CHAPTER THREE: MAN v NATURE

Voss’ God meets man in the desert. Captain Michales’ in the communion of warrior saints. These are journeys through fundamentally disparate landscapes, of society and nature.

Through Captain Michales’ struggle to regain elements dear and familiar, the natural world articulates a long-dwelling culture, a wealth of personal and traditional histories. Charting unknown territory involves Voss in the process of invention:\(^1\): overlaying new cultural perspectives on an ancient canvas\(^2\). The two landscapes collide in the process of being mapped to the text, in which translation we find that our experience of the land is as limited as human mortality; the land outlives us all.

LANDS

Both texts are inscribed on genuine geography.\(^3\) It is possible to chart their plots on maps and historical events, and such knowledge is imported into our reading of the texts: incorporated into our expectational horizons for each reading.\(^4\)

Every reading is, of course, coloured by the sum of experience, assumptions and beliefs which the reader brings with them to the text, and particular external factors ought neither be accentuated nor assumed: the only ‘facts’ of the texts are those

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\(^1\) McGirr 2003

\(^2\) David Malouf, Sunday 29/11/98, “Landscapes”, Lecture 3 of the 1998 Boyer Lectures: The Making of Australian Consciousness, a series of six lectures broadcast on ABC Radio National from November 15 to December 20, 1998. (Compiled in book form: Malouf, David, (1998) A Spirit Of Play: The Making Of Australian Consciousness. Sydney, NSW: ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.) ‘What we did when we came here was lay new knowledge, a new culture, a new consciousness over what already existed, the product of so many thousands of years of living in and with the land. What we brought supplemented what was already there but did not replace it … A land can bear any number of cultures laid one above the other or set side by side. It can be inscribed and written upon many times.’

\(^3\) This mirrors the etching of our selves on stimuli from real people and actual events. But just as our narrative selves remain subjective (and therefore limited in plurality only by the extent of our interactions) and discrete (for all that we are responsive, each of us is unique and integrative), so too are the texts. History has no more inevitable tie with the landscape than author with text (see Barthes 1977). A good examination of the multiplicity of ways in which text and history influence each other is in Peter Hulme’s (1986) discussion of colonialism, and its influence upon the colonists as well as the colonised.

\(^4\) See, for example, Jauss 1982, Fish 1980.
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CRETE

Cretan civilisation can be traced back to Neolithic times, peaking with the Minoans of the Bronze Age. Mainland Greeks first colonised the island about 1,100 BCE, establishing Doric cities (of the same governmental system as Sparta), vestiges of which survive. As a Roman province the population increased, with the establishment of many towns, inland as well as on the coasts, and this population was Christianised under Byzantine rule, when Iraklion became the capital. The island was occupied by the Venetians 1204-1669, serving as safe-haven for many Greeks from Constantinople after the Fall of 1453. Crete itself fell to the Turks in 1669.

Facts of the history of Crete under Ottoman rule are interspersed in Kazantzakis’ plot-line: the warriors of 1821, the battles of 1854, 1866 and 1878, calls for enosis with the expanding Greek state, the monastery at Arkadi. The novel is set in 1889, during the last decade of revolt against the Turks, which ended with an autonomous Cretan state in 1898.

The social fabric of Cretan life forms the background to the plot. Religious and cultural practices, gender-based stereotypes and common myths and folk-lore

5 Thus, although correspondence of White’s Voss with the historical Ludwig Leichhardt is high, we may not assume, for example, that Voss came from Leichhardt’s hometown of Sabrodt in Trehatsch, Saxony (Roderick 1988). For further discussion of every reading as a new rewriting see, for example, Bassnett 1993 and Ward 1990.
6 Possibly as early as 6,000 BCE, Hopkins 1977, Smith 1973.
7 2,600 - 1,100 BCE
8 67 BCE - 330 CE
9 330 - 1204, with a temporary Arab conquest of 826 - 961.
10 Mega Kastro (Megalo Kastro) in the novel.
11 Clogg 1979, Hopkins 1977, Woodhouse 1968
12 Further discussion of this period and its rendering in the novel is made by Fanourakhj 1958.
13 s 48 p42, s 308 (not in translation)
14 s 21 p15
15 s 128-129 p118-119
16 s 17 p11: Captain Michales’ eldest brother Kostaros plays the role of Konstanine Giaboudakis, 9th November 1866, see Palmer 1993, Herzfeld 1985, Yale 1958.
are woven through every event. As are connections with the land and its cultural symbolism.\textsuperscript{21}

Cretan identity is a crucial factor for each character’s role. Non-Cretans are demarcated according to a hierarchy of ethnic relationship; in descending order of closeness: Cretans, other islanders, other Greeks, non-Greek Christians, non-Christians. Distinctions between Cretans and other Greeks are particularly marked.\textsuperscript{22} Paraskevás, the barber from Syra\textsuperscript{23}, for example, is clearly distinguished from his

\textsuperscript{21} For example: Easter § 194-196 p179-181; fasting and feasting § 50-51 p44-45, § 213-215 p188-190; blessings for the first of the month § 87-88 p79-80; involving God in the uprising § 366 (not in translation), § 369 p325, § 429 p372.

