all they say is true"(112). Teresa's active reading on love is also educational: "after you get engaged, and after you get married, you have to know things. For example Aphrodite, in this book [Ovid's *Art of Love*], when she bathed she used herbs to scent the water. . . to smell nice"(112). Teresa reads because, according to the law, she is not allowed to sew, and she cannot speak of her ambition (110). The boat, like the steamer in "A Night in the Indian Ocean," is a location for female pedagogy. The knowledge that is being circulated concerns a knowledge of men, and, less obviously, laws of economic and sexual survival.

"A Night in The Indian Ocean"

The sea voyage has been an instrumental narrative moment in rites of passage. Stead's short story moves away from the script of masculine initiation, usually battle with the external world, as well as feminine initiation, troped as sexual awakening or marriage night. Stead stages a scene of heterosexual rehearsal between women that explores the cross-implications of gender, sexuality, capital and economic power. In *The Voyage Out*, Virginia Woolf sends Rachel Vinrace to South America in the imperial 'voyage out,' and it is a journey, heated and dissolving, which results in the education and eventual death of the young English woman. Stead sends Teresa Hawkins and Stella on the colonial 'voyage in,' from heat to cold, south to north, periphery to centre, which has the effect of concentration rather than dissolution. Stead and Woolf's voyages differently involve rehearsals of normative gender and sexuality, and, as such, expose the problematic nature of these identifications. Woolf and Stead sharply part company on the role of the nurturing or maternal woman in the education and development of the protagonist. In addition, Stead's protagonists are poor, travelling in third class (steerage). It is fair to say that the dramatic possibilities of hierarchy and class interest Stead as much as gender.

While *For Love Alone* demonstrates that the voyage at sea is only one aspect in the desiring and mobile *process* of expatriation, "A Night In the Indian Ocean" represents the expatriating traverse between one nation space and another, and this space of 'in-between-ness' is a particularly interesting *moment* of expatriation. The sea voyage, as the interstitial passage between nation spaces, is continuous and discontinuous, inside and outside. The confusion of the interstice is the confusion about whether these boundaries or limits operate as inside or outside, or both, a confusion that indicates a disruption to the circumscribing space between subject and object. This applies to the distinction between Stella and Barbara. Foucault, for example, has suggested that: "The boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in itself and at the same time, is given over the infinity of the sea."[73]

Foucault, therefore, suggests that the space of the boat is one that is both inside and outside simultaneously. This makes the boat the expatriate location *par excellence*. Neverthless, expatriation is inextricably linked with taxonomies of space and place, not mere abstraction. Places such as the steamer are made up of social processes involving power relations, where technologies or social operations of identity (gender, sexuality, race) are constantly being articulated and rearticulated. Stead's sea voyage narrative establishes a social operation of place, where the ship operates as a microcosm of the social and economic. Although the social world is dramatised in close proximity to the natural world, the interaction of gender and class means that the woman "at sea" is not in fact "nowhere."[74]

This sea voyage is the "night passage" about which Teresa fantasised, but it is not figured as a Cytherean utopia, rather a colonial-tropical situation of labour. The dystopic possibilities are signalled with this opening: "The night was rayless and sultry and phosphorescent jellyfish heaved in the round black waves"(53). The topographical and cultural inversions worked

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73 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16. 1 (1986) 22.

74 Valsopolos claims a "no-territory" of the sea, where women learn the importance of female community in the feminine territory of the sea—the location of productive female sociality and maternity. This kind of idea is echoed in much critical work on female *bildung* and *kunstlerroman*, and texts such as *The Awakening* and *The Voyage Out*. Neither *For Love Alone* nor "A Night in the Indian Ocean" can be made to answer to this model. Vlasopolos, "Staking Claims for No Territory."

through "Sea People" are intensified here, where travelling works as an antipodean double negative of travelling north across the Indian Ocean at *night*. The Indian Ocean evokes a colonial compass for the exotic and oriental south.[75] The ship operates under its own time, the action of the short story occurs between midnight and two, around the stopping and starting of the ship's clock. Temporality is marked instead by the hierarchical bells attached to the first class cabins, ringing for service.

The ship provides an excellent ground for dramatisations of class, since there are a hierarchical strata of decks. Despite the separations of wealth, there is almost no distance between the six millionaires and the rest of first class (what Crow calls the "real other half"), the rest of the community of the ship; third class-steerage, ship's crew, nurses. Stella is an untrained woman from third class who has been offered work as a night nurse looking after an alcoholic heiress from first class, who has been confined to a small cabin after a suicide attempt. 'Babs' Prescott is the woman with *dementia tremens*, who reveals her story in conversation with Stella. She claims that she is "at sea" for six months of the year and therefore knows all about ships, meaning economic, social and sexual knowledge. Barbara's continuous travel is subtended by a fiscal imperative, to avoid tax. Stead's story exposes the "high life" for women as an account of corruption and exploitation. The endlessly mobile life is disorienting and destabilising.

The heiress's wealth operates in a figurative economy with her addiction. She may seem to have the phallic potential of manipulating a money economy and participating in the worldliness of finance, yet here she is a figure of economic oppression and exchange. The heiress combines a sexual worldliness with commercial vocabulary: "'If you get a chance, marry him. Take my tip. Don't wait and don't live with him without marrying him. It doesn't pay. I know men.'" She repeated bitterly, "'I know them'"(56). She divides men into types. She claims that Captain Blount is "the right sort," that he sounds "just the type" (65-66) and that she "knows that type only too well"(62), whereas the doctor is "rotten soft" and the Captain a "cheap snob," they both "lick for money" (55). The heiress quizzes Stella about the availability of any "interesting" or "decent" men ('types') and counsels her in certain technologies of femininity for the seduction of the right 'type:'

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75 'Orient' denotes the sun rising, facing east; facing Other in a non-Atlantic, non-Western disorientation.

> 'I'll tell you something. if you're ever in Paris, go to the Champs Elysées, Guerlain, and get this *Little Blue Flower*. All other scents are vulgar besides this one. Men, especially refined men, go wild over this one. It is so feminine.' She said curiously, 'Are you interested in men?' (55-6)

This ambiguous question is set against the fact that Stella has been interested in, and finally shamed by, Barbara's transparent nightdress, which displays her to both Stella and Parker. Bab's surface is "fair, diaphanous," and the eye penetrates from one surface to another, through the veil of her transparent nightdress, from veil to body which is interesting for the relation of surface to depth, as well as the interaction between women.

> On the bed, the covers thrown down to the foot, lay a pretty young woman with fair hair. She was made up with eyeshadow, lipstick and rouge, but carefully so, to bring out the exceptional translucency of her skin. She was dressed in a transparent white nightdress, trimmed with small lace and ribbons. (54)

The heiress continues her advice about the profitable performance of femininity in terms such as pretty, small, transparent and graceful:

> 'Get nightdresses like this, they're the best. They're cheap. You can have a dozen. Get a nice one, not too much lace, pretty small lace, small. Men like it. Transparent is best! It's so graceful and men like it.' (60-61)

Miss Prescott's desperation for a drink subtends the unreliable vacillations of her narrative: "'I'm rich,' she said fiercely, 'and I can't even get a pony of whiskey. I have to depend on the favour of the steward, damn his eyes'"(64). Wealth has granted this woman neither power nor independence. It has made her craven and suicidal by turn. Her alcoholic addiction is aligned with her dependency on and desperation for male attention: "'I must have things about me that men like. If I didn't feel at any minute of the day or night that men would like what I have on, I'd go mad'"(61). She repeats that her thirst is "burning and perishing," "It's like dying in the desert or something" (55). Her sexual appetite and alcoholic addiction focus on André the steward, about whom she characteristically vacillates.

The pedagogical scene between Barbara and Stella concerns a woman's self commodification in order to 'catch' a man, and therefore relates to the commerce of marriage familiar in *Letty Fox*. It has involved a rehearsal of heterosexual and worldly femininity. Nevertheless, the core aspect of the heiress' story, and the lesson she has to teach is not only about men and

money; it actually concerns her mother. The heiress's mother "gave her too much to spend"(64)—an economic figure for too much to drink and too much sexual freedom. Barbara's narrative of the corrupt maternal is told using a photograph which forms a *mise en abyme* of the scene:

> On the other side of the doorway was a bedside table with a bottle on it and in the bed a young girl, very young, soft, appealing, smiling shyly. She was wearing a nightdress with a soft frilled neck. One arm in a long sleeve was on the bedcover; in the other hand was a glass, half full. (61)

Barbara Prescott claims she was sent to sleep with gin, implying that her mother did this to encourage her precocious sexuality and pliability at age 11 or 12. She mentions something about the male "friend of my mother's" who took the photograph "he was mad about me," extending the corruption from alcohol to sex (62). She reiterates that men are "mad" about her.

The heiress produces a range of positions about the corrupt and phallic maternal. "She did it to make me like herself. . .She's stronger than I am. And she ruined me. . . I became one of them"(62-63). Her mother was also an alcoholic and 'preserved' as very youthful, but was more successful at dissimulation: "with those looks she could get drunk every night and no one suspected it"(64). The suspicion about misleading surface is extended to the daughter also: "'I'm thirty-one. I can't get any older looking. I blame my looks for the way I live. Don't tell Mrs Montorgel. She treats me like a child. It's better'"(60). "Babs" is infantilised and 'spoilt,' only able to point to her forty pairs of shoes as an index to her wealth. Otherwise:

> She was so weak that she could not stand up, could not straighten her legs. Like a beach doll half filled with air she hung over the girl, and helping herself with her weak thin arms she was dragged to the W.C. (59)

She includes herself in an economy of dysfunctional maternity, but the statement is indeterminate: "I had a child. No don't believe that. Yes, I had a child. My sister has it. It doesn't want me for a mother" (60).

The infant and alcoholic are not self-disciplining. Infants are 'lost' in the 'sea' of the maternal *chora*, and the *chora* is a space inimical to the constitution of the speaking subject in the Symbolic. To explain her notion of the semiotic, Julia Kristeva refers to what Plato, in the *Timaeus*, calls the *chora*. The *chora* is "receptacle, unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to

naming, to the one, to the father and consequently maternally connoted."[76] Grosz explains that the *chora* is the site of the undifferentiated bodily space the mother and the child share. A site for the production of matter, the *chora* is the unnameable, unspeakable corporeality of the inextricably tangled mother-child dyad which makes the semiotic possible. The heiress, both as daughter and mobile capital, struggles to find that differentiation from the mother's body is the original spatial structure of the maternal, since bodies in excess of the Symbolic must be demarcated. The instability of subjectivity and identity, evident in the vacillation of the narrative account, takes places in the choric rhythms and intonations *in* the Indian Ocean; for example—"the rush of the sulky ocean could be heard through them. The ship was beginning to heave a little, like a sleeper taking deeper breaths"(53).

The liquid analogue of sea and alcohol is worked through the rhythms of syntax, and the use of alliteration and assonance. Both the sea and alcohol confuse, disorient, disinhibit, make excessive and unstable. The definition of "hydro" in pathology is 'dropsical, affected with the accumulation of serious fluid.' Stead's narrative reiterates the terms "spoiled," "rotten," "soft," "flaccid," "weak," "ruined." Barbara claims that "my way's a rotten way." The woman has been in the water for too long, perpetually homeless because of her superabundance of wealth. The woman who has "had too much," who shouts and threatens to "cheat them all," is in excess of the limits established by the normative modes of gender and sexuality (66). *I'm Dying Laughing* similarly focusses on the interrelation of gender, class and power through the figure of female excess. The most ironic statement that Barbara makes is her criticism that "you don't know what it is to live"(65). For Stella, the colonial expatriate woman, this is her first international display of worldliness.

Barbara Prescott is not an heiress of Jamesian international romance, travelling as part of her quest for self-knowledge. She is "at sea" for half the year, and her addiction is an analogy for the disorientations of land and sea, of capitalism, and of the mother-daughter relationship in patriarchal capitalism. The heiress is an instructive figure, delivering a warning about going "too far," and this follows the structure of warnings included on the feminine crossings of *For Love Alone*. I am thinking of Harper's Ferry and

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76 Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) 133.

the vacant lot in "The Island Continent." The difference is that they were both phallic warnings, threatening Teresa's idealistic asceticism with instances of crude sexuality. This shipboard scene involves a cautionary rehearsal between women, recalling the early parts of "The Island Continent," when Anne is beating her head against the floor in the bathroom and the letter from Mrs Percy, both of which inspire Teresa's repudiation and disidentification (59 ff).

For Irigaray, the marine element evokes the amniotic fluid of uterine origin.[77] In *Amante Marine,* Irigaray suggests that for Neitzsche the sea represents his desire for an impossible return. Yet for women, fluids have the capacity to mingle with other fluids without clear cut boundaries or distinctions, a striking metaphor for the mother-daughter relationship. For Irigaray, the woman at sea has a positive chance to be immersed in the maternal imaginary and explore the female experience of proximity to the maternal body as a way of figuring the specificity of female sexuality (archaic libidinal bonds between mother and daughter).[78] In addition, Irigaray has been interested in theorising the conditions for a sociality among and between women.

Stead is not interested in this sociality as a utopian mode, but is interested in how the women are exchanged, and how gender, class and mobility interact. The expatriate rites of passage for Stella-Teresa involve witnessing the corruption of the excesses of the marine and the maternal. If the girl can only identify with a phallic or castrated mother—a mother as defined by the patriarchal economy—then to become a woman in patriarchy means, in effect, abandoning the mother. The rites of passage for Stella seem to be an injunction to control and overcome the corrupting feminine element of water (which relates to maternity and the maternal imaginary) rather than

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77 Luce Irigaray, *Marine Love of Frederich Nietzsche,* trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia, 1991. Trans. of *Le corps-a-corps avec la mere* 1981) 48-9.

78 In *This Sex Which is Not One,* Irigaray makes an anology between femininity as a specific sexual subjectivity and theories of fluid dynamics. In her chapter in that book, "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids" she opposes the material and masculine economy to the prevalence of solids "Historically the properties of fluids have been abandoned to the feminine . . . this fluid is always in a relation of excess or lack *vis a vis* unity, and eludes . . . definite identification. It (femininity) speaks fluid even in the paralytic undersides of the economy, continuous, compressible, viscous, condutible, diffusible. Water is what disturbs rigidity of both frozen forms and mirrors. it is a place which I wouldn't call opposite but difference, in relation to the sun." Luce Irigaray, "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids, "*This Sex Which is Not One,* trans. Catherine Porter (1977; Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 116-117 and 111.

remain trapped in it. In effect, this abandonment *of* the mother perpetuates the tale of abandonment *by* the mother.

"A Night in the Indian Ocean" stages a scene between women on board ship (often metaphorised as the feminine), 'in' the Indian Ocean, also regarded as a feminine element. This places the feminine within the feminine within the feminine, a veritable Chinese boxes of femininity. In this cautionary tale, however, Stead does not confine herself to representing the anti-heroic corruptions of sinking into boundary-less feminine space; she also examines the regulatory mechanisms of capitalist economics and patriarchy.

For Stella, the female rites of transition (expatriate sea voyage) involve dealing with the dependency of the heterosexual woman and her identifications with the mother. This does not match the nocturnal oceanic sublime imagined in "The Island Continent" and the heterosexual utopic space suggested at the end of "Port of Registry. "A Night in the Indian Ocean" is dystopic, suggesting Teresa's earlier experiences of her female relations and her repudiation of the "bloodless rout of women." The rehearsal of femininity and phallic maternity does not 'fit' with the heroic masculine script Teresa adopts.

To return to the "oceanic imaginary:" Stead's introductory piece to *Ocean of Story* revolves around her claim that she was "born into an ocean of story, or on its shores"(4), a claim which asserts implicit national-geographic information about her "natural" genesis as a writer. The ocean is not only used as a collecting figure to bind a miscellany, Stead also asserts a relation between writing-storytelling and the metaphor of water. It would seem that the "oceanic imaginary" has a primacy in Stead's writing. There is a lexical clue provided by the "night in" rather than "on" the Indian Ocean. "A Night in the Indian Ocean" is a hydrographic, an underwater map, etymologically marrying water and writing, depth and surface, writing *as* water.

V Incorporation

Teresa's words at the end of "The Island Continent," some months before she sails to England, are a reiteration of the credo that has sustained her three-year efforts to travel: "Johnny first and the rest nowhere"(290). After she has made her expatriating voyage, Jonathon Crow says to Teresa, "You do not stand anywhere, you are lost." Teresa ends up "lost" in the

"nowhere" she has marked for "the rest," those outside the primacy of her single goal. "Nowhere" articulates her profound liminality in Britain until the climactic episode at the mill, in which Teresa releases Jonathan from her will after repeated humiliations. Teresa's decision not to drown, and Quick's declaration of love following soon after, inaugurates the end of the rites of separation, liminality and transition, and Teresa is incorporated into the world she has always desired—the world of the cosmopolitan and learned man. Teresa equated sexual freedom and sexual equality with masculine engagement in the social, and in some ways sex, before finance, became the index of worldliness for her. Sex is also an important part of Teresa's imagined utopian future. The utopic site is a libratory space beyond the reaches of cultural legislation: "Here where she stood, no old wives' tale and no mother's sad sneer, no father's admonition reached"(495). It is also a disorienting space: "what relation had she to Quick, to Girton, to the men who surrounded her, to all men?"(495) but it is not nowhere, it is the beginning of freedom "she had lost nothing and would never have anything to regret" (496).

Utopia, heterosexual pedagogy and cosmopolitan men

Peter Brooks devotes a chapter of his work, *The Novel of Worldliness*, to Stendahl. Stead was a keen reader of Stendhal, particularly his meditative *On Love*. Worldliness is something that both Andrew Hawkins, at the beginning of the text, and James Quick at the end, represent to Teresa Hawkins, because they have both travelled and know the discourses of love. Worldliness, as a masculine experience and prerogative, is what Teresa avidly pursues. Andrew Hawkins declaims knowingly about sexual experience and the structures of desire, taunting his inevitably less experienced daughter with her ignorance. So he shores up his worldliness, a worldliness Teresa is excluded from, but desires: "That just shows that you don't understand the world and your Andrew"(8). James Quick, with his limericks, political theory, financial and general knowledge and 'revolutionary' radicalism gives Teresa access to the social. He causes Teresa to comment that "With you, I am really seeing the world"(317). Quick is well-versed in the worldliness of the homosocial marketplace, a marketplace Stead illustrates in *House of All Nations* (1938), but he also has a high regard for women.

Pedagogical scenes in *For Love Alone* place Teresa in conjunction or contestation with the instructive male, or engaging in autodidacticism: Teresa choses not to engage with the social technologies and oppressions leading to women's 'non-recognition'—such an engagement presents her with stasis and containment as she sees it: "Teresa did not worry about her sisters"(464). Teresa sets out to learn from masculine worldliness and she sees union with a man as providing access to arcane knowledge, sexual freedom, masculine power and mobility. Quick's suitability for his role as mentor and lover lies in his Jewish background, with its substantial intellectual and peripatetic traditions. "He was a stepping stone, he told her; she would be a Stael, a Recamier, a Catherine II. He would take her to Paris, and elsewhere, no one who knew her now; he would make her over entirely" (454).

The latter half of *For Love Alone* builds a portrait of Crow's unrelenting misogyny. The only relief from this horror is Quick's immediate dispatch of Crow's ideas and written work, which in turn sets up a homosocial exchange between the two men. Patterns of rivalry and displacement in heterosexual desire are displayed here. The triangular structure of all desire—that all desire is mediated through a third, and that what appears to be the desire for Other, is, in fact, a concealed way of desiring the mediator—is portrayed. The following stages of desire are followed by Teresa until the 'mill and the will' sequence: imitation (Teresa's masquerade), displacement (Teresa's expatriation), mimesis (Teresa's writing) and vanquishing (Jonathan's demise). Teresa first wanted to possess Jonathan as the mediator of the discourses of love, and she then vanquishes him in her own terms and just in time, like her father. She is then free to pursue her desire, and she eagerly seizes what she desires. First, Teresa was:

> like a cornered animal before which, miraculously, an escape through rich, quiet flowering country is opened; she fled away down the flowering lanes of Quick's life, and had not yet stopped to reconnoitre or see and admire the plain. (460)

Later, however "she began to think she could master men —her hunger had made her insatiable. . . she wanted to try men"(464). Teresa speculates that "for herself she knew that the satisfaction of this great desire only made her more restless and energetic than before"(478). Teresa's rites of passage relates to the stages of desire, and like desires dialectical escalation, she does not want to stop in one place, her restlessness continues.

"I am thinking I am Free": The desire for desire

> She was conscious of two desires, to accomplish her Testament, which had now become the "Triumph of Life," and to get to understand and love men, from whom she had been wrongly, feloniously separated for so long .(458)

Now that her text has become a triumph, and proper complementary heterosexuality has been achieved, a new triangle of heterosexual desire presents itself to Teresa ("they were only in love, perhaps, when Quick was there," 479). Through Quick, Teresa meets Girton, "the wanderer" (466) who "bred love upon them," with him "they came closer to the burning heart of life"(467). Teresa realises that, for her, the end of desire is improper:

> For this end of all striving and even lusting in love was wrong and not the part of any mature, joyful human being. It was no good struggling for mere tranquillity and the death of the heart. (467)

Her desire for desire ensures her continued journeying, without quite ending up with her desire channelled into patriarchal marriage, even though "all her study for love had fitted her for marriage." In this way Teresa achieves both incorporation and continued mobility.

Teresa's liaison with Girton, first in Quick's company and then as part of a sexual idyll in Oxford, tests the importance of her autonomy and erotic agency —"now she really felt a woman" (468), and the growing dimensions of her incorporation into her new world. One example of her erotic agency reclaimed after the punishing rites of transition, is the following expression of female desire, which, when compared to the early parts of the novel, is reflective and bountiful in equal part. This is Teresa's arrival in heterosexual knowledge:

> It was of his body that she dreamed; its secret nakedness become robed in incomparable, ever flowing, everborn, shadowy loves and nameless pleasures, as yet without form, but not without scent and touching the secret knowledge of the body. (467)

In Oxford, Teresa achieves a moment of sublime satiety, marked by a remarkably opaque passage (p. 489ff) in which Teresa again reflects on the moral constraints to happiness and declares, "I was never chaste till now."

> She was in a strange state of ecstasy, she seemed to float upright, like a pillar of smoke, or flesh perhaps, some little way above the pavement.

> Down below flowed a great, slaty river, smooth but covered with twisted threads of water, swollen with its great flow, and directly under the window was a duck-white flower with drooping petals, surrounded by green and living leaves. (489)

The flower floats away, imbued "with the genius of life," and Teresa reflects that "Time is already floating away," floating forward. She proceeds to have a strange conversation about morals and social taboos with the "oracle of her life," a "secret deity." The conversation is very like the surreal monologic reflections of the adolescent Teresa. The tryst with Girton gives Teresa a knowledge of passion which is both transitory and absolutely memorable. It will remain to her a symbol: "a passion in which their bodies evaporated"(490). When Teresa pants "We are made of smoke" she refers to the processes by which she comes to change state, to achieve her rites of intensification through this adulterous relation. She is now truly incorporated into a knowledge of men, and it frees her to turn again to James Quick and others: "she wanted to possess Quick, too, to grasp him and weave him into herself cunningly, by practising the arts of love in every form. She had learned from Harry and made up her mind, if the chance came, to learn from others"(493).

With Girton, Teresa only momentarily satiates her drive for desire: "they felt a glow of simple happiness, without *transport*, almost without desire, which was like a heartfelt recognition of each other, a kind of inward smile"(488) and "she was astonished at the feeling of wanting nothing" (490) but "since they were stormy petrels, each looking for adventure not only in physical danger but in moral, heady regions what could they do with this simple love that depended on and gave tranquillity" (489). Teresa's desire for Girton the adventurer indicates the adventurer in herself: "she thirsted after this track-making and wandering of the man in the world, not after the man"(492). However, for the early twentieth century expatriate woman, wandering is most effectively done with a husband:

> She thought of her future with James–immense, rich, busy, in half the cities of the world; it was not the wide brown field of harrowed earth that Harry called up, but docks, wharves, watersides full of shipping, cities of canal-mouths, and masts, pilots and stevedores, all the Hanseatic world and the Baltic outpourings, that business that James was in, the loading and unloading in harbours—that was her world. (492)

Teresa's future world with Quick the Marxist financier, nods to her past in Sydney harbour as her natural habitat, with her dual citizenship of land and water.

On the last journey of *For Love Alone*, Teresa has emerged from her rites of incorporation with Girton and is returning to Quick. She spends her time imagining other journeys. The exalted language of the flower and the secret deity in Oxford clarifies itself a little here, but Teresa's reflections in both instance teeter on opacity and the surrealism of her Testament:

> She had reached the gates of the world of Girton and Quick. . . the black and sterile plain of misery and that beyond was the real world, red, gold, green, white, in which the youth of the world would be passed; it was from the womb of time she was fighting her way and the first day lay before her. This was beyond the Seventh House and when she understood this, that there was something on the citied plain for all of them, the thousands like thin famished fire that wavered and throve around her, pressing on, she knew why she continued restless and why the men, having so much in the hollow of their hands, kept on striving. (494)

Teresa had not written "beyond the seventh house" until her adultery and her return to Quick. Now that she knows for certain that "great love exists, mad fervent, self sacrificing love" Teresa moves beyond the seventh house of her testament, moving from the rites of separation, liminality, sublimation and transition to freedom and a continuation of her central epistemology:

> I know only one commandment 'Thou shalt love.' No one would hold her prisoner. . . But now I know this is the only love, but not the first and not the last. I will know how to make myself a life apart. . . as I know how to cultivate my mind and heart in secret, now I can only love him for giving himself to me. (496)

Conclusion

For Love Alone has been read as important evidence for the position for creative women in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s. Among others, Ros Pesman and Drusilla Modjeska have drawn conclusions about social and literary roles for women in this period from Stead's novel. *For Love Alone* certainly maps out the position and choices of the creative and ambitious young woman from an oppressive lower middle class family in Sydney in the 1930s. In a sense it is a useful narrative account of why a gifted young woman might expatriate to the imperial centre.

Teresa's expatriation is not only interesting at the level of plot. I have used the 'rites of passage' rubric to structure an argument about how desire and mobility are figured as twin drives for Teresa's ambitions. I have suggested that there is an interactive series of tropes in a rhetoric of desire and mobility in *For Love Alone* including figures of walking, talking and writing. The rhetoric of mobility frames an ultimately optimistic meditation on the dimensions of transformation and the operations of female 'will' or ambition.

Stead's narrative about female expatriation produces some intriguing experiments with genre. Genres that were previously the exclusive precinct for masculine experience, such as *bildung* and *kunstlerroman*, are taken up by Stead in order to organise sexually specific representations of formation and development. Stead's hybrid genre in *For Love Alone* relates to the relative newness and complexity of female mobility, which in turn is sanctioned by the 'love' script. The multiplicity of genres also relates to the spectre of the feminine position colliding with a desire for invulnerable masculinity and masculine mobility. The specificity of female desire, worked through the feminine and oceanic sublime, is described and inscribed, but ultimately renounced in favour of a masculine worldliness.

Teresa's liminality, her separation from the social, and her eventual re-incorporation within the social world, take place alongside her pedagogical dialogues with men. In "A Night in the Indian Ocean" a pedagogical scene between women is represented as part of the sea voyage to England. This instance of female sociality delivers a cautionary tale about excess, abjection and the monstrous maternal. According to a number of theorists, this is not what a woman might hope to learn 'at sea.' But it does prepare us for Emily Wilkes in *I'm Dying Laughing*.

3

The Figure of the Renegade in Christina Stead's *I'm Dying Laughing*

I The Politics and Gender of the Renegade

> "I can only follow blindly; but I intend to follow. I went into Marxism for personal salvation. I know, a despicable reason; but I have to stick to it, or where am I? Just a failure; not even a playboy."
> "I'm not going to follow anyone into a quagmire; and I don't want to be saved."
> "You're an individualist ; individualists become renegades."
> She sprang up from her chair. "Don't call me a renegade! I'll scratch your nose. I won't stand that." [1]

This exchange between Stephen and Emily Howard is part of a larger, if somewhat cryptic, argument about American "exceptionalism," a political disagreement which is identified as "the great wound which had opened in their love" (52). The exchange represents, in part, some of the 'political explanation' that Stead so disliked providing in her redrafts of the novel from the late 1960s. It also marks the tenth year of the Howard marriage, which has covered the decade between the Paris Writers' Congress in 1935 and the meeting of the United Nations Organisation in San Francisco in 1945. Stephen, in line with his double position as both a patriotic American and loyal party man, is adhering to the Earl Browder line about the USA's role in the Second World War.[2] Stephen's declaration of 'blind' party affiliation engages an evangelical rhetoric of personal insufficiency and the need for salvation. Where Stephen identifies a certain adherence as better

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1 Christina Stead, *I'm Dying Laughing: The Humourist*, ed. and pref. R. G. Geering (1986; Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1989) 53, compare with 117. All reference will be to this edition, and included in the body of the text.

2 Earl Browder was the postwar leader of the United States Communist Party. He was against class revolution and for American nationalism and the war effort. As such, he was a provoking target for left-wing progressive radicals. Emily Wilkes doesn't entirely take the Browder position; she is for a worker's revolution and vociferously left-wing at the beginning of the novel. It is Browder's and, by association, Emily's contradictions that are being emphasised: for example, the contradictions inherent in the combination of nationalism and socialism.

than failure and dislocation ("I have to stick to it, or where am I"), Emily eschews this salvation, seeing a 'quagmire' instead. Emily firmly states her independence from any blind loyalty to party lines, but reacts strenuously to the charge of being an 'individualist,' which leads to being a 'renegade.' She focuses at this point, and repeatedly throughout the novel, on the horror of the position of 'renegade' or traitor: "No turning back is always dread . . . Oh, what dread to turn from a world we know well to one we don't know"(252). Emily's cry echoes Stephen's dread of not being anywhere ("or where am I") which parallels Teresa Hawkins' expatriate horror at being informed by Jonathan Crow that, upon her arrival in London, she was 'nowhere.'

A number of the pivotal themes of *I'm Dying Laughing* surface in this exchange. It alludes to certain radical positions within the United States Communist Party as well as aspects of America's position in an international socialist context.[3] The passage works through the oppositions subtending the thematics of collectivity and individualism (or renegadism). An ambivalence resides in the double of national and international affiliation, an ambivalence that is repeated in the gendered figures of the working individualist (Emily) and the upper class member of the party (Stephen). Stephen Howard, 'scion' of a wealthy Chicago family, ranks alienation from the party as a failure more despicable than if he had been true to his class position and just been a 'playboy.' The "grand guignol" of the Howards' volatile marriage is built on class difference, as well as the contradictions of American national identity and radical politics. Stead's text critiques the quintessentially American drive for success as a major component of national identity, as well as the most significant problem for radical activism. In 1973, Stead remarked that:

> It was all about the passion—I use passion in almost the religious sense—of two people, two Americans, New Yorkers, in the thirties. They were politically minded. They went to Hollywood. They came to Europe to avoid the McCarthy trouble. Of course, they were deeply involved. And then, they lived around Europe, oh, in a wild and exciting extravagant style. But there was nothing to support it. At the same time they wanted to be on the side of angels, good Communists, good people, and also to be very rich. Well, of course . . . they came to a bad end.[4]

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3 Refer to Peter Clecak, *Radical Paradoxes: Dilemmas of the American Left: 1945-1970* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Franklin Folsom, *Days of Anger, Days of Hope: A Memoir of the League of American Writers* (Niwot, Co: UP of Colorado, 1994); James Gilbert, *Writers and Partisans: A History of Literary Radicalism in America*(1968; New York: Columbia UP, 1992).

4 Joan Lidoff, "Interview with Christina Stead," Surbiton, England, June, 1973. Rpt in

Stead activates the issues of failure and success within a shifting economy of earning power, fame, 'serious' work and political commitment. The desire for success, or even notoriety, and fear of the obscurity of failure (see p. 149) are thematised as the 'American dilemma'—the often paradoxical and often productive relationship between collective action and individualism (or greed) at the heart of American national identity.[5] Of one of her many political writing projects, Emily declares:

> I've got an idea. I'm going to write a horror book, about the most dreaded figure in American society, a failure . . . and the terrible aching poignancy of knowing, in a way, for they know, it's all a mistake, and these hectic drab lives are living for nothing, because the country's mindless, and life here is without a system; and it could be better . . . We're all pressed down on every side, like fish at the bottom of the ocean, as Mike Gold says, with dollars, dollars . . . (149)

The often contradictory dynamics of political allegiance and artistic autonomy for the political woman writer forms the key drama of *I'm Dying Laughing*. The foregrounding of politics and political conscience, and their relation to textual practice, displays an important difference between *I'm Dying Laughing* and *For Love Alone*, Stead's other text about an expatriate woman writer. The characterisation of Teresa Hawkins as expatriate colonial and budding writer shifts, in the case of Emily Wilkes, to a portrait of a 1930s lower middle class American radical who has forged a lucrative 'career' as a journalist, novelist and political polemicist. The relationship between money, writing and politics, rather than desire and mobility, is central to *I'm Dying Laughing*. Although *I'm Dying Laughing* was started about six years after the publication of *For Love Alone* (1944), there is a sense that the politics and intellectual debates of the 1930s, still very much alive in 1944, had moved irrevocably into the disillusionment and disappearing literary markets of the Cold War period. Emphasis on the woman writer's affiliations—political, sexual, national, creative—had sharpened by 1950, although Stead's interest in monological ideology and the monomaniac, read either as Andrew Hawkins or the Communist Party, is steadily maintained.

Christina Stead (New York: Frederich Ungar, 1982) 181. Stead refers to *I'm Dying Laughing* as "the big novel."

[5] Stead occupies an anomalous position in terms of America, her adopted home between 1937-1946. Margaret Harris discusses Stead on America in "Christina Stead's Human Comedy: The American Sequence," *World Literature Written in English* 32.1 (1992): 42-51

Expatriate women writers such as Teresa Hawkins and Emily Wilkes exhibit a specific relationship with physical and discursive boundaries. Their movement between nation spaces, and the correlative movement into print, constitute transgression of proper spatial, gender and textual perameters. In the case of Emily Wilkes, textual body and bodily text transgress established limit and threaten the proper system of classification (which maintain the stable homologies of woman-local-private) with a violation of boundary and rule and therefore the grotesque potential of mixed category. Supercession of 'limit,' in the case of *I'm Dying Laughing* underwrites the movement toward the apocalyptic combustion of the expatriate woman writer, whereas *For Love Alone* imagines the opposite, utopian possibility of incorporation and transformation. The carnival transgressions of *I'm Dying Laughing* are shadowed by the economic imperative for the professional woman writer to earn money. Teresa's drive to be free to pursue love, learning, bread, is critically different from Emily's desire to be political, textually productive, wealthy *and* free.