\textsuperscript{22} For example: Séfakas’ taking (literally) of Lenió as his wife § 472-473 p409-410; his only concerns about Pelagiá, about to become his daughter-in-law, § 411: Kaí h’naí; Xontrokošal h, fardokapoul h; akei taldontia thj kai tatrianta dub, (Is she good? Strong bones, broad hips … has she all thirty-two of her teeth? p364)

\textsuperscript{23} For example: harbour § 14 p8, § 184 p175, § 443 p381-382; mountains § 42-43 p36-37, § 62-63 p53-54, § 471 p408; tou Koule (Kule tower) § 14-15 p8-9; to\textamalgamation monasthí tou = Afenth Xristou = the monastery of Christ the Lord) § 357-358 p314-315. And, most poignantly, the representations of Christ as Cret § 172-174 p163-165, and as Freedom Fighter § 191-192 (not in translation).

\textsuperscript{24} For the non-Cretan reader, such distinctions may prove unexpected – which may account for the emphasis given them by the author; although this is an accurate reflection of reality, even now: see, for example, Herzfeld 1985: 4-6.

\textsuperscript{25} H Suřoj , one of the Cyclades (Aegean islands).
Cretan neighbours, in his timidity and his predilection for a quiet life. Although an Orthodox Greek, his deviant ethnicity debars him from complete religious engagement, emphasising the deep intertwining of religion with politics, and with the island’s history. Bertódulos, from Zakynthos, is similarly differentiated by his dubitable masculinity. Although he’s been so long in Crete he can’t remember how he came to be there, he is still conspicuously non-Cretan.

Cretans who have voluntarily spent time away from the island are viewed suspiciously, as if their Cretanness is tainted. Hadjisávas, for example, who returned from medical studies with an interest in archaeology, is described as a corrupting influence, because of his digging up ancient artefacts and displaying them in the churchyard; raising discrepancies in Cretan self-identification with their own past.

Kosmas’ years away undermine his commitment to his homeland, even though he

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24 Paraskevás is frightened by the Cretans, and overwhelmed by their lack of attentiveness to personal hygiene (S 19 p13). He’s unable to defend himself, not against the Cretan boys (S 127 p116-117); and certainly not against the Turks (S 315-316 p275-276).

25 S 19-20 p13-14: In discussion of which is the more desirable: Nuri’s horse or his hanum, Paraskevás says he would choose neither, because they’re both mpela/dej (trouble). This marks him out as good as dead, in the Cretan man’s opinion.

26 Although Orthodox, as a non-Cretan Paraskevás is unable to appreciate fully even the Easter experience – the most fundamental of Christian celebrations. In the words of Vendúsos S 192 (not in translation): den katal abainej eṣu/pou=akatal abej, eiṣai Surianoj. (You don’t understand – how could you understand? you’re from Syra.) Interweaving of politics and religion is seen most strongly in the Warrior God S 74 p65 – and his connection with Russia S 131-132 p121-122, referring to the Russo-Turkish War 1877-1878, see Westwood 2002, Saunders 1992.

27 H Zakunoj, one of the Ionian islands.

28 S 333 p292-293: he’s unashamedly terrified; S 391 p346: he’s described as gunaikopaido (woman and child together); S 104: he shaves – xal naşi thnta ch tou=ko=s mou, mperdei=ei tij gunaikej metouj ahtrj. (He is destroying the order of things! He is mixing up women and men. p96)

29 Bertódulos flounders between identities, illustrated in the loss of his name: konte Mantzaˇbiˇno (Count Mangiavino, expressing the Italian influence upon his homeland), replaced with the Greek descriptive Mpertimeouj, after the cloak in which he shivers all year round S 104-105 p96. He’s acutely aware that he doesn’t fit in, articulated in dividing men into three groups, according to the manner of their egg-consumption: without the shell, with the shell, or Cretans: with the eat-cup as well. Bertódulos is unable to eat the egg-cup. S 138: ṭwx, ṭwk, ti/gureuij, konte Mantzaˇbiˇno, etwre=ja; (Captain Michales’ cellar feast: “Oh, oh, Count Mangiavino, what has brought you here?” p128.) Note that his internal voice addresses him with his original name.

30 S 167 p158 Hadjisávas’ statues being displayed in the churchyard highlights conflict between Ellnaj (Greek) and Xristianoj (Christian). Although Cretan identity is ineluctably tied to the land, it is not located in the ancient (Pagan) cultural history.