I'm Dying Laughing combines the female rebel of *For Love Alone* and the female swindler of *Letty Fox* in a portrait of the dangers of excess in body, text and speech. When Stead began working on *I'm Dying Laughing* in the late 1940s, it was entitled "The Renegade." I take a cue from this working title and read Emily Wilkes through the figure of the renegade. I manage Stead's multiple figurations of transgression and extraterritoriality by focussing on the meanings of renegade and outlaw. My interest in 'renegade' foregrounds instances of expatriate passage through and beyond political, cultural and sexual limits. The mobile political woman writer is the centre of Stead's exposition of the animating, but ultimately degenerative, transgressions of 'limit.' Both expatriate and renegade inhabit positions that are inside and outside categories of identity and the political, a structural doubling that makes for an ambivalent relation to law. Stead's thematisation of the grotesque and exhilarating possibilities of law breaking is matched by a portrait of the tragic loss of categorical coordinates and structuring principles, such as political faith. Stead's thematisation operates through the use of mixed category and textual excess.

I begin this chapter with an examination of the specifically political and gendered meanings of renegade and outlaw. In section two I provide a comprehensive history of production and reception in order to demonstrate that *I'm Dying Laughing* is marginal to certain decorums of textual

production, not least for its multiple locations of reading and writing and its unfinished and posthumous profile. In the third section I argue that satire is the driving genre of *I'm Dying Laughing*, and that satire, particularly menippean (serio-comic) satire by women, can be regarded as a hybrid or 'out-law' genre. In the last section I investigate the transgressive and ambivalent nature of the feminine grotesque as a component of Stead's grotesque realism. I use Patricia Parker's figure of the "the literary fat lady" and Susan Stewart's work on the gigantic to analyse grotesque exaggeration and excess, specifically those excesses of the expatriate woman writer and her various texts.

Emily Wilkes' dangerous excess relates to the volatility of the renegade position. Renegade derives from *negare,* to deny. To reneg(u)e is to 'deny, renounce, abandon' and a renegade is one who deserts a 'person, party or principle in favour of another; a turncoat.' The turncoat 'turns' from a previously held system of beliefs and this 'turning' or crossing marks him or her as deserter and traitor. The renegade is less trustworthy even than the enemy because this transgression (from inside to outside) is usually seen in the light of self-interest, rather than principle. The renegade is tremendously threatening to the maintenance of law as he or she is in breach of regulation and still 'at large.' The renegade, the enemy from within, exits one set of laws, usually for another.

The epigraph to Part II of *I'm Dying Laughing* is from Goethe's *Faust.* Faust's turning to Satan is a famous occasion of apostasy in literature. Faust freely chooses to renounce his faith and is punished by death and eternal damnation. Indeed, renegade is a word traditionally used in the context of religious apostasy, usually the renunciation of Christian faith for Muslim.[6] Making the link between religious and political apostasy, Stephen Howard

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6 N. I. Matar, "The Renegade in English Seventeenth Century Imagination," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 33. 3 (1993): 490. Matar claims that:

> In England, the renegade developed into an important dramatic type: as there was a type of the Faustian, Machiavellian and Moorish villain in Elizabethan and seventeenth century literature so would there be of the renegade . . . an average Englishman—a sailor, a trader, a traveller—who wilfully renounced God and Monarch and "turned Turk."

I note that the renegade figure is invariably mobile in non-English territory, and this mobility is crucial to the act of apostasy.

declares that he can never give up his belief in the Party and the Soviet Union because:

> If I didn't believe in that, what would I believe in? It would be as if I suddenly did not believe in the ideas of Galileo; or after being an atheist all my life, woke up one morning believing there was an old bearded tribal God. (164)

In *I'm Dying Laughing*, Stead returns to this notion of political commitment as faith, and explores the consequences of a loss of faith. The desire for faith and the disavowal of faith for greater creative freedom is a central example of Stead's political ambivalence. Similarly equivocal, Stead's narrative of the death of political conscience is appalling, yet counterbalanced by the fascination with heretical freedom.

N. I. Matar makes this observation of the renegade character in early modern English drama:

> In order to magnify the heinousness of apostasy to the English audience, writers showed that the renegades not only renounced their Christianity, but their Englishness too . . . Writers sought to present the renegade as the villain *par excellence* because he was a traitor to his culture, personal identity and God . . . He was despicable because he represented the facility with which Christendom could collapse from within: for the renegade, religion had neither depth nor passion.[7]

Matar's observation provides a marvellous synopsis of Emily Wilkes, who is represented finally as a "traitor to culture, personal identity and God." However, Emily is contextualised as vulnerable to her "gargantuan" temperament. In another way, she is like the racial 'half-breed,' a hybrid figure understood to have knowledge from plural cultural and racial positions, and unable to be fully assimilated to either (ambivalence again). Both renegade and half-breed are stereotypically considered dangerous in terms of 'inside' information and may operate 'outside' or even 'across' boundaries of ethical or political codes.

Whereas the tag 'renegade' denotes voluntary 'turning,' the outlaw has been denied the benefit and protection of law through banishment or exile. This is stereotypically an unjust exile from a cultural-legal system, although it can be a self-imposed exile because of an untenable ethical or political

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7 Matar 501.

position. Even though configured differently, both renegade and outlaw operate outside the law through acts of 'turning.' Renegade and outlaw are positions that are situated outside a system or economy which has been previously experienced from the inside. The plural perspective that results is intrinsic to expatriate narration. Metaphors of inside and outside, and the traverse between the two, are central to this thesis, because expatriate narration thematises this double perspective.

The Political Renegade

'Renegade' has had specific political connotations in left circles since the 1920s. Lenin's work *On the Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* identified "Kautsky's renegade sophisms and complete abjuration of Marxism" from within Party ranks as more dangerous (because more insidious) than the large scale fascist-capitalist forces the Party opposed. As far as Lenin was concerned, renegadism resided in Kautsky's desire to substitute a bourgeois democracy for the idea of a proletarian dictatorship recommended in Marx's writings. Seeing this as an opportunist and liberalising distortion of Marx, Lenin responded that:

> The working class cannot realise its revolutionary role, which is of world significance, otherwise than by waging merciless war against this *desertion of principles, this supineness, this servility to opportunism and this unexampled theoretical vulgarisation of Marxism.* Kautskyism is not an accident but a social product of the contradictions within the Second International which combined faithfulness to Marxism with submission to opportunism in deeds (my emphasis). [8]

Lenin's comments about Kautsky are the model for the contradictory renegadism of Stephen and Emily Wilkes. The Howards begin on the left of the party; Emily is at least faithful to international socialism over American

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8 V. I Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky* (1918;London: Martin and Lawrence, 1935) 11-12. This work was published at the end of 1918, written after the appearance of Karl Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Wien: Ignaz Brand, 1918) in which Kautsky criticises Lenin's *State and Revolution* and repeatedly reveals himself as an opponent of proletarian revolution. In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin devotes himself to exposing Kautsky's distortions and vulgarisations of Marxist teachings on the State, proletarian revolutions and proletarian dictatorship. Lenin saw Kautsky's critique of imperialism as a method of ironing out the contradictions of imperialism and "bringing about a reconciliation with opportunism." Lenin opposed Kautsky's opportunist distortion of Marx's teachings, and the transformation of Marx into a common liberal. Distortion and liberalisation are eventually undertaken by Stephen and Emily Howard.

exceptionalism, both Howards were for the workers, and hard-working for the cause. Yet their 'faithfulness' begins to erode as McCarthyism begins to be felt in American political life. Eventually fear, opportunism and corruption make them traitors to their early ideals.

The "Straightening Out" (chapter 6) presents a long scene in which Emily and Stephen are disciplined by the Hollywood branch of the Party for their dissident, because progressive, positions. Stead unflinchingly anatomises the regulatory mechanisms of the Left, which work. in this scene, to contain the 'individualist' and 'bohemian' Emily. Vera Holinshed, the wife of Jim Holinshed, a moving force in the Hollywood Communist Party, says to Emily:

> Don't you think you ought to accept more discipline? Do you think your own individual opinion is so important? I don't believe you're just a Bohemian; and for that matter, we've talked it over and put it down to your coming from New York. Everyone knows that New Yorkers are more Bohemian, more individualist than we are, especially the writers. Here, we've got a mass of working writers who are unionised, work for big bosses, just like factory workers. The writer working in a cellar on his own ideas, is almost unknown: it belongs to the handloom epoch. (89)

The use of "bohemian" here does not carry the explicit charge of amoral decadence. Rather, it implies theoretical irregularity.[9] To be "bohemian" in this context is to be dissident (too radical), having affiliations with the New York literary and political scene, and an attachment to 'romantic' notions of individualism and textual production. The accusation of "escapists and bohemian adventurers" (232) also carries the charge of lightweight zealots acting outside direction. Vera Holinshed's statement ("woman-to-woman"), employs an east coast-west coast distinction within the American Left. In 1942, while working in Hollywood, Christina Stead wrote to Stanley Burnshaw:

> . . . it looks, after all, as if the Lion's Roar (M.G.M) is going to take me in—but when, I don't know: I have to wait, though a director, an M.G.M

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[9] An interesting word in terms of expatriation that also appears in the chapter on *Maurice Guest* —denoting a vagabond, adventurer, person of irregular life or habits—a gypsy of society: one who either cuts himself off from the society for which he is otherwise fitted; an artist, literary man or actor, despising conventionalities generally. Stead referred to her travels as her 'gipsy' life. The possible alignments with the figure of the Jew as the twentieth century nomad and political exile is of interest.

> intellectual, *now please be good* —has given a firm promise and there's talk of a 30 week contract and all that.[10]

In this letter Stead seems to allude to an east-west distinction between real intellectual work (east) and mass produced writing (west). *I'm Dying Laughing* scrutinises Hollywood's strangely elitist Communist party branch, with its hierarchy of powerful and well-paid filmakers and writers. Emily asks "Do the intellectuals in Hollywood join a separate branch? The writers' branch of fighting progressives in Hollywood is by long miles separate isn't it, from the vulgar Mexican worker downtown?"(90) Stead's investment in her own brand of naturalistic objectivity means that the Left, both in Hollywood and in the east, are not recuperated as automatically good or worthy, they are portrayed as disunified in policy and point of view. The East coast party members are represented thus:

> There were impudent people, devoted followers with no minds of their own, a noisy but ever loyal Connecticut editor, who was rude to all intellectuals and particularly rude to communist intellectuals, because he was one himself, and people from New York . . . Almost everyone was drunk and the usual brutal personal attacks, parlour analyses were going on, along with all brands of economic and political discussion . . . The words 'wreckers, saboteurs, Trotskyists, bastards, petty bourgeois poseurs, rich crackpots' had already been shouted at Emily and Stephen by certain partisans led by the suspect district organiser. (159-60)

Stead, whether ultimately through her father, or husband or otherwise, was a Leftist—but not of the joining variety—she claimed to hate conflict and meetings.[11] She existed 'alongside' but not 'in' the Party. Her novels display interest in all kinds of hypocrisy (including Left hypocrisy and opportunism), the tyrannical effects of ideology and the subversion and vivisection of the demagogue. In a way, Stead was a watchdog for the Left—looking at the hypocrites, the renegades, the slippages and the "radical chic."

What is it about the Howards, and Emily in particular, that requires censure by those on the right of the party? Was it just radicalism? Before her departure for Paris, Emily pursued a more radical brand of politics than her husband, including a dislike of American exceptionalism, a disagreement

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10 Christina Stead, letter to Leda and Stanley Burnshaw, 29 Oct. 1942, Stanley Burnshaw Papers, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin. Quoted with permission from Stanley Burnshaw. My emphasis.

11 Joan Lidoff, "Interview with Christina Stead."

with Popular Front ideologies in their wartime and postwar form, and a notoriously individual style of speaking and writing. Disciplining the 'out-of-line' Howards really involves a full-scale attack on Emily for her lack of control—as a writer, woman, mother and political subject. What Judith Kegan Gardiner identifies in *The Puzzleheaded Girl* as Stead's use of the discourse of the psychological case history, "whether of the narcissistic borderline personality or the hysteric" is evident in the 'Straightening Out' as a mode for describing and disciplining the garrulous woman.[12] In this scene Stead uses the 'party line' to point to the way in which left politics might collapse from within. It is as much this treatment at the hands of the party as it is the McCarthyist witch hunts that cause the Howards to leave America.

Although Emily Wilkes is branded a "bohemian" and a renegade by the Party, *she sees herself* as a *political exile*, compelled to move from the American west coast, to east coast, and then to Paris during the early McCarthy period. Political exile is an interesting instance of renegadism. Political exile is a mode of outlawry, where the movement across national and political borders is also grounded in ideological principle. The Howards' political exile is twofold: from their own Party and from the increasingly conservative national political topoi of the House Unamerican Activities Committee hearings. Using the rhetoric of the witch hunts, Emily declares of the U.S.C.P:

> "I know we're going to be blackballed. I know we've got our feet on a road from which there is no turning back. I don't know where the road is going," she said sadly, "but I know in the night, one night, we passed a signpost, I dreamed about it and when I woke up I shuddered. I shivered all day long, for we had passed the sign in the night, in our sleep and there was no going back." (164)

Both Emily and Stephen refer to the "renegade's train," a version of the revolutionary icon associated with Lenin. They return a number of times to this nightmare of movement on the road or tracks at night, unable to make

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12 Louise Yelin, "Christina Stead in 1991," *World Literature Written in English*31. 1 (1992): 53. Yelin's reading of Gardiner's essay suggests that Honor Lawrence is produced by three different sets of discursive practices: the case history, whether of the narcissistic borderline personality or the hysteric; the critique of late capitalism; and the narrative of (failed) artistic production. Judith Kegan Gardiner, "'Caught But Not Caught': Psychology and Politics in Christina Stead's *The Puzzleheaded Girl," World Literature Written in English* 32. 1 (1992): 26-41.

out 'the sign,' the moment of transgression from which there is *no return*. They rehearse between them the stages in the evolution of the renegade: individualist, renegade and traitor. Emily begins watching for the signs in the night.

I'm Dying Laughing indicates Stead's passionate engagement with concepts of betrayal and political exile. Hazel Rowley reports this of Stead's reception of *Jericho*, a film about the Resistance:

> [Stead] who by then had begun to write *I'm Dying Laughing* in earnest—"wept like a fool." I'd never known until then how far this 'traitor' theme I am treating had got under my skin . . . I felt how dreadful, dreadful, dreadful it is for Ruth McK (the only friend I have in that category) to betray. I never thought her anything but *Gargantua, a crazy out-of-size drawing* (Of course I'm writing about the whole thing, so I'm not normal about it).[13]

Political betrayal and exile were everyday realities in the political environment of the late '40s and early '50s in which the gestation and first drafts of *I'm Dying Laughing* took place. Stead had met Ruth McKenney in the late '30s when they were both involved with *New Masses* in New York. The intellectually and politically radical '30s and early '40s for American communists slowly revolved into Cold War doubts and obfuscations, the right-wing backlash in the United States and the slowly emerging revelations about Stalinist atrocities.

Stead's use of the terms 'traitor' and 'betrayal' indicates a horror at the breaking of affiliation through treacherous disclosure of beliefs that locate and orient. The betrayal of intellectual and political affiliation was seen by Stead as the most serious instance of dislocation, disorientation and disidentification. Stead talked of "the torturing conscience of the traitor" and saw the Emily-Ruth apostasy as a 'death of the conscience' narrative."[14] The transgression of national boundary, of language and of genre—those transgressions attached to spatial mobility—were secondary to moral and political transgression produced through a loss of faith. Political discourse

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13 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 13 Jul. 1950 cited in Hazel Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* (Port Melbourne: Minerva, 1994) 361-2. (my emphasis)

14 Christina Stead's diary, "The Traveller's Bed and Breakfast," 7 Nov. 1950. NLA Box 15, folder 111, and letter to Edith Anderson, 11 Oct. 1950 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 364).

was, especially for Bill Blake, Stead's German-Jewish Marxist husband, a crucial mode of international identification and affiliation. Socialism was a form or mode of location in the itinerant life, an ideological 'mobile home' they both claimed the other partner to be. Socialism offered a rubric for relationships which allowed for a wide scope of affiliation—the use of 'fellow traveller' for example, suggests the possibilities of being continuously mobile and still affiliated; in other words, the ability to be simultaneously mobile *and* stable.[15]

Stephen Howard's nationalism is thoroughly ironised in *I'm Dying Laughing*. Stephen copes much worse than Emily with the loss of filiation, of Party and of nation, which correlates with Kate Lilley's argument in "Writing Expatriation," that the woman must be able to identify with love and marriage in order to be at home, which makes her more mobile.

The Renegade Gender: "The Natural Outlawry of Womankind"

> It was a strange affection. It could never express itself by embraces or kisses, nothing more than a rare, cool, kiss on the withering cheek of Henny. It came from the physical differences, because their paths could never meet, and from the natural outlawry of womankind.[16]

In *The Man Who Loved Children*, Henny and Louie have a double affiliation. The first aspect of their "strange affection" stems from their "physical differences, because their paths could never meet," suggesting that their *differences* in age and physical type affiliates them. The second bind springs from their sameness, in the form of their alliance in the category of the "natural outlawry of womankind." Stead suggests here, and elsewhere, that femininity is always already outlawed and appends to femininity an essential (natural) outsideness to, or uncontainability by, the law. What is the law to which women are 'naturally' outside? What does 'natural' mean in this context, and how else does Stead conceive of femininity? In early legal use, 'to outlaw' was the action of putting a person out of the protection

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15 Hazel Rowley, "Christina Stead: Literature and Politics in the Radical Years, 1935-1942," *Meridian* 8.2 (1989): 149. Judith Kegan Gardiner claims that *I'm Dying Laughing* was "Stead's only book to consider seriously and at length her most important aesthetic preoccupation, the connection between writing and politics." Judith Kegan Gardiner, *Rhys, Stead and the Politics of Empathy* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989) 75.

16 Christina Stead, *The Man Who Loved Children*(Harmondsworth, England: Penguin 1970) 274-5.

of the law or legal process by which that person is proclaimed an outlaw. The outlaw exhibited disregard or defiance from that law which had forced his or her exile as a result of transgression of some kind. If the woman is a renegade by default, then Emily Wilkes, as a political writer-satirist and an expatriate woman, represents the renegade position many times over.

The "natural outlawry" of femininity is a category that returns again and again in Stead's fiction. Characters such as Catherine Bagenault, Elvira Weston, Louisa Pollitt, Teresa Hawkins, Letty Fox, Emily Wilkes and Nellie Cotter all represent various modes of spatial, national, political, sexual and textual outlawry.[17] In *For Love Alone*, the rebellious Teresa Hawkins comes up with this theory about patriarchal law:

> And it's more misery for the men who make the laws than for me who never made a law, for women are outside the law; they make nothing, they say yes or no, to some collection of whereases. Why do men make the laws about marriage, decency and the like, to shackle themselves? It's all incomprehensible .[18]

For Teresa it is incomprehensible that 'the men who make the laws' have 'more misery,' because they 'shackle' themselves. Teresa's statement reveals a characteristically ironic combination of heroic bravado and *naïveté*, exemplified in her off-hand admission that women 'make nothing' and merely respond. Teresa suggests that her freedom is at the precise location of the outsideness to politico-legal systems. Teresa's whole experience has been one of being "shackled," and she is blind to the benefits for the mechanisms of capitalism and patriarchy of precisely such regulation of her gender and generativity. Teresa performs the strange and interesting feat of pitying the masculine experience she values and desires. She re-functions her exclusion from formal systems of power as an incomprehension at men's seemingly paradoxical combination of legal and cultural power on one hand, and lack of 'freedom' on the other. The implication seems to be that if she were a man, she would do away with the shackling of human sexuality. Teresa cannot see that the law of the father does not shackle men with "laws about

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17 The texts, in order of female protagonists, are: *Seven Poor Men of Sydney, Beauties and the Furies, The Man Who Loved Children, For Love Alone, Letty Fox, I'm Dying Laughing* and *Cotter's England.*

18 Christina Stead, *For Love Alone*(North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson-Sirius, 1987) 93.

marriage and decency"—exactly those laws about the control of the feminine that she seeks to transgress.

Christina Stead's position on women, femininity and political feminism is convoluted. The most serious convolution is the result of her late interviews, where she makes a series of claims in response to direct questions about feminism, and a number of more general claims about the natural complementarity and generativity of heterosexual love. Stead emphatically claims to be the child who did not care and the woman who had always loved men. A number of interviewers insist in general terms that she is "more than a feminist" implying, it seems, that she is more difficult, less schematic and more interesting. This recuperates Stead from a too-straightforward political buttonholing and allows her to 'love men.' The introduction to Susan Sheridan's monograph on Stead is a comprehensive account of the dynamics of how Stead writes about women, ideology and freedom and also produces a vociferous anti-feminism and homophobia. Sheridan directs our critical attention away from the primacy of questions about *how much* of a feminist Stead may or may not have been, and to questions produced by taking up a feminist reading position.[19]

My reading position as a feminist prompts me to query the essentialism of Stead's model of the "natural outlawry of womankind," as well as the problematic installation of negation as the feminine mode *par excellence*. I query Stead non-strategic essentialism. Stead's take on the 'natural' fits with her claims that, when writing fiction, she was "just recording what I see." Her naturalist, biological claims are connected to claims about her father's scientific training and are unapologetically determinist. In this sense the law of the father and a positivist account of the world are neatly aligned. Stead was interested in the law of survival as the law of the jungle. Her naturalism and her naturalist training explain her call to the 'natural.' Nature and woman are unproblematically conflated as singular and unified entities, carrying the old metaphyiscal baggage of binary, hierarchical terms nature-feminine-body and culture-masculine-mind. Are women outlaws by default to the laws of nature, or are women, like nature, outside the law (and culture)? Is the law in this sense cultural and not natural?

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19 Susan Sheridan, *Christina Stead* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988).

The "natural outlawry of womankind" implies that the operations of femininity and feminine sexuality operate outside the bounds of some *a priori* law, which must nevertheless recognise her, since the law constitutes the subjects that are meant to stand before it. As an 'out-law' the woman escapes an established taxonomy of laws that defines her, and which her outsideness in turn defines. In other words, her outsideness makes the insiders inside. What is this law that the woman naturally transgresses? Are they natural, social, political, textual sexual laws, laws of gender, race and class? In terms of *The Man Who Loved Children*, the law in question is the law of the father. Sam quite categorically represents the law of the Father, a law that can be construed as the law of the Phallus and the authority of the law of the Symbolic. As a protean writer, Louie Pollitt must negotiate her marginality to this law.

Patriarchal law extends to laws of compulsory heterosexuality and normative femininity. Stead's women are not out-laws in case of sexuality. Stead's ethics of sexual difference only recognises 'natural' heterosexuality. If women are naturally outlawed, woman are also naturally heterosexual. This means that there is some conflict within the heterosexual choice as the lawgivers are "naturally" desirable.

The place outside the Law of the Father and outside the Symbolic is the realm of abjection; of the Real and of *jouissance*. It is a place where that which is unrepresentable in an unmediated way resides. Can the woman writer find subjectivity or language in this place? Is it a place from which women can write? Is this natural outlawry therefore desirable or productive, or is it a location of radical negation and even hysteria? What are the implications of being outside the law for enunication, agency, subjectivity and power? Over and above the romance of the outlaw, if the woman 'naturally' exists outside certain cultural and legal meanings granted by the law, how can she speak or write?

The space outside the law provides no viable language system for the feminine. It is a space that Irigaray calls "elsewhere." Irigaray suggests that the feminine is *constitutively* "elsewhere" and therefore unable to inscribe itself within patriarchal language. Irigaray recommends strategic mimicry (masquerade) as a method for articulating the 'view' from elsewhere. Her work forms a dialogue with Lacan, who radically left aside all reference to biology in defining the field of the feminine. He asserted that the woman is

'not entirely' within the phallic function, in the phallic effects of the signifier and the Symbolic. Femininity is characterised here by its failure in relation to the rules defined by the phallus as representation of lack: to be a woman is not only to be situated within the phallic as a subject of language but also to be one who cannot trust language or bring herself to make phallic laws the sole foundation of the meaning of her life. [20]

What kind of place is "elsewhere" in the landscape of identity, and does 'elsewhere' figure against 'home' in expatriate narrative? Expatriate narrative often looks to home from "elsewhere," or dreams of "elsewhere" while at home. I take up Kate Lilley's argument, that Stead's "elsewhere" of the feminine is a topos of radical negation, especially for the woman writer in exile in patriarchal language, a line of argument that applies to *I'm Dying Laughing*. Lilley sees that:

> Throughout Stead's work the negativity of the feminine has a radical creative potential and energy, but its anarchic excess must be contained and matched by the masculine if it is to be recuperated as other than destructive or masochistic, or merely wild and comic: the feminine requires masculine ratification and endorsement. [21]

I want to juxtapose Lilley's commentary with the following piece from *Ocean of Story*. To me, the most conspicuous aspect of the following is its positioning of an anarchic maternal:

> The woman in the home, no status to speak of, no trades-union, yet has the awful power of hunger and suck, givers of life and holds off death, sets our her law, defies *their* law for *our* sake; the man's power is evident: the woman's is stranger . . . *Behind the concept of woman's strangeness is the idea that a woman may do anything: she is below society, not bound by its law, unpredictable*; an attribute given to every member of the league of the unfortunate. To make a small payment for their disability, we endow the slave, the woman, the dark skinned alien with unusual interior vision . . . It is perhaps out way of recognising that they are thinking inadmissible

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[20] Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, eds., *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*,(New York: Norton, 1985) 137-48.

[21] Kate Lilley, "Christina Stead: Writing Expatriation," *Diverse Voices: Essays on Twentieth-Century Women Writers in English*, ed. Harriet Devine Jump (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991) 177. Negation relates in an interesting way to contradiction and transgression in the context of *I'm Dying Laughing*. According to Bakhtin "negation in popular festive imagery has never had a logical, abstract character. It is always something obvious, tangible. That which stands behind negation is by no means nothingness but the "other side" of that which is denied, the carnivalesque upside down." Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984): 410.

> thoughts. *The angle of seeing is different: it is from underneath,* for one thing; not to mention other differences, national, local, personal. [22]

The woman (but not Stead) is inside because she is "in the home" with no organised political backing. Yet she is also outside the law, as well as pivotal to the law, since she is life-giving and this is part of her "strange power." The construction, "holds off their law for our sake," positions Stead as a child and a woman, the 'their' referring to the male law-makers, and 'our' presumably referring to children. The woman, in her strangeness, is below society and 'may do anything.' Yet, though she is not bound by law, and therefore unpredictable, she is disabled and unfortunate. This disability is compensated for with unusual interior vision, described as a specifically feminine angle of seeing, from "underneath," and from other differences—"national, local personal." The woman is figured as strange and foreign, as the "dark skinned alien" Other who is thinking inadmissible thoughts from positions of national, local and linguistic difference. This maps out the position that may be held by the renegade woman and the expatriate woman. The trouble with the view from underneath (from negation) is that the thoughts might not only be inadmissible, but unrepresentable. The drives of Stead's most important renegade women circumscribe 'a dark continent,' a place excluded from the symbolic economy that is unrepresentable and outside meanings proposed by the relation to the phallus. Nevertheless, the power of the Other woman can disrupt official categories that confer and contain those meanings.

Stead's "outlawry" of womankind suggests that the feminine already collectively operates outside established patriarchal economies. In the case of the woman writer, spatial mobility is a corollary to that outlawry. Louie Pollitt's "walk around the world" in the last pages of *The Man Who Loved Children* inaugurates her textual production, a writing that has stabilised Louie's selfhood in the context of the tyrannical orality of her father, Sam. Movement in and through the world entails certain kinds of liberation for the woman writer. However, there are also situations of exposure to, and struggle with, social institutions which must contain or repress a transgressive or excessive femininity. Mobility, and its material and textual consequences for the woman writer, is a form of transgression and this

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22 Christina Stead, "The Magic Woman and Other Stories," *Ocean of Story* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1986) 529-30 (my emphasis).

transgression is conceptually shadowd by ideas about containment. Transgression and containment form the double helix of limitation and extra-territoriality. As Stead's rogue woman are predominantly mobile, their mobility "refunctions" the nineteenth century *bildungsroman* in which the masculine subject moves as part of processes of social and cultural development.[23] Louisa Pollitt, Teresa Hawkins and Emily Wilkes exemplify the adumbration of renegade-outlaw and mobile woman writer.

Stead's "alongside" positioning of herself politically refers to a location that is neither inside nor outside. I think Stead was tremendously energised by the shifting double position of her location *inside* left ideology and her resistance to any kind of totalising theories. The position of the woman as outlaw is *both* inside and outside, a structural doubling that is represented when Emily does eventually renounce and denounce the party in order to secure enough money from the mother-in-law to cover their debts. She phrases her renunciation this way:

> They lost me. I am free. I can think and write without being compelled by narrow petty mumbo-jumbo orthodox views and strait-jacket childish loyalties. Like the child who has to hit every railing with a stick, I had to hit every tenet of my faith with my pen when I wrote. (382)
>
> "Oh, dear, if I am a sort of candidate for the tumbrels in the end, still it is worth it. I can see why they did it."
> "What, are you a candidate for the tumbrils?" enquired Charlotte
> "Oh, dear, the company I keep. You dear people, in fact, and the things I eat. The workers will get me yet . . . *I see behind the scenes. Why shouldn't I see both sides?"* (171, my emphasis)

Of all Stead's main female characters, Emily has the most substantial career as a writer. Emily's claim that she can see both sides is a writer's claim, produced from her desire to be unconstrained by party ideology or ideology of any systematic kind, and her desire for money. What becomes clear in *I'm Dying Laughing* is that if women are 'naturally' outlaws, then women *writers* are the supreme mavericks and renegades. The political expatriate woman writer especially tests categorical transgression and instability.

Michel Foucault and George Bataille are two key twentieth-century theorists of transgression. Both draw on the work of Kant and Hegel in the

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23 Jonathan Arac, "The Struggle for Cultural Heritage: Christina Stead Refunctions Charles Dickens and Mark Twain," *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

consideration of limit. Nietzsche is another crucial thinker in the theorisation of transgression, through his speculations about, among a wealth of other things, the notion of a limit (death) to the limitless (God). Foucault and Bataille pursue the death of religion and other configurations of limit in the form of institutions such as the law, as well as the intersection of sexuality, modernity and the *avant-garde.* Transgression describes the action of exceeding limit, of travelling across lines constructed by a law or command, of violating or acting in contravention to prescription or rule, of improper attendance to the matter of boundary. It can also denote trespass, digression, overlap and therefore a corruption of excess in terms of the classical rhetorical body. Transgression is one aspect of expatriate figurations of outsideness, disorientation, inversion, hybridity, and excess. Emily Wilkes, the renegade writer and outlaw woman transgresses appropriate limits in her desire to "see both sides" and have it all.

II. The Renegade Text

> What is the law according to which a text can be classified as literary and nonliterary and who is entitled (and by what legal authority) to make such a decision? Literature, that is, is seen as a historical (and relatively recent) institution, brought into being and governed by laws; but the texts which come under its aegis have the peculiar attribute of being able to stage and suspend all the presuppositions upon which such an institution rests—among them the operation laws, the property of belonging to a category, the function of proper names. Crucial to the literary texts are such features as its external boundaries, its uniqueness, its authorship, its title and its acts of reference, yet equally crucial is the way in which these features are put into questions as stable properties or concepts.[24]

This thesis concerns itself with the political, cultural and material requirements for (and forms of) mobility, as well as the textual figures such movements generate. The ways in which mobility effects the labour of textual production and reception is an important aspect of expatriation's material base. The textual history of *I'm Dying Laughing* demonstrates a number of representatively peripatetic conditions of production, publication and review for the expatriate woman writer. What Naomi Schor identifies as "the complexities generated by the superimposition of the context of reception on the context of production" provides a starting point for this

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24 Derek Attridge, "Before the Law," intro., *Acts of Literature,* by Jacques Derrida (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) 181.

consideration of the representations of transgression and extraterritoriality in *I'm Dying Laughing*. [25]

Establishing the Nomadic Text

The 'delivery' of *I'm Dying Laughing* was relatively distant in time and space from its original 'scene of writing.' As an unfinished, posthumously published text, carried around for more than thirty years, *I'm Dying Laughing* (on the basis of textual production alone) exists 'outside' certain literary decorums. It takes a concerted exposition of textual history to present the text of *I'm Dying Laughing* as an orthodox (stable) object of literary inquiry since Stead's remarkable movement between locations is paralleled by her knowledge of and movement between genres. *I'm Dying Laughing* was a text she carried in the bottom of her suitcase during her years of post-war wandering in Europe and its accretions of material, time and spatial location, as well as array of editorial opinion and number of drafts, accounts to a certain extent, for the difficulty of its textuality; a nomadic textuality that mimics its nomadic author.[26] As Louise Yelin suggests:

> If we want to understand a writer like Stead, who wandered through three continents, traversed—in a marginal or oppositional role—a variety of literary and political cultures and worked in several genres, we must take into account multiple determinants of literary production and reception and acknowledge the inadequacy of realism as a description of Stead's practice.[27]

It is worth testing Yelin's view about the inadequacy of interpretive tools in the critical reception of *I'm Dying Laughing* to date. Accounting for the "multiple determinant of literary production and reception" provides my argument with empirical evidence that the material aspects of expatriation are mirrored in the figurative systems of Stead's expatriate text which trope thetransgressive female renegade.

By the late 1930s Christina Stead had published *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*(1934), *The Salzburg Tales* (1934), and *House of All Nations* (1938). In

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25 Naomi Schor, *Engaging With Irigaray*, ed. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, Margaret Whitford, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 9.

26 This textual history is indebted to Hazel Rowley's exhaustive biography.

27 Louise Yelin, "Christina Stead in 1991" 52.

1940 she published *The Man Who Loved Children*, the first of her novels fully written in America. In terms of American literary context, Louise Yelin notes that other women writers publishing in the United States around 1940 included Willa Cather, Carson McCullers, Zora Neale Hurston, Dorothy Parker, Edna St Vincent Millay, Gertrude Stein, Lillian Hellmann and Mary McCarthy.[28] The comparison is enlivening, eliciting an interesting set of similarities and differences. Stead is more usually compared to the influences she claimed at the time and later: male European writers of the nineteenth century, or James Joyce. When it came to publishing she experienced similar disadvantages to the *avant-garde* modernists, as well as the disadvantage connected with the regulation of female authorship and the correlative of proper genres, such as romance. Women writers were not considered to be the appropriate source of political novels.

Ron Geering considers that the early material for *I'm Dying Laughing* dates back to Stead's experiences in the United States in the 1940s. Geering cites what appears to be a title reference among Stead's personal papers:

> A Novel.
> *Emily Endore* in *Double or Nothing*.[29]

The subtitle is fascinating. 'Endore' derives from Old French, *endore-r*, meaning 'to gild.' It has been used as a culinary term meaning 'to cover with the yellow glaze of yolk of egg, saffron.' "Double or nothing" indicates a reckless bid with all and nothing to lose, presumably since neither conscience nor ideology is ultimately involved. Emily Wilkes' egotistical recklessness and the sense of her escalating compulsions is mediated through a vocabulary of gambling. 'Double or nothing' also links the opposites of volume and lack, where lack operates as lack of interiority. The connotation of gold and gambling suggest tropes recognisable in political satire, from Jonson's *The Alchemist* onward. These early ideas for *I'm Dying Laughing* are part of the move towards the interconnection of satire and politics evident in Stead's publications from 1945.