31 Captain Michales refers to Kosmas as S 15: ocenitemeˇnjoj, fragkemenoj ahiyioj. (the nephew living overseas and adopting foreign, Western ways)
is a grandson of the robust Captain Séfakas, and despite his own deep connectedness with Crete – physically and culturally – which he finds undiminished by absence.32

Non-Cretan women are distinguished according to the same hierarchical criteria as men.33 Since the Cretan practice is for women to remain in their home village34, there are fewer alien women than there are men, but the prejudice against them is even stronger than that against the foreign men.35 Marcelle, for example, the wife of Kasapákis the doctor, is French, and a perpetual outsider.36 However, as a Christian, Marcelle is a more acceptable wife for a Cretan than Noëmí, who is Jewish37 – and even after her baptism is construed as a polluting threat to the purity of Kosmas’ offspring38. Even Old Séfakas, who is one of the few voices of acceptance for his grandson’s choice of wife39, raises concerns about her negative potential on the future bloodline, demanding that the children take after their father, not their mother.40 Most tellingly, this xenophobic anxiety is finally revealed in Kosmas

32 For example: s447: Ἐτούθει篑άι ἤπατρίδα μου ... εἷvalueOf αποθέου ... τοξωμα πολυταυμε. (This is my country ... I am from this earth that we are treading on. p385 (my alterations); s471: Ἐτούθει篑άι ἡ Κρήθη, Ἐτούθει篑άι τοξωμα πουτέλε ασε ε, Ἐτούθει篑άι ἡ ημαν. (This is Crete, this is the land which created me, this is my mother. p408 my alterations); s481 (not in translation): ὑπαρξεὶ στην Κρήθη μαϊάδαστθή ογα ... μαίνομαι ποι ὑπαρξεὶ πάθον ζωτίκι αποτολόγαντο (There is in Crete an indomitable passion … a passion stronger than life and death.)

33 Compare, for example, dependable and predictable Cretan paragons like Captain Michales’ grandmother s16 p10; Christiniá s77-81 p68-72, s221 p195-196; Renió s44 p39 – women who are strong, but ultimately under the control of their men and their men’s rule – with non-Cretan wildcats: Circassian Eminé s36-40 p31-35; Moorish Ruhéni s92 p84, s122 p112; Armenian Marúsia s132-133 p123 – all beyond the limitations of specific men or social mores, and therefore dangerous.

34 s80-81 p72, s232-233 p207 See also: Dubisch 1986, Lambiri-Dimaki 1972.

35 As for men, these prejudices are evident in the aliens’ failure to meet the expectations of their gender. Thus, Eminé, Ruhéni and Marúsia are conspicuous in their common unchastity. 36-40 p31-35; Moorish Ruhéni 92 p84, s122 p112; Armenian Marúsia s132-133 p123 – all beyond the limitations of specific men or social mores, and therefore dangerous.

36 For example: s448: Γιατίοθηθπεή; Καυμελεί ειτοαίμα. ‘Οβραίας. (Why did you marry her? She’ll pollute our blood. A Lewess... p385 my alterations), s449: Τι κανθη; πω; άλλη rsα, αλλοι qeθ, θεβλ ασε αυθθ/. (What am I so say to her? ... another race. Another God created her. p387); Captain Michales s17: Ἰεντραπήκει ἀπακάθεγε ἐτοιαίμα ναϊ μετούξ, Τσιφούθεϋ. (He is ashamed of mixing our blood with the moneylenders. p11); the neighbourhood women s450: Κοιταζανθη ‘Οβριαίοπου αποθόνον ναρφθή; ταυνύκια, σανεθα παρατεύνει αγιμάνμαστσικακ. (They examined the Jewish girl from head to toe like some strange and disturbing beast. p388 my alterations)

37 Note that this ties Cretan identity primarily to religion, rather than political affiliation. Noëmí’s experiences of displacement and oppression (s449-450 p387, s456 p393) count for nothing against her alien blood. More generally, the Cretan struggle finds no echoes in Jewish suffering; but rather vilifies Jews as Christ’s murderers, s186-189 p176-177 and beyond: mostly not in translation.

38 Kosmas’ mother s448: Εγατίοθηθπεή; Καυμελεί ειτοαίμα. ‘Οβραίας. (Why did you marry her? She’ll pollute our blood. A Lewess... p385 my alterations), s449: Τι κανθη; πω; άλλη rsα, αλλοι qeθ, θεβλ ασε αυθθ/. (What am I so say to her? ... another race. Another God created her. p387); Captain Michales s17: Ἰεντραπήκει ἀπακάθεγε ἐτοιαίμα ναϊ μετούξ, Τσιφούθεϋ. (He is ashamed of mixing our blood with the moneylenders. p11); the neighbourhood women s450: Κοιταζανθη ‘Οβριαίοπου αποθόνον ναρφθή; ταυνύκια, σανεθα παρατεύνει αγιμάνμαστσικακ. (They examined the Jewish girl from head to toe like some strange and disturbing beast. p388 my alterations)

39 s487: γεγακενθούκινα αυτή, έθα Κρήθηκου, μοός αναθη ται Τσιφούθεϋ. (I want strong great-grandsons, made of steel. She’s to bear Cretans,
himself: *God forbid that Noëmí’s blood should dilute the blood of Crete! My son must be born a complete Cretan.*

Cretanness is entailed in birthright, but emanates politically: in visceral engagement with Crete’s freeing herself from the Turks. The fight for freedom underpins religious conceptions, overrides familial ties and social praxis, and is at the very heart of every Cretan, from birth until death. Fundamentally, Cretan identity is located in the struggle; and the struggle – like its people – is intimately embedded in the land:

*He loved Crete like a living, warm creature with a speaking mouth and weeping eyes; a Crete that consisted not of rocks and earth and the roots of trees, but of thousands upon thousands of forefathers and foremothers, who never died …*
AUSTRALIA

Judith Wright describes the landscape of white Australian literature as demonstrating both hope in new freedoms and exiled anguish: two aspects clearly evident in Voss.\footnote{Wright 1965} Set in the middle of the nineteenth century, the novel depicts the angst of a young and self-conscious colony attempting to define itself between distant familiarities and present unknowns.\footnote{The novel covers roughly 1845 – 1870. Identity and belonging remain, of course, ongoing Australian concerns; illustrated in the depth and breadth of national soul-searching which accompanied, for example, the rise of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party (Leach et al. 2000, McGregor 1998), the centenary of Federation (Thompson 2002, Irving 2001), the republicanism debate (Turnbull 1999, Vizard 1998, Hirst 1994, Hudson and Carter 1993) and current Howard Government policies regarding asylum seekers – which have prompted this from barrister Julian Burnside: There was a time when Australia was a good-natured country. There was a time when Australians understood, and responded to, the suffering of others. / Then something went wrong. Tyler 2003: ix (See also Mares 2002 and McMaster 2001.)} The contrast of urban colonialism with the untamed bush epitomises the distance of the social individual from our natural roots, and the layers of self-protection we construct against truths about ourselves, individually and collectively huddling in delusions of control.\footnote{This process is contained at a social level in the colonists’ restricting themselves to the safety of Sydney P13: “A week in the country makes a change, but I am always happy to return to this house.” / “A pity that you huddle” … he accused her of the superficiality which she herself suspected.; and individually in the men of the expedition’s constructing for themselves places of at least notional sanctuary P298: ‘the whole human company was glad to huddle in the shelter of the caves.’; P406: ‘They were pleased to huddle together, and derive some comfort from an exchange of humanity.’ In June 1935 P. R. Stephensen (1936:4) described the majority of the Australian population as living in cities: ‘huddled there, it may be, for mutual protection against the loneliness of the bush’. Wider analysis of the literary representation of this colonial huddling: creating new systems of exclusion as a means self-protection, may be found in Rutherford 2000.} Voss’ expedition pushes to the limits of such delusory control: his physical journeying traced for us through Laura’s accompanying self-exploration.

White’s Johann Ulrich Voss is built on a skeleton of facts from Prussian explorer Ludwig Leichhardt.\footnote{Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Leichhardt (1813 - 1848) led a successful expedition from Dalby, Queensland, to Port Essington, Northern Territory, October 1844 - December 1845. In 1846 he attempted to cross from Darling Downs, Queensland, to Western Australia, but failed and returned. He tried again in 1848 and vanished without trace. For further information see Dewar 1994, Roderick 1988, Connell 1980, Webster 1980, Erdos 1962, Chisholm 1955, Larcombe 1926. Hubert Teyssandier (1995) also associates White’s Voss with poet and scholar Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1825). While the association is convincing, it does seem of scant interpretative consequence.} The association is cemented in allusions to common history\footnote{For example: P16 we learn that Voss, like Leichhardt, was intended to be a ‘great surgeon’ but determined during his studies to become instead a ‘great botanist’; P20 Voss has been ‘gathering some interesting plant and insect specimens’ – there are collections of Leichhardt’s in the National Herbaria of NSW and Victoria.}; and severed through deliberate dissimilarities. Reference is made to Voss having some previous experience of the bush\footnote{P20: collecting on the “North Coast” and visiting the Moravian brothers at Moreton Bay.}, but it is clear that this is his first serious
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Although Voss’ expedition echoes Leichhardt’s geographically, it is given incompatible dates. Through such intentional differentiation between his protagonist and the historical model, White reinforces that his is a fictional text, the ‘truth’ of which is self-contained, and open for examination according to all of our interpretative fora. It also locates his text in the post-Leichhardt canon: part of the mythologising of the exploration experience; and invites allegorical interpretation: Voss’ unsuccessful survey of the physical terrain as an image of white Australia’s incomplete mapping of our social environment.