The interest in different modes of power and uses of ideological rhetoric displayed in *The Man Who Loved Children*, *Letty Fox* and *A Little Tea, A Little Chat* mark Stead as a political writer of some dimension. From the

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28 Louise Yelin, "Fifty Years of Reading" 472, 498, 476.

29 R. G. Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing*: Behind the Scenes," *Southerly* 4.3 (1987): 311.

point of view of publication, the political nature of these novels was not nearly the drawback in the early 1940s that it was to become in the late 1940s. Stead's activities in, and experiences of, the New York Left between 1937 and 1946 provided her with the materials used in the later, darker days of McCarthyist black listing. For example, *A Little Tea, A Little Chat*, set in New York between 1941 and 1945, works through an exposition of the benefit capitalists such as Robbie Grant were making of the war, often disguising their motives in the rhetoric of radical Marxism. Issues of America's participation in the war, and the widespread war-profiteering by the post-Depression financial markets and business were at the centre of Left debates in America of the early '40s.

In the case of *I'm Dying Laughing*, Stead's creative raw materials were quite obviously Richard Bransten and Ruth McKenney, communists with whom Stead worked on *The New Masses* from the late 1930s. The central constellation in the conception of *I'm Dying Laughing*is Stead's relationship to her 'source': Ruth McKenney. Stead wrote to Edith Anderson about the potential 'dimensions' of the book about Mme Gargantua, the "big, noisy, ravenous and alive" Ruth McKenney.[30] These dimensions referred to the site of the "terrific struggle" of the death of conscience narrative—the contradictory pulls of political affiliation, idealism and personal greed: Stead commented that:

> It is a fascinating subject. Here is a gargantua who marries 1,000,000—and decides to go in for Despair, and it is a tragedy, it's not just talk . . .What dimensions. I hope I am able to do it, that's all.[31]

Ruth McKenney was born in 1911 to an Irish Catholic working class family in Indiana. She attended Ohio State University, and after a stint on the *New York Post* worked on *The New Masses* where Christina Stead presumably met her in the late 1930s. Ruth McKenney had married the wealthy Richard Bransten in 1937. The late 1930s saw the publication of two very different books by McKenney. The successful comic sketch *My Sister Eileen* (later to become both Broadway production and popular film) in 1938 and *Industrial*

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30 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 20 Jan. 1950 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography*, 361).

31 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 1 Oct. 1950 (Rowley *Christina Stead: A Biography*, 363).

Valley in 1939, a monograph on the rubber industry in Akron. In 1943 she published the proletarian epic, *Jake Home*, which Stead liked and staunchly defended. It was this kind of work, rather than her successful comic writings about her eccentric family, that McKenney valued. Nevertheless, McKenney and her husband spent a very lucrative time in Hollywood, freelancing between summer 1944 and May 1945 (about a year after Blake and Stead), and mixed with the wealthy radical crowd. They were being denounced as renegades by the Party, and were eventually expelled in 1946 for "freedom of criticism." They sailed for Belgium in 1947. It was in Europe that they, according to Stead, became obsessed with luxury and commercial success. In London they were noticeably neurotic and without friends. Bransten gassed himself in a car in 1955, and this heralded an almost twenty year period of mental instability for McKenney, until she died in 1972.[32]

Stead's tendency to view about the people around her as pure novelistic resources emerges explicitly in *I'm Dying Laughing*, as well as in her letters. What are the dimensions of the relationship between the political expatriate woman writer and her exposé of another political expatriate woman writer? One of the most significant features of *I'm Dying Laughing* is the biographical resonance between Stead and Emily. For example, both are political exiles, and both write a political satire which explores the spectrum between political idealism and political monstrosity. Both Emily and Stead carry around an incomplete manuscript which has become monstrous in some way.

Writing Draft 1: 1949-1951

Stead and Blake left the United States for Europe in 1946 and were based in England by 1949. Ruth McKenney and Richard Bransten were there also, writing a guide book for Americans travelling to England (*Here's England*, 1951). Rowley reports that although Stead still interacted with Ruth,

> These days Stead considered McKenney a traitor, politically and morally. As well as planning her novel about working class England, Stead was now making detailed notes on 'Emily Wilkes' for the novel she was to call *I'm Dying Laughing*.[33]

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32 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography*, 405.

33 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography*, 356-7. *Cotter's England* is the text.

Stead and Blake left for Brussels at the beginning of August 1950. Having sent off *The People with the Dogs* to the publishers, Stead went back to her embryonic preparations for *I'm Dying Laughing*, then called 'The Renegade'. In October of the same year they moved to Montreux in Switzerland, via Paris, and then moved around the lake to Lausanne. Stead was working on *I'm Dying Laughing* and managed to complete a first draft within the next year (1950-51).

> It entailed massive research, reading documents, personal letters and books on contemporary American history, including the recently published and controversial book, *The God that Failed*, six accounts by disillusioned former communists, including André Gide and their old friend Richard Wright. It did nothing to shake her own faith in communism, but it was useful to know *the renegade's viewpoint*. [34]

In about May 1951 Stead had completed a first draft of *I'm Dying Laughing* and, as Rowley surmises:

> She calculated she needed at least a year to revise it. She felt obliged to put it aside now and write something that might sell. But it was like putting aside a love affair; it meant losing the original rapture. [35]

Despite the obvious scale and excitement of Stead's new project, Rowley reports "so worried was she about 'The Renegade' selling that she was working on several things at once."[36] This indicates one of Rowley's main points about this section of Blake and Stead's life—one of their first priorities was that they survive financially; financial insecurity for the leftist writer in the postwar period was a grim reality. The relation between money and writing can seen in several configurations in Stead from *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* (1934) and *House of All Nations* (1938) to *For Love Alone* (1944).

The dynamic found new expressions in *The Little Hotel*, a work she undertook in parallel to *I'm Dying Laughing*, and which voiced her anxiety about financial security and the dynamics of aging within a long term

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34 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 370 (my emphasis).

35 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography*, 370 and 378.

36 Rowley *Christina Stead: A Biography* 371.

heterosexual union. Stead was working on the material that was to become *The Little Hotel* in the early 1950s. This text, eventually published in 1973, provides an interesting comparison with the thematic concerns and formal choices of *I'm Dying Laughing*. The most obvious point to make is that the difference between the works demonstrates the breadth of Stead's novelistic range. Both *The Little Hotel* and *I'm Dying Laughing* are Cold War novels, in the sense that they engage explicitly with the paranoias and displacements instantiated by postwar politics.

Wayward text: 1951-1979

Ron Geering has added the following jigsaw piece to the puzzle of *I'm Dying Laughing*'s textual history for the period 1951-1966:

> In 1960 I wrote asking Christina for unpublished material for a special Christina Stead issue of *Southerly*. She sent the story 'A Household', and 'U.N.O. 1945,' subtitled 'Chapter One of an unpublished novel *I'm Dying Laughing*,' I discovered, quite recently, that she had decided to offer 'U.N.O 1945' back in 1957 to Charles Humboldt, editor of the US magazine *Mainstream*. It seems she never actually sent it to him so its first appearance was in *Southerly*, 1962. In a letter to Humboldt dated June 1957 (but probably never sent) she said of *I'm Dying Laughing*: "This novel is written in first draft, but needs a thorough second go."[37]

It seems that Stead did not really return to work on *I'm Dying Laughing* until after the eventual publication of *Cotter's England* in 1966 (published as *Dark Places of the Heart* in America in 1967). This was after the republication of *The Man Who Loved Children* in 1965. Stead and Blake were to be found in their Surbiton home in England, where Stead was unhappy (despite her newfound fame) and Blake unwell. She returned to *I'm Dying Laughing*, the big project for which she had had such hopes fifteen years before. She devoted an intense burst of energy to it between May and November 1966 and sent her revised manuscript to Stanley Burnshaw with this note:

> I should be very glad to have your views if you will be so good as to spend time on it. It is in two sections—a rather long book; but I don't doubt it will cut some. I just wanted to go ahead and get the fling. At any rate, say what you like and I *do* mean it this time. I am very serious about getting this book right. [38]

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37 R. G. Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 310.

38 Christina Stead, letter to Leda and Stanley Burnshaw, 10 Jul. 1966 (Rowley, *Christina*

Burnshaw, although impressed with the novel, recommended considerable editing. He wanted Stead to provide additional information about the political environment of the late '40s, a recommendation that highlights an intriguing facet of Stead's career and indeed of expatriate writing more generally: the combination of innovation *and* belatedness in production and reception. Burnshaw's was to be a much repeated editorial suggestion, and one which still summarises the main formal problems with the text. Burnshaw was attempting to retrieve the specificities of time and space that could not be assumed to be part of the cultural landscape fifteen years on. Margaret Harris has commented that Burnshaw tried to communicate to Stead a sense of the censorship that had become a significant part of the political landscape in the Cold War years.

> The whole Hollywood situation sounds incredible today, and so does all the kowtowing to party hacks through the forties and fifties. The CP and radical movement are absolutely nil here; you wouldn't believe it. And your novel will come upon a reading public that regards the American experience with the CP and the radical left as nonsensical, idiotic, meaningless.[39]

Stead's agents and publishers all agreed that this novel had great power, but everyone wanted changes. Cyrilly Abels, her New York agent, considered that certain details needed elaboration.[40] At Secker and Warburg in London, Maurice Temple Smith pressed Stead to make substantial cuts and re-think the first half of the novel.[41] Rowley surmises that:

> Stead agreed to revise, but the barrage of advice quite paralysed her. . . Nevertheless, it was understood that the novel was almost ready for publication. By mid 1967, Stead's American and English publishers were discussing the possibility of a co-production. Yet the novel was not published for almost twenty years.[42]

Stead: A Biography 459).

39 Stanley Burnshaw, letter to Christina Stead, 27 Feb. 1967, Burnshaw papers. Quoted with permission from Stanley Burnshaw.

40 Cyrilly Abels, letter to Maurice Temple Smith, 30 Jul. 1968 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 459).

41 Maurice Temple Smith, letter to Christina Stead, 11 Jul. 1968 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 460).

42 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 460.

In the middle of 1968 Stead wrote three different chapters endeavouring to provide a political background for the novel. However, the event of Bill Blake's death in 1968 had profound consequences for Stead's ability to write. Later in her life she would peg her own productive hiatus with the loss of Bill, claiming that creativity and heterosexual love were inextricably linked. She also figured Blake as her mobile home, and her increasing distress about dislocation could no longer be mediated by her partner, fellow traveller and enthusiastic supporter. Age, dislocation (rather than 'wandering'), lost creativity and lost love combined in a way that meant that Stead did not undertake any significant original work after 1968.

Stead tried to deliver *I'm Dying Laughing* to Fred Warburg before her departure for a visit to Australia in 1969. Just before that departure in July, Hazel Rowley reports that Stead

> told Burnshaw (who had left Holt two years before to write full-time) that she was abandoning the novel for the time being. Her additions had merely ruined the original dramatic tension, and now the manuscript was only good for "the garbage can or the deep freeze."[43]

Fred Warburg inquired about a draft for publication in autumn 1970. Stead replied

> I wouldn't say that I have scrapped the novel: I just put it away and there it is on the shelf. Now that I have completely recovered from those four months as an official person, I am quite ready to begin work again; and I can only say that I hope the novel will be the novel.[44]

By early 1973 Stead decided to abandon *I'm Dying Laughing*. She wrote to Burnshaw:

> My forthcoming novel is now in the dustbin or as good as. I ploughed it under—instead of dying laughing, it was dying of boredom and overword and what Bill used to call ree-search. It is not my métier and it got me down.[45]

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43 Christina Stead, letter to Stanley Burnshaw, 15 Jul. 1969, Burnshaw papers. Quoted with permission from Stanley Burnshaw.

44 Christina Stead, letter to Fred Warburg 29 Dec. 1969 (Rowley *Christina Stead: A Biography* 491).

45 Christina Stead, letter to Leda and Stanley Burnshaw, 15 Apr. 1973, Burnshaw papers. Quoted with permission from Stanley Burnshaw.

The Geering Story

Professor Ron Geering was nominated as Stead's literary executor in 1979. Stead had been in touch with Geering since the early '60s, when he had contacted her about material for *Southerly*. After Christina Stead's death early in 1983, the much travelled manuscript of *I'm Dying Laughing* arrived in Geering's hands. After he had produced the short story collection, *Ocean of Story*, from Stead's considerable corpus of personal papers, he launched into the shaping of the wayward *I'm Dying Laughing*.

In "*I'm Dying Laughing*: Behind the Scenes," Ron Geering narrates the mammoth project of readying Stead's script for publication.[46] Geering's is a fascinating 'behind the scenes' narrative—a kind of literary detection, or even romance of manuscript preparation, involving the male editor and the excessive and improper mess of the feminine script. The title of his talk presents his involvement with the mess of Stead's manuscript as theatre, with the 'invisible' editor in the pivotal role of textual stage manager in a drama of posthumous reputation.

> After Christina died some of her personal papers came to me in relays from various places over a period of several months. Among an early batch was a big bundle, tied together, of *I'm Dying Laughing* typescript. I assumed that it was more or less complete. On close examination, a year or so later I found to my dismay that it was a mixture of various drafts covering only the first third or so of the novel. I was relieved to get another large bundle of typescript some time later, and thought my worries were over. When, however, I started serious work on the book in 1985 I found, not a finished version even then, but a mass of material, some overlapping, some contradictory and confusing —the results of years of rewriting.[47]

Geering goes on to describe the reasons for his several organisations of typescript material. He speaks of a manuscript as wayward as its author:

> One of the greatest problems was the confusing pagination. In her rewriting Christina was apt to start again at page 1 or page 1a, or even page 25a, and it was difficult to fit the inserts (which more often than not had gone *walkabout*) into their designed narrative slots. [48]

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46 R. G. Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 309-317.

47 R. G. Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 313.

48 R. G. Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 313 (my emphasis).

The first third of the novel was the most unstable and required the most strenuous shaping. The last two thirds required mainly excision, insertion and then the corrections "usually in Christina's execrable handwriting."[49] Not only was Stead, then, wayward in pagination and other methods of textual organisation, her internal consistency, chronology and occasionally her grasp of empirical fact was also shaky.

Publication and Review

I'm Dying Laughing was published by Virago in England in 1986, almost three years after Christina Stead's death. It was this edition that was made available in Australia in that year, whilst Henry Holt picked up the novel for publication in America in late 1987. The book appeared as a Penguin Twentieth Century Classic in 1989. The reviews of *I'm Dying Laughing* demonstrate familiar strategies of explanation and categorisation, as well as indicating the international arena of modern English language publication in Britain, America and Australia. Reviewers recap their general position on Stead's earlier work, and the recognisable comparisons they were hoping to find or make with such earlier work. Connected to this is the more ephemeral issue of what the reviewers wanted Stead's posthumous novel *for*—what cultural work this unlooked-for text might perform. The Australian reviews do have an undertow of ambivalent (often confused and defensive) literary nationalism, whereas the Americans wish, it seems, to arbitrate on the facticity of their own political history. Although the Americans sporadically allow the text to be 'great,' they baulk at its sprawling textuality. Only the British seemed to embrace *I'm Dying Laughing*. Overall, the positions articulated in the reception of *I'm Dying Laughing* demonstrate a confusion over the object of study in terms of nationality, influence, and direction of critique.[50]

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49 R. G. Geering "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 314.

50 Examples include: Adler, L., " Retreat into Two-fold Gluttony," Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead, *National Times on Sunday* 19 Apr. 1987: 30; Anderson, Don. "A Great Feat of Detection." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *National Times on Sunday* 19 Apr. 1987: 30; ; Binding, Paul. "Christina Stead shows us - as only a novelist can - that the political is the personal." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Listener* 2 Apr. 1987; Blake, Ann. "An Epic Exhumed." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Meanjin* 47.1 (1988): 135-143; Carter, Angela. "Laughter in the Dark." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Guardian* 27 Mar. 1987; Cole, Diane. Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *New York Times* 20 Sept. 1987; Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "Lives of the Party." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *The Women's Review of Books* 5.1 (1987): 8; Hewett, Dorothy. Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead.

It is noteworthy that the reviews of *I'm Dying Laughing* draw on a vocabulary derived, in some part, from forty-five years of reception of *The Man Who Loved Children*. Reviewers seem to be hoping to find in this belated text something of the same family or genus. This was a position clearly taken by Marian Wood, the executive editor at Henry Holt, in her correspondence about several facets of the American publication. *I'm Dying Laughing* was partially inflected by the discourse that attached itself to *The Man Who Loved Children*, what Louise Yelin, following Barbara Herrnstein's work, has called the discourse of the 'unjustly neglected masterpiece:' a discourse subtending the imperative for the literary executor to produce this 'last' text.[51] The Jarrell introduction to the 1965 edition of *The Man Who Loved Children* that in tandem with Stanley Burnshaw's vigorous lobbying to re-publish, resuscitated Stead's career and reputation more than thirty years after the publication of *The Salzburg Tales* (1934), uses the discourse of the unjustly neglected masterpiece. Jarrell's introduction reassured readers as to the question of the magnitude of Stead's achievement and the merit of her work.[52]

Overland 108 (1987): 83-86; Keneally, Catherine. "Wrestling Stead to the Ground." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Adelaide Review* August 1987; Mitchell, Adrian. "Accessible and Still in Good Stead." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *The Weekend Australian Magazine* 28 Mar. 1987: 15; Motion, Joanna. "Three or Four of Everything." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Times Literary Supplement* 24 Apr. 1987: 435; Riddell, Elizabeth. "The Novel that Gave Christina Stead Trouble." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Bulletin* 7 Apr. 1987: 74-75; Riemer, Andrew. "Ill-Matched Americans Destroyed." *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 Mar. 1987: 47; Roff, Sue. Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Antipodes* 1.2 (1987): 122-123; Rowley, Hazel. "Satire on the Hollow Radicals of Hollywood." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Age* 4 Apr. 1987: 12; Sage, Lorna. "Shades of Red." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Observer* 5 Apr. 1987: 25; Savage, Georgia. "Unfinished Manuscript." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Sun Herald* 29 Mar. 1987; See, Carolyn. "Money Woes." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Chicago Tribune* 4 Oct. 1987; Smith, Anne. Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Scotsman* 14 Apr. 1987; Yglesias, Jose. "Marx as Muse." *Nation*. 100 (1965): 363-70; Daniel, Helen. "Christina Stead: Lost and Not Quite Found." Rev. of *I'm Dying Laughing*, by Christina Stead. *Los Angeles Times* [November, 1987]

51 Barbara Herrnstein, "Contingencies of Value." *Canons*, ed. Robert Von Hallberg (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984) 31.

52 Randall Jarrell, "An Unread Book," Intro. The *Man Who Loved Children* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1965) 37-38. Jarrell states at the end of his introduction:

> I call it a good book, but it is a better book, I think, than most of the novels people call great; perhaps it would be fairer to call it great. It has one quality that, ordinarily, only a great book has: it does a single thing better than any other book has ever done it. *The Man Who Loves Children* makes you part of one family's immediate existence as no other book quite does.

Posthumous

How does posthumous publication function with respect to meaning and reception? Posthumous denotes 'last, lateborn, after—anything which appears after the death of its originator; of a child, born after the death of its father; of an action or reputation—occurring, arising or continuing after death; of a book or writing—published after the death of an author.' In terms of the sequential decorum of a literary career, 'posthumous' usually indicates the latest artefact, the work that the author was concentrating on at the time of his or her death, the fulfilment of career and reputation; the latest and most fully borne out concerns of that author. The posthumous tag complicates confusions already involved in 'placing' expatriate material. The ideologies and assumptions attached to the production after death requires critical refocussing so the romance of "writing beyond the ending" can be avoided.[53] *I'm Dying Laughing* is not a *last* unfinished work, valuable because it is the final production of a wise old age. It *is* more material, rich and unexpected, conceived of and begun at the end of the prolific 1940s.

The way in which *I'm Dying Laughing* came to be published problematises any notion that it is the formal and thematic crystallisation of a life's work. Instead, the posthumousness of Stead's last publication synchronises *I'm Dying Laughing* with a peripatetic modality characteristic of her life and publishing career. Editorial intervention acts to stabilise the mess of *I'm Dying Laughing* yet fails to guarantee authentic beginning or ending. In that sense the 'unfinishability' of *I'm Dying Laughing* is due to the lack of singular signature. It is a text of hybrid signature: famous woman writer and her self-declaring male editor and literary executor:

> Strictly speaking, Christina Stead and I are joint authors of *I'm Dying Laughing* because there is one absolutely necessary sentence of mine

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Jarrell's introduction is examined by Louise Yelin as part of her analysis of the reception history of *The Man Who Loved Children*. Yelin constructs her extremely useful argument on how contexts of reading and cultural investment change according to temporal and spatial specificity. She argues that Jarrell's introduction in 1965, in its effect on both publishers and readers, is part of a set of specific, even local, conditions governing Stead's career and her opportunities to be in print. Louise Yelin, "Fifty Years of Reading: A Reception Study of *The Man Who Loved Children*," *Contemporary Literature* 31.4 (1990).

53 Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985) 91.

> embedded in the text . . . I leave you to decide today which sentence is mine.[54]

Textual identity is pluralised, opened, cross-gendered, threatening, uncontained and limitless. Geering's interest was to contain, order and successfully produce a stable and 'readable' text; a procedure often accompanied by the telepathic imperative to understand what the author intended. Despite high scrupulousness, the text remains open, unstable, and inconsistent. It escapes the boundaries of literary decorum and challenges the reader-text contract. Stead's novels have always achieved this, yet how appropriate that *I'm Dying Laughing*, her last published book, should particularly do so. Indeed, how appropriate that Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* was also left unfinished at the author's death

The desire to align *I'm Dying Laughing* with the culmination of Stead's career has much to do with the apocalyptic end of the text itself. *I'm Dying Laughing* cannot straightforwardly be read as apocalyptic. If it is apocalyptic, it because it is historically yoked to the possibilities for the Left aligned writer in a milieu where fascism, in the form of blacklisting, continued to spread in the postwar western markets and cultural arenas. The posthumous production of the unfinished *magnum opus*, written across a series of temporal and spatial locations suggests the larger argument of this chapter about the renegade transgression of boundary. The improperly begun and finished text does not establish a decorum of its limits, because its secure origin is unstable. It is ambivalent—neither properly closed, nor actually diffuse. The body of the feminine text, and the readings produced about it, continue to negotiate a complex inside-outside relation with the law—both patriarchal law and the laws of genre.

III "The Cruel Book": Female Satirists and the Out-law Genre

Genre is a discursive category which organises the articulation of 'kind' in aesthetic production and consumption. Genre is therefore a taxonomic system which classifies the operation of certain exemplary kinds. Theories of genre have traditionally provided literary criticism with a ground for comprehension and interpretation—a basis for readability. We assume as a first premise that a reader's conception of the text's genre makes possible

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54 Geering, "*I'm Dying Laughing:* Behind the Scenes" 317.

and coherent the production of its significance. For example, New Criticism deployed theories of genre which took for granted the unified essential identities of texts, the meanings of which could be sourced with the author. In contrast, poststructuralist critics have been sceptical about this treatment of genre as 'deep structure,' advancing a deconstructionist bias against the idea that genre is centred by either authorial intention or any other kind of "transcendental signified." It is these versions of genre as 'presence' and self-identity which poststructuralists such as Jacques Derrida set into infinite textual and intertextual play.

Derek Attridge, in his introduction to Derrida's essay "The Law of Genre," suggests that "the question of genre—literary genre but also gender, genus and taxonomy—brings with it the question of the law, since it implies an institutionalised classification, an enforceable principle of non-contamination and non-contradiction."[55] Derrida's sense of genre is that it is an odd categorical imperative that dictates against 'mixture' and by doing so points up the lapses of genre's putative purity. Derrida states that "as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must risk impurity, anomaly or monstrosity."[56] When a limit is suggested then so is contamination, proliferation, decomposition. For Derrida, therefore, genre operates as a law, since the categories of genre establish limits, with norms and interdictions. If we take Derrida's formulation of genre as law, and a law of purity at that, then I am interested in the "out-law" position that the law of purity suggests as its very condition of possibility. What kind of genre might be out-lawed? Presumably the monstrous, the anomalous, the impure. What kind of text would this be? I suggest that the serio-comic text by the woman satirist, about a woman satirist, is just such a renegade text. Dustin Griffin asserts that "satire can create strange hybrids," and indeed the combination of satire with the re-vision of genres by women writers makes for a hybridised, 'out of law' text.[57] Why is satire an outlaw genre? The answer is twofold; the hybrid (serio-comic) transgression of generic purity, and, as Yelin comments, satire is a

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55 Attridge 221.

56 Attridge 224.

57 Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1994) 3.

genre "devalued in or ignored by, both gynocritical and Marxist literary orthodoxies."[58]

For Derrida, genre is generative; genre generates meanings in the sense of establishing, regulating and qualifying various kinds of discourse, yet Derrida's theory of genre evacuates *history* from generic operations, focussing only on the limits of textuality and intertextuality.[59] Frederic Jameson has been instrumental in formulating a theory of genre that re-positions it as a critical and dialectical juncture between history and aesthetic production and consumption.[60] Jameson sees genre as a set of historically generated and modified operations rather than essences. From this point of view, genres are open categories forging relations between history, ideology, text and structure, and forming what Terry Eagleton calls "a ceaseless reciprocal operation of text on ideology and ideology on text."[61] It is this post-Althusserian theory of genre which interests me in terms of *I'm Dying Laughing*. Stead, well read in the literatures of a number of languages, was aware of the political valences and self-advertisements of the kinds of genres with which she worked. Stead's satiric-grotesque text locates its literary precursors very strongly. Her generic acknowledgment displays a text obsessed with writing and authorship, as well as the psychological and historical forces behind a certain period of politics. Her texts consistently 're-mark' on a preference for romance-epic and serio-comic satire.

The first book of *I'm Dying Laughing* opens with an epigraph from Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1564): "I'm thirsty" is a translation of Gargantua's birth cry as Gargamelle gives birth to him at a feast of tripe and excess. Stead's epigraph makes an explicit link between Gargantua and the

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58 Louise Yelin, "Christina Stead in 1991" 53.

59 John Snyder, *Prospects of Power: Tragedy, Satire, the Essay and Theory of Genre* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1991) 6-7, John Snyder claims that "though like dialectic in its generativity, Derrida's 'law of genre' is more like irony in its infinite escape from itself and from history." Snyder insists that a theory of genre needs narrower boundaries than "an infinite intertextuality" and that "literature is also real, in some way, for history, perhaps even as history."

60 Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (1981; London and New York: Routledge, 1989) If genre is a valuable dialectical tool for a contemporary Marxism that seeks to closely coordinate textual form with history, it seems that some version of presence required. Indeed, it is difficult to see how a theory of genre can escape some charge of essentialism.

61 Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: NLB, 1976) 98-99.

character of Emily Wilkes. Stead, writing to Edith Anderson about her visits to Ruth McKenney in London, explained that she would head for Chelsea "to see Mme Gargantua perform."[62] Stead had obviously read Rabelais and her debt to him was as important for her later novels as her debt to the European realists of the nineteenth century. The intertextual relation between Stead and Rabelais set up by the epigraph works, at least at one level, as the 're-mark' of genre, as Derrida suggests, and the genre marked is menippean satire.[63] Rabelais had been a literary out-law for Renaissance and Augustan critics, his excessive texts defying the decorum of the well-made textual body. Popular Front ideologues, as well as Bakhtin, reclaimed Rabelais for a counter-hegemonic folk tradition, as a genuinely populist author. The marking of Menippean satire, as well as Goethean tragedy, as the prevailing genres of *I'm Dying Laughing* is part of a the 'ceaseless reciprocality' between ideology and text referred to above.

Ronald Paulson, quoting Northrop Frye, offers this summary of satire:

> Contemporary definitions of satire usually join two terms: "wit or humour founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd" for one, and "an object of attack for the other; or fantasy and a moral standard; or indirection and judgement. One is a wild, not quite stable comedy; the other a moral condemnation.[64]

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62 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 20 Jan. 1950. In a letter to Anderson, 11 Oct. 1950, Stead refers to "a gargantua" again in the context of Ruth McKenney/Emily Wilkes (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 361-2). Interestingly, Stead prefers a female Gargantua to Gargamelle, Gargantua's mother.

63 In her paper "Representing the 1930's: Capitalism, Phallocracy and the Popular Front in *House of all Nations*," Louise Yelin allows us to see that Popular Front ideology encouraged the establishment of a left literary genealogy, which in turn sanctioned the recuperation of writers such as Rabelais, previously ignored in the early modern period. Yelin also makes the very useful point that Ralph Fox, a figure of great importance to Stead, "praises the philosophical novel of Rabelais and Cervantes, among others. Fox's figure . . . of the satirical novel as a powerful 'instrument' in political struggle, like the figure of pen as scalpel, authorises the Rabelaisian project of *House of All Nations*". Yelin cites Ralph Fox, *The Novel and The People* (New York: International Publishers, 1937)Yelin sees a fundamental tension between the textual ideologies of satirical exposure, political engagement, and social realism or representation. In other words, a conjunction of satire, realism and political engagement is an unstable conjunction. Louise Yelin, "Representing the 1930's: Capitalism, Phallocracy and the Popular Front in *House of all Nations*,"*Critical Essays on Christina Stead*, ed. M.A. Harris (St Lucia: U of Queensland P, forthcoming) 44-45 and 97-98.

64 Ronald Paulson, *The Fictions of Satire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1967) 6.

Satire is the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, scorn or indignation. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire 'derides.' That is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt existing outside the work itself, which might be an individual or a type of person, a class, an institution or a nation. As Edward Rosenheim states "satire consists of an attack by means of a manifest fiction upon discernible historical particulars."[65] Satire typically uses weapons of parody and caricature. From the autobiographical information available, there seems little question that *I'm Dying Laughing* is based fairly directly on Ruth McKenney. This use of a 'real person' poses questions about the relationship of satire to the world of history. What is the referential effect of satire? If we turn again to biography, Stead commented in 1950: "I am in that lonely life which deprives me of that casual contact of friendship which I like and of that intense contact of character-hunting which is everything to me."[66] "Character-hunting" for Stead ("new subjects for Emily" IDL, 280), was an "intense contact," more intense that the "casual contact of friendship." Stead was renowned for her cannibalisation of old friendships as fictional subjects. Hazel Rowley reports that "as preparation for writing, Stead read all Ruth McKenney's letters to her, which dated from the late '30s."[67] In 1947 Stead wrote to Mike Gold:

> The Branstens, for the moment, are flat out for money success . . . Do not think me cynical. I regard Ruth as the greatest American of all in many respects (Richard really does not count, he is not in the same scale), outrageously venal, ferociously for her ideas, gangster *à outrance* when she must . . . and capable of *volte faces* —in a word, we don't know yet. [68]

In early 1950, Stead would write to Edith Anderson about Ruth McKenney's outsized unpredictability:

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65 Edward W Rosenheim Jr., "The Satiric Spectrum" *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism* ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971) 323.

66 Christina Stead to Edith Anderson, 20. Dec. 1950 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 367).

67 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 364. Stead later destroyed these letters. Another interesting possibility for Stead's sources on McKenney was McKenney's novel, *Love Story*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950).

68 Christina Stead, letter to Mike Gold, 3 Nov. 1947 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 349).

> She longs to be anti-Soviet and decry the Cominform—it makes her sheer raving mad to think of the money you can make by being anti-Soviet and she is prevented by shame . . . I laugh at her —I like her, Edith. She is big, noisy, ravenous and alive . . . I have a lot of fun when I visit Ruth. [69]

At the end of 1950 this had transformed into a bitter fictional portrait of a political traitor. This "crazy out-of size drawing" presented the novelist with "queer problems" because of the contradictions in Ruth McKenney's actual character: "They're all real, not invented by me in some nightmare moment." The tumbril motif of decadence in *I'm Dying Laughing* is taken straight from Ruth's life—"I didn't invent it: in fact, I wouldn't dare" stated Stead.[70] In 1967, when Stead submitted *I'm Dying Laughing* to her agents and publishers, it "clearly presented libel problems and Holt could not have published it as it was. Emily Wilkes was instantly recognisable to those who knew McKenney."[71] Stead's satiric portrait of the talented traitor, Ruth McKenney, gave her trouble in terms of faithfulness to her 'real' satiric subject. In this sense, satire combines fictional and external worlds in a volatile way, and the figurative and the literal can be seen as manifestations, and indeed, productions of each other.

Satire is traditionally regarded as a rhetorical and moral art, designed to attack vice or folly.[72] Like polemical rhetoric it seeks to persuade an audience that something or someone is reprehensible or ridiculous—it engages in

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69 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 20 Jan. 1950 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 361).

70 Christina Stead, letter to Edith Anderson, 11.10.1950 (Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 362).

71 Rowley, *Christina Stead: A Biography* 460.

72 Joan Lidoff, "Interview with Christina Stead," *Christina Stead* (New York Frederich Ungar, , 1982) 220. In 1973, Stead claimed to Lidoff: "I'm not moral when I'm not writing. When I'm writing . . . I'm a thoroughly moral being." Susan Sheridan suggests that "The tendency to read her as a naturalist writer has been reinforced by Stead herself, who always responded to questions about narrative, moral and political judgements by declaring that she was a 'naturalist,' like her father before her, and would no more condemn certain kinds of behaviour than she would criticise a dingo for being a dingo." Sheridan refers to Rodney Wetherall, "Interview with Christina Stead," *Australian Literary Studies* 9.4 (1980): 441. Her claim to truthfulness of observation within the naturalist model was not necessarily a claim to 'objectivity,' and her narrative stance suggests that she shared the view that she attributes to *Letty Fox*, that "mere observation is not enough. The examiner must take part . . . sympathy and antipathy are two instruments of observation." *Letty Fox: Her Luck* (London, Virago, 1978) 458.

exaggeratio, in other words, some fictional process. The vehicle of persuasion in *I'm Dying Laughing* is the monomaniacal Emily Wilkes, the humourist, who is ridiculed as she ridicules herself and others, through caricature and exaggeration. Emily's desire to write effective political satire offers a reflexive self-advertisement of genre in Stead's text. Instead of writing 'Toonerville tales,' Emily Wilkes wants to produce a critique of the revolutionary movement, "the way I see it and what's wrong with it," an ambition outside the traditional orbit of female authorship. She says:

> This would be a cruel book. I wouldn't spend much time on theoretical errors or an analysis of our peculiar application of theory; but I'd try to put a finger on essential human weaknesses; the ignorance and self-indulgence that has led us into Bohemia . . . I ought to say how everything becomes its opposite not only outside the besieged fortress but within. (71-2)

A little later she claims "I've got an idea. I'm going to write a horror book, about that most-dreaded figure in American society, a failure" (148). Stephen's response to the proposed 'cruel book' is that "it might be the epitaph of American socialism," and Emily should use *him* as a representative character. Emily goes on: "It would be for the real rebels, the real labour movement, against all vampires who take all that's best in the world, even the name of the most sacred causes and use them for promotion; shepherds killing and eating the lambs" (72). The renegade woman satirist wants to "put a finger on essential human weaknesses" as a form of justice for the "sacred causes." Wilkes wants to use satire ('the cruel book') as the power of rational superiority gesturing at declining, corrupted others. The complexity of *I'm Dying Laughing* is that she becomes her own satiric subject and object. Emily uses herself as a satiric allegory for the "American dilemma" in her working portrait of "The Sorrows of a Really Fat Person Like Me." The cruel book she desires to write in fact writes her, including her genius and her "bohemian" self-indulgence. Stead's "cruel book" about Emily Wilkes, and her texts anatomises the situation ("how everything becomes its opposite") within the 'besieged fortress' (American radicals in the late 1940s) with a characteristic lack of interest in theory or synthesised intellectual positions ("no theoretical analysis"). It is not surprising therefore that in "Uses of the Many Charactered Novel," Stead described her preferred form as "a novel of strife, a world whose only glimmer is in some philosophic view. Yet on account of some vast entertainment possibilities, it easily escapes the accusation of "thesis," the

wicket of the wicked critic."[73] At least in 1939, Stead considered that the avoidance of 'thesis' did not exclude a 'philosophic view.' Stead characteristically saw systematic statements of ideology as inimical to the 'real' of compelling art. Certainly the combination of 'strife' and glimmers of philosophic content with the aim of 'vast entertainment possibilities,' strongly indicates menippean satire.