White settlers approached Australia as an opportunity to prove the dominance of reason over nature. Since at least 1597 the continent was known to be an island: a vast, self-contained unknown. At the end of the eighteenth century, with most of the globe mapped, Australia remained a challenge. In the context of the industrial revolution, charting the unknown land entailed its being conquered: brought under

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55 Mr Bonner P22: “You are quite certain you are ready to undertake such a great expedition?” Tom Radclyffe to Mr Bonner P30-31: “Do you really intend to send the creature on an expedition into this miserable country?” P67: In response to Mr Pringle’s suggestion that all Voss will find is ‘a few blackfellers, and a few flies, and something resembling the bottom of the sea’, Voss says: “Have you walked upon the bottom of the sea, Mr Pringle? ... I have not ... Except in dreams, of course. That is why I am fascinated by the prospect before me.” To Laura, P74-75: “It would be better … that I should go barefoot, and alone. I know. But it is useless to try to convey to others the extent of that knowledge.”

56 Leichhardt’s final, unfinished expedition was begun in 1848. Voss’ first letter to Laura, from Rhine Towers, near Newcastle, is dated October 1845 – a time when Leichhardt was returning from his successful exploration of the Northern Territory.

57 Best indications of the strength and longevity of this canon come from an overview of editions of The Bulletin. As early as Christmas 1880, The Bulletin offered £1,000 to anyone who could solve the mystery of what happened to Leichhardt’s 1848 expedition. By 14th October 1899, the mythologising was already entrenched, with the publication of Banjo Paterson’s poem “The Lost Leichhardt” about an intended British search party fifty years after the explorer failed to return, advising that they travel the route by train, and seek advice from locals over pints of beer – most likely in the pub built on Leichhardt’s grave. And it was still continuing January 2003, with reports of Bruce Simpson’s ongoing search for Leichhardt’s remains (Anthony Hoy, “Leichhardt’s Bad Trip”, The Bulletin 29/1/03).

58 Veronica Brady (for example: 1999, 1996, 1983) has written extensively on such allegorical interpretations, detailing, in the words of Vrasidas Karalis (2003): ‘the intense historical conflict between actuality and ideality, that is, the collusion between the utopian element of Australian history and the actual implementation of that dream with the Aboriginal genocide, the destruction of the land, the cosmic abandonment of the individual.’

59 For example, addressing the Philosophical Society of Australia in 1822, landowner Alexander Berry praised the good fortune that had allowed colonisation to occur when ‘the sum of human knowledge, both moral and physical, is so extended’ and urged rational theory to be applied to the conquest of nature, in order to prove the superiority of their advanced civilised society. Field 1825: 254

60 Hyde 1947: 308

61 David Malouf, Sunday 15/11/98, “The Island”, 1998 Boyer Lecture 1. Malouf also points out that such a view of Australia relative to the rest of the world could not have been held by the indigenous residents, highlighting fundamental disparities between black and white conceptions of Australia.
the control and made to serve the purposes of white man. 62 Conquering the land included the conquering of its residents, most successfully accomplished by writing them out of history altogether in citing the new land as *Terra Nullius.* 63

Presenting Australia as uninhabited space open for the invaders’ appropriation was a clear and deliberate untruth. It is estimated that in New South Wales alone there were more than 40,000 Aboriginal people before white settlement. 64 The land was integral to Aboriginal culture: the substrate upon which was founded every aspect of their lives, physical and metaphysical. 65 White men’s taking of the land was not merely economic misappropriation, but also spiritual and cultural desecration; a process aptly described by P. R. Stephensen as *raping* the land and its people. 66

White demonstrates Aboriginal intimacy with the Australian land in their constant cultural presence 67, their survival skills 68, and their continually emerging, insinuated within the landscape, as if sprung from the land itself 69. Underlying the entire text is

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63 See, for example, Gary Foley’s essays at The Koori History Website (http://www.koooriweb.org – accessed 8/6/03), especially “Assimilating the Natives in the U.S. and Australia” (14/6/00). Such linguistic subjection has a long history; since the Ancient Greeks’ referring to the *barbara* (see: *M* pampiriwthj* 1998: 353, Friedman 2001: 107). It continues in our writing of history, most famously in Manning Clark’s *History of Australia*, which declared in 1962 that ‘civilisation did not begin in Australia until the last quarter of the eighteenth century’. (This was reprinted as recently as 1999 despite having been discredited in 1993 by its original editor, Peter Ryan, who described it as shallow and fraudulent and the utmost shame of his life; but ‘a great little earner’, *Quadrant* September 1993, Vol. 37, No 9, pages 11-24.)
64 ABS 2000: Cat. no. 1300.1
65 See, for example, Habel 1999, Gelder and Jacobs 1998, Poynton 1994, Bourassa 1991, Chatwin 1987, Berndt 1970, Tonkinson 1970, and the preamble to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW) which states: “Land in the State of New South Wales was traditionally owned and occupied by Aborigines. Land is of spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance to Aborigines. It is fitting to acknowledge the importance which land has for Aborigines and the need of Aborigines for land.” See also the words of Bill Neidjie (1985): Rock stays, / Earth stays. / I die and put my bones in cave or earth. / Soon my bones become earth ... / All the same. / My spirit has gone back to my country ... / My mother.
67 For example: cave-paintings P292-293, P298-299; platforms for laying out of the dead P260-262.
68 For example: Aboriginal bush-tucker P203-204, P224, P233-234; fire-making P360; occupying the desert P360-361, P400. P386-387: ‘While the white men, with their trickle of surviving pack-animals and excoriated old horses, stumbled on through the full heat of day, the blacks padded very firmly.’ Even in urban areas Aboriginal bushcraft thrives, seen in the two women on the quay cooking fish they have caught P107.
69 For example: P204: ‘Other figures were beginning to appear, their shadows first, followed by a suggestion of skin wedged to the trunk of a tree.’; P357: ‘Although the natives never showed themselves in strength, several dark skins at a time would flicker through pale grass, or come to life amongst dead trees. At night there was frequent laughter, a breaking of sticks, more singing, and a
the indisputable primacy of the Aboriginal claim to the land: it is upon millennia of indigenous footsteps that Voss’ expedition falls.70

Their bare feet made upon the earth only a slight, but very particular sound, which, to the German’s ears, at once established their ownership.71

Against this undertow of Aboriginal union with the physical landscape runs the white man’s attempted domination.72 He acknowledges the Aboriginal presence on the land73 and their knowledge and superior bushcraft74. Yet still views the country as unclaimed, uncharted, virginal territory.75 Aboriginal people are as insignificant as the flies with whom they dwell.76

White Australia’s racism is evident in Belle’s naivety77, Angus’ disdain78, and Turner’s crudeness79. Brendan Boyle, a man whose whole estate functions on Aboriginal labour80 yet who describes his unpaid workforce as fickle and shifty81,
sums up white society’s genuine, and mostly unacknowledged, ambivalence: “Dirty beggars … but a man could not do without them.”

Aboriginal people are literally beyond the pale – taken to its full extent with a wealth of animal imagery, putting them outside the image of the white man’s God. In all ways they are made Other: the perfect ploy to keep their interests from interfering in the colonists’ expansion. This Otherness is contained most strongly in the liminal characters of Dugald and Jackie, attempting to straddle the no man’s land between black and white.

Both Dugald and Jackie travel with the expedition from its start, but neither is considered one of the men. Rather, they are assigned a role somewhere between the

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81 P181: “… they will blow with the wind, or turn into lizards when they are bored with their existing shapes … standards of truth vary, of course …”

82 P184 It is particularly ironic for Boyle to use ‘dirty’ as a derogatory term, given the squalor in which he dwells P178-179. Boyle’s racism is also evident in his raising of his voice when speaking to Aboriginal people P182. This common offensive practice is beautifully parodied in the following advice to Americans when dealing with foreigners: “Speak loudly. English, when spoken in a normal tone, can only be understood by persons who are fluent in it. But when spoken loudly or shouted, by saying for instance “WHAT DO YOU WANT” as if you were speaking to a person hard of hearing, it can be comprehended by all.” (http://www.genepool.addr.com/foreigners.html – accessed 9/6/03)

83 Thus, it’s perfectly acceptable – indeed, perfectly charming – for Belle to request Voss bring her back a bloodied black’s spear P125. Yet not for Laura to refer to the bones of a long-dead white man P89. Similarly, Boyle’s liaisons with the Aboriginal women on his property are dismissed as crudely sexual encounters; implying that Aboriginal women are not capable of genuine affectionate connection – and even if they were, it would be inappropriate to seek such from them.


85 Note the correlations with Cretan anti-Semitism S449: Noëmi is of a different race, made after the image of a different God. Once the expedition splits, segregated associations with the divine are more pronounced. Voss, Robarts and Le Mesurier combine in a ‘harmony of souls’; with Jackie the ‘doubtful quantity’ P382. Their ‘trinity of whites’ P402 makes no room for the black man (P382: ‘they longed to be one less, so that they might enjoy their trinity’); in fact, views the black man as a threatening evil. P403: “Man is a tempting morsel.” – black wickedness may well not withstand such temptation. White himself counters this with a beautiful demonstration of Aboriginal purity of heart P389-390: Voss stumbles mounting his horse and strikes his chin on the stirrup, ridiculous. ‘But the black men did not laugh.’