Satire , Femininity and Authorship

I suggests that satire is a 'renegade' genre because it operates outside a number of decorums of classical genre. The combination of genre and gender ensures the works are renegade, in the sense they are marginal to an array of textual and sexual laws. Gender must be raised in relation to Stead's affiliation with a genealogy of Menippean satirists that include Rabelais, Cervantes and Burton. In the instance of Stead's satires: "the female protagonists of many of these works and their status as female-authored novels raises further questions as to whether, or how, gender inflects [this anatomy]."[74] How are gender and satiric form entangled? What is the relationship between satiric rhetorical and discursive structures, ideological framing and political consequence?[75]

The interconnection of gender and genre throws a certain importance on historical specificity. What, in this case, is the nature of the female (and not necessarily feminist) use of satire—a complex rewriting, or a complicitous critique, or a strategic complicity? What are the historical and generic specifics of Stead's deployment of Menippean satire for her political satire of an expatriate woman writer in the late 1930s and 1940s? The question of how women hear, interpret and learn to speak a dominant language—such as the language of satire—is a political one. To begin with, satire is a male tradition, since there is so much more of it by men, and social prohibition

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73 Christina Stead, "Uses of the Many-Charactered Novel," *Christina Stead: Selected Fiction and Non-Fiction*, eds. R. G. Geering and A. Segerberg (St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1994) 198. The draft paper of this is held at the Bancroft Library, University of California. It was originally a short paper given by Stead at the third Annual Congress of the League of American Writers in New York in June 1939.

74 Louise Yelin, "Christina Stead in 1991" 52-53.

75 Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987) 1.

against satiric utterance did not extend to men. The main complication for the female author lies in what attitudes satire poses towards women, who are frequently its targets. Satire often takes femininity and the effeminate as objects of satiric attack, or some other form of the Other—the racial, religious or ethnic Other. The relation between the author of satire and the satiric object has been one of authority (first and foremost), desire, opposition, critique, regulation, moral and rational superiority. What happens when satire, a mode invested in dominance, is taken up by minorities — by the Others it traditionally satirises? Can the minority Other garner the necessary subject position to launch a satiric attack? If there has been no real tradition of female satire, how and why might women take up the authorship of satire in the twentieth century? How does the woman writer take up the authority in the authorship of satire if the woman satirist, or scold, has often been the object of written satire, and rarely its subjective 'I'? [76] The female satirist must find a legitimate perspective from which to speak within hostile conventions designed to silence women's critical and "shrewish" voices. As Lewis argues, "satire by women internalised suspicions about itself and was fraught with a deep and debilitating ambivalence about the satiric enterprise."[77]

Stead would no doubt claim that her 'view' was gender neutral, that she was 'just looking' and that she was indifferent to sexual difference—it was politics and 'science' that authorised her writing. However, Stead's claim to naturalistic mimetic interest as a guarantee of gender indifference, is not borne out by her satires on women. Emily Wilkes and Nellie Cotter are *not like* Robbie Grant or Jules Bertillion. These women are depicted through an armoury of sexually specific grotesque tropes derived from Rabelais, Cervantes and others.

Stead's mimicry of a 'masculine' genre does alter the 'effect' or destination of satiric tropes, and I believe this invites a consideration of narrative authority, authenticity and ventriloquism and, above all, desire and ambivalence.[78] Sheridan argues that, Stead's satires, "the critical distance"

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76 For a comprehensive overview of satires by women in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, see Jayne Lewis, "'Compositions of Ill Nature': Women's Place in the Satiric Tradition," *Critical Matrix* 2.2 (1986) 31ff.

77 Lewis 45.

78 In "'The Woman Who Loved Men,'" Susan Sheridan examines the relation between

between author and object "is not fixed; indeed, it fluctuates under the strain of attraction to the very objects the narrative critically constructs . . . Stead as satirist does not deny her involvement with her objects in order to claim a pure position of opposition."[79] Is the "fascinated critical distance" to which Sheridan refers the same in those satires that take femininity rather than masculinity as their target? What happens when the masculine 'other' of sexual difference is the feminine 'same'? Is the quality of intensive observation more or less ambivalent? Sheridan speculates about this fluctuating closeness to satiric object: "something like the naturalist-observer's desire to possess her objects through knowledge," and suggests that it may indicate something about gendered authorship, positioned through the tag 'female satirist.'[80] If there can be no simple reversal or revision of the economy of male satirist as subject and his feminine object when the author of satire is female and the subject of satire is female, does the traditional nature of the satiric relation change?

As Sheridan comments, Stead demonstrates "little interest in the women" in her satires of masculinity, but as we can see from *I'm Dying Laughing, Letty Fox, Cotter's England* and *Miss Herbert*, Stead was extremely interested in the possibilities of satire for her portraiture of a number of women. Sheridan opens a challenge to feminist literary critics to investigate how satire works in Stead's 'woman-centred' novels. Feminist criticism has baulked at *Letty Fox, Cotter's England, Miss Herbert* and *I'm Dying Laughing* because it has been interested in 'affirmative representations of women.'[81] Sheridan implies that a comprehensive feminist reading position on Stead must incorporate the later satires as examples of Stead's wide-ranging generic experimentation, as well as the variety of constructions of femininity in her work.

Stead as female satirist and the masculinities that emerge as the objects of her satiric critique in these texts. Yelin claims that Sheridan demonstrates how Stead's "deployment of satire rewrites the traditional gender coding of the genre." Louise Yelin, "Christina Stead in 1991" 53-4.

79 Sheridan "'The Woman Who Loved Men'" 8.

80 Sheridan "'The Woman Who Loved Men'" 8.

81 Sheridan, "'The Woman Who Loved Men'" 3.

Women, whilst tremendously represented as *objects* of satire, have not historically been *authors* of satire which, as Sheridan comments, is a "major textual mode of opposition" and should "furnish women writers with some powerful means of critique and protest against patriarchal domination."[82] Stead, the female satirist, is optimistic about the 'stern and marvellous precision' of the 'satirists and moralists,' but *not* for specifically feminist purposes.[83] Satire was useful to Stead in terms of human behaviour understood as a manifestation of politics. In her report on the Paris Writer Congress in 1935, "The Writers' Take Sides" Stead claims that writers who "enter the political arena" and "take lessons from the workers" will then "use their pen as a scalpel for lifting up the living tissues, cutting through the morbid tissues, of the social anatomy."[84] The figure of the scalpel works with notions of satiric precision, not a word which usually springs to mind as a description for Stead's texts. The "lifting up the living tissues" through satire's ability to point up corruption, delusion, decadence, hypocrisy would result in a political critique of the "morbid social anatomy." Perhaps the precision of satire rests in its ability, through an array of such rhetorical means, to demonstrate relations of power, including gender relations.

Felicity Nussbaum cites Mary Wollstonecraft's satire, *The Vindication of the Rights of Women*, as a female-authored satire which satirises women in order to make an argumentative point about women and freedom.[85] She suggests that for the emerging female satirist perhaps there can be an unorthodox, if temporary, alliance of feminist with misogynist cultural codes—which they could organise, elaborate, co-opt in order to articulate the previously unpresentable. This is not Stead's project. Stead, "having learned the lessons of the masters" is "adept at satirising women" using misogynist tropes which have traditionally been the mainstay of classical satire.[86] My

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82 Sheridan's adoption of Stead's phrase for herself 'the woman who loved men' complicates this kind of attribution of the critical directions of satire in Stead's case.

83 Christina Stead, *For Love Alone* 76 (my emphasis).

84 Christina Stead, "The Writers Take Sides," *Left Review*, 1.2 (1935): 453. Rowley points out that there are a number of inconsistencies of Stead's position in this document. It does not account for her 'alongside' positing of herself in relation to political ideology and writing.

85 Felicitiy A Nussbaum, "Gulliver's Malice: Gender and Satiric Stance," *Gulliver's Travels: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. Christopher Fox (Boston and New York: Bedford Books of St Martin's Press, 1995) 321.

86 Susan Sheridan, "'The Woman Who Loved Men'" 3.

reading of Stead's deployment of misogynist (and homophobic) satiric tropes is that they are unapologetically akin to a number of male-authored satires of decadence and corruption. Nevertheless, the gender and textual politics of Stead's satire of women cannot be made to answer to a naively affirmative nor wholly misogynist view of women. Stead's choice of satire as a genre has specific historical and ideological contexts; for example—the Left's relation to Rabelais. The portrait of Emily, while invested in gynophobia and misogyny, does not just produce a vilifying caricature. Stead's text also reiterates Emily's ability to retain the power and the tongue and acquire the authority of text. The tremendous generativity of the unusual, vital woman in terms of *her* raw satiric energy is palpable in the exaggerations, accretion and rhythm of its language. Stead's text, like many satires, is ambivalent in its effects, oscillating between masculine and feminine, dominance and subordination. In *I'm Dying Laughing*,satiric direction is considerably unstable, because ultimately satire is a double-edged weapon. Satire is unable to only work in one political or moral direction, and therefore Stead's satiric misogyny unravels, redirects and misses some of its targets.

The Humourist: "Her outrageous humour, bad or good, knew no limits"

Another angle on the connection between satire, femininity and authorship can be garnered from a look at Emily Wilkes' work itself. The subtitle of *I'm Dying Laughing* is 'the Humourist,' a tag the text returns to a number of times, making a series of unclear distinctions. One of the rare definitions of 'humour' is 'excited state of public feeling.' It otherwise means disposition or temperament, or acting on whim, caprice, fancy, which implies changeability. A 'humourist' is a person subject to humours or fancies—a fantastical or whimsical person, a faddist, also facetitious or comical, a wag or a humourous talker—one skilled in the literary or artistic expression of humour, capable of blending the pathetic with the ludicrous. The usage of humourist has also referred to a person as base, turbulent, contentious—engaged with small things and matters of no importance. Both positive and negative connotations of humourist are entirely apposite for Emily Wilkes.

Emily's claims early in her career that "I'm a humourist: humourists are always pessimists. They're reactionaries: because they see that every golden cloud has a black lining; so why get a stomach ulcer" (17). Stephen Howard

claims that "You see things otherwise. You say your say in your own humane way and luckily for us it's a selling way and we don't have to starve in a shanty, while you're revolving the novel of the century" (116). Vittorio says to Emily, "America is a land of humourists with stout, rich, philosophical humour; you belong to a great race. How I admire this talent!" (244). He indicates that a humourist is a particularly American phenomenon. This is Emily's account of American humour, which makes a distinction between the satirist and the humourist:

> Well, that's the bitter truth, the savagery of life which staggers you, keeps you rooted to the spot and your outcries stop your breath; and yet it is wildly out of line with all our ideals, humanity, peace, brotherly love, do unto others, until you laugh, shout, you understand your own simplicity and wickedness and denseness and greed—that's American humour. . . You listen to any Hollywood dialogue in a modern film and you'll hear such a mash of good sense, brashness, earthy wit, impudence—that's American wisdom, that's our humour, it bites to the bone; its not like satire which is just needling someone you're afraid to touch; American humour is another way of seeing the truth; and what a vision! It isn't giggles or smut, it isn't anecdotes about baby-sitters and chards and Uncle Brown's habits; it is homespun godlike truth stalking in from the plains and the tall timber, cookskins and deerhide, with a gun to disturb our little home comforts. (20)

This "other way of seeing the truth" has all the altruism and freshness of the frontier tradition, according to Emily. *I'm Dying Laughing* creates an interesting literary genealogy from American literature for Emily's division between what she does easily and lucratively and what she is ambitious to write. While Melville, Hawthorne and Poe are tagged as "boneyard types" (212), and Twain as a bleakly pessimistic satirist, the authors that symbolise the divide in Emily's writing life are James Thurber on one hand and Theodore Dresier on the other, and it is around these authors that*I'm Dying Laughing* suggests an investigation into comedy as a mode suited to social and cultural critique. My reading suggests that Stead has a soft spot for the 'funny Hamlet'—the wise clown figure, who can cut through the 'morbid tissues' of the 'social anatomy' with humour, to see the 'truth' of moral, political and social dilemmas. The text treats Emily as a genuine serio-comic writer, with aspirations to revealing something tragic and therefore something lasting. "I always felt I was poor Yorick. I am always concealing from myself that I am poor Yorick. Besides, Hamlet was poor Yorick. Clown at court; what future but a naked skull"(8). Stephen claims that 'humourists' "have both worlds . . . They see the sinister truth and they can laugh." Yet Emily worries about the cruelty:

> "I see the funny side, I'm a wise guy. I've got the angles, I know the score. . . I really am cruel. I often wake up in the night, Stephen, to think out what I am. I'm like a doll with two faces glued together. They used to have those. I disliked them. One back, one front. Mark Twain wrote some terrible unfeeling, heartless pieces. After all, to write *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg*, you have to have a really hard heart, you have to be a cynic. Whereas a natural tragic dramatist is always weeping for humanity. "(212)

Emily Wilkes aspires to write a serious revolutionary novel (113), like Dreiser's *American Tragedy* (350 ff.) but it is her 'humourist' material, involving the lives and stories of her family and small town American life, that earn her 'serious' money: "nothing but family hokum, a belly-laugh or two and a shovelful of sentiment"(137). Her addiction to luxury—a combination of disposition and an aristocratic marriage—forces her to continue with her humourist pieces. Even the lucrative market for this work dries up in the postwar period, when her political and national positions are ambiguous. The novel continues to offer the idea that Emily is capable of a serious work of political commitment, of 'truth,' but that her husband-manager-editor dissuades her from work that might not earn the dividends they require. The relationship between writing and earning is, I suggest, a central preoccupation of *I'm Dying Laughing*. For the Howards, politics is compatible with writing and earning insofar as it provides material for novels, and prevents or encourages market success.

Emily's disruptive capacities not only affect the Howard family, but also the organised structures of the Party and party policy. Emily's humourous stories about her family work through 'folk humour': through idiom, parody, carnival inversion and discrowning, of which she is sometimes the subject. However, Emily wants to move from popular culture ("hix in the stix") to high culture and write novels dealing with the revolution, wartime concentration camps, the French Resistance. Emily wants to traverse the high-low divide in cultural production. In *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Stallybrass and White theorise the role of transgression in the mutually constitutive construction of high and low in paradigms of cultural value. Russo reiterates this point as follows:

> The masks and voices of carnival resist, exaggerate and destabilise the distinctions and boundaries that mark and maintain high culture and organised society. It is as if the carnivalesque body politic had ingested the entire corpus of high culture and, in its bloated and irrepressible state,

> released it in fits and starts in all manner of recombinations, inversion, mockery and degradation.[87]

What is it to be a female comic in this context? What does it mean be a female "funny Hamlet?" Is the role of laughter only an ambivalent cognate for an extreme physicality, for 'dying?' Or does the woman's laughter represent phallic power and transgressive freedom. The doubled relationship between the self-conscious mobilisation of satire as a mode by Stead, and also by Emily Wilkes (the "humourist" Stead's text satirises) makes for a knot of problematics in an already difficult arena of female satire. Satire often demonstrates a problematic relation to what it seeks to curse, and hence to correct, which reveals itself in the monstrosity of both author and satiric object. Destructive self reference is finally the price satire pays to articulate any point of view at all. That Emily takes her own monstrosity (of body size, region and gender) as a subject for a humourous allegory of American dilemmas is a case in point: "A typical Middle-Western Mamma, with a beer-barrel waist, overstuffed dewlaps, panting about looking for an ice-cream soda"(310). The female satirist satirising a female satirist who satirises herself ('sorrows of a really fat person'), as well as others, introduces a number of occasions for a reflexive account by the text of its own genre. The cautionary "showing forth" of the monstrous satiric object means that monstrosity attaches itself to the author of satire also

Menippean Satire

Satire derives from the Latin, *satur*, meaning 'full,' a denotation that subsequently underwent a transition from 'fullness' to 'miscellany' by its application to *lanx*. The *lanx sature* —or the full plate of various kinds of fruit—comes to describe a medley. Varro employs the miscellaneous aspect of satire through a medley of prose and verse, a method that derives from the Greek Menippeus who used a mixed prose-verse form to ridicule philosophical opponents. Often called the 'anatomy' from an English Renaissance tradition, such satires are usually written in prose and feature a series of extended dialogues and debates (often conducted at a banquet or a party) in which a group of loquacious pedants, literary people and representatives of various professions or philosophical points of view serve

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87 Mary Russo, "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory," *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed., Teresa De Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986) 218.

to make ludicrous the attitudes and viewpoints they typify by the arguments they urge in their support.[88] Thematically, therefore, Menippean satire was most concerned with "right learning or right belief, a theme that often called for ridicule or caricature of some intellectual or theoretical fraud."[89] In the modern period Menippean satire, as an indirect mode of satire, markedly shifted into other modes and genres—tragedy and the novel, for example. This is not surprising as the Menippean tradition is generally regarded as a 'loose' prose tradition mixing seriocomic prose and verse, and its principal emphasis is on the forms of variety—dialogues, conversation, picaresque narrative, traveller's narrative, anatomy, mock lecture.[1] The Menippean variety in *I'm Dying Laughing* corresponds to this list. This includes the travel between Hollywood, New York and Paris; and the house hunting in Hollywood and Paris; detailed accounts of material possessions, grandeur and dining out. Emily's monologic lectures on Cicero, or Versailles (419 ff.) operate as learned anatomy- mock lecture. Vittorio delivers a lecture (240 ff), and Suzanne's account of the Occupation demonstrates certain characters associated with ideas or *idée fixe.*

Stead's text demonstrates the prerequisite rhetorical variety in a number of set pieces from this Menippean catalogue. These set pieces occur throughout five main textual modes: labyrinthine exchanges between Emily and Stephen (Emily does most of the talking); their interaction with larger groups of people, including their children and tutors; Emily's monologic tirades, including lists of food; 'learned anatomies' from select other characters, and lengthy descriptions of Emily's indiscriminate textual production and proliferating plans for new texts, both commercial and 'serious.'

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88 Northrop Frye's designation in the *Anatomy of Criticism* (pp. 308-12) is after a major English instance of the type, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy,* 1621. The anatomy is a form of indirect satire, as distinct from formal or direct satire. In formal satire, the satiric voice speaks out in the first person (Horace and Juvenal). Indirect satire is cast in another literary form than that of direct address. The most common indirect form is that of a fictional narrative, in which the objects of satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say, do. Braha argues that the anatomy is "an intellectual foray, a dissertation on or a dissection of a specific topic." Elliott Braha, "Menippean form in *Gravity's Rainbow* and in Other Contemporary American Texts" (Diss., Columbia University, 1979) 3. Kharpertian gives a useful summary of the *locus classicus* of satire in *The Hand That turns the Time,* 24-27.

89 Eugene. P Kirk, *Menippean Satire: An Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism,* Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, vol. 191 (New York: Garland Press, 1980) xi.

Eugene Kirk nominates a range of unconventional diction as the hallmark of Menippeana. His catalogue of Menippean textuality reads like a check list for the carnival-heteroglossic aspects of *I'm Dying Laughing*:

> Neologisms, portmanteau words, macaronics, preciosity, coarse vulgarity, catalogues, bombast, mixed languages and protracted sentences were typical of the genre, sometimes appearing all together in the same work. . . a jumble of flagrantly digressive narrative, or again a potpourri of tales, songs, dialogues, orations, letters, lists, and other brief forms, mixed together. Menippean topical elements included outlandish fictions and extreme distortions of argument (often paradoxes). [90]

If only one example could suffice to illuminate this connection, it might be taken from Emily's voyage to Europe:

> I'm just one hundred and one per cent hayseed and ignoramus, the big, brainless American wonder from Hix in the Stix. They've got so much culture there they throw it away, like Uncle said, we threw beefsteaks and turkeys in the garbage cans at Christmas around Camp Upton. I'm hoping to eat out of their garbage cans. Unless there's a sentry. (11)

Kirk's list recontextualises some of Emily's characteristic utterances (Stead's text) and narratives (Emily's texts) in relation to gender and genre. The monomania of Emily Wilkes as a woman satirist is different from that of Jonathon Crow, a character of an epic-romance.

I'm Dying Laughing is a Menippean satire about the greed and corruption of a couple who subscribe to Communist ideals, but who find themselves unable to live without the comforts of capitalism. Stead's generic choice of Menippean satire makes for an interesting use of the scene of the feast, or banquet. Food is variously troped throughout many of Stead's novels. Salient parallels can be found in *House of All Nations* (1938). Food, as a form of consumption, is formulated as indispensable to production, but also invariably present at representations of the inevitable decadence of capitalism.[91] Food is an indispensable aspect of Emily's voluminous production of speech and text; and if money is vital to the Howards, *writing* is the key commodity.[92] In *I'm Dying Laughing*, the generativity and excesses

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90 Kirk, *Menippean Satire: an Annotated Catalogue of Texts and Criticism* xi.

91 Stevick explores the concept of anatomy as an essentially oral form with tendencies towards encyclopedism, that is rooted in the inclusive nature of dialogue. Phillip Stevick, "Novel and Anatomy: Notes Towards an Amplification of Frye," *Criticism* 10 (1968) 156.

92 Tina Muncaster, "The Pleasures of Text and Table: Appetite and Consumption in *I'm*

surrounding food are part of an ambivalent economy of censure and delight; food represents a degenerative downward spiral of insatiable desire and partial gratification *as well as* a tremendously energetic and impressive production of speech and text. A specific example is many descriptive lists of food (cf 58, 165). Writing, food and commodification directly intersect in Emily's self-commodification as an over-eater in her autobiographical concept for an allegorical account of America, "Sorrows of a Really Fat Person Like Me."

Let us take the banquet or party as an example of the Menippean investments of Stead's text. A number of critics have noted Stead's preference for the dinner party or family dinner as the scene of melodramatic crisis or exchange of positions.[93] Frye's identification of Menippean characters as "pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds" comes to mind. Frye's claim about the scene of satire is also apposite to *I'm Dying Laughing*: "disorderly, crowded, packed to the very point of bursting. The deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance and maliciousness group closely together."[94]

The "Holinshed Party," the "Straightening Out" and Olivia's eleventh birthday in Part One, are good examples of these renegade Menippean rubrics. In both France and the United States, the contradictions of the Howards' politics are rehearsed at the feast-banquet. The crowded scenes of pedantry, invective and venality do change tone with geographical location. The connotations of the feasting in France is less the Land of Cockaigne landscape of carnival (60/71) that is Hollywood, and more a desperate black-market decadence, which marks, as it is meant to, the Howards' decline into

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Dying Laughing,'" Southerly 53.4 (1993): 109. Susan Sheridan and Virginia Blain argue that Stead's interest in speech is related to the "revelation of character though obsessive monologue," which Muncaster cites in this article. My suggestion of Menippean satire as the formative genre for *I'm Dying Laughing* re-contextualises these speeches as part of a complex generic heritage—the learned anatomy. Stead's more frequent use of satire since *Letty Fox*, suggests these obsessive monomaniacal tirades are related to genre.

93 Don Anderson, "Christina Stead's Unforgettable Dinner Parties," *Southerly* 39.11 (1979): 28-45.

94 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, p. 311-12. Alvin P. Kernan, "A Theory of Satire," *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971). 253-54.

amorality. The Howards obtain and dine out on blackmarket food in France, behaviour contradictory to their communist principles, and a gesture of desperation against the poverty and political complexity of post-war Europe. The Jamesian comic potential of the crude American in a subtle Europe has a bitter satiric twist in Stead's text. Suzanne, the Belgian ex-Resistance fighter, encourages Emily to write about the experience in German concentration camps, and she is confronted with the horrors of the survivors' accounts. The energy and originality of the New Worlder is confounded and alienated by the subtlety and terror of the post-war Old World.

It is the combination of two feasting scenes—Olivia's eleventh birthday (involving unfriendly radicals) and the Howard-Tanner dinner for Anna's birthday (involving fascists)—that convince Emily and Stephen to relocate in Europe. Emily is prompted by Dr Coriolis to announce "Stephen, isn't it fascinating? Life is different, it's much gayer, tougher, strange, more complex in Europe. Here it's just dull corruption, drink, drink, fornicate, fornicate, no love, no romance, no adventures, no mascots" (139). Shortly after arriving in Paris, the Howards have dinner with the Valais family whom they met on the ship from America and who take them to be wealthy right wing Americans, rather than political refugees, because of their first class tickets and luxurious parties. The Valais dinner, itemised at several points, is supplied through the Parisian black market, and Emily and Stephen cite Horace's Lucullan banquets, aware of the corruption of this "Evening in Cold War Society." Emily quips that "I thought they ate lampreys and slaves" but nevertheless enjoys herself hugely; she takes "three or four of everything, coffees, cigarettes, cakes, glasses of cognac," tells "endless tales" and refuses to leave (199-200). *I'm Dying Laughing* catalogues meals of all kinds—private dinners, meals at expensive restaurants, dinners parties at the Howards' house. Emily's return dinner for the Valais' causes her to create a menu (219). Like the other lists in *I'm Dying Laughing* this represents the logic of commodity consumption. The itemisation of food operates as epideictic display and a representation of an accretion of goods.

After the Howard dinner for the Valais family, Stephen claims:

> "We look like fools and we're living like rakes. We passed the offices of *L'Humanité* on the way down from the station the other day. Why didn't we, if we had to give a dinner party, drop in and ask twenty of the fellows

> there in for a feed? What we stuffed down these collabo gullets would have fed twenty honest, starved men."
>
> Emily pouted, "Oh I hate the way you denigrate and belittle. We can't live in a charmed circle, swooping slogans in a tower of glass, through which we can see the rest of humanity making strange gestures we don't understand."(223)

Despite a writer's desire to be exposed to a range of people, Emily understands perfectly the right wing nature of her 'collabo' guests and uses the latest American phonograph to drown out and punish their anti-left comments. This demonstrates a point about nation—the power of American technology, as well as Wilkesian escalation. Emily overwhelms her guests with sound, trying to mitigate her own feelings of hypocrisy for the Howards passing as 'aristocrats'—"The Howards in Paris, famous for their French cooking" (223). Stead is beginning to play out the relation between decadence, luxurious food and the French revolution. The text is set to punish Emily for her decadent belief that she might have her cake and eat it—"all this and communism too" (223). Emily exclaims over the French gourmet food—"Me! Who came to Europe to reduce and live highmindedly" (198). This yokes reduction and principle together, in opposition to inflation and corruption. The inflation-dilation of *I'm Dying Laughing* is related to difficulties of closure traditionally presented by the menippean satire as well as Emily's physical and textual escalation in response to the struggles of rupture and paradox.

Emily defends herself from Stephen's criticism of over-expenditure by suggesting she will have a 'return' on the evening, since it provides material for a potential publication, her *Journal of Europe 1948*. This allies monetary profit to feasting, even though Stephen wryly points out that there will probably be a substantial shortfall—their usual economy of debt through over-consumption and inadequate production (224). Emily commodifies her dinner party. She even thinks about the 'return' on one of the most telling intersections of politics, commerce, decadence and food—Vittorio's narrative of concentration camp survival:

> You know how they are finding out the final disposal, the eventual address of thousands of children and other waifs and strays of this last disaster? Through the account books—I'm not joking. It was a question of calories, kilograms and grams of human resistance, the kind of flesh and fat. The nutrition problem they calculated was how long a man of a certain type and weight, fat, bone-structure, would keep working on a diminished provision of calories and vitamins. I saw the books of accounts. (249)

This becomes a potential "subject for Emily;" a potential money-spinner in the American literary market, much like a French Revolution epic.

Feasting is a crucial *mise en scène* of Menippean satire; Rabelais' feasts of tripe and excess are well-known examples. Food in *I'm Dying Laughing* operates as a site of complex satiric ambivalence: as epideictic display; as greed, decadence and corruption; as gratification and consumption; as delight and textual sensuousness; as flesh and generativity; as writing and speech. This accords with what Tina Muncaster has identified as the "textuality of appetite." In satires on capitalism, food is a favourite satiric trope for decadence, over-consumption, excess, and loss of control. Food involves bodily orifices and is often an analogue for sexual appetite. In short, food is indispensable to carnival behaviour. After the family visit to the decadent Versailles, Stephen and Emily revisit the *Tour d'Argent*, an opulent restaurant ("ease, glitter, luxury" 429) reminiscent of the early days of their romance, although "neither of them could walk, as they used to do" (428). Their walk takes them through a ravaged Paris ("not for them"), although the discrepancy between the luxurious food and the postwar deprivation is clear to them. The description of the food here is sensuous, but elegiac.[95] Emily talks of the tumbrils as Stephen claims "You passed the sign post, and there's no turning back" (428). Emily and Stephen are sheltering in a bombed post-occupation Paris, returning to the scenes of the their first love with communism and each other. Emily's refrain of 'the tumbrils' makes this return unbearably ironic.

I'm Dying Laughing is a satire about the left, from the left, which examines the 'turn' from the principles of communism to the practices of capitalism. A number of satiric commonplaces (other than the feast) are used to lampoon capitalist venality and hypocrisy, only some of which I will mention here: Stephen's 'gift' to Emily of an amethyst necklace (63), Stephen's gold smuggling (348), debt/lotteries (260-1, 406), the use of children as capital—the so-called "rape of Olivia" (95) and "The Struggle for Christy" (380 ff). Stead's targets are the same as those of Roman satirists such as Horace: the corrupting effects of fame; the lofty and hubristic delusions inspired by superficial success; and the degenerative aspects of power. Nevertheless, when Michael Seidel draws our attention to the encyclopedic

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95 Compare to p. 34 and 58-59 of *I'm Dying Laughing* (1986; Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1989).

or *farraginous* nature of James Joyce's texts, he comments particularly on the "the power, even the crazy joy, of *degeneration*" in *Finnegan's Wake*.[96] This paradoxically joyful degeneration is one of the many modes of contradiction at work in *I'm Dying Laughing*. Like Jules Bertillion in *House of All Nations*, *I'm Dying Laughing* relishes the energetic "glorious swindler," and the corruption and degeneration that the satire is set to expose.

Both Rabelais (folk humourist) and Blake (political radical) were Menippean satirists who used the transgressive and radical power of seriocomic texts. Both are repeatedly cited by Emily Wilkes. *I'm Dying Laughing*is contemporaneous with work Mikhail Bakhtin was undertaking on Rabelais in the 1940s Russia.[97] Bakhtin's work on carnival and menippean satire, and on the novel as an absorption of menippean and carnival energies, provides apposite analytic categories for my 'renegade' reading of *I'm Dying Laughing*. I have established the critical interest of menippean satire. Bakhtin's work also suggests the use of categories such as the dialogic, the carnivalesque and the grotesque.[98]

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96 Michael Seidel, *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1979) 265. For example, we know from her letters that Stead admired Joyce very much from her exposure to his work in Paris. Christina Stead to Gwen Walker Smith, *Boulevard Haussman*, 30th September, 1929. CS to Gwen Walker-Smith, 18 *Rue de la Paix*, 26th July 1932.

> I know his friend, Miss Sylvia Beach, the one that published his great book *Ulysses*. James Joyce is the new Euphues: the melting pot of the language and of present literary idiom, and banality: he has himself the finest poetical gift of the day, besides, and the greatest verbal talent perhaps of all ages.

R. G. Geering (ed.)*Web of Friendship* (North Ryde, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1992) 24-25 and 51.

97 The majority of Bakhtin's work on the novel was written in the years between the late 1920s and the early 1940s when Bakhtin was in internal exile in Russia. Although a number of formal aspects are strikingly similar, Stead's uses for the carnivalesque and the grotesque differ from Bakhtin utopian popular-festive materialist critique of Rabelais. Her grotesque realism, whilst bearing a relation to Rabelais, presents what Bakhtin would see as a bourgeois, private version of grotesque modes, versions which do not represent the collective, but the individual narrow literary satire, sardonic and negative grotesque rather than regenerating. The loss of the regenerative capacity of the grotesque after the sixteenth century strips much of the carnival ambivalence from the use of the grotesque.

98 Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*(London and New York: Routledge, 1990) 69. Mikhail Bakhtin considered menippean satire to be the most important seriocomic genre, and he excavated what he saw as the neglected menippean tradition from underneath dominant Renaissance and Augustan aesthetic judgments about literary decorum. Bakhtin's wide ranging work on menippean satire is inseparable from his work on the novel,

Bakhtin's suggests that menippean satire, and then the Dostoyevskyan novel, belong to a tradition he terms 'dialogical' (double voiced) since narrative authority is not clearly sourced in any one place. The 'dialogical' is opposed to and subverts the 'monological' tradition—that he associates with institutional forms of absolutism, dogmatism and repression. Christina Stead's texts display a fascination with speech, and certainly engage critiques of monologic ideology, often by dramatising the exhausting tirades of monologist egoists. Stead predominantly 'shows' the action of *I'm Dying Laughing* through the speech acts of Emily Wilkes. The texture of Emily's voice, its socio-political particularities and idiosyncracies, occupy large sections of Stead's text. Emily (and certain other characters) hold 'the floor' in long monologic tirades, dominating the production of speech and writing as well as the consumption of food and space. Despite this monologic mode, there is no ultimate authority invested in the narrator: each voice vies for narrative authority. This touches on the drama of *I'm Dying Laughing* as a political satire, where the contest for authority between ideological positions is crucial. *I'm Dying Laughing* investigates the construction and contestation of literary and political authority.