86 Voss is included in this colonial disassociation, as articulated by Mary Hayley P423-424: “My father says … the German was eaten by blacks, and a good thing, too, if he was going to find land for a lot of other Germans.” Not only are Aboriginal people cannibals – breakers of the most universally stringent taboo (see Telfer 1996:71) – but, as a foreigner, the German’s motives are, by definition, suspect. In both cases, it is perfectly acceptable for a colonial lady in training to discuss them publically in this way, exhibiting a most pronounced dearth of compassion – and of Raimond Gaita’s (1999) common humanity.

87 Such political expediency continues, of course; most prominent currently in Australia with portrayals of asylum seekers as Other, skilfully examined by Dr Carmen Lawrence in her recent Online Opinion article (23/5/03): “The socially corrosive effects of fear and prejudice as public policy” http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=368 – accessed 10/6/03. (To be published by the University of Wollongong Press in a forthcoming collection of essays.)

88 P203: ‘lost between several worlds’.
white men and the livestock. Their Aboriginality is reinforced by the white men’s rejection, and undermined by their skills being co-opted in the service of white against black. From all perspectives, the Aboriginal men occupy peripheral identities. And while this does entail a measure of freedom, more powerful is the absence of particular space in which they belong, epitomised in Jackie’s inability to find a place for himself amongst either white or black, and his consequent identity fragmentation. Called to choose, Jackie sides with his skin, abandoning the remaining shreds of the expedition: “Blackfellers no good along white men. This my people. … Jackie belong here.” – and proves this belonging by killing his former master. Jackie’s murdering Voss contains no interpersonal malice. It is a declaration of identity:

The boy was stabbing, and sawing, and cutting, and breaking, with all of his increasing, but confused manhood, above all, breaking. He must break the terrible magic that bound him remorselessly, endlessly, to the white men.

89 The Aboriginal men have unique skills which Voss values highly (for example: tracking cattle P214-216, P221-223; reconnaissance P291-292; mediating with the local Aboriginal nations P214-215, P220, P356-357), but this does not accord them equality. Voss is apt to romanticise them and elevate them beyond human foibles – much as he does with the dogs (for example: Gyp the sheepdog P283-285; an association emphasised in Jackie’s taking Tinker’s place at the entrance of Voss’ tent once the terrier goes missing P357) – but he does not treat them as part of the human company. The Aboriginal men fend for themselves (catch lizard P203-204 and kangaroo P294), do not eat with the white men (in fact, Voss uses food as a reward P304-305 – further dog-associations) – not even on Christmas day P221 – are excluded from all decision-making (including when the party splits P371) and are not assumed to experience the white men’s level of suffering (thus, although Jackie is as well as ever, we find ‘every man of them’ P298 is made ill with the rains P286, and from hunger, thirst and the unrelenting landscape P355-357).

90 For example, reclaiming cattle which the blacks have stolen P214-216, reminiscent of the Aboriginal tracker in Nugi Garimara’s (1996) *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*.

91 Demonstrated in Dugald’s adopted attire: swallowtail coat and strategically placed piece of bark P182.

92 Since they are standing on the fringes of liberty P259.

93 In contrast, Dugald successfully sheds the corruption of white society along with the swallowtail coat P234: symbolised in his tearing up of the letters entrusted to him by Voss P234-235. However, his internalised personal loyalties (summed up in his reluctant explanation of the purpose of flour P220: ‘This he did briefly, as people will confess unwillingly to the lunacy of some relative.’) remain complicated: ‘home’ has become both Jildra, a white man’s estate P228, and ‘his people’, the ancient nations of his land P235. Dugald’s marginalisation embodies that embraced by bell hooks (1996): excluded from the centre but choosing the manner and meaning of one’s own liminality. For Dugald, this is an indubitably self-empowering position; emphasised in its stark distinction with Jackie’s personal disintegration.

94 P388 The lie beneath this statement is given by Voss’ own manifesto of personal liminality and social pluralism: “Where do I belong, if not here? … Tell your people we are necessary to one another. Blackfellow white man friend together.”

95 In killing Voss, Jackie aims to ‘expiate his innocence’ P419, showing himself of undivided loyalty to the black man over the white, echoing gangland initiations which demand proof of allegiance in acts of violence against loved ones (as depicted recently, for example, in Ken Loach’s *Sweet Sixteen* UK 2002 and Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund’s *Cidade de Deus* (City of God) Brasil 2002).

96 P419 It is, of course, both tragic irony and deeply symbolic of his gesture’s futility that the weapon with which he kills Voss is the clasp-knife Voss had given him upon their first meeting P183.
Chapter Three: Man v Nature

But a declaration which ultimately fails. Rather than recover his Aboriginal belonging, killing Voss results in his complete dispossession: at home now with no one but himself and ‘the souls of those who had died in the land’.\(^{97}\) Lost between black and white, Jackie embodies the unmet challenges for Australian national identity.