Although the idea of carnival threads throughout Bakhtin's work on Dostoyevsky, it is in *Rabelais and His World* that Bakhtin concentrates on the historical practice of carnival, and its closest symbolic representation—menippean satire. In menippean satire "different points of view, different worlds, may be simultaneously present, without any privileging of one over the other, so that different worlds can comment on each other in a dialogic way." This ambivalence, illustrated in the scenes between Emily, Stephen and a group of fascists, is "the first and most fundamental characteristic of the carnival."[99] Carnival is presented by Bakhtin as a world of topsy-turvy, of heteroglot exuberance, of ceaseless overrunning and excess where all is mixed, hybrid, ritually degraded and defiled.[100] The carnival licensed certain

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since the types of novel he privileges are centrally formed by menippean (seriocomic) energies. Bakhtin argues that the emerging novel absorbed the carnivalesque energies of menippean satire Bakhtin saw the novel as a unique genre, unique in its contemporaneity, its contact with everyday life, its close connection with extraliterary genres.

99 M Keith Booker, *Flann O'Brien, Bakhtin and the Menippean Satire* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1995) 2.

100 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1986) 6. As Stallybrass and White identify, Bakhtin wavers in his conception of carnival. On one hand he positions carnival as opposition/negation; a popular festivity which acts as a negation of established social and symbolic order. On the other hand,

inversions, suspensions and transformations (albeit temporary) of cultural and symbolic orders. Although carnival was once a specific historical practice in Renaissance Europe that has disappeared, it has left residual textual traces—the 'carnivalesque.' The carnivalesque is identified as a set of symbolic discourses, images and practices, which Bakhtin insists operate as a populist critical inversion of all official words and hierarchies.[101] The carnivalesque demonstrates a logic of the "inside out" and "turnabout" where forms of secular and religious hierarchy are suspended/inverted. Structures of ambivalence, inversion, excess, heterogeneity in *I'm Dying Laughing* characterise the hierarchical relationships between fascist and communist, individual and party, rich and poor, principled and amoral, masculine and feminine.

Carnival operates as a locus for the transgression of law. Bakhtin sees it as a relativising space, allowing a festive critique of hierarchy through the free play of antagonisms and the comic grotesque. Emily Wilkes is the carnival space personified; she forms the point of mediation between high and low. She is upwardly mobile in terms of class, but an alien in Stephen's aristocratic family. She aspires to move 'up' from writing comic sketches and Broadway material to writing serious fiction. She wants to inhabit grander and grander houses, moving from bottom to top, and then top to bottom, finally inhabiting a basement in her Paris house. She says to her Belgian tutor "Down here, Suzanne, I have found myself" (408) referring to her cellar workroom. As such, Emily comes to occupy the position of the hybrid grotesque, debased, in the lower stratum which befits her. Emily finally says to Stephen about her basement living that "I am not myself. I am someone else, someone better. I have begun to live my way, not yours" (417).

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carnival is deployed as a hybrid, as a mediation between the high and low forms of culture, rather than the 'other' of official culture. Stallybrass and White also raise the possibility that carnival is merely an occasion of permitted license, whereby the empowered allow a certain mode of misrule in order to better contain the 'low' classes, races, cultural forms.

101 Stallybrass and White identify a problematic (because essentialist) understanding of carnival. *Politics and Poetics of Transgression* 7. Enough detailed work of explication has been carried out on Bakhtin to understand his project as utopian and anti-Stalinist, as well as producing a nostalgic and uncritically populist positioning of carnival as a radical source of transcendence. Nevertheless, his work is indispensable for an understanding of Rabelais as well as carnival, despite the clear desire for a radical origin of socialist politics in a disappeared historical practice.

The carnivalesque had two indisputable elements: carnival laughter (an ambivalent folk laughter which simultaneously degrades and regenerates) and grotesque realism, also ambivalent and contradictory. An example of Emily's folk laughter might be:

> Oh, my mamma public! That good old respectable pie-eating Middle-Western family with papa and mamma, taking colonic irrigations, the children twice as big as anything in Europe—but the Russians maybe—the dreary, thick-skulled, fat-backed, smug, pig-eyed hog-calling Middle West. I guess I like it too, when I'm not with my family. (136)

Yet the question persistently in my mind is whether Emily, clearly intended as a 'female gargantua,' is in fact regenerative. What if the regenerativity necessary for the ambivalence of carnival is lost, as Bakhtin claims it is, in the post-romantic grotesque?

Grotesque realism is a concept which alludes to those aspects of Rabelais' writing (but not only his) which emphasise the material and the bodily. Grotesque realism is fundamental to the collective nature of carnival laughter. If there can be no regenerative grotesquerie in the post-romantic period, what *is* the effect of the post-romantic grotesque body? Mary Russo suggests that the postromantic grotesque has strong ties to the outrageous, the hilarious, and the comic.[102] Emily Wilkes is deployed in a directly Rabelaisian way, but her individuality is of greater interest rather than her representativeness of a folk spirit. Interestingly, she herself wants to be an allegory for America, she wants to write a "book on myself—good, funny, fat, sincere, dramatic, tragic, also a picture of the USA as seen transparently through me" (191). Bakhtin argues that the grotesque bodily image, which is grandiose, exaggerated and hyperbolic, positively reflects a phenomenon in transformation, a 'becoming.' Russo agrees that the grotesque body is the "open, protruded, extended, secreting body, the body of becoming, process and change . . . connected to the rest of the world."[103] When writing "Sorrows," Emily has this recollection, which exemplifies the carnival grotesque body:

> I was just talking about my physical suffering as a fat girl and I was given over entirely to remembering my sufferings physical, so very physical. And

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102 Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge 1994) 7

103 Russo "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory" 219.

> the body gets up like an immense giant and grabs me and balances me over the cliff, threatening to toss me over. (305)

Stallybrass and White claim that such instances of the transgression of gender, territorial boundaries, sexual preference, family and group norms are transcoded into the 'grotesque body.' They consider how the grotesque body may become a highly charged intersection and mediation of social and political forces, a sort of intensifier and displacer in the making of identity. While the grotesque body has its own norms: of impurity, heterogeneity, marking and distension, the representation of the low is nevertheless contradictory and unstable. The low 'other' has an operative ambivalence because the classificatory body of culture is always double—it is always structured in relation to its inverse, its negation. The low 'other' is Emily Wilkes in the economy of desire, disgust and power working though *I'm Dying Laughing*. The result is a representation of the low that is indeed unstable and contradictory because of the ambivalence necessarily present in the construction of identity.

In 1939 Stead praised "the many-charactered novel" for its capacity to convey "multiplicity, incongruity, disillusion," to "produce worldly wisdom, destroy family and national ideals," and "increase causes for laughter, anger, action." Stead, interested in the drama of conflict and the vicissitudes of the survival instinct, understood and valued disorientation and strangeness, as well as attack and contradiction:

> It is impossible to write a novel about a crowd of amiable and charming characters, therefore we will have a parade of enormities, abuses, defects, or more incongruities which gives off a strong odour of insecurity, a faint odour of malice . . . this form of novel is all a sidelong critique, and mostly ironic . . . Here, it is not easy to take sides: the reader must draw his own conclusions from the diverse material, as from life itself.[104]

Stead's comment aligns the experience of reading this "parade" as an experience of life. This verisimilitude between reading and life is based on the combination of "diverse material" and a lack of narrative direction, a lack of authorisation—"it is not easy to take sides." Stead's analysis also

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104 Christina Stead, "Uses of the Many Charactered Novel" 198. The position perhaps speaks most precisely about *House of All Nations* (1938), written two years before, and which produces a truly large array of characters. Jules Bertillion, the 'glorious swindler,' dominates less than Emily Wilkes.

resembles a description of menippean satire ('causes for laughter, anger, action') and heteroglossic textuality.

The hybridity of the seriocomic mode is transgressive of 'pure' genre in the first instance, and therefore it has been little accounted for in classical catalogues of genre. The aggregate textual effect of menippean satire is one of difference or strangeness. The 'out-law' sensation is one of disorientation, which can work to provide, at least sometimes, new orientation. Stead's menippean satire, centred on an expatriate woman writer who is politically affiliated and a 'humourist' herself, constitutes a transgression of the laws of genre, and possibly creates a new convention, one "not yet made." I am making a connection here between the woman writer as renegade and the gendering of an already renegade genre.

IV The Female Grotesque and the Literary Fat Lady

In *I'm Dying Laughing* the category of the grotesque feminine suggests a nonidentical resemblance between the grotesque body (open, protruded, becoming) with traditional readings of femininity (earthly, material, abject). Russo comments that "the frequency, intensity and salience of the association between these terms suggest a mutually constituted genealogy."[105] It is a resemblance bound up with fears about permeability, loss of boundary and disorder. Positive, archaic tropes of the feminine can easily slide into misogynist fear and loathing about the processes of reproduction and aging. What, therefore, can theories of carnival transgression and the grotesque offer the feminine, except notations like the aberrant 'fat lady at the circus,' and other tropes of the abject and excessive 'other?' We must look at Stead's gendering of the grotesque in order to see what the female grotesque implies about female transgression.

Feminists have begun to interrogate Bakhtin's conceptualisation of carnival using psychoanalytic terms such as desire, masquerade, hysteria, abjection and gendered spectatorship. This interrogation searches the symbolic categories of the carnival for the possibility of new social subjectivities for the feminine. Does the subversive potential of carnival allow feminists to re-approach questions of difference (gender, sexuality, race)? Does carnival

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105 Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, Modernity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) 12.

laughter—conflictual, inverted, travestied, liminal—posit new transformations and counterproductions? Carnival licence often resulted in an historical exclusion of already marginalised groups, an exclusion Stallybrass and White have termed "displaced abjection" and what Russo calls "double jeopardy."

Emily Wilkes conforms to the category of the feminine grotesque in a number of ways. The most important feature of her grotesquerie is her position of female transgressor as public spectacle. She is a woman in the public sphere — her 'fame' makes her visible and audible, and notorious. The "female gargantua" is political, lower class, mobile and a writer. Emily Wilkes, who claims that "Rabelais was the only man who understood me" (301), is mobilised as a figure from the Rabelaisian tradition: she is variously described as a "circus horse," a "Holbein woman" and a "loamy sprite" throughout the first half of the text. In the second half Emily's degeneration is represented thus:

> She was no longer the merry oaf she had been, she looked leering and wild, her eyes swam and one half of her face, grey and fallen, seemed many years older than the other. Of this she was not conscious, but continued eating and drinking with gusto, hurrahing and *talking greedily* between bites, her suspicious greedy eyes watching them all, calling attention to anyone who did not look at her. (416, my emphasis)

This description takes up the grotesqueries of age, gender, excess and irregularity, and exhibits what Russo sees as "an ambivalent redeployment of taboos around the female body as grotesque (the pregnant body, the aging body, the irregular body) and as unruly when set loose in the public sphere."[106]

The carnival grotesque body is "open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple and changing;" it is opposed to classical definitions of the body as pure, static, finished, closed and sleek.[107] Stead dramatises Emily Wilkes as a (creative-destructive) prototype of household, society, nation-state and city for the purposes of satirical critique. In my reading of the trajectory of political satire in its relation to gender and sexuality, Stead's satirical anatomisation of Emily's Wilkes as the marvellously and horrifyingly

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106 Russo, "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory" 214.

107 Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, Modernity* 8.

generative grotesque is too profoundly ambivalent to be part of a *strategic* feminist project. It is caught fast in misogynist satirical tropes of the fat lady-female comic, and yet also desirous of Emily's carnivalesque vitality, individuality and excess. Ambivalence (death and laughter suspended together), rather than dialectics is, after all, the carnivalesque mode *par excellence*.[108]

Emily Wilkes positions herself in relation to the fat lady at the circus, initially with horror and then with desire (301). I have argued previously that feasting is a favourite grotesque realist subject, involving both loquacity and the lower bodily stratum. Fatness, food and speech are located at the threshold of the body, on the cusp between inside and outside. As such these products are both anomalous, ambiguous and often taboo. As much of Stead's text is speech, the line between speech and narrative is blurred, phasing both speech and text into a chain of voluminous production that lines up Emily's consumption with her production and her body with her texts.

When Emily arrives in Paris, one of her many ideas for a new book concerns an autobiographical sketch of herself "Emily Wilkes, in *Double or Nothing*." She drafts a version of herself as her subject. She is encouraged to make this choice because of her "fame, however decayed, shot through and mistaken" (191). Emily sees capital in her own notoriety. During her time in France she elaborates this idea a number of times (230), reaching a crescendo in "Subjects for Emily," a chapter that concentrates on material for Emily's writings of all kinds. Emily suggests to Stephen that this idea is something in her "best style." that would *sell*. In her lengthy synopsis of "The Sorrows of a Really Fat Person Like Me"(301), Emily slides between "she" and "me," between subject and object. The allegory is remarkably nasty; a blackly

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108 Julia Kristeva "Word, Dialogue and Novel," *Desire In Language,: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, ed., Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) 58. Kristeva argues that "The notion of dialogism, which owed much to Hegel, must not be confused with Hegelian dialectics, based on a triad, and this struggle and projection (a movement of transcendence), which does not transgress the Aristotelian tradition founded on substance and causality. Dialogism replaces these concepts by absorbing them within the concept of relation. It does not strive towards transcendence but rather toward harmony, all the while implying an idea of rupture (of opposition and analogy) as a modality of transformation." Simon Dentith also comments that "Bakhtin rejects the dialectic as the way of conceiving the structure of the novel, for the dialectic is a way of recognising conflict and contradiction only to resolve them ultimately." Simon Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) 44.

humourous commodification of her own past, with situations which might make you die, if you did not laugh. Emily's tall tale includes a regional story of her fascination with grotesque (because very fat) people from rural Arkansas. Intriguingly, she comments that they "don't earn." She surmises that "I suppose you'd have to be fatter still to earn a living in a circus" (301). This collocation of fatness, earning power and grotesque spectacle is telling for its insight into the fat lady's self-exploitative (self-commodifying) view about writing and money. It is also a bitter, bitter self-dramatisation—with "some gruesome, funny details. All sorts of superstitions" (302) and strongly features Emily's ambivalent signature claim, "I nearly died laughing." The allegory of America does not offer much in the way of Rabelaisian regeneration. It illustrates Emily's monstrous willingness to sell her own monstrosity—to prostitute her own suffering as a supposedly 'humourous' account of her life that will please the punters and hold off the debtors. At the Holinshed Party in Hollywood (1945), Godfrey Bowles' claims about Emily's "exploitation of her own personality," and "pronounced cult of her own individuality" (100) have, it seems, come true.

At the Holinshed Party, Godfrey Bowles, one of the party faithful, produces a lengthy grotesque catalogue of Emily Wilkes' faults as part of a bid for Florence Howard to obtain the guardianship of Olivia (and her heiress' allowance). This denunciation of parental fitness operates as part of a 'straightening out' delivered by the elitist Hollywood branch of the Communist Party to the 'renegade' Howards. Bowles engages both psychoanalytic ("degenerating psychism" 105) and medico-legal discourses to denounce and discipline Emily. It is a long, repetitive, rhetorical scene, Bowles reading from a prepared testimonial. Bowles offers a 'before and after' structure of Emily's faults: "surely, before, she had had a lively good humour, a natural comic spirit, a broad general wit, an almost gargantuan perception, an unrepressed genial flow of animal spirits" (102). 'After' is characterised by a lack of control over food, speech, behaviour, ideas, money and reality. The grotesque portrait is built up with reference to excesses such as "verbal incontinence," especially relating to her public and political persona. Emily's abject lack of 'form' relates to the body and to rhetorical decorum. Bowles describes a 'progressive' speech for the party:

> There were coarse, hasty blandishments, and arguments whose strong greedy intention immediately crudely appeared, a verbosity approaching surely morbid conditions, a repetition, excitements false and real, frenzy, and

> almost delirious monologues as if the words came out without any censorship. (102-2)

Emily's alleged instability and lack of proper inhibition is matched by a 'hysterical' set of illnesses. These grotesque excesses of food, speech, body and psyche add up, supposedly, to the double of improper maternity and untrustworthy financial sense.

Julia Kristeva has made links with Bakhtin's theoretical *oeuvre* as it intersects with her preoccupation with structuralist linguistics, the maternal and abjection.[109] A prime example of the grotesque in Stead's text involves a description of Emily as the monstrous maternal body. Emily's corruption lies in her ignorance of proper limit, and this includes parental and sexual boundary. This displays itself when Emily, already concerned about her sexual power, and feeling betrayed by Stephen's absence, attempts to seduce Christy, her adoptive son:

> She was putting on weight and very often wore dressing gowns all day long. Stephen would not have cared for that; but at present she did as she pleased and so she lived with and near Christy, in exquisite house-gown and boudoir wraps, of silk, chiffon and lace, bathed, powdered and perfumed, doing his studies with him, sitting by his bed at night and kissing him, kissing him, till the air of the house was to him the odours of her flesh, cosmetics, delicate underclothes and perfumes; till she would see him almost fainting from the odour, worn with sleep, desire, study. (330)

This description is very similar to the descriptions of food, demonstrating a parallel interest in the corrupting lack of proper limit. Kristeva and Bakhtin establish that there are carnivalesque impulses being harnessed through, or absorbed into, the polyphonic novel. Both see the carnival as a privileged instance of ambivalence, dialogue and relational wholeness. Both are interested in various modes of transgression. Only Kristeva assesses the specificity of the feminine in the carnivalesque textual economy in terms of the "powers of horror" of the maternal.[110]

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109 Using Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, founded on the fundamental ambiguity of the linguistic unit, Kristeva formulated her conception of intertextuality. Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" 47.

110 Kristeva would not have read a "woman's" text to find effective Menippean critique, since for her the feminine text cannot evidence a transgressive poetics. Women's texts are hysterical by definition, and therefore already in transgression of certain textual codifications and limits. Kristeva's *a priori* ascription of hysteria to the feminine text poses questions the female-authored carnivalesque text, and its representation of the feminine grotesque. Clair Willis argues that hysteria is an important category in a consideration of

Emily Wilkes' monomaniacal speeches, with their longwindedness, obsessive, cumulative rhythms and strange repetitions, might situate them (since she is a female subject) on the borders of hysteria. However, Emily's monumental output is contextualised as 'gargantuan' rather than hysterical in its compulsiveness. Stead's text has little patience for psychoanalytic readings of Emily, preferring economic analysis: "She sobbed, struggled, strangled, shouted, screamed, with laughter, strong immense laughter, it seemed, *not hysterical*, the great roaring of big lungs and a strong heart"(399).

Russo points out that the space of female performance is characterised by risk and abjection. Stead's portrait of the transgressively excessive woman and her expansive speech-text probes the public (and therefore transgressive) spectacle of the prolific, political and popularly successful woman writer like a sore tooth. Stead's relationship with fame is involved with the representation of the female transgressor (women writer) as public spectacle. The grotesque and unruly Emily is a fraught representation of the consequences of being set loose in the public sphere without a notion of 'limit'. Emily Wilkes' 'bloating' is also indicative of political betrayal and personal delusion—holding together the failure of fame and the loss of bearings. Emily is shown to be the disorderly woman, celebrated and derided for her position in excess of the norm.

Excess is the master trope of *I'm Dying Laughing*. Gender, genre and rhetorical tradition are all bound to a poetics of transgression in Stead's satire. By this I mean the supercession of certain sexual and textual decorums. Emily is the complex site of a number of different transgressions: bodily, egotistical, political, feminine, maternal. As an expatriate American she is of interest to this thesis. It is as an expatriate woman writer that she is indispensable.

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the transgressive potential of the feminine because it works through the relations between *the excluded and the law*, as well as performance. The feminine and the carnival are anomalous zones with respect to the law. Clair Willis, "Upsetting the Public: Carnival Hysteria and Women's Texts," *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepard (Manchester: Manchester UP , 1989) 136.

The Literary Fat Lady

Emily Wilkes, Stead's "literary fat lady," must be read within the historical context of twentieth century fictional critiques of capitalism, which use and re-use a series of fat-inflated figures to trope capitalist decadence and corruption. Where Patricia Parker's investigation of the textual figure of the 'literary fat lady' works mainly in the early modern period, it nonetheless sheds handsome light on the rhetorical and ideological operations of *I'm Dying Laughing*. Parker's position on the intersection of rhetoric, gender and generativity resonates with Stead's satirical project in *I'm Dying Laughing*. Parker's aim is to demonstrate "the link between the amplification of discourse and the expansive textual figure of the 'fat lady' both within the Renaissance and beyond."[111] Her account of the links between "female copia, of body and of word, and the copiousness of texts" works mainly with the male authored romance of the sixteenth century. Parker argues that, although the texts on which she concentrates are male authored, the collocation between copious textual/feminine body depends not so much on authorship as "the existence and adoption of a form which involves a combination and double movement of textual expansion with closure or 'point.'"[112] The gender of authorship is of some consequence in this consideration of the development and continuation of misogynist topos such as women's endless talkativeness and, by extension, their boundaryless bodies. *I'm Dying Laughing*, uses the rhetorical modes of dilation and copia which are clearly connected to the feminine-effeminate, and therefore retain a significantly misogynist charge.

Satire's generic features therefore complicate and contradict a number of Parker's assertions, which are based on her reading of romance. The matter of formal closure in satire is always difficult, whether or not there is a figure of textual expansion that must be mastered. The dilation before coming to a phallic 'point' is all very well for the shapes of romance. Satire, particularly menippean satire, is conditioned to be 'out of shape.' Menippean satire traditionally has problems with closure, with 'point.' Stead once described her UNO 1945 chapter (originally the first) as "full of energy . . . I meant it to go from fire to more fire to fierier still; it has a very terrible dramatic end, I

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111 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 2.

112 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 34.

wanted it to be a build up all the way through."[113] Fire is the figure of increase, consumption, escalation—of textual expansion and destruction. The end of *I'm Dying Laughing* presents a conflagration (Stephen's suicide) as an apocalyptic dilation before the end, but there is not so much a close (a 'point') as a dissolution. Emily's copious unsent letters and manuscripts flying around the Forum Romanum do not provide a model of mastery or limit. Is this the female authored mastery of the wayward body of the feminine satiric text?

Rhetoric

Parker's identification of the rhetorical tradition of 'copia' and the ways in which copia is gendered feminine (or effeminate) is explicated through the textual figure of the fat lady. Emily Wilkes's body and texts answer to the collocation of fat textual body and rhetorical copia. It is difficult to demonstrate her textual/bodily dilation without quoting at length. "Sorrows of a Really Fat Person Like Me" is an example of textual amplitude about amplitude (exaggeration, repetition, tall, tale, hyperbole, culminating in hysterical laughter). This characteristic monologue continues without interruption for three pages. The dimension of this discourse is directly analogous with a discourse of body size. The degree of verbal generation escalates continuously into excess. Emily seemingly never takes breath; her monologues expand in the text, enlarging and becoming more and more manic, and wayward, more 'out of bounds.' In Parker's words, Emily demonstrates "the putting off ending with the increase of a copious supply of intermediate words."[114] Copia is a classical rhetorical method used to expand discourse. Dilation upon certain subject matter was necessarily, however, linked to an ability to control that dilation in order to prevent excess.

Derrida argues that the privileging of speech over writing is a necessity of the metaphysics of presence. Speech seems to carry full presence—and the metaphysical concepts of being in time and in space demand presence. Speech seems to indicate that the speaker's thoughts are as close as possible to their words—and therefore offer a direct, and in Emily's case, uncensored,

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113 R. G. Geering , Intro. I'm *Dying Laughing* (1986; Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1989) viii.

114 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 19.

access to consciousness. No lapse of time, or surface, or gap, should occur between speech and thought. The irony for Stead's drive to represent overwhelming presence, is that it is written speech which partakes of the absence implied by writing. The order of writing is distance, delay, opacity and ambiguity. The seductive, persuasive, corrupting powers of speech are part of Stead's aggressive mimesis—her naturalistic, ethnographic ambitions to inscribe full presence, with little or no mediation. The following example uses a marine metaphor from Stead's naturalist background:

> Merry, eh? We're a side splitting set. It gives you confidence in sharks. Do you want to write a selling story? Man, soft bodied, brave man against those devils of the deep. Sharks don't march down the current and form vigilante groups to tear up other sharks. I hope we don't find soft, gentle jellies of our ilk somewhere else in space, progressive ones who've got a few centuries ahead of us in blood-letting and soul-freezing. (10-11)

The fact that Emily Wilkes is a 'lifelike' portrait of a 'real' person, Ruth McKenney, means that there is a reality to which Stead constantly referred for 'accuracy.'

I'm Dying Laughing declares its self-conscious interest in rhetoric through Emily's repetitious support for Cicero, the great Roman orator. Emily enfolds Cicero into a defensive narrative of the great but weak orator, a middle class man among aristocrats, corrupted in a period of late imperial Roman decadence.

> The tradition of rhetorical dilation—with its references to the "swelling" style or its relation to the verbal "interlarding" produced through an excessive application of the principle of "increase"—provides its own link between fat bodies and discoursing "at large," between the size of discourse and the question of body size. Ascham's Schoolmaster treats of the use of "epitome" in reducing the inflated bulk of an oration through the example of the need to put an "overfat" and "fleshy" style on a diet, as Cicero did in order to rid himself of "grossness."[115]

Stead's homology between Emily and Cicero locates itself in the uncovering of corruption through the examination of correspondence. Emily's correspondence is a prime textual instance of the connection between her excessive egoism and indiscriminate textual production. Christy's tutor, Monsieur Jean-Claude, cites a new work, *Secrets of Cicero's Correspondence,*

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115 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 14.

in which the scholar denounces Cicero as corrupt with money—in debt and financially ruined. The synopsis makes for a thinly veiled portrait of the Howards:

> The politician is shown here so odious that his misfortunes come as the punishment of unpardonable faults into which he was plunged by the mistakes of a kind too self-centred to be farsighted and the false moves of a will too weak to overcome the crises in which his generation struggled. (338)

Emily replies to this portrait of her with a defensive counter-version of Cicero, which makes a particular note of class

> Why was he ashamed? Was there anyone who did not do the same? It was because he was not an aristocrat, for aristocrats never are sorry or ashamed, they know the rules of conquest and living better than your neighbour, but because he was at heart a mild, good-natured middle-class man. . .Oh, poor Cicero; and in the end, bought to an unfortunate end, to shame, with all his kindness to his family and all the letters he wrote to his friends, showing such devotion, and his magnificent passionate oratory defending in the courts, so he was thought sublime, the greatest orator of all of Rome. (339)

Later, in the "Struggle for Christy," Emily makes for Cicero (and therefore herself) what Parker identifies as a "dilatory plea," a judicial tradition of rhetorical dilation, a means of putting off judgement, or execution.[116]

> Emily seemed to dilate. She smiled, her eyes shone, she flushed and for at least three-quarters of an hour she continued to exhort the harassed, gloomy, restless, nauseated and, at length, depressed and exhausted Monsieur Laroche. (376)

The analogy made with Cicero shifts in the course of the text to align Emily with Danton (pragmatic revolutionary), and finally Marie Antoinette, taking the parallel with Roman decadence through to the French Revolution; another instance of the decline and fall of a lavishly corrupt empire. The question of gender, as well as the position of the writer, is interesting here, as Emily is aligned with both masculine and feminine corruption. Emily's final project deals with a 'tragic' and helpless Marie Antoinette in the final days before her execution. Emily's sympathies with the queen mark the political path she has taken, moving from solidarity with the workers, to

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116 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 16. Emily's dilatory plea for Marie Antoinette resonates with an effort to stave off her own end, since she identifies with the French Queen. In addition, the dilated account of Versailles is the space before the apocalypse, the deferral before the end.

sympathy for a corrupt aristocratic wife, possibly (Emily eventually suggests) an innocent and hapless victim of hierarchical and geographic mobility.

Maternity

Parker comments that:

> Still another use of 'dilation' occurs in the context of propagation and generation . . . The generational joins the rhetorical and hermeneutic here through the fact that the command to 'increase and multiply' which stands behind this kind of dilation has its rhetorical counterpart in the tradition of the copia of discourse.[117]

Emily achieves neither the endless production of children, nor the 'vagrant' female sexuality that Parker argues also tropes female excess. Nonetheless, Emily sees her fertility as an essential aspect of her femininity and creativity.

> Yes, I'm pregnant. Oh, it's so fine. It's what I want. I always know because of this splendid rich full feeling, this wholesome creating feeling . . . do you know a woman feels different each time she's pregnant? I suppose that is the basis of the personality; or its connected—well—this time, I feel as if I'm swimming in a bed of lilies, like those floating islands in Mexico. (177)

Emily produces only one child of her own, Giles, and otherwise mothers two wards, Olivia (Stephen's child by a previous marriage) and Christy (the son of Stephen's wayward sister), who, as I will later argue operate in an interesting role of surrogacy and the provision of capital. Emily's reaction to Stephen's suggestion of a hysterectomy is to locate her femininity at the level of the body. She does not consider this surgery as liberating, she does not want to be unburdened from reproduction, since the possibility of fertility carries her "essential" womanhood, part of the ideology of proper femininity:

> Without my sex and womb, I'm not a woman, my character would change, I'd be nothing and I wouldn't want to live. I'm a woman all ways. I like it and I won't have that . . . I know where my feelings spring from, not only the brain, but from everywhere, I am myself everywhere. (187)

The combination of the image of the "floating island" from above, with Emily's 'all ways' femininity, figures maternity in direct series with the dilated body of the fat lady and the dilated body of the text.[118] Emily's bodily

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117 Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies* 15.

118 Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (1977; Ithaca: Cornell

all-at-onceness testifies again to her persistent inability to identify proper boundary: psychic, physical, spoken, textual. Sam Pollitt is another monstrous parent who trespasses on psychic and physical space. Stephen's description of Emily's maternity crosses the discourse of natural phenomenon ('volcano') with a figure of superabundant excess (female giant) and also with a capricious and untrustworthy feminine Fate. The masculinity of both 'sons' is at stake in their relationships with Anna and Emily Howard respectively:

> I've asked Christy to be good to Emily. He loves her, I'm sure, though he's afraid of her —a volcano like that is not for a small boy. And Christy will be a small boy for some time to come. Then he may marry a volcano. There is Fate standing ahead of him, *like a giant woman*. Fate seems friendly, even maternal. And like all mothers, you never know what turn she is going to give the play. (440, my emphasis)

The maternal is a crucial aspect of *I'm Dying Laughing's* discourses of excess. However, Emily's main vagrancy is neither copious fertility nor threatening female sexuality. Her waywardness is concentrated in her superabundant and indiscriminate production of all kinds of text, wherever she is. She endlessly produces text, plans for texts, letters and journal entries.

The Literary Fat Lady is an Expatriate Woman Writer

> Her room was furnished mainly with steel files containing copies of her voluminous writings of all sorts, her diary, her correspondence, the material for many novels and stories, copies of all her lectures and articles, bundles of clippings, household bills and the children's school reports; as well as the exercise books in which she carefully went over their lessons with them. Yet she consumed hours, weeks in all, writing to friends and otherwise wasting time. (50-51)

The question of female generativity in *I'm Dying Laughing* concerns not only the labour of reproduction, but the crucial productive labour of the woman writer to generate text and earn a living. Emily's textual generativity, and the commodity value of some of these texts, is the greatest fascination of the text.

The mastery of Emily's text had been in Stephen's hands, the refined male editor, and owner of the means of production. Although the text decrees

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UP, 1985) Irigaray's notion of the two unseen lips constantly touching, constantly doubled presents an interesting corollary.

that the Howards' reading partnership is destructive, it is both a version of heterosexual complementarity, as well as a version of the operation of female generativity at the centre of means of production.

> Emily had an open secret, her journal, *Journal of Days Under the Sun* she called it. It went everywhere with her. It had now reached its twelfth volume. She had the irresistible duty imposed by her nature, her verbal excess and her genius, to record all her life in a great diary. In this she wrote all that had happened to her, she recorded not only the flattering letters she had written to the rich, to kind and complimentary reviewers, the loving and generous letters to friends, sarcastic revelatory letters, tender and tough letters to editors and agents; she not only wrote all this in her journal but at times she made extracts from it and sent them to persons appropriate or not with a good deal of recklessness, devil-may-care or innocent freedom; her views of this and that; and the outcries of her passion, disappointments, their anticipants, follies and venalities.
>
> Stephen feared this journal as nothing else. He was not allowed into her study when she was working, so her could not control her. He never knew whether his golden goose was laying golden eggs or merely reading to catch up with the children or pleasing Vittorio, sporting with her journal, writing letters to a hundred different people, old and new, or reading novels voraciously. (265)

Emily Wilkes, and the texts she produces, obey the law of increase though exaggeration and repetition Emily proclaims "I can't do without anything" (112), and her body and her texts follow this appetitive ruling against lack. Her textual production follows the profit motive of the capitalist market into overproduction. However, her voluminous textual production does not solely concern the market; although they are assessed for saleability and sometimes concern money, her journals and letters are productions of self.

Emily's generation of text(s) turns, especially as the political tide complicates itself in Part II, into degeneration—until finally Emily is close to forms of pathological behaviour and madness. Her relentlessly chronicled self-delusion, betrayal and addiction is partnered by an indiscriminate overabundance. This excess is effectively troped by the table decorations that Emily creates for unwelcome dinners at Christmas, and for Stephen's return. Moral decadence, in the form of political hypocrisy, infidelity and incest is matched by linguistic degeneration such as catachresis (*abusio*), nonsense inversions of order and rule, paradoxes and illogicality.

Conclusion: Dying *and* Laughing

"I'm dying laughing" is one of Emily's repetitious declarations. It is a paradoxical construction indicating continuous action. It indicates her serio-comic brand of humour, an appropriately hybrid variety for the political outlaw, the textual outlaw and the outlawed feminine:

> Suddenly she shivered a little, but it was a giggle. It increased: she began to laugh. She laughed outright, frankly, hilariously: she roared with laughter. . .Haw, haw, haw. The house rang with her gigantic laughter. "Ha-ha-ha, oh-hoho." She got up and tried to walk about, "Stephen oh-hoho, save me! She fell on the bed and turned on her side trying to stifle her laughter. 'How-haw-haw, oh, my god, oh-ho-ho, I shall die!"
> She sobbed, struggled, strangled, shouted, screamed with laughter, strong, immense laughter, it seemed, not hysterical, the great roaring of big lungs and a strong heart.
> Stephen turned on the light and sat up. Her face was crimson, tears poured out of her eyes. Her bosom heaved convulsively. He said, "Stop it! You'll have convulsions. Stop! Stop it! He slapped her. " (399-400)

The double presence of death and laughter is ambivalent and foregrounds Emily's body. In addition, the quotation is a marvellous example of Stead's extraordinary ability to make characters "present" through speech. The physicality, and the semiosis of Emily is overpowering as she literally almost dies laughing in the face of tremendous personal tragedy and degeneration. The contradiction of dying and laughing are not sublated here into a third term, they inflate instead. Emily's personal and textual inflation concerns the irreconcilable conflict of a romantic individualism and a commitment to collective identity. Preference for amplification and exaggeration is a hallmark of ambivalence because it can then contain the flux of contradiction. Other modes of exaggeration as a rhetoric of significance include the childish, the feminine and the mad; all of which Emily engages at one time or another.

Susan Stewart's work on the gigantic in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* is of great interest for the characterisation of Emily. I pick up Stephen's rhetoric of Emily as overwhelming 'natural force' as well as the "great roaring of big lungs and a strong heart." Earlier in the text Stephen says 'affectionately:' "'You are a public danger, a monster, a terror, but never a bore, if a bore, well, the sort that has never been seen before; and so a phenomenon'" (354). Stewart relates that the giant was a stalwart of hyperbole in grotesque realism, and was associated with the market fair and attendant feasts. The giant was a

symbol of surplus and licentiousness, of over abundance and unlimited consumption.

My thematisation of the expatriate woman writer as renegade has produced transgression and ambivalence as the most important features of Emily Wilkes' supercession of limit. The giant also possesses the tremendous capacity to be both destructive and productive. Emily similarly possesses a vast creativity that bears within it the capacity for self destruction. The giant symbolises exaggerated physical force and lawlessness, and an overabundance of the natural that is an affront to cultural demarcations because it threatens abjection.

After he has "sung" to the American Embassy and before his suicide, Stephen comments with bitter irony: "The renegade husband and wife, the perfect American couple, loyal to each other and to the country" (437). Stephen has betrayed the party and is also a "Man Without a Country," Emily has been adulterous, and he has considered leaving her. Emily asks the following question, one which points to the difference between Emily and Stephen as renegades: "If we remain communists in reality, in our heart, what difference does it make? They'll say we're not communists, but bohemians, compromisers, splitters and traitors" (387), which is exactly what the party did to the then loyal Howards. This chapter has used constructions of 'the renegade' as a way of categorising expatriate modalities of filiation, excess and transgression.

I see *I'm Dying Laughing* as a renegade text in its production and reception. It posthumousness, and unfinishedness dovetail with exaggeration and repetition to make for a general lack of textual decorum. It is an outlaw of decorum. The use of serio-comic menippean satire, by and about a female satirist, makes for an 'outlaw' genre, although satire has often been used to discipline the garrulous and unruly woman. Representations of the feminine grotesque reprise themes of excess, risk, imposture and wandering. Critics of *I'm Dying Laughing* must now begin a re-consideration of the Emily, Ruth Christina triangle and the way in which satiric invective and satiric monstrosity circulate and recirculate between them. Yet satire has always contained elements of delight, and *I'm Dying Laughing* delights in its portrait of the tremendous life force that is the ungovernable Emily Wilkes. Emily's powerful excesses, her transgressions of order, of size and speech, her disrespect for the law, her overproduction, her rebelliousness and her

disruption are as much desired as they are censured. Her end is a cautionary tale about limit and the breaking of filiation, but also about creativity and individuality.

4

Double Vision: The Politics and Poetics of Dislocation in Janette Turner Hospital

> Expatriates and nomads do it with double vision and reverberations. . . There is always static: Brisbane humming below Boston, descant pips from Canada and then India, Australia in the 1940s seeping up through Australia in the 1980s. . . double vision becomes triple, becomes multiple. [1]

I The Postmodern Double

The figure of the double is an uncanny phenomenon. In terms of Freud's *unheimlich*, the double can be the immortal part of the self that transcends death, or a ghostly harbinger of death. The territory of the unhomely was addressed Chapter one, where the loss of possession of the singular self was fatal Maurice Guest. In postmodernity, the double has come to represent a mode of managing anxiety, often used as a shield against the abyss of little or no reference. Doubling is usually the result of fracture and division, and it is a composite figure which narrates the disturbing loss, even amnesiac relation to, familiar ground or origin. Doubling often leads to a frightening further proliferation so that "double vision becomes triple, becomes multiple" and the subject of multiple vision finds themselves groundless and in disarray. Robert Rogers calls this multiple fragmentation "decomposition," which is synonymous with splitting and doubling.[2] Personal memory provides the most precious, yet precarious, form of personal history. It is memory, although itself a doubling of past and present, that will ground the fractured narrator and characters and provide them with an ethics for action in the bewildering transnational present. The political importance in Hospitals' expatriate narrative of witnessing and other acts of recuperation exist alongside reflexive textual effects that cast 'knowing' anything into a highly provisional light.

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1 Francine Ringold, "Margins Within Margins: an Interview with Janette Turner Hospital," *Nimrod: International Journal of Poetry and Prose* 36.2 (1992): 30.

2 Robert Rogers, *A Psychoanalytic Study of The Double in Literature*(Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1970) 4.

In this chapter I scrutinise the politics and poetics of postmodern displacement in *Borderline* (1985) and *The Last Magician* (1992). I use the figure of the double to organise the chapter in three parts. The first double is Janette Turner Hospital's dual position as writer *and* interpreter of her own locations of writing, as part of a larger examination of the social and historical relations of postmodern production and reception for the Australian expatriate woman writer. In section one I 'close read' the texts of Hospital's self-positioning, and include an analysis of the meaning and role of postmodernity (as an analysis of the contemporary) in Hospital's work. The second section, "Double Trouble," examines textual examples of doubling with particular reference to genre and mode, 'twin' narrators and tropological systems. Genre is integral to the construction of persistently doubled narrative point of view and to the doubled tropological systems that express something of a postmodern experience of disorientation and marginality. Although narrative confusion, intrusion and self consciousness are prevalent aspects of style and substance in Hospital's fictions, the central concept about the duality of world and experience quite clearly engages a politics of vigilance, testimony and memory. The third section, "Double Exposure," looks at the doubling of the visual and verbal in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* as methods for making sense of a prismatic world. The final section forms a coda to the thesis. Here, I speculate about the politics of the disappearing woman and the mobile woman writer who represents her. Hospital's fictions warn of the dystopic possibilities of a postmodern "tourism," particularly for the feminine and other positions of political and social marginality.

Jean-Francois Lyotard suggests that postmodernity inaugurates a loss of totality and narrative, and therefore continuity and meaning. His position implies a radical loss of perceptual coordinates in the postmodern world.[3] According to Jean Baudrillard the postmodern subject experiences a brand of hallucinogenic hyperreality which deprives them of their ability to stabilise themselves in space and time.[4] As part and parcel of "the postmodern

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3 Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984).

4 In *Simulations* , Baudrillard argues that today the mass media have neutralised reality in stages: first reflecting it; then masking and perverting it; next, masking its absence; and finally producing in its stead the simulacrum of the 'real,' the destruction of meaning and all relation to reality. Baudrillard's model has come under attack for the metaphysical idealism of its view of the 'real', for its nostalgia for a pre-mass-media authenticity and for its apocalyptic nihilism. But there is an even more basic objection to his assumption that it is (or

condition," the subject can experience, without moving anywhere, what I have identified in previous chapters as key aspects of expatriation: discontinuity; fragmentation; the need to understand confusing surroundings, and the use of representation to imaginatively make meaning and thereby take possession of estranging positionality. Lucy reports in *The Last Magician* that the purpose of expatriate representation (visual and verbal) is:

> to observe more sharply, to set everything down, to record the minutiae, to add to the documentation on premonition, coincidence and chance, to know what we know, so that we may inch ourselves towards that place from which everything will be seen and understood . . . "That is why I take photographs," said Charlie. (95)

Anthony Vidler argues that:

> A postmodern uncanny has been construed . . . For Lacan, the uncanny formed the starting point for his examination of anxiety, the very "image of lack," for Derrida, the uncanny lurks behind the unstable links between signifier and signified, the author and the text, for Baudrillard, its propensity for the double, for the elision between reality and fiction, its insistent *trompe l'oeil* gives it a central role in the explication of the simulacrum.[5]

Lacan's 'lack,' Derrida's unstable relation between author and text, and Baudrillard's simulacra are all features of Hospital's texts because they systematically investigate alienation, uncertainty, and the potential for 'home.' The importance of doubleness in vision, self, genre, trope and world concerns estrangement, which is produced from the divisions constitutive of identity *in* mobility. Hospital thematises dividedness as the loss of an important Other, often a 'twin self.' In *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* the central characters work through the destabilising effects of the disappearance of their double, narrating their life and memories from a 'doubled' point of view, one half of which is absent. As such, Hospital's

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was) ever possible to have unmediated access to reality: have we ever known the 'real' except through representations? Linda Hutcheon, "Postmodernism's Ironic Paradoxes: Politics and Art," *Remembering Postmodernism: Trends in Recent Canadian Art*, ed. Mark Cheetham (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991) 116. Hutcheon cites Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).

5 Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992) 9-10. Vidler cites Jacques Lacan, "L'Agnoisse" seminar 1962-3, unpublished transcript, Jacques Derrida, "La Double Seance," *La Dissemination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972) 249; and Jean Baudrillard, *De la Seduction* (Paris: Seuil, 1979) 91.

doubled narratives in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* split, cross, repeat, defer, slip and reconstruct.

Hospital persistently points to everyday elisions between reality and fiction, and works through the double of reality and unreality. These doubles are unstable, and Hospital's metafictive awareness gestures precisely to this doubled instability. She uses doubled genres, such as detective fiction and the medieval quest, to structure her insights into the central double of the text, presence and absence. The double narration (double gender) in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* question the 'real' with respect to an 'other' realism (the fantastic), as well as ironically thematising issues of sexuality and violence. The 'double vision' of image and text organises experiences of alienation and invention (estrangement) for the displaced person. The dialogism inaugurated through the systematic use of the double creates a productive hybridity as well as transgressive aesthetics of reading and writing.

David Callanhan has argued that: "An increasingly mobile world has made the shock of meeting radical difference an ever more frequent psychological occurrence."[6] Hospital is clearly committed to the contemporary validation of the Other. The double or twinned characters in her texts provide ways for exploring and mediating a range of Otherness: social, sexual, cultural and linguistic. Callanhan claims that Hospital's aim is to represent a cohabitation with the Other, even in its multiple modes of difference in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician.* Hospital destabilises the relations between selves, destabilising the sameness-difference contract of identity. Hospital's use of the double signals her interest in processes of difference and identification in the zone of postmodern displacement where the boundaries between subjects and objects are becoming ever more eroded. Doubleness structures the play of loss, recuperation and compensation.

In terms of Australian expatriate women writers, Janette Turner Hospital's peripatetic writing life, her mobility between major cosmopolitan centres, and among post-colonial and neo-imperial peripheries, invites speculation about the new discursive possibilities of the figure of the travelling postcolonial woman. It is these possibilities, trans-national and

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6 David Callanhan, "Becoming Different in the Work of Janette Turner Hospital," *Ariel* 28:2 (1997): 24.

translational, that makes Hospital's work relevant to this thesis. Her operation within contemporary western markets underlines the "scrambling" of location, audience and identifications for the contemporary expatriate writer. The multiple sites of editing, distribution and review in the early and middle parts of the century have, in Hospital's case, accelerated tremendously to give her a "global nomad" market position and wide-ranging international exposure in the relatively short period since the publication of her first novel in 1982.

Janette Turner Hospital's fictions indicate that the kinds of expatriate mobility undertaken and represented by Henry Handel Richardson and Christina Stead are not the kind undertaken and represented in a late western capitalist context of global information networks and telecommunications. Patricia Waugh has described "late western capitalism" as:

> an era of capitalist expansion where the spatial and temporal compression of the globe (through information technologies, search for new markets, financial development) is producing a crisis in traditional conceptualisations of identity and history.[7]

It is the combination of late capitalist spatio-temporal compression and the spatio-temporal fractures of dislocation that interest me in this chapter. Waugh's definition suggests that the social relations of capital, science and technology have intimately restructured the situation of national and personal time and space. Anne Friedberg offers this description of contemporaneity:

> In the mid-1980s, new electronic technologies transfigured the network of everyday communications: cash machines in airports, phones on airplanes and in automobiles, computer terminals in libraries, fax machines everywhere. These technologies appeared with a suddenness that made one consider the science fiction future as the present. The momentous shifts in global politics in the late 1980s were, I would argue, produced as much by these new technologies as by political and ideological shifts . . . The boundaries of space and time which were so radically challenged by "modernity" have been, again, radically transformed.[8]

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7 Patricia Waugh, "Postmodernism," *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992) 341.

8 Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993) xii.

Subjectivities are becoming increasingly detemporalised and derealised. In response to these transformations of postmodernity, Friedberg theorises a position she calls the "mobilised virtual gaze" referring to the ability, via telecommunications, visual and information technology, for the subject to access locations "virtually," without moving. Friedberg elects the gaze, and the subject's relation to visuality, as a point from which to assess the changes wrought on time, space and subjectivity in the move from modernism to postmodernism.[9]

Currently, if you have access to the technology (predominantly a first world access), you have the ability physically to be almost anywhere in the world within one day. This compression of time and space must inevitably impact on "traditional conceptualisations of identity and history" and traditional conceptualisations of expatriation. Although the global and local have not become homogenous (as predicted), the effects of media and other mechanisms of global capital have undone the meanings of "home" and "away" as understood through modernity. The meanings instituted through the use of the term expatriation in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century (especially in terms of literary modernism) have also altered. Postmodern first world subjects are developing a knowledge of acting in a dispersed global situation. The postmodern features of displacement and marginality, and the dimensions of new kinds of cultural and national mobility, means that expatriation needs to be re-examined in the light of historical and technological development. In other words, what happened between 1955, when Stead put aside the first large draft of *I'm Dying Laughing* and 1985, when *Borderline* was published? New affiliations between past and present, home and away, have been formulated in a world that exhibits unprecedented access to itself. How does a thematics of expatriation work within the social and textual formations of the postmodern and postcolonial? What kinds of subjectivity, representation and identity emerge in the contemporary expatriate text?

Bruce Bennett refers to "the bifocal vision that characterises talented expatriate writers."[10] This "bifocal vision" is the product of a division

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9 Friedberg 2-3.

10 Bruce Bennett, "Perceptions of Australia, 1965-1988," *The Penguin New Literary History*, ed. L. Hergenhan (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin , 1988) 437.

produced by the expatriate leaving one nation-space for another. This division splits past and present locations, and bifurcates place of residence (away) from place of origin (home). Such divisions lead to a doubling, even a multiplication, of location and perspective. The 'doubles' of inside-outside, past-present, home-away, self-other, absent-present, invoke questions about origin and identity. Hospital's strategy of doubling constantly requires us to look in two directions: most pressingly she invites a 'double take' on the cross-eyed inside-outside, as well as past and present. The most important double or overlay for this chapter is the virtual coexistence of past and present, absent and present.

Many of Hospital's fictions examine the forms and consequences of dislocation or cultural rupture. By cultural rupture, I mean a variety of temporal and spatial breaks in cultural systems comprised of same-different economies of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and class. Hospital often represents cultural rupture through tropes of spatial division: borders, fissures, underground and other parallel worlds. *Borderline* (1985) and *The Last Magician*(1992) revolve around the catastrophic revelation of a plurality of worlds, and the confusing proliferations that stem from divisions in a previous unity and safety of knowledge and experience. Several of Hospital's locations have precisely the character of the *unheimlich*—both homely and unhomely, where the strange is contained *in* the familiar.

Production, Reception and the "Global Nomad"

With the publication of *Oyster* (1997), Janette Turner Hospital consolidated her double market position as "global nomad" *and* original exotic Queenslander. "Global nomad" is a term that inaugurates a new subject position for the Australian expatriate woman writer. Hospital is the only author in this thesis to produce any extended commentary on the relationship between expatriation, her fiction and the fictional process. Hospital is also the first to claim expatriate/global nomad as a self-conscious subject position and her analysis provides another interesting text for my analysis of Australian expatriate women writers across the twentieth century. In order to read Hospital "against the grain" I want to position her comments about her own marginality and cosmopolitanism in alignment with her fiction; not as a rubric for it, but rather as part of an analysis of postmodern and postcolonial expatriate authorship. I see Hospital's claims to global nomadism as part of a larger discourse of cultural production and

reception, a discourse that needs to be highlighted in order to guard against the dehistoricisation of the writer's connection with diverse national and political identities. This is particularly so in the case of the expatriate woman writer, since misrecognitions of gender, genre and nation have been commonplace.

Hospital's "global nomad" self-positioning, developed consistently in interviews given since 1982, deploys the terminology of certain contemporary theory, and enacts her own critical categorisation.[11] In some sense this kind of anticipation closes down, or fails to "authorise," certain interpretative positions, those outside the category of nomadic, for example. One is reminded of Christina Stead's caveats on her work, caveats that are certainly most productively resisted.[12] Hospital's commentary interacts interestingly with the development of her fictional method, often reflecting the concerns of her latest novel. I see Hospital's self-positioning as made up of a complex set of factors, one of which involves the phenomenon of the university educated contemporary author and the 'reach' of these authors into literary hermeneutic discourses. Another factor is the relation of the contemporary author to the western market, and his or her tremendous status, despite poststructural calls for the "death of the author," as literary celebrities are required to tour extensively in order to promote their product.

Janette Turner Hospital was born in Melbourne in 1942 and moved with her working class, fundamentalist Pentecostal family to Brisbane when she was seven. She cites Queensland as her 'home.' She married in 1965, left for Harvard in 1967 and later moved to Kingston, Ontario in 1971. She has also lived in Southern India, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, with writers-in-residence terms in locations as diverse as Boston, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, East Anglia and Sussex. She has been writing since 1975. Since 1982

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11 Hospital acccounts for her texts in terms such as "baroque" and "nomadic." For example: "The rainforest is nature at its most baroque. My prose reflects that." Her emphasis on her 'exotic' origins can be linked to the 'baroque metaphors' and 'tropical aesthetic' of the Latin American and southern American authors as a position with particular meaning for the American market. Her claims, when in Australia, that Queensland is marginalised in terms of literary politics, shores up the marginal exotic self-positioning so useful in the American and Canadian market.

12 The act of situational self-definition, or the production of terms for one's own reception, presents slippery issues in terms of the twin problematic of authorship and subjectivity. Hospital is a metafictional writer, and one of the functions of metafiction is to provide a critical rubric for reading and interpretation, which she does quite consciously.

she has published two collections of short stories and seven novels, one of which was a detective novel written under the pseudonym, Alex Juniper. She has also extensively reviewed fiction for a variety of international newspapers and periodicals. Hospital has been anthologised in Australian, British and Canadian collections of short fiction. Hospital's listings as an author extend from the major Australian biographical reference works to the *Who's Who in Canada, Who's Who of Canadian Writers, Contemporary American Authors, Who's Who of American Women, Who's Who of Emerging Leaders in America, The British International Dictionary of Biography* and a *Directory of Writers* published in New Delhi (and this is not an exhaustive list). Hospital's books are generally sold in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and England. Her work has also been translated into several European languages. Hospital exemplifies a late twentieth century mastery of a large section of the western market, a mastery not shared by either Richardson or Stead.

In 1992, Hospital told Francine Ringold:

> Every year I am in three countries. This overlay is going on all the time, also because I am a medievalist, who grew up in a postcolonial culture, and in the margins of the culture at that, the subtropical hick state margins of Australia.[13]

Postcoloniality and marginality are identified here, with the interesting American idiomatic use of "hick." Hospital suggests that her "overlay" is not only geographical, temporal and epistemological, it is also intimately bound up with marginality. It is an interesting marginality to sustain in the face of other kinds of positions. In 1993 Hospital told Christina Hamelin that "my life is nomadic and international, so it figures that I'm going to observe movements across borders."[14]

The marginality of region, discipline, postcolonial nation has, however, ensured materials for a career as a writer. In the following comment I discern a coextensive relation for Hospital between expatriation and authorship:

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13 Francine Ringold, "Margins within Margins" 30.

14 Christine Hamelin, "Novelist as Urgent Questor: An Interview with Janette Turner Hospital," *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada* 9 (1993): 106.

> that's the thing about a very muddled and nomadic life—like being a housewife using leftovers. There's nothing you can't use eventually if you become a writer, and I think that's one of the reasons I became a writer. My life was dislocated so many times, there really wasn't anything else I could do with all the junk, except become a writer. Once you do that, you are independent fairly much of place and it's all useable—even muggings in Boston. [15]

Hospital states in the same interview that the needs of children contribute to the dislocations of a woman's life, but such dislocations are rich and therefore "full of writing material."[16] Dislocation is positioned as fertile for authorship, and further interviews demonstrate that Hospital considers expatriate experience as vital to her writing.

In an "An Expatiation in Expatriation," Hospital produces a commentary on the nature of Australian expatriatism in the late 1980s. At this point expatriate rather than global nomad seems to apply: "It would seem that countries with a clear sense of identity and destiny are never threatened (though they may be bewildered) by the idea of expatriation."[17] At the end of that interview, Hospital gives this account of being at an International Authors' Festival in Toronto: "And I thought: maybe this is the country I belong to now, the *In Transit* Lounge of the Wandering Scribe Tribe . . . Expatriates all, we belong to the Ones who don't Belong. We Live in Limbo."[18] This foregrounds a founding contradiction of the article, that she feels Australian 'in her gut,' but it also positions her as outsider who doesn't belong anywhere. The number of different writers' festivals, and the number of countries included in Hospital's promotional tours is very much a feature of the contemporary book trade.

The "Scribe Tribe" fits a category Caren Kaplan (among others) has identified as the cosmopolitan or diasporic subject. Kaplan argues that a notion of the cosmopolitan or diasporic subject has emerged in Euro-American criticism over the last decade: "beyond the older socialist paradigm of the 'international,' the cosmopolitan intellectual as migrant figure signals for

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15 Ron Store, "Interview with Janette Turner Hospital" *LINQ* 17. 1 (1990): 23.

16 Store, "Interview with Janette Turner Hospital" 35.

17 Hospital, "An Expatiation on Expatriation," *Overland* 114 (1989): 36.

18 Hospital, "An Expatiation on Expatriation" 39.

many either the liberatory or negative effects of an increasingly transnational world."[19] The 'stars' of world literature define a certain kind of postmodern transnationalism. Kaplan suggests that paradoxically, the cosmopolitan subject as 'celebrity author' or critic is materially linked to the weakening of national states in the advent of transnational capital configurations, even as such shifts in cultural and national identity pose the "national question" more strongly than ever.[20]

Ahmed Aijaz claims that the cosmopolitan author is a "citizen of the world" by virtue of independent means, high tech tastes and globe-trotting mobility," similar claims made of the middle class men of the lost Generation. Bruce Robbins defends the cosmopolitan subject from charges of cynical marketeering.[21] Robbins argues that there is a viable (respectable) practice of cosmopolitanism via professionalism. In the discourse of authorial professionalism, the technologies and apparatus of western publishing have had an enormous impact on the role of the author and the meanings of authorship where national affiliation, a staple of authorial identity, is more mobile than ever before.

In a 1988 interview Hospital told Ron Store: "I always felt I lived in two distinct worlds and I voyaged between them like a space traveller from one to the other every day when I went to school because my family was fundamentalist Pentecostal."[22] In 1992 she reiterates this position when she says of her Pentecostal childhood on the outskirts of Brisbane: "I felt I had to

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19 Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996) 123. Kaplan charts the vehement arguments against the category of diasporic cosmopolitanism posed by theorists such as Aijaz Ahmad. Ahmad asks if theories of cosmopolitan hybridity have sufficiently addressed class differences, gender issues and geopolitics in an effort to avoid ahistorical glosses and critical abstraction. Aijaz and Tim Brennan argue that the production and reception of contemporary "world" or "postcolonial" literature must be read through the lens of "economic and cultural inequalities, wholesale labour recruitments and legal recruitments and legal arrangements set up on the basis of the former Empires". Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory* (London: Verso, 1995) Tim Brennan, "Cosmopolitans and Celebrities," *Race and Class* 31.1 (1989): 4.

20 Brennan argues that the "new cosmopolitan figure" becomes the "spokesperson for a kind of perennial immigration, valorised by a rhetoric of wandering." Brennan, "Cosmopolitans and Celebrities" 2.

21 Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*(London: Verso, 1995). Bruce Robbins, "Comparative Cosmopolitanism," *Social Text* 31. 32 (1992): 171.

22 Store, "Interview with Janette Turner Hospital" 18.

try to voyage between parallel universes and had to try to translate them to myself each day, to act as a go-between, an interpreter."[23] This figuration of traveller, and the positioning of interpolator and non-mainstream outsider, characterises Hospital's self-constructions. Another by-product of the dislocated life is the nature of one's relation to the past, and the memories of that past time and place:

> I suppose because I've lived in so many different places and different countries. I zip around from culture to culture and I come back here, and my memories of the past are very intense. When you come back to a place after absence from it . . . the people who have gone on living in the place, their memories are constantly adapting themselves retroactively, because the present is constantly working on that. If you leave a place, there's no continuing present modifying the past. It becomes a sealed off unit in the memory, a preserved, freeze-dried chunk.[24]

Hospital's comments describe the fate of many of her fictional characters who are often caught between two or more worlds, one or some of which exist in memory alone.

"Simultaneous overlay" is the figure Hospital produces to describe the by-product of her dislocated, travelling subjectivity. 'Simultaneous overlay' resembles "having several slides jammed into a slide projector and projected simultaneously." I view this as an expression of the divisions and strange hybridities of dislocated experience that produce multiple senses of time and space. Hospital is committed to figuring both the experience and consequences of travel, but the 'technology' of storytelling (as photography is also a technology) negotiates transit through the recuperation and continuous scrutiny of memory and the past.

Twin Set and Pearls: Memory, History and the Postmodern

Postmodernity can be described a set of economic and cultural relationships that produce specific discourses of space, time and subjectivity in a particular time period and in relation to multiple locations. When we ask about what happened between 1955 and 1965, Stuart Hall might reply 'something new.' Caren Kaplan answers this way:

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23 Marion McLeod, "'Parallel Universes': Interview with Janette Turner Hospital," *New Zealand Listener and TV Times* 12 Dec. (1992): 48-49.

24 Store, "Interview with Janette Turner Hospital" 31-32.

> that vast and complicated shift in the organisation of capitalism that is referred to as flexible accumulation or specialisation. Articulated by Mandel as "late capitalism," further delineated as the suppression of distance by speed and mobility in telecommunications, rapid transfers, immediacy, and ahistorical 'shock' by Jameson, Baudrillard, and Virillio, among others, this phase is variously pinpointed as emerging in the late '60s and early '70s. In the aftermath of over a decade of debate and publication about the "postmodern," is it utopian or reactionary—the changes in modes of production and distribution, the destabilising of national identities and delegitimation of state functions and institutions and the proliferation of fragmented "alternative" politics are now taken as givens.[25]

Janette Turner Hospital published *Borderline* in 1985 and *The Last Magician* in 1992. At the time of writing this chapter (1997-8) these texts must be situated in a *historical* literary context, despite their contemporaneity. In the course of his work on certain theoretical *cul-de-sacs* within postmodernity, Frederic Jameson has commented that "I have a feeling that the only adequate way out of this vicious circle, besides praxis itself, is a historical and dialectical view which seeks to grasp the present as History."[26] I take Jameson's point about the critical opacities generated by the 'too-near' sensation that confront the critic of fiction. Such opacities relate to an sense of the overwhelming speaking and writing *present*, a present so close that it almost cannot be identified or described. Unlike Jameson, however, I now refuse the pessimistic postmodern proclamations of the death of history and, instead, historicise the literary experimentation of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Janette Turner Hospital's texts were produced in the period 1982-1997, a period that Hans Bertens, in *The Idea of the Postmodern,* sees as quite distinct from that of the mid-1950s to the late 1970s. The term "postmodern," tracked from its literary-critical origins in the 1950s, began to have much wider usage in the 1980s, when it reached a level of global

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25 Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* 156. Kaplan goes on to state that the primary mode of explanation is a shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist production, resulting in radical reorganisation of national industries, the movement of offshore primary production, the overturning of organised labor and the "feminisation" of workforces, and massive shifts in superpower alliances and alignments. Kaplan quotes Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalisation and Ethnicity," *Culture, Globalisation an the World System: Contemporary Systems for the Representation of Identity,* ed. Anthony D. King (London: Macmillan, 1991) 27.

26 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1993)

conceptualisation.[27] Bertens sees that 1980s as the decade in which the relationship between poststructuralism and postmodernism became more defined (read separate), and when theories of the postmodern moved from a "deconstructionist, self-reflexive postmodernism of the late 1970s and early 1980s," interested mainly in "the play of textuality" unfettered by history, to an interest in the origins and history of specific representations.[28]

The *word* "postmodern" is enveloped in the mists of this ongoing debate about cultural and ideological meanings.[29] Anne Friedberg makes this useful summary of the postmodern:

> It has been defined as the end of the Enlightenment (Lyotard) and as the site of the Enlightenment's completion (Habermas); it has been seen as radical pluralism, multiculturalism, centralised marginality (Spivak) and as a culture of decentred subjectivity (Derrida); it suggests that texts only refer to texts and authentic experiences replaced by simulations (Baudrillard). The categories of anti modern, late modern, postmodern blur into one another as the debate rages . . . but when all the dust settles, the valence of the modifier *post* signifies its position *vis-à-vis* the root word *modern*, indicating either its end or its continuance in a new configuration.[30]

The term remains controversial and confusing. Despite this instability, 'postmodernity'/'postmodernism' seems to have become an appropriate way of describing a contemporary cultural, political and theoretical restructuring; what Frederic Jameson has called "a general modification of culture itself within the social restructuration of later capitalism as a system."[31] In pursuit of the relationship between expatriation, representation and the contemporary, it is especially the way in which the

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27 Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) 10.

28 Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* 11. Bertens sees the late work of Foucault as central to this movement, especially as theorists digested Foucault's notions of discursive formations and the relation between knowledge and power.

29 Frederic Jameson suggests that the development of the cultural forms of postmodernism may be said to be the first specifically North American global style. *Postmodernism: or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991) xx. The *debate* on postmodernism, as it has been defined since the 1960s, had it origins in American literary and cultural criticism and from this location moved into other fields and disciplines.

30 Friedberg 10-11.

31 Jameson's working hypothesis for postmodern as an historical period was a project he began to flesh out in "Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53-92.

word 'postmodern' is used to refer to theorisation of the contemporary subject that is relevant to this thesis.

Robert R. Wilson demarcates postmodernism into two archives, a division which loosely organises the debate within postmodern studies. The first archive constructs the postmodern as a *period*.[32] Wilson identifies the theorists of this first archive as Frederic Jameson and Terry Eagleton in a neo-Marxist grouping which concentrates on postmodernity as a stage in late capital, with ramifications for the relation between aesthetics and commodified culture. In another set, Wilson aligns Lyotard's analysis of postmodernism as the state of culture attendant on the decay of the master narratives of bourgeois liberalism (including knowledge as a meta-narrative), with Baudrillard's conceptualisation of the "simulacra" as "the generation of models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal."[33] Although these four positions are hugely diverse, they are seen by Wilson to agree about the impact of technology, commodification and replications of the postmodern "NOW." Following from this they evidence a concern for the absence (or death) of history, depthlessness, defamiliarisation and lack of politics. Frederic Jameson bleakly refers to:

> the disappearance of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions.[34]

Theorists of period are most concerned for a-historicity within the postmodern period.[35] The concern about history (reference, politics) is the

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32 Robert R. Wilson, "Slip Page: Angela Carter, In/Out/In the Post-Modern Nexus," *Past the Last Post: Theorising Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism*, ed. Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991) 111.

33 Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Cambridge: Polity Press-Basil Blackwell, 1988) 166.

34 Frederic Jameson "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *The Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster, (Post Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983) 125.

35 Friedberg 5. Friedberg is concerned with the a-historicity about the postmodern's own past. "*Post* implies historical sequence, a moment of rupture when the *post* succeeds the *past*. But, as historiographers remind us, history is not only a discourse but a product of discourses. The debates about postmodernity have often been marked by - as if a product of their own discourse - a symptomatic amnesia to the past." As Friedberg emphasises, the use of the word 'postmodern' has often ignored the underlying concepts of modernism and modernity that are its assumed base. In her work on the ubiquity of the cinematic and televisual she pursues the relation of the postmodern artefact to modernity and modernism. Her position is that "rather

site of the main, even constitutive, oscillations and contestations in postmodern studies.[36]

Wilson's second archive of the postmodern constructs "a highly flexible analytic-descriptive term capable of isolating conventions, devices and techniques across the range of all the cultural products . . . that can be caught in a widely-flung transnational net."[37] In this archive Wilson places the work of Linda Hutcheon, Brian McHale, Ihab Hassan, and Patricia Waugh. These critics work mainly on postmodernism as it relates to (is constructed through) literary texts, and all of them claim the literary text has returned to dealing with history and narrative, and away from aesthetic autonomy, self-reference and depoliticisation of the earlier postmodern. The second archive deals with postmodernism as an aesthetic genre or style that characteristically demonstrates the play of language within language. Robert Wilson notes that post-modernism in this context does similar conceptual work to the term metafiction—which refers to reflexive fiction that self-consciously refers to its own fictional status, explores it own condition and function as art, and investigates the ways in which language conveys, constructs or evades meaning. The confusion here is that several texts can be metafictive without being necessarily postmodern, and postmodernism encompasses more than metafiction.

Neil Bessner's catalogue of postmodernism reiterates the wide definitional net that the term 'postmodern' casts:

> It can mean writing that opens itself to the contingency of history. It can mean writing that in one of several ways questions the authority of a centre, be it the authority of a cultural centre, or the fields of authority within a work of art: in fiction, for example, the authority of unified characters, of one dominant narrative voice, of the chronology and causality implied by a well-made plot, of the highly finished form of a well-made modernist story. Postmodernism can mean writing that crosses traditional generic

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than proclaiming a distinct moment of rupture —when the modern ended and the postmodern began—I suggest the gradual and indistinct epistemological tear along the fabric of modernity" (2) The 'first archive' theorists, interested in the post-modern as an historical period, have noted but not fleshed out the nature and magnitude of the cultural break/residual trace relationship between modernism and postmodernism.

36 Hans Bertens lays out this oscillation, self-reflexivity and a-historicity versus the return to narrative and reference, very succinctly in *The Idea of the Postmodern* 3-11.

37 Robert R. Wilson, "Slip Page " 113.

> boundaries . . . experiments with, interrogates, or merges modes—magical realism for example.[38]

"The contingency of history" flags again the productive contemporary anxiety that all history amounts to is historiography, the study of texts and texts and texts. What status can experience and memory claim for an aesthetics which privileges discontinuity, decentring, indeterminacy, polyphony, parodic form, the problematisation of representation and the fetishisation or retrieval of difference?

If postmodernity is the wider field of engagement for Janette Turner Hospital, her texts also demonstrate self-conscious relationships with three specific literary contexts: the French *nouveau roman*, "the Canadian postmodern" and Latin and South American magic realism. The examination of these influences is part of an ongoing aspect of this thesis, to emphasise the situatedness of the production of expatriate fictions in order to emphasise the intelligibility of texts by Australian women expatriate writers. The location of Hospital's authorship can be tied to locations such as north-eastern Australia, English Canada and north-east America, as well as her proximity to French Canada. This multiplcity empahsises the nature of international influence on expatriate writers, and the plural sites of production of expatriate fictions.

It seems fair to say that the specificity of a "Canadian postmodern" is due, in some part, to the desire to establish distinctions in Canadian praxis in relation to certain American literary practices, the extreme autotelic nature of surfiction, for example. Linda Hutcheon repeatedly calls on Canada's colonial history, and the doubleness of its linguistic and cultural inheritances, in order to make an argument about the appropriateness of irony and parody (doubled modes) in Canadian representations, and the love for postmodern paradox and contradiction. It is the paradoxical partnership of self-reflexivity and the call to history in which the Canadian postmodern specialises. The divisions and proliferations of Canadian identity, and the particularity of Canadian history and geography, make their textual productions quite distinct, mainly on the matter of the past as well as some productive self-consciousness about the matter of representing nation.

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38 Neil Bessner, "Beyond Two Solitudes, After Survival: Postmodern Fiction in Canada," *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*, eds. Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992) 15-16.

The status of history is re-confirmed as the spine of the postmodern debate when Hutcheon, making her disagreements with Jameson and Eagleton, argues that the postmodern novel, and those that she terms 'historiographic metafictions' in particular, are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages.[39] Hutcheon claims these characteristics of Canadian postmodern novels:

> fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political. Its contradictions may well be those of late capitalist society, but whatever the cause these contradictions are certainly manifest in the important postmodern concept of "the presence of the past." Postmodernism's relation to history is that of an ironic rethinking.[40]

Other Canadian critics have examined "the presence of the past" in Canadian postmodern fiction, and the problems of reference to the past. The status of the past is something over which self-reflexivity comes into some conflictual contact with the desire for a grounding in the historical, social and political world. This joust works through the philosophical problems of reference, that is. the relation of the word to thing, of discourse to experience. Hutcheon sees Canadian postmodern narratives producing a provisional, located, contextually determined set of fictional responses to this dilemma, and she sees the work of Michael Ondaatje, Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood and Robert Kroetsch in this fictional domain. There is distinct evidence of the influence of the Canadian writers and their cultural and theoretical milieu in the work of Janette Turner Hospital, her contradictory interests in metafiction and the importance of the past.[41] Hospital foregrounds the processes of memory:

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39 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988) 4-5. Linda Hutcheon is a theorist of the Canadian postmodern, and has had an impact on studies of postmodernism more generally. Hutcheon disagrees with Eagleton on a number of points, contending that Eagleton ignores the textual working of irony, parody and humour, and that Jameson exhibits a nostalgic desire. Hutcheon suggests that the postmodern texts that interest her evidence a critical reworking, rather than a "nostalgic return."

40 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction.*

41 Jameson labels the French *nouveau roman* the last significant innovation in the novel. I mention it here because certain Quebecois writers were working with the French new novel and new new novel. Nicole Brossard is a well known example. As well as the proximity of Quebec and its fictional and national debates, Hospital claims the strong presence of Marquez and Borges in her work, making magic realism, or perhaps fabulation, an important modal aspect of her work.

> I've become very conscious of the way in which memory is selective. We remember what impinges on us, what is significant for us. We change our memories, we reinterpret our own memories and I'm very conscious that historiographers are saying that history is perpetually reinterpreted depending on who's doing the looking and what they're looking at . . . I'm conscious that history and the past are, in fact, artefacts of memory, which is a very slippery thing.[42]

Hospital returns repeatedly to the problematic nature of historical knowledge and the related function of memory. In terms of postmodern narrative, memory is used as a device because it foregrounds a potentially unstable form of representation and thereby challenges any simple notion of realism.

II Double Trouble

The Double of Genre and Mode

I chose to work on *The Last Magician* and *Borderline* because they are murder mysteries investigated by hybrid narrators, one half of which (the 'silent' half) has disappeared. In each novel there is a disappearance of an unlikely pair (one of whom is intimately known to the narrator), and the narrative negotiation of their absence forms the core of the text. Detective fiction structurally expresses the ruptures integral to experiences of displacement (expatriation) because it concentrates on solving (making meaning from) the pivotal mystery of disappearance or death. The genre systematically addresses displacement, dislocation and disappearance, tracing events in some kind of sequence to see if they make sense.

Detective novels are highly patterned, making demands on both narratorial and reader competence. They seek to create a mode of orientation out of disorientation and fracture, they fit together partial perspectives, like a jigsaw puzzle, negotiating gaps in knowledge and areas of indeterminacy. This offers a pattern akin to the traveller-expatriate-nomad changing location more than once and having to fit the pieces of their lives together so that they make sense, accounting for cultural and social gaps and moments of elision and slippage. It therefore seems to me that the quest (as motif and/or genre) becomes usefully subsumed into crime genres such as

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42 Store, "Interview with Janette Turner Hospital" 32.

the detective and anti-detective novel, the novel of suspense, and the novel of recuperation. In crime genres, the system of representation is tied to the construction of knowledge and vision. The quest narrative thematises transit between worlds, between times, between selves. For Giovanna Capone the transit quest theme is a recurring motif in what has been identified as the "loss of geographical and to some extent, national and even social sense of belonging."[43] The narrative of transition can be an account of loss and impermanence, but also one of transformation and rebirth.

Detective fictions deal with dualities as a matter of course: generic expectation and generic disruption, the legal and criminal, double narrative lines of the actual murder and then murder investigation that involves the double temporal series of absence and presence, past and present, mystery and solution.

Linda Hutcheon, the theorist of postmodern "double consciousness," suggests that "one must isolate first the three major characteristics of detective fiction: the self-consciousness of the form itself, its strong conventions and the important textual function of the act of reading."[44] The external subject position constructed in traditional detective fiction produces a reader who is active in the collaborative effort of the production of meaning; readers become detectives in the return from chaos to order. Detective fiction foregrounds the often elided mechanics of reading since it emphasises the construction and reconstruction of events in search of clues. Hospital emphasises these processes for her characters in order to make a point about systems of knowledge, as well as epistemological uncertainty and textual indeterminacy. Hospital's fictions usually provide a *mise-en-abyme* of reading through the detective plot structure. She dramatises a number of characters engaged in acts of reading, narration and interpretation, as well as foregrounding the unstable relationships between the provisional roles of author, character and reader.

Hosptial's exposure to theories of chaos and other tenets of theoretical mathematics and physics has seen the gradual incorporation into her poetics

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43 Giovanna Capone, "Shirley Hazzard: *Transit of Venus* and *The Bay of Noon*," *Australian Literary Studies* 13. 2 (1987): 173.

44 Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: the Metafictional Paradox* (London and New York: Routledge, 1980) 73.

of the idea that chaos contains very sophisticated systems of order. Although her detective fictions seem confused and labyrinthine, she not only emphasises the ways in which we construct meaning, there is also a high degree of patterning discernible.

The conventions of detective fiction, such as those in 'hard boiled' realism, present a rich field for the self-conscious installation and subversion of literary convention in order to reveal fictionality and constructedness. Tzvetan Todorov claims that "theoreticians of detective fiction have always agreed that style, in this type of literature, must be perfectly transparent, imperceptible; the only requirement it obeys is to be simple, clear, direct."[45] To refuse linearity, closure and solution in a detective novel is to refuse a major aspect of its traditional form.

William Spanos has called the anti-detective novel (the detective fiction that refuses these stock generic aspects) "the paradigmatic archetype of the postmodern literary imagination."[46] *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* are "anti-detective" novels mainly because of their refusal of the premise that "all will be revealed." Both detective and anti-detective modes use mystery, ambiguity and suspension, but the anti-detective novel finally refuses the closure of solution and understanding. It deploys these expectations only to subvert them, to multiply the mysteries, to deconstruct the processes of investigation, to foreground the instabilities of certain epistemologies. Realism is a staple of the detective genre, and Hospital uses and abuses realist modes, contaminating realism with fabulism and metafiction.[47]

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45 Tzvetan Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction," *Modern Criticism and Theory: a Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London and New York: Longman, 1988) 132.

46 William Spanos, "The Detective and the Boundary: Some Notes on the Postmodern Literary Imagination," *Boundary* 2.2 (1972): 68.

47 Theo D'haen, "Timothy Findley: Magical Realism and the Canadian Postmodern," *Multiple Voices: Recent Candian Fiction*, ed. Jeanne Delbaere (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1989) 217-233. Several critics want to claim Hospital as a magic realist. She herself claims a distinction between stylistics and thematic in magic realism and settles for being identified with fabulation instead. The relations between postmodernist, magic realist and fabulist are complex, although they all offer challenges to traditional realism. The combination of fabulation as a mode and detective ficition as a genre makes for hybridity indeed. Theo D'haen argues that the "ex-centric," marginal speaking postion is integral to magic realism.

Gabriel Brennan is the combined reader-detective-writer in *The Last Magician*. He is partnered by Charlie Chang, as Jean-Marc is partnered by Kathleen. Gabriel is engaged in documentation of events, he, like the reader and narrator, is trying to find meaning, something that connects, that makes sense. His quest is a dramatisation of the desire to understand. Like Jean-Marc, Kathleen and Felicity, his is also a quest to understand his father and the main absences in his life. Gabriel and Charlie's own disappearance-deaths present the starting point for another of Hospital's investigations into the nature of obsessive 'need to know' and its consequences.

The primary technology of Gabriel's detection is written notation. He teams up with Charlie Chang, whose technology is the photograph: "the photographer is the armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitring, stalking, cruising the urban inferno."[48] Charlie's stories about photography, patience, seduction and death link the evidentiary capacity of photographs, and emphasise the relationship between the detection and the gaze. Both Charlie and Gabriel roam the city-scape observing, recording, reading, watching, visualising, reading across the gaps of experience and knowledge in order the solve the same riddle for different reasons.

> Gabriel mapped the quarry with notations of his own. In back streets, in boarded-up buildings, in subway tunnels, in the sewers, he recorded the intimate encounters between strangers. He filled notebooks. He used stealth, persistence, hunches, intuition and his map-making was full of intimate detail. (265)

The question of witnessing, truth, testimony and documentation is at the heart of detective fiction. Hospital's metafictive text explicates the mechanisms of seeing, interpreting, writing and narrating. This explication produces a reading of all such projects as subjective and unstable, emphasising the complexity and contingency of events.

If detective fiction is the genre for double narration, metafiction seems an apposite mode, since it has been called a mode of 'double consciousness,' for producing double coded texts, double or ironic modes of reading. Wenche Ommundsen comments of metafiction that, while it seems to be clear that metafiction is the dominant designation for contemporary fiction about fiction, it appears that

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48 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1973; New York: Penguin, 1979) 55.

> a great number of other names have been given to the same type of writing: self-conscious, reflexive (or self-reflexive), self-referential, introspective, introverted, narcissistic or autorepresentational, surfiction, antifiction, fabulation, neo-baroque fiction and postmodernist fiction. These terms are not perfectly synonymous; surfiction and fabulation have sometimes been contrasted with metafiction, and postmodernism, in fiction and elsewhere, is. . . a category so complex and disputed that its relationship to metafiction cannot precisely be defined.[49]

In all the definitions about metaficton that I have canvassed the overwhelming concentration is on the relationship between fiction and reality and, in particular, reflexive fiction's presumed inability or disinterest in engagement with history or the "real." Ommundsen wants reflexivity to have a wider significance than self-referential language games. "Fiction about fictional systems" should indicate "processes of mediation and representation in the text and elsewhere."[50] Reflexivity should serve, then, to "problematise the ways in which we gain access to knowledge of all kinds" and make us acknowledge the story-telling process, and therefore the ways in which the real is produced and mediated, and the processes by which we read the world as text.[51] Metafictional techniques are used as a way of foregrounding both a contemporary lack of certainty about the nature and possibilities of representation and knowledge. However, this reflexivity is emphatically pressed into the service of politics. Both *The Last Magician* and *Borderline* investigate political situations, situations of inequity or injustice in class, gender and nation. *Borderline* advances a constantly negotiated position on the nature of political refugeeism and violence, as well as cogitating about the ethics of any engagement with suffering. In *The Last Magician* a social underclass is represented: a lost class of people who live in the quarry. A central interest in both texts is the political and personal nature of, and reaction to, disappearance in a global context.

Critics in the mid 1990s have come to see that the narcissistic self-scrutiny of 1980s metafiction was not an isolated and isolating phenomenon, but a response to the intellectual climate of its time. Ommundsen claims that reflexivity is no longer regarded as symptomatic of literary paralysis but has

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49 Wenche Ommundsen, *Metafictions? Reflexivity in Contemporary Texts*(Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993) 14.

50 Ommundsen 18.

51 Ommundsen 19.

become an analytical tool in our quest to understand human realities.[52] Although the attitudes towards the power and role of fiction in the late 1990s demonstrate less anxiety about 'the real' and about reference, Hospital's fictions still display a self-conscious commentary on the status of history as a form of knowledge. In particular, the murder mystery plot is crossed with a quest narrative, as well as the moral accountability that is the feature of fable.

Double Trouble: The Double Narrator

The narrators of *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* refer to the position of medieval chronicler or archivist as a model for their own activity. This is a useful conceptualisation of narrative position because it marries a number of activities: the interpretation of the past for present purposes; the task of transmission; the fact of dealing with incomplete material; the need for suitable self-effacement but the inability to eradicate the self; attraction to quest and otherworld motifs and stories; the recurrence of exegetical structures; glossing and marginalia; and the attraction of allegory, fabula and exemplum, which all operate as parallel scripts. The medieval chronicler aspires to objective omniscience, but his/her reach is in fact limited and partial.

In terms of expatriation and dislocation, I am interested in how storytelling comes to grips with the main double vision of *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* —that of absence and presence. Narrative point of view—what Hospital calls "angle of vision"—is one of the crucial aspects of Hospital's narrative strategy to represent displacement and loss. The narrator of *Borderline* comments that "an absence, whether from death or some other more final loss, calls forth compensatory action, we all know this . . . you see what can be done with loss"(262-4). Both *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* begin in the middle, with the acknowledgment of a disappearance or death, and work in two directions, to recuperate the story leading to the disappearance and the present continuous experience of the chronicler.

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52 Ommundsen states that: "by calling attention to it own process of mediation and construction, the reflexive text points to the cultural and ideological codes which inform the construct we call 'reality.'" Whilst it is difficult to generalise about the politics of literary forms, the emphasis in metafictive texts on the constructedness and provisionality of texts and their contexts means that the reader acquires a new, more active role, in the production of meaning. Ommundsen 20.

In *Borderline* and *The Last Magician*, point of view operates as a representation of contingent situatedness. This contingency stems from a doubled position of, on one hand, the experience of multiple dislocation in space and time and, on the other, a metafictive awareness of the way in which fiction and fictionalising are socially constitutive. Hospital uses narrative position to explore the disorientations of dislocation and loss, as well as emphasise the radical instabilities inherent in any story told about it, with specific attention to the status and possible discovery of truth.

In her first novel, *The Ivory Swing* (1982), Hospital's narrator comments "We are like trapeze artists who swing away from each other, she thought. It is a delicate act full of balance and hazard" (252). Hospital's narratives are precisely full of balance and hazard. The balance belongs to the interstitial location of her overworked narrators, who have the "bifocal vision" of those who stand at boundaries, on the perimeters of infernal circles. Bruce Robbins makes this apt evocation:

> for instead of a clearly seen self, they have an experience . . . called cubistic, an experience of self-dispersal, of inhabiting a non-place that is suddenly obtruding planes jutting into one or another realm.

This cubistic self, according to Robbins operates in "a narrow space of dislocated in-between-ness."[53]

Narratology involves the examination of textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, sub-texts, figurative stratagems. Most recently, the critical apparatus of narratology has extended to include poststructuralist theories of narrative knowledge: textuality, discourse, enunciation, *écriture*, and the unconscious as language. In my reading of *The Last Magician* and *Borderline* I will focus on two narratological dimensions: narrative point of view (focalisation) and tropological system. This critical weighting reveals my interest in the subversive interaction between postmodern texts and an Aristotelian mimetic decorum that privileges plot, a plot which demonstrates the laws of unity and economy, and to which character, setting and diction are subsidiary. The expectations of the pleasurable rhythms and orderliness of classical mimesis, found in much realist narrative, are both deployed and undercut in Hospital's fiction. The function of narrative as

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53 Bruce Robbins, "Homelessness and Worldliness," *Diacritics* 3.3 (1983): 70.

order-finding and order-giving is also constructed and deconstructed by Hospital's texts. While the narrative strategy highlights the epistemological dimensions of storytelling, the potential for the provision of knowledge, reiterated as the 'need to know,' is never satisfied. The assumptions that we make about narrative and the role of time, the investigation and invention of the meaning of human life and the questions about 'man's' nature and origin, are simultaneously installed and turned upside down. This is a double gesture that moves in two directions at once—installing reference and pointing out its provisionality.

Displacement and loss are focalised through a hybrid narrator, and this doubled voice processes the interconnected web of dislocations and slippages between absence and presence, past and present, seen and unseen, between generations and geographical locations. The point of view that substantially organises the action of the texts represents an 'in-between' position. The narrator is in process, in transit, moving through the material in order to understand something. They are caught between the slip streams and simultaneous overlays of temporal frame, character and location.

The purpose of the concept of 'focalisation' is to provide a means of identifying the consciousness through which a fictional event is present in a text. This is most likely to be a fictional character within the text, or an external narrator. The mechanics of focalisation display the source of the vision of events—and make the distinction between the processes of seeing and the processes of verbalising in a text. Vision and seeing are crucial modes in focalisation, a technical fact with which Hospital extensively works.

Sara Mills claims that the work on point of view and focalisation has concentrated on two factors: the position relative to the story and degree of persistence. In terms of position, focalisation can be either internal or external to the story. The external narrator-focaliser is the "sole source of vision, information and judgement on the characters and events." The degree of focalisation has three categories: fixed, variable and multiple focalisation depending on whether focalisation remains fixed throughout the narrative, alternates between two predominant focalisers, or shifts among several. Mills also claims that "it is common to find that an external focaliser can function across all the temporal dimensions of the narrative

past, present and future, while the internal focaliser is limited to the 'present' of the characters."[54]

The character of the narrator 'knows' the entire history of events in the novel from the opening, but reveals them as they are revealed to her younger self at the time of their occurrence. Hence the reader undergoes with the character the process by which she achieves the 'total knowledge' of the narrator. This permits the device of suspense, as the narrator withholds information from the reader which was unknown to her younger self, until the moment of revelation when the character and the reader discover the 'truth.' Hospital's narrators reconstruct events that have happened to central characters in the narrative past, characters who have disappeared in the narrative present. The narrator does not have all the facts, or even most of them, so that the act of storytelling is a dynamic interpretative process of reading, sifting and sorting, discovering, inventing, shaping, and retelling the facts. Phenomenology also describes the act of reading as one that is not so much linear, as one that continually moves through what it terms protension and retention. The idea here is that the reader accumulates information through the text, while at the same time projecting a number of possibilities. As these projections become confirmed or denied, they are either retained or abandoned. The reader, the character and the narrator are all in this position.

The narrator in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician* demonstrates a 'hybrid' consciousness in the sense that the subject position of the narrator is doubled through an uncanny, provisional access to one other major character's history, memory and interiority; to the point where they venture to predict what that character might or might not have done, based on their stories. This 'possession,' or (heterosexual) doubling, functions to lock down two generations, and link events of the past to the narrating present. In the language of grammar, reflexive is used to indicate an identity between subject and object. The narrators of *Borderline* and *Last Magician* certainly blur the demarcation of narrating subject and object narrated, problematising the strict demarcation of self and other, inside and outside. Furthermore, the detective/narrator is not only overlaid, but double-jointed. The narrators of *Last Magician* and *Borderline* are Janus faced—able

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54 Sara Mills, *Feminist Stylistics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) 181.

to look in two directions. The narrator is split between his/her own relationships in the present, and the account of relationships in the past. This model of division and proliferation is an important one. The narrator occupies a hybrid subject position that establishes itself as the locus for multiple stories of loss, fragmentation, incoherence, plurality and contingency. Modes of coherence are therefore challenged in Hospital's fictions, including strict notions of linearity and fixed focalisation.

The 'angle of vision' is constructed in Hospital's fiction to be tangential, decentred, ex-centric. Marginality is a crucial aspect of narrative position, offering an implicit critique of the centre, the mainstream. Both the piano tuner (*Borderline*) and the prostitute (*The Last Magician*) possess a capacity for self-effacement, an ability to see without being seen, a behind-the-scenes kind of present absence. Marginality is also an important feature of the narrative objects; Felicity, Dolores Marquez, Cat and Charlie all have peripheral points of view, merging on, if not fully ensconced in, silence.

David Matthews commences his review of *Oyster* with this anecdote about the writing of *Borderline*:

> Janette Turner Hospital has explained that she began with the incident at the Canadian border that begins the book and wrote 100 pages or so before completely stalling. Later, to restart the novel, she gave it to a narrator Jean-Marc whose name deliberately invokes two of the evangelists, writers of lives, seekers of truth. The resultant narrative mode has dominated her novels ever since.[55]

If Jean-Marc presents the dominant narrative mode, he requires examination. The effects of discontinuity and unreliability in modernist and postmodernist texts has been addressed in the section on metafictive modes. I am interested here in the way Jean-Marc embarks on a narrative quest to 'track' a woman who has disappeared for over a year. The provisionality of his stories hint at the Pygmalion relationship the narrative subject has to the narrative object. The way gender works through his account of Felicity is explicitly linked to the idealised love relation of Dante to Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*.

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55 David Matthews "Lost in Outer Maroo: Rev of *Oyster* by Janette Turner Hospital," *Australian*, 28-29 Sept. 1996: 9.

Jean-Marc is a piano-tuner in Montréal and the unreliable first person narrator of a discontinuous narrative concerning his father's ex-lover, Felicity, and a man named Augustine Kelly. Felicity, a Boston art dealer, meets Augustine Kelly at a Canadian border incident which involves them illegally hiding an El Salvadorean refugee rescued from a meat truck. Both Felicity and Augustine are overtaken by the continuously ambiguous events stemming from the border incident and both eventually disappear. Augustine Kelly has a daughter, Kathleen, who resembles Felicity and who tracks down Jean-Marc, (who in turn resembles her father and who met Augustine before he disappeared) and aids his reconstruction of events. Twinning, coincidence, and resemblance are all aspects of the basic narrative, providing a model of complex order within disorder.

The positioning of the piano-tuner as narrator calls on elements of self-effacement, science, and an occluded but crucial role in the production of 'art.' Jean-Marc's involvement in exactitude and art equip him to be the detective investigating the disappearance of two people by piecing together their story from the provisional bits of jigsaw. He tempers' the versions of Felicity and Gus's stories as he does piano strings: "Now is the time . . . to examine the dynamics and harmonics, to look for patterns, resonances, meaning. Time for tempering the data" (26-27). Jean-Marc is patient:

> I have infinite patience. When I left, the jangled air was noticeably unsnarled. Tonight tranquillity will take the building contractor by surprise; it will seep into his thoughts like a perfume remembered. Such is harmony, the science of proper alignments. (24)

Not only does Jean-Marc have Kathleen's perspective on events, he also has access to long-standing knowledge of Felicity. It is this relationship—between narrating subject and his object—that I have defined as 'hybrid.' Jean-Marc grows to inhabit Felicity's stories, in some senses they are always already his:

> Her stories bombard me, they seem to have become my own memories, they writhe and change and regroup in the way true memories do. They are like photographs in her grandfather's dresser, a deluge of *the ever-present past* (164-165)

He comments on his narrative recuperation of her thoughts and actions in this way: "perhaps I am better at her lines than she is. I have begun to dream her dreams" (189). The relation between Jean-Marc and Felicity is a paradigm of the potential relationship between author and character:

> Is it surprising that I feel at home in Felicity's skin? That sometimes she slides into mine? The truth is, I seem to know more about Felicity's life than about my own. I understand hers better. I've given it more thought. (189)

Not only is Jean-Marc author and character, he is also a reader. He reads his (and her) memory as a useable script of the past:

> Of course, I have gone over my memory like an archaeologist, I have dredged up phrases and pauses, I have wracked my brain for innuendos I might have missed. I chip away at amnesia. I go over my reconstruction with a magnifying glass. In the night I listen for commas and glottal stops. I explore the subtext, I am an expert on the buried layers of the sentence. (266)

Memory is the most important embodiment of the past in both *Borderline* and *The Last Magician*. The question of the status of memory—memory as a potentially unstable form of representation, as untrustworthy, but as the only viable mode of representing past experience—is central to Hospital's fictional vision. Jean-Marc is constantly correcting his tenses, from past to future conditional.

In *The Last Magician*, Lucy/Lucia is another hybrid narrator, like the hyphenated Jean-Marc, but in this case the 'hyphen' is the split between past and present selves. Lucy has privileged access to the experiences and stories of another person caught up with images, Charlie Chang, the photographer. Prostitution offers Hospital a chance to investigate masquerade, disguise and self-effacement, recognisable techniques the feminine deploys to gain and sustain certain kinds of mobility: "(Lucy, or at least that particular Lucy, Lucy-upstairs-at-Charlie's-Inferno, was a costume I wore for several years. I stepped into that costume and out of it)"(116). The 'shapeshifting' required by the sex worker extends to the shapeshifting required by the self-effacing narrator.

Lucia was a pristine Queensland private schoolgirl, an orphan, who, after an event at a railway station in her senior year of school, winds up in Sydney as a prostitute/bad girl. At this personal moment of fissure,' Lucy/Lucia catches sight of an underworld and understands the plurality of possible worlds. It is an underworld in which she becomes a 'tourist.' In this process, she meets Charlie the restaurant owner/photographer. He is also a refugee from a Queensland childhood, and a cataclysmic event that involved a girl named Cat, as well as two other friends, Catherine Reed and Robinson Gray. Charlie has been trying to find Cat for about 20 years. Robinson Gray is a judge and

the father of Lucia's lover, Gabriel. Catherine is a documentary maker and Lucia's future boss. Gabriel and Charlie disappear while looking for Cat, leaving Lucia to piece together a story involving two generations, Sydney, and Cedar Falls Creek.

Lucy/Lucia is a composite of past and present selves. There are three Lucy time frames in *The Last Magician*. Lucia is the identity of the schoolgirl, Lucy is a medial identity of the prostitute in Kings Cross, and narrating Lucy in the text's present. We meet Lucy as she emerges and replays the experience of Charlie Chang's film, "Charlie's Inferno." It is from here that we undertake the archaeological process of Lucy's various selves, in first and third person, and it is to this point that the narrative circles back.

> When I say I came to myself in that black wood, I mean it literally. I mean that without any warning, in a darkened theatre on the other side of the world, I stumbled over my own feet as it were, bumped into myself on a cinema screen. (4)

Pronominal and temporal pluralities work hard to represent the way we experience time and ourselves simultaneously, rather than in sequence. Hospital is enduringly interested in how memories seep up into experience, and time-frames cross over each other. Lucy's 'history,' "from that day on the railway platform in Brisbane until I lost my way in the dark" (56), must be finally obedient to sequence, to the linearity of language. This struggle between the diachronic and the synchronic is the productive identifying struggle of the text, and the site of its most self-conscious reflections:

> (Was this any way for Lucy, former private school girl, to talk? It was Lucia, not Lucy, who went to that school . . . Lucy was full of contempt for Lucia. She'd shed all that, the trappings of safe stuck-up bitches. She'd adopted a different history). (49)

The identity of the narrator is constantly in question, in production, because of the effects of time and space. The identity of the speaking subject in time and space is as much the quest of this text as the discovery of an account of a crime or disappearance. For example:

> Ah, but I am mixing Now and Then . . . I am mixing time, as Charlie did, as memory does, one image bleeding into another, Lucia taking off her neat school uniform and putting on Lucy, Lucy seeping by degrees into me, but who am I? (119)

The demarcations of Lucy's selves means that she understands herself to be split and therefore plural—coextensively good girl and bad girl, participating in the over and underworlds. Her inventive self-composition, her shifting, touristic self makes her an effective inhabitant of the borderlands, the limits and margins:

> As for me, I go back and forth, above and under. I cross borders. That world, this world, they coexist all the time and I move between them . . . Underground woman, you might call me . . . I want to see the nether side of our cities and send back word. (19)

Hospital's persistent concern with dispersal and displacement is rendered through the twists and turns of Lucy/Lucia's dislocated narrator, who has the privileged mobility of the travel writer or ethnographer.

"Charlie said" is possibly the most repeated construction of this text—and foregrounds the narrative point of view that features dialogue, intertextuality and ventriloquism. Patricia Waugh observes that "fabulation reveals . . . a stylisation which enables other voices to be assimilated, rather than presenting a conflict of voices."[56] The game of "Charlie said" makes Lucy/Lucia past and present the site of both her own and Charlie's stories. Are they her stories? Is this straightforward mediation? Apart from an interlocking set of stories, what kind of status does Charlie's material have? Can we even distinguish a 'pure' Charlie story? Charlie is Lucy's narrative compass; Charlie's experience and memory operate as a text written and remembered, told and retold by Lucia. His experience and memory are not only available through his stories, but also through his photographs. Lucy's narrative is not only constructed and reconstructed through a knowledge of Charlie, but through a retrospective reading of Charlie's photographs and films. These images provide 'clues' to the murder mystery at the heart of the novel.

One of the most interesting formal modes in *The Last Magician* is the use of brackets. A parenthesisis a digression, or a figure of tolerable disorder. Brackets separate textual frames, making formal as well as temporal frame-breaks that characterise a discontinuous narrative. Brackets open a dialogue. Brackets open an intra-textual space for dialogic commentary, either between

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56 Waugh 15.

the time frames, or between the narrating voice in its various guises with one of the characters in flashback. Brackets enact the 'seepage' of memory and the multiplicity of hybrids. Brackets are part of a self-conscious textual mode. They house digressions, asides, metafictive reflections, self-conscious questions and invocations about self and others. Brackets foreground the provisional and contingent nature of memory, narration and the speaking subject. Brackets perform an exegetic function, providing commentary on reading, interpretation and possible meaning. Lucy/Lucia transcribes experiences and then glosses them:

> (Did Lucy see these particular film clips with Mr Prufrock? What year was Mr Prufrock a client? What year did the prisoners' faces grab the world by the scruff of its neck. Retrieval systems are faulty. Wrong button and you get the wrong rerun . . .) .(121)

Charlie features strongly in the digressive and dilatory bracketed commentary. Lucy's dialogue with Charlie's stories and images refracts his actual silence throughout the text.

> A hapless fly in Charlie's web, fleeing from memories of my own, I spin my webbed translations as I go (. . .though since this is my record, my history, Charlie's thoughts curl up inside mine just as my ideas take shape from his photographs. His words flow into the shape of my words. . .).(85)

Because collage involves fracturing and reassembling, dispersal and displacement are continuously enacted. Dialogic brackets are heavily featured in Hospital's 'reading' of Lucy's reading of 'Charlie's Inferno.' These dialogic brackets fracture the unity of the narrative present and operate as 'fissures.' The textual fragmentation constructs a textual collage of sorts, which is by its very nature inter- and intra-textual. Lucia (patron saint for those afflicted in the eyes) has a one-sided dialogue with the absent Charlie during his 'mutational' film.

> (Okay, I say. That photograph on the wall in your living room. Yes, he says. You remember it now. You remember that you thought of Dante, and I'm willing to bet you thought of other landscapes of nightmare. Remember that, Lucy?) (61)

Charlie's film offers up a declension of a central image—Cedar Creek Falls, which dissolves in a series of other images:

> I watch the rainforest deconstruct and remake itself, I slide down the declensions of Cedar Creek Falls into the vortex of water which is the funnel of Dante's Hell which is the Serra Pelada mine which is the

> Newtown Quarry which contracts to one of its ladders which is a railway line which is Cedar Creek Falls in the middle of the dark enveloping wood. (64)

This is presumably the 'mutational' bit, the difference between collage in film and the collage as photographic still. This 'declension' which is recursive, acts as an archaeology of a nightmare, and offers both a formal and thematic *mise-en-abyme*.

Borderline and *The Last Magician* work with narrators who are intricately bound up with a 'double' in the text, a character who has disappeared in the process of searching for someone else, and who works intimately with images. In the case of both Charlie and Felicity, images, because they are about ways of seeing, are a mode of knowledge and being. This ontology through the visual suggests a number of interesting questions for point of view/angle of vision.

Double Worlds

According to Paul de Man: "the paradigm for all texts consists of a figure (or a system of figures) and its deconstruction. But since this model cannot be closed off by a final reading, it engenders, in its turn, a supplementary figural superposition which narrates the unreadability of the prior narration."[57] As J. Hillis Miller notes, this claim, that text/narrations are no more than the exploration of a single figure or system of figures, is certainly a large one. Hillis Miller prefers William Empson's term "complex word," the resonances of which a novel, even a long multi-plotted novel with a wealth and particularity of character, incident and realistic detail, may explore. For Empson, of course, the "complex word" is the locus of ambiguities and involves narrative disjunctions that can never be brought back into unity. This ties back into the unreadable narration that always requires supplement.[58]

Hospital often uses technological or scientific figures. In *Charades* (1988) she explored the notion of parallel worlds through the language of astro-physics and the new mathematics. She deployed the Heisenberg wave/particle

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57 Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979) 205.

58 William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (London: Chatto and Windus, 1953).

conundrum of quantum physics across the background of the Zundel trials in Canada, litigation involving a controversy as to whether the Holocaust actually took place. Matter could be constituted as either waves or particles, and for the survivors of the Holocaust, legal institutions were determining the reality of their experience. Hospital is interested in contradictory coexistence, another version of her "simultaneous overlay." Her central figure or system of figures concern the existence of double/parallel worlds. These locations are narrated by traveller characters, those in the position of cultural translation, who lead lives in the contact zone.

One master trope that interacts with narrative point of view is one of fissure—a break in experience, location, self-hood and between past and present, absence and presence, the seen and the unseen. Preconceived notions of the unity of experience shatter in the lives of the various expatriate/dislocated characters. Hospital's tropes answer to an ideology of fracture, and what Robert Wilson has called a principle of spatial folding, that fold or interpenetration which occurs "when one world bearing with it its own distinct laws, appears or erupts in the other world."[59] For this reason, the Otherworld/unseen world is an important figuration.

The border is the privileged figure for the representation of geographical, political, cultural and economic division. Those moments of division between past and present, absent and present, real world versus dream world, 'real' world versus Otherworld-Hell are also borderlines. Border conditions are of great interest as they dramatise the situation of the marginal as well as the hybrid. The border connects as well as divides, and this situation of plurality and division requires crossing.

The specific border incident in Hospital's text occurs at the American-Canadian border. A woman from Boston (via Australia and India) and a man from Winston, Ontario witness the customs capture of a freezer truck full of El Salvadorean refugees at the Canadian border. A series of other locations collect, by association, at this geographical separation between Canada and the States; El Salvador, Quebec, Felicity's postcolonial 'south,' Australia and India. The division of America and Canada is in fact redolent

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59 Robert Wilson, "The Metamorphoses of Space: Magic Realism," *Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories*, ed. Hinchcliffe and Jewinski (Waterloo: U of Waterloo P, 1986) 71.

of a series of other locations. In the complex and unstable border zone, the El Salvadorean world of third world poverty and murderous politics erupts into middle class experience, and the 'ordinary salesman' character, Gus, never recovers from, nor finally escapes, his apocalyptic introduction to the plurality of worlds.

Felicity, the nomad character in *Borderline*, is well versed in the strange hybridities, protocols and rituals of mobility. She traverses different temporal and spatial zones with well-practised ease. This border is one version of the many borders/double worlds of which, Felicity, in particular, is aware. Her double vision makes her intensely sensitive to irony, the distance between the literal and the intended meanings and the ultimately 'double' mode meaning generation. The United States-Canada border is a physical anchor in the tropological system of borderlines; unstable demarcations between dream and reality, absence and presence, past and present, 'truth' and 'fiction,' self and other, subject and object, visual and verbal, even masculine and feminine.

Although the borderline trope has become commonplace in literary, cultural and postcolonial studies now, it still had impact in 1985 in discussions about national, racial and ethnic identity. The border denotes the side, edge, brink, margin, or boundary. The border may be the frontier, and is often conceived of as a district, a spatial zone which demarcates territories or dominions. A border may also be a frame (perhaps decorative) to an image or object, which confines or limits. The idea of the border as frame is deployed extensively by Hospital in *Borderline*.

What kind of work does the image of the borderline perform? In phrases such as 'across the border' or 'south of the border,' the border has an idiomatically separated present location from a disembodied 'elsewhere,' an imprecise location of difference. In his 1921 essay "Critique of Violence," Walter Benjamin observes that the drawing of borderlines, whether literal or figurative—though they may be as plain to read as scars on a body—is a ritual designed not so much to secure one's possessions by constituting a new law, as to mark the exhibition and foundation of power, represented as law.[60] Borders seem integral to the notions of limit and the deployment of

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[60] Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979): 132-154.

power and force in the formation of national identities through exclusion. It is also clear that borders are constitutively transgressed; limit can only be established through the actions of transgression, crossing or inclusion. Transgression may be the mobility across stipulated borders, a mobility which exhibits the contingency and permeability of those borders. The scene of border crossing is therefore electrified. The divisions central to identity, in the self, and between self and other, depend on notions of rigidity. The moment of crossing renders that rigidity fluid and potentially transforming.

The border is, at one level, a geopolitical demarcation, a national and geographical boundary which defines through certain inclusions and exclusions, which the cartographic line is meant to precisely legislate and convey. In this way borders rely on particular, agreed distinctions and conventions, which nevertheless become blurred and contested. Territorial violence continues to occur over the concrete location of certain borders, their literal location is often murderously serious. If their concrete work is to demarcate nation-space, then they inevitably distinguish ethnicities, cultural and linguistic difference, and historical contingency. The drawing of physical borderlines activates a tremendous array of abstractions which concern identity: sameness and difference; the spatiality of the metaphysical distinctions of inside and outside; and how space and national identity correlate. The borderline can operate as a spatial metaphor for the relationship between self and other. This emphasises the foundations of space as an imaginary formation as well as the structures of political identity. Homi Bhabha observes that:

> The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new 'people' in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation.[61]

In *The Last Magician*, the Quarry is an allegorical structure which metaphorically figures the undersides of existence, the unofficial, the illegal, the criminal, and the a-discursive. It is both an actual location, the Newtown Cut, as well as something that the individual carries with them as the subconscious landscape of nightmare, shame and silence. Hospital claims that it was the conjunction in her mind of Sebastao Salgado's photograph of

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61 Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). 4.

the Serra Pelada goldmine in the rainforests of Brazil, and Botticelli's drawings of Dante's *Inferno,* that triggered ideas about the quarry. Experiences in Australia and news reports of subway dwellers in the United States also feed into the notion of the Quarry.

Nightmarish undergrounds offer imagined zones of cultural or evolutionary darkness, geographical zones within civilisation; dark underworlds located beneath the cities of progress characterised by poverty, sexual excess, degeneration, disease and corruption. To encounter such zones is to risk contamination and corruption of the cultural self. Like the quarry these zones erupt into experience as a moment of fissure, fracturing previously unified worlds. For example:

> When she suddenly saw that there were parallel worlds, that you could cross the line, that you could fall through a hairline crack and cartwheel giddily down and round and sown in slow motion, like moondust in space. (37)

The 'she' in this case is Lucy/Lucia, at the moment her life fractures. Her Queensland girlhood of privilege is shattered at the sight of a mad woman at a railway station. This mobilises Lucia to seek out the 'other' world, and she moves between Queensland, Sydney and London. Sydney is both the city/text of urban dystopia and privilege; both wealthy judiciary and the dispossessed and the disappeared. The Quarry also exists in the forms of bones, secrets and death at the heart of the edenic Cedar Creek Falls.

If representations of the Quarry survive, it is as riddling images. No one is heard from the Quarry. Hospital uses Munch's *The Scream* to impart this:

> There is the world that is only scream, and the world where the scream means nothing and is not even heard. They occupy the same space, but one world fits inside the other like a hand inside a glove. (227)

The trope of the underworld involves 'border zones'—Charlie's place is just such a zone, existing on the cusp of the respectable and unmentionable. Lucy/Lucia is the doubled tour guide between the locations and personalities of privilege and the sites of debasement. Hospital's vision of 'the game' is that it is where you see respectability and debasement hand in hand, between the distance of 'upstairs' and 'downstairs.'

III Double Exposure: The Visual and the Verbal

> The photograph is a thin slice of space as well as time. In a world ruled by photographic images, all borders seem arbitrary. Anything can be separated, can be made discontinuous, from anything else. All that is necessary is to frame the subject differently.[62]

Susan Sontag's claim about the radical discontinuity of the photographic image might also be a description of Hospital's enduring thematic and narrative concerns. In her texts, the image, narrative and subjectivity dramatise a space-time that can be described as postmodern, and, therefore, dislocated and fluid. In other words: expatriate. In the chapter on Richardson's *Maurice Guest*, I argued that Maurice negotiates his cultural dislocation through a scopophilic fixation on the enigmatic and unattainable Louise Dufrayer. Richardson's text demonstrates the way that modernity produced a new predominance of the visual through a tremendous awareness of, and engagement with, spectatorship and other categories of the visual such as the photographic.[63] Anne Friedberg reports that "[I]n 1859, Charles Baudelaire indicted photography as being a 'cheap method of disseminating a loathing for history.'" In this sense, surmises Friedberg, Baudelaire was "an early declaimer of the dangerous transformations of history and memory that the photographic image would produce."[64] Modernity, understood as a social formation coincident with late eighteenth and early nineteenth century industrialisation and urbanisation, offered new configurations of the visual such as photography. Postmodern theorists have continued to examine the continual transformations of time, space and subjectivity. I argue, following Friedberg, that contemporary visual practice is a form of mobility that constructs increasingly fluid kinds of subjectivities. It is here I identify an intersection of expatriation, postmodern subjectivity, visual culture and technology.

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62 Sontag, *On Photography* 22.

63 "In the nineteenth century, a wide variety of apparatuses extended the "field of the visible": and turned visualised experience into commodity forms . . .The telegraph, the telephone and electricity increased the speed of communications, the railroad and steamship changed concepts of distance, while the new visual culture —photography, advertising and shop display, recast the nature of memory and experience." Freidberg 15.

64 Friedberg cites Charles Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1859," *Art in Paris 1845-1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions*, trans. and ed. by Jonathan Mayne (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1965) 153. Friedberg, 1.

Jameson suggests that "a whole new house of mirrors of visual replication and textual production has replaced the older stale reality of reference and of the non-cultural 'real.'"[65] Hospital's fictions suggest that it is not so much that notions of truth, reference and the non-cultural 'real' have ceased to exist, but that they are no longer unproblematic issues, assumed to be self-evident and self-justifying. The postmodern is not a degeneration into a Baudrillardian hyperreality, but a questioning of what reality can mean and how we can come to know it. The dislocated subject, the passenger in transit, the border-crosser are all types of subjects who most keenly understand the shift in the status of the 'real.' Jameson argues that: "The problem of [postmodern] interpretation is raised by the nature of the new textuality itself, which, when mainly visual, seems to leave no room for interpretation of the older kind."[66] Hospital's texts demonstrate a developing sense of "the new textuality" of visual replication as part of the replication of postmodern experience itself. It is Hospital's dislocated, expatriated and otherwise peripatetic characters that deploy technologies of transit; visual, narrative and cross-cultural technologies that they use to map and stabilise where they have been in order to know where to go. The function of witnessing is crucial to characters such as Felicity in *Borderline* and Charlie in *The Last Magician*, and one of the modes of witnessing, or recording, is by or through the visual.

Hospital's engagement with visuality reveals her relation to fictional processes. Her postulation of the nature of the imagistic is similar to her treatment of narrative; she foregrounds the constructed nature of representation (framing), the instabilities of the subject (point of view), and highlights the role of the spectator/reader in the creation of meaning. As Lorraine York comments:

> The complexity of the photographic image lies precisely in its dual status: it transcribes and transforms objects from the world which we perceive and, in so doing, it also points towards this act of transcription and transformation—towards its own constitutive process. [67]

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65 Frederic Jameson, "Hans Haacke and the Cultural Logic of Postmodernism," *Hans Haacke: Rehtinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986-7) 42.

66 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* xv.

67 Lorraine M. York "'Violent Stillness'": Photography and Postmodernism in Canadian Fiction," *Mosaic* 21. 2 (1988): 193.

In *The Last Magician*, for example, Hospital underlines the way in which the transparently 'real' photograph is, like realist prose, actually implicated in a dense matrix of ideological formations, including those of race and gender. Hospital's characters acknowledge the provisionality of their versions, and their complicity in institutional structures and ideological forms.

Janette Turner Hospital explores a variety of representational modes useful to the 'ex-centric' subject's production of meaning, a production of meaning that is a response to *both* the "virtual mobilities" of postmodernity *as well as* actual physical dislocation. Hospital's narrative strategies for representing a dislocated subject position—the ways in which her characters negotiate the aporias and discontinuities of their experience—include visual practices and technologies. The experience in and through visuality is another means by which subjects attempt to narrate, and therefore understand and re-calibrate, their bewildering milieux. Friedberg suggests that the technologies of the visual in the nineteenth century have produced cinematic and televisual apparatus, which have contributed to and are also symptomatic of contemporary experience as both derealised and detemporalised, which in turn effect notions of 'presence' and 'identity' and their relation to expatriate subjectivity.

The intersection of a documentary historicity and a formalist self-reflexivity, such as Charlie's images portray, amounts to an exploration of the way in which images structure how we see ourselves and how we construct notions of the self in the present and past. Hospital is always referring to the importance of art in the construction of meaning—the romantic role of the imagination is pivotal in her work.

In *Borderline*, visual culture centres on Felicity and Seymour. Felicity is an art curator and trained in art history and continuously thinks with and through images. The visual mediates her relation to the world in the form of painting, the media photographs in her clippings file, and the photograph she finally possess of what we take to be Dolores Marquez's children and mother. Images are an intertextual constant, providing alternative kinds of knowledge and recognition, although imagistic and the linguistic epistemologies are thoroughly entangled. For example, Felicity immediately sees or 'reads' Perugino in Dolores Marquez and thereby refers to her as *La*

Magdalena. Felicity navigates her rich and confusing world of spatial and temporal overlay, generated by expatriation and other forms of mobility, with these almost talismanic, images. While images can orient, they can also deepen and widen a sense of spatial and temporal distortion. For example, at the Canadian-American border an Italian Renaissance image is collocated with a twentieth century El Salvadorean political refugee. It is at this border that the political and historic, as well as different periods and geographies, bleed into one another. Past and present, real and unreal, distant and near become conflated at the 'between' (curved) site of the borderline.

Seymour, Felicity's lover-father (Jean-Marc's father), doesn't experience the world through imagistic quotation, he appropriates the world into his own visual terms. For example, he obsessively paints Felicity, constantly re-framing and re-interpreting her in an attempt to capture her elusiveness, her enigmatic and exotic Otherness. Of course, painting is one order of image, and photography quite another. Berger maintains that painting translates from appearances, whereas the photograph quotes from them, remaining opaque. [68]

In the *Last Magician*, Charlie Chang (photographer and postmodern film-maker) co-authorises Lucy's provisional narration with a parallel/twin text of photographs, making an analogue between graphic and imagistic narration. Lucy and Charlie construct a double commentary of word and image, characterised by interruption and repetition, ambiguity and indirection. Their project is essentially personal historiography, although their stories intertwine and overlap. They are both documenting memory as a form of history. The photograph is both evaluative record and memory indicating the unattainability of the past and the past self. The seeping of memory and images is a figure for the way in which the past is constantly reinterpreted and reshaped, as memories are reinterpreted and reshaped.

Lucy comments that:

> They're an arrogant and dangerous lot, the photographers, the film-makers, the story-tellers and spinners of images and words, the black

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68 LorraineYork has discussed the operation of the photographic image in *Borderline*, making a comparison with *Tiger in the Tiger Pit*, charting Hosptial's development of a theory of memory and the past through her treatment of the photograph.

> magicians. They make hay with a lot of memories and lives, they tamper with things, they hold nightmares up to the light (324).

Charlie, likened to Newton as the 'last magician,' is a 'refugee' from an Australian childhood, scarred by the price extracted for racial and ethnic difference, as well as the corrupting effects of shame, injustice and silence. He is also an expatriate artist, lately returned from a career in New York to clarify aspects of his childhood history.[69]

Photography, like piano tuning in *Borderline*, is the central 'art and science' of *The Last Magician*. While Hospital's postmodernity postulates the lack of a privileged point of narrative understanding, her modernity means that her marginal (doubled) narrators occupy a speaking position on the cusp of art and science, retaining and combining the prestige of art and the magic of the real, a romantic hybrid.

The theories of photography that circulate in *The Last Magician* are recognisably those of Roland Barthes, John Berger and Susan Sontag.[70] Roland Barthes theorised the photographic effect of the real. As traces of the real, photographs impart intoxicating corporeal effects of immediacy and palpability, a certain kind of magic. Yet how could photographs have both an undeniable authority from the real and also a mysterious opacity? Barthes averred that the photograph has an irreducible authority that retains a mystique beyond artifice. As a certificate of presence that can never lie as to past existence, the photograph also represents the past as a real force to be reckoned with, though the meaning of that existence might remain undisclosed. The image therefore resisted meaning, and referred to it.

> The type of consciousness the photograph involves is indeed truly unprecedented. Since it establishes not only a consciousness of the being-

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69 Amanda Nettlebeck's discussion of C.J. Koch's *The Year of Living Dangerously* is useful here for its treatment of postcoloniality, indigeneity, recording and deatchment. Billy Kwan is an intersting comparison with Charlie Chang, both are flâneur-photographers and both interested in the politics of witnessing and in danger of a certain kind of voyeurism. "'The Two Halves': Questions of Post-Colonial Theory and Practice in C.J Koch's *The Year of Living Dangerously*," *Span* 32 (1991) 3-8.

70 Lorraine York suggests that Hospital, like Berger, is not as interested in the problematisation of representation as she is in the meaning of appearances, making her less a postmodernist and more a romantic fabulator. *The Last Magician* does not engage either with strenuously psychoanalytic or Marxist readings of the photographic image produced by critics such as Allan Sekula, John Tagg and Rosalind Krauss.

> there of the thing but an awareness of having-been-there. What we have is a new space-time category: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority, the photograph being an illogical conjunction between the here-now and there-then.[71]

Berger believes that the discontinuity and ambiguity of photographs offer another way of telling, derived from a position "in-between." Photographs offer no translation of appearances, they only quote from and, as such, require reading. Berger's emphasis on the role of the spectator in the construction of coherence dovetails with the role of reading in *Borderline* and *The Last Magician*.

> There is no order, no sequence. Charlie's photographs spill out of the boxes with the randomness of memory itself. Sometimes there is a caption, sometimes not . . . I sift through an avalanche, picking random pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, trying them out here, moving them there, looking out at the photographer, trying to make the circles intersect, the dead ends meet. (243)

Berger believes that the desire for revelation structures the drive to look at photographs. If Hospital invests in romantic theories of the imagination, then she also attests to the revelational nature of appearances, and their uncanny ability to mean and confuse, make us at home and estrange us. In this she agree with Berger:

> Revelations do not usually come easily. Appearances are so complex that only the search which is inherent in the act of looking can draw a reading out of their underlying coherence . . . It is the search, with its choices, which differentiates. And the seen, the revealed, is a child of both appearances and the search.[72]

Hospital's texts propose that the quest of the drive to look is integral to the larger expatriate quest for coherence.

The description of Charlie's room in *The Last Magician* contains imagistic coordinates of identity: "Space. That is what the apartment celebrates: the mysterious quality of space;" or "[Lucy] feels like a traveller entering another atmosphere . . . like someone returning to a lost world." Lucy has crossed into another Otherworld, because Charlie's room is a room "full of mystery. It is also full of photographs"(47). On one wall Charlie has blown up to

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71 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.

72 John Berger and Mohr, *The Appearance of Things*, 118.

human scale an image of a Brazilian gold mine by Sebastiao Salgado. Lucy, already in step with Charlie's 'angle of vision,' asks if it is Charlie's vision of the quarry—Hospital's version of the nightmarish Otherworld of crime and violence which she often models on Dante's *Inferno*.

On the opposite wall is a an equally large colour photograph of Cedar Creek Falls "full of luminous greens"(48), a landscape Lucy and Charlie have in common as Queenslanders, even before they understand their link though Gabriel. For Charlie and Lucy this landscape is a source of vital nostalgia, of a point of origin and identity before their lives fracture.

Facing the window is a huge collage

> a honeycomb of framed pictures, snapshots, family groups, old school photos, sepia wedding portraits (grandparents? parents?), a Chinese bride, a Chinese couple behind a shop counter, Brisbane Street scenes, New York street scenes, the signposts of a life. (48-49)

Within this collage Lucy begins to notice a number of composed and rearranged images. Images are not just juxtaposed, they are cut across and within each other, especially one from school, "The Two Catherines." The kitchen has "one wall a mosaic of framed photographs"(50) as does the bedroom. In Charlie's darkroom is a work in progress, interpreting with the most enduring riddle of shame:

> across the surface of his body the jigsaw outline of a puzzle has been inked, black lines, interlocking tabs and slots. Some of the pieces have been removed by scissors, so that the boy has a hole where his face should be, another at the left thigh, another at the blazer pocket skimming straight through school badge and prefect's crest. Another shearing off part of one hand. The missing puzzle pieces have been stuffed into the boy's other hand which is cupped and held up for show in a way that seems slightly frantic, slightly comic, as through heroic school prefect that he is, he hangs grimly onto the shreds of a desiccating self. (52)

The collage is an arrangement of several individual instances of the effect of lightning—since the single photograph has the effect of a sudden or violent illumination on a limited and petrified surface. Collage upsets the photographic authority of the real and the seamless, it ruptures continuity. In collage each image has its own vantage and vanishing point. The internal logic of the fragment is that it is incomplete—yet meaning can be read across cropped juxtapositions and multiple vantage points, forming a polylogue:

> . . . several photographs can come together to form a sequence . . . the signifier of the connotation is then no longer to be found at the level of any one of the fragments of the sequence but at that—what the linguists would call the suprasegmental level—of the concatenation.
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> . . . discontinuity, disarticulated forms and compensatory unity: wrenching things from their context (to see them in a fresh way) bringing things together elliptically, according to the imperious but often arbitrary demands of subjectivity. [73]

From the point of view of 'reading,' collage is a 'wandering' mode—a structured but unstable mode of movement and of memory. There is only ever an elliptical 'resolution' to the collage text, especially if the collage is being treated as evidentiary. Collage thematises diversity, itinerancy, inner migrations, and multiple juxtapositions. As *The Last Magician* suggests, discontinuity confers mystery and therefore inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy.

Friedberg states that:

> While the nineteenth-century observer may well have been offered the illusion of mobility, it was at first only a spatial mobility. The illusion of temporal mobility became more effectively produced in cinematic spectation. Such imaginary flânerie produced a new form of subjectivity—not only decorporealised and derealised—but detemporalised as well. [74]

Friedberg argues that one of the essential properties of cinematic spectatorship is the basic temporal displacement is offers the spectator. Yet, cinematic space does different things with the expansion and extension of space and time as Bergson proposed. In the sense that cinema offers both temporal and spatial mobility, cinematic spectatorship provides a paradigmatic model for postmodern subjectivity. Cinematic spectatorship brings together the mobilised gaze of the shopper and the tourist into a "virtual mobility," although the spatial and temporally fluid subjectivity of this form of visuality is often at odds with actual bodily position. According to Friedberg, cinema and television are mechanical and electronic extensions of photography's capacity to transform our access to memory and history. They have produced increasingly detemporalised subjectivities and a derealised sense of presence so that identity in postmodernity and

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73 Sontag, *On Photography* 96.

74 Freidberg 37-38.

displacement is decentred, derealised, detemporalised and in need of reconstruction.

"Charlie's Inferno" is the film integral to Lucy's 'return' to Australia and her starting point in the unravelling of Charlie and Gabriel's disappearance. Of his film, Charlie comments:

> "It's something new I'm trying, hard to describe." He searches for words and disappears into the enterprise itself. "A sort of photographic decomposition," he says carefully. "The declensions of an image. Not sure if it'll go anywhere, but New York seems interested. I'm still working on it. The subject matter keeps changing."(52)

It is Charlie's film, that brings Lucy/Lucia back to Sydney from London. She experiences a profound time/space distortion as a result of watching the "mutational collage" (57) that is Charlie's postmodern short film, "Charlie's bloody black magic" (7). 'Charlie's Inferno' is "part of a body of work which has now made him a cult figure in New York" (56). Lucy is disoriented, even though she is a practised traveller, used to transit and the strangeness of global time and space:

> when you travel as much as Catherine and I do, living on the move half the time and treating the world as an office, there is nothing so very unusual about arriving home one day and leaving again a day later. (6)

The "dark wood" of "Charlie's Inferno" is a darkened cinema, and gives Lucy the exact coordinates of Cedar Creek Falls, the spiritual centre of the text, a utopian rainforest site of childhood and first love where, nevertheless, the remains of an awful crime are hidden. The rainforest is where the written and filmic text begins and ends—a central point of expatriation and painful return.

Lucy "bumps into herself on a cinema screen"(5) in London, where she has just arrived from the United States. She sees a cast of characters from her former life, of which three at least have disappeared, and attempts to ring one of them, Catherine, with no success. Lucy returns to Sydney, believing she has been sent one of those coded messages in which Charlie fervently believes: "The film was a kind of telegram . . . it was typical Charlie sending a message about the quarry." Lucy sees the film again, and blacks out again, "falls down a black hole" (13) since Charlie photographs black holes (15). Two of the missing people, Charlie and Gabriel, are re-presented on film

"their moving, breathing, celluloid selves, looking as though they were alive" (11). Charlie has effectively rearranged both space and time.

Lucy elaborately describes the experience of watching the film (57 ff). Charlie has taken the logic of collage and deployed it temporally, using cinema's ability to move both spatially and temporally in 'real time.' Charlie speaks in the present of the film-viewing and Lucy imagines him to be actually present. Lucy carries on a dialogue with Charlie in her head while the film proceeds. Charlie cuts the rainforest against a vortex of Botticelli drawings of Dante's *Inferno* cut against Sebastiao Salgado. Charlie follows the Dante reference by representing Virgil and Dante as Gabriel and himself. In the filmic vortex, the image declines again to be the granite cut of Newtown railway, and the quarry dwellers of caves cut into Newtown and Redfern.

"I am in the pit, at the heart of the fisheye lens, and I feel dizzy because of the languid curving zoom"(62) Lucy experiences a "queasy sense of decomposition, of dissolve" as Charlie moves towards the story of the railway track game, and then back to Cedar Creek falls, also analogues for the quarry—the parallel world of nightmare. It is Lucy herself on the boulder, staring at the dark hollow between boulders where the bones were stuffed.

> This time the order of events is speeded up and the effect is that of a time-lapse nature film, the kind where before your eyes the rosebud appears and swells and opens and loses its petals, all in a matter of seconds—there are three time lapse mutations, the fifth cycle is in slow motion. (63)

As Lucy watches this fifth cycle, she gathers more and more clues—the answer to Gabriel's riddle could be read in Charlie's film, which only takes 10 minutes for the five cycles:

> Lucy meet Lucy . . . The final close up was of the pendant at the tip of the chain, not a pendant in the ordinary sense, but two small gold rings, earrings, each threaded with a tiny glass bead . . . when he made this particular collage, when it was first lying as a neatly labelled videotape in his workroom, we had still not yet met—although of course, of course, he could have added to it, changed it. (67-69)

Lucy's bearings are haywire, she is spinning in a circle. Here and at the end of the novel, although the final clues seem clear, the past retains its provisionality.

Charlie's Otherness as an Australian born Asian in Queensland impels him to watch and record the procedures and constructions of Othering. Like Maurice Guest, Charlie negotiates his dislocation/Otherness visually.[75] In both cases masculine subjectivity, the visual, scopophilia and the national interact in interesting ways. Charlie takes photographs so that he can excavate and connect meanings across his dispersed life, and understand, in the process, the constitution of the cultural inside/outside and their ironies. Charlie 'narrates' visually, and Lucy 'reads' and narrates these photographs, combining interpretations of them with embedded narrative anecdote (cf. 243-264).

Charlie assumes an oppositional stance through his photographic practice. Oppositional photos manifest a critical stance in relation to the photograph itself. Collage and montage, for example, are an oppositional method because they rely on a critical stance in relation to the photograph itself. Charlie's photographs look critically at the retrospective seamlessness of ideologies and political practice—they aim to make visible the culturally invisible operations of law makers such as Robinson Gray. Charlie charts the Janus face of justice and corruption, and their ironic interrelation. As a photographer of ironic gaps, Charlie tracks the relation between power and knowledge, and the binary configuration of the spoken and unspoken, the legal and the criminal, the overworld and underworld. He 'shoots' ironic doubleness. As Sontag concurs:

> The photographer is the armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, cruising the urban inferno . . . the flaneur is not attracted to the city's official realities but to its dark seamy corners—an unofficial reality behind the facade of bourgeois life.[76]

Charlie's photographs evidence an archaeological relationship between image (art) and politics (world)—demonstrating another way in which Hosptial's texts are moral fables, engaging self-consciously in questions about the role of representation in the political.

Charlie's artistic practice necessitates a seeming self-effacement. As Sontag asserts "Photography is advanced as a form of knowing without knowing: a

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75 Both Maurice and Charlie are fixated on the vital yet enigmatic worman.

76 Sontag, *On Photography* 55.

way of outwitting the world, instead of making a frontal attack on it."[77] Charlie's oppositionality, his visual genealogies of dispossession and difference, define his 'angle of vision.' Charlies sees or frames the world in accordance with his marginality.

> Charlie was situated, you might say, in the first circle of the Quarry. He occupied the border lands. He looked both ways . . . The view from here is always interesting, Charlie used to say. (57)

He uses his marginality/invisibility, emphasising the text's concern with what the invisible person sees and with what the ex-centric person understands about both centre and periphery. Being a photographer, restaurant manager or a "hooker" is "like being made of one-way glass. You can see everything without being seen"(34). The 'point of view' from the periphery is also Lucy's narrative perspective—she has also seen both sides of the law, of the possessed and dispossessed and she understands the penalties and exhilarations of difference. Both Lucy and Charlie work with alterity, seeing and narrating marginality from both centre and periphery because they move between them.

Don't Look Twice

One of the dominant themes of Hospital's fictions is that the contemporary postmodern experience *is* the experience of dislocation. A twofold problematic is thereby engaged. While the revelation of the constructedness and provisionality of knowledge and representation destabilises one's relation to history as point of origin or locus of stable self, especially for dispossessed subjects, Hospital's texts nevertheless remain committed to the narration of memory as a phenomenon crucial to formations of identity. Hospital's recuperation of the past operates in a context of the postmodern impossibility of memory as it has been traditionally conceived and represented. Hospital narrates the destabilising experience of fracture in tandem with the compensatory and continual quest for a sense of self located in a viable time and place (past-present). In this sense Hospital engages with the central controversy of postmodernism—the status of the past. Has history disappeared, giving way to a perpetual present, as Frederic Jameson's dystopic symptomatology suggests? What is the shape and

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77 Sontag, *On Photography* 116

function of memory in the postmodern world? It is Hospital's commitment to memory and a 'useable' past (which nevertheless acknowledges the fictionality of that past) that places her work in postcolonial as well as a postmodern critical category. Whilst her fictional means are postmodern, her overarching investment is to a discovery of identity, agency and place.

In Hospital's fictions, writing, like the postmodern nomad's life, is a process of balancing 'multiple exposures' of dislocated experiences, sifting temporal frame, evidence and the possible events in order to make sense. Writing, like Charlie's photographs, is a technology for transition between the multiplicity of temporal and spatial locations. Insight into plurality and marginality displaces the subject into more anxious modes of knowing and being. Uncertainty, provisionality, contingency are the product of Hospital's thematisation of radical confusions about the 'real' and the possibilities of making any reference to it. Janette Turner Hospital runs a dual agenda characteristic of a postmodern, postcolonial text. She displays all the pyrotechnics of postmodern literary form, but retains a recuperative impulse toward history, and maintains the possibility of history's reference.

In *Oyster*, Hospital again 'returns' home with an enabling disruption from the United States. She transplants the spectre of Waco into southwest Queensland, and re-enters the Fundamentalist territory she knew well as a child. *Oyster* is an interesting hybrid, experimental and comprehensive, again thematising absence, loss, memory and young woman's exit from one way of life to another. In *Oyster*, Hospital writes the paradoxically mythical local of outback NSW. Her use of the local demonstrates that the multiplicities and fragments of identities in postmodernity can be productively, if exotically, grounded in the local.

CODA

"The Woman that So Many People were Looking For"

In both *Borderline* and *The Last Magician*, an initially enigmatic and then thoroughly absent woman stands at the heart of the mysteries that structure both texts. This woman constitutes one half of one of the most important 'doubles' in Hospital's arsenal: the simultaneous overlay of the narrating woman as speaking, worldly subject and the silent objectified woman she attempts to recuperate as a subject in narrative and history, and from a masculine scopic domain, masculinist symbolic discourses, authority and control. Hospital's "missing person" is a narrative framework for her meditation on the fact of survival of certain people in the hypermobile and dislocating contemporary world, and not others. Gender is an important study in Hospital's work, bound up with narrative point of view and irony. Her texts portray an extensive and politicised interest in the way in which women are represented and the way in which they attempt to represent themselves. Irony, dismemberment, silence and disappearance are all aspects of a question about the consequences of reified postmodern fragmentation for feminine subjectivity. The representation of gender in Hospital's fiction requires some engagement with the thorny but rewarding intersection of feminism, postcolonialism and postmodernism. The double of the missing woman and the woman who survives and tries to find her is a productive seam in Hospital's text.

Hospital engages a set of terms familiar to us from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: nomad, nomadology, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, becoming woman, all of which are seductive ways of discussing displacement in postmodernity. The concept of "minor literature" seems particularly useful for reading Christina Stead. However, it seems to me that the nomad is a privileged subject, and that if we are to use Deleuze and Guattari then the application has to be rigorously gendered and historicised.[1] Possibilities of an historically grounded practice of literary

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[1] See Jamil Khader, "Postcolonial Nativeness: Nomadism, Cultural Memory, and the Politics of Identity in Louise Erdrich's and Michael Dorris's *The Crown of Columbus*," *Ariel* 28.2 (1997): 81-101; Constantin V. Boundas, ed. and intro. *The Deleuze Reader* (New York: Columbia UP, 1993); Rosi Braidotti, "Toward a New Nomadism: Feminist Deleuzian Tracks; or, Metaphysics and Metabolism," *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantic V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) 159-

nomadics, addressing historically specific geographies in relation to the strategic methods of nomadism is an exciting prospect for ongoing discussions of femininity, mobility and representation.

In her study of the nineteenth century *fin de siècle*, Elaine Showalter provides a wonderful description for the positioning of this coda:

> The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past . . . Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the fin de siècle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of identity and difference, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of the distortion a disturbance of direction, in the beyond.[2]

This coda represents a moment of transit. The 'what next' refers to the position of expatriation at the end of the twentieth century. Showalter's complex, double figures again link Richardson with Hospital at this end of the thesis, and also indicate what I see in the contemporary *fin de millennium* as the destabilisation of "expatriate" as a meaningful term in late western capital transnationalism. Such a destabilisation is grounded in the reorganisation of subjectivities in a certain strata of first world privilege. By this I mean that Janette Turner Hospital can be a "global nomad," who moves among postcolonial peripheries and neo-imperial centres in search for work and markets, in a way that was simply unavailable to Stead and Richardson. Hospital's fiction suggests that new affiliations between past and present, and home and away are being forged, creating a new, elitist interstitial subjectivity. As Caren Kaplan suggests

> In the age of telecommunications and transnational cultural production this might mean that distance does not inevitably lead to exile and war, but to new subjectivities that produce new relationships to space as well as time so that distance is not only a safety zone or a field of tension but a terrain that houses new subjects of criticism.[3]

186; Elizabeth Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics," *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantic V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York and London: Routledge, 1994): 187-210; Réda Bensmaia, "On the Concept of Minor Literature From Kafka to Kateb Yacine," *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds. Constantic V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) 213-227; Phillip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

2 Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture in the* Fin de Siècle (London: Bloomsbury, 1990): 1-18.

3 Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1996) 142.

Throughout my thesis, I have been committed to reading the national *with* the international, instead of across and against it. In this sense one reads origin with exile, home with away for *both* inside and outside. The role of the Australian expatriate woman writer forms an "internal seam" (to use Benstock's phrase) in the history of twentieth century Australian women's writing. Without attempting to unify and homogenise their texts, the expatriate woman tests the prevailing possibilities of national, textual and gendered identity. Their work is important because of what it suggests about femininity, mobility and representation, but also because it has been the constitutive outside of the Australian teaching canon in a number of institutions for some time. Postcolonial and feminist discourses about "location," with their interest in gender and geography and position over essence, provide an interesting context in which to re-examine the complex cultural production and the rich difficulties of texts by Australian women expatriate writers.

Ros Pesman succinctly declares that

> to ignore Australians once they leave their own shores it to diminish our history and to suppress international cosmopolitan links and strands in Australian life and the contribution Australians have made to other histories and other societies. . . to place Australian experience in a wider framework is not to reject Australian nationality and culture, but to emphasise our connections with the rest of the world, their porous and permeable qualities. Identity and nationality are, like everything else, not fixed structures, but processes in the making. There is not Australian identity, only identities, and these have been forged abroad as well as at home, in contact and collision with others as well as in isolation.[4]

To take us back to the beginning, this would be my proposition for the 1994 permanent judges' panel of the Miles Franklin Award. In a political context in which contemporary Australian postcolonial and political debates rage about the constituency and possession of nation, when parochialism and protectionism haunt discussions of Australia's relation to region and globe, we need to encourage a geopolitical awareness as well as re-examine worldliness in light of ethical action in the local. The expatriate woman writer's ability to constantly negotiate and renegotiate identity in terms of the difference between subjects, and within oneself, is expressed in the extensive thematisation of "between" and "across" in her texts through figures of transformation, translation and transgression. These figures of

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4 Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad* (Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1996) 16.

crossing are salutary. In this study of three expatriate women writers (1890-1990) I have moved away from the problematic unity of the nation to the articulation of cultural difference in the construction of a gendered, international perspective from a productive, hybrid point somewhere 'in-between.'

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