The ground between black and white is not, however, entirely barren.\(^{98}\) White tenders promise of future inter-racial connectedness through two pairs of engagements. The first is in mutual eroticising, by both black and white. At times of greatest stress, we find Voss and Jackie each reaching out for connection at a primitive, visceral level, from among the most basic of human needs, in acknowledging the Other’s sensuality: recognising their physical and emotional unifying potentials.\(^{99}\) The second evokes Shakespeare’s Shylock: each searching for the other’s humanness. Voss yearns to communicate with the Aboriginal people, to expose them as *individuals* rather than the *shadows* of the other white men’s

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97 P448 Jackie’s inability to locate himself wholly within Aboriginal identity is portended P291-292 in his refusal to enter the cave without Voss: “Too black. This feller lost inside.” – he is literally lost inside blackness. And in his willingness to follow Voss and his white man’s ‘exorcising magic’ into the cave, holding himself ‘fortunate’ to have a master. Jackie’s connection with Voss – and his embodiment of white society – runs deep: has been interpolated into his sense of who he is and of where he belongs. Killing Voss entails renouncing these important elements of his developing selfhood, resulting in critical fragmentation of his identity, which echoes the experiences of the Stolen Generations: Aboriginal children removed from their families in accordance with (cross-party) Federal Government policies of assimilation from 1940 until the 1970s. For further information, see *Bringing them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*. (Commissioner: Ronald Wilson) Sydney, NSW: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997. Available online at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rslibrary/hreoc/stolen/ – accessed 10/6/03.

98 White provides pragmatic prescription for cross-racial reconciliation in his acknowledging bilateral utilitarianism: white exploiting black knowledge of the land, and tracking and survival skills; and black holding white as talisman P413: ‘He who had appeared with the snake was perhaps also of supernatural origin, and must be respected, even loved. Safety is bought with love, for a little. So they even fetched their children to look at the white man …’ This marks, of course, a reversal of the norm, where white men have viewed black as curiosities. Consider, for example, the public displaying of Truganini’s skeleton in the Tasmanian Museum until 1947 (“Bringing Truganini Home”, editorial, *The Age*, 5/1/02; for further information see the European Network for Indigenous Australian Rights (ENIAR) http://www.eniar.org/news/Truganini.html) and the fact that Aboriginal bodies are still retained in the UK, Europe and the USA for scientific investigation. (See, for example: David Ward, “Return of Aboriginal Remains”, *Guardian*, 30/7/03; “Aboriginal Remains Welcomed Home From UK”, Federal Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, website, 9/4/03, http://www.atsia.gov.au/atsia/media/media03/r03025.htm – accessed 11/6/03.)

99 P389: When Voss is taken captive by the black tribe whom Jackie has joined: ‘The eyes of the black men were upon him. How the veins of their bodies stood out, and the nipples.’ P447: Jackie’s memories of Angus, after finding his body: ‘He remembered the thighs of the young man gripping the withers of a horse, and his pink skin shining through a wet shirt.’ David Hart (1993:65) asserts that: ‘By experiencing the other simultaneously with the self, we experience a necessary sexuality.’ Here we see the obverse of that: sexualising of the other in order to connect with them. For discussion of sexuality as a primary need, see Ridley 1993, Foucault 1980, Maslow 1970.
perception. For all that his gestures reek of arrogant paternalism, every offering of his hand is a genuine attempt to prove that black and white are of the same human substance; reciprocated in the old black man’s cutting the white man’s skin, to prove that they bleed the same blood. Such tentative interactions serve as first steps toward reconciliation, embracing commonalities rather than running divided by apparent difference.

The complicated processes of reconciliation are further articulated in Voss’ relations with the Aboriginal people. Of all the white men, his racism is the most complex. An outsider himself, he feels some affinity with the outcast black race, evident in a genuine desire to make contact with the indigenes. However, his empathy is marred by the arrogance that makes him believe he is the black man’s rightful leader and a skewed sentimentality which alternately infantilizes and deifies: as effectively

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100 P204
101 For example: P219-220. Shylock: “… hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer…” *The Merchant of Venice* Act Three, Scene I, lines 153-157, Shakespeare in Alexander 1951: 237.
102 P415-416 Shylock: “If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” *The Merchant of Venice* Act Three, Scene I, lines 158-160, Shakespeare in Alexander 1951: 237.
103 The reconciliation process is also initiated textually with Le Mesurier’s measured respect P218: “We do not understand them yet” – and the realities of its failing shown in his own limitations: lacking the courage or imagination to make positive exchange, he attempts no communication at all. For further discussion of the wider social potential of individual interactions, see, for example, Holloway 2002, Gaita 1999, Habel 1999.
104 The depths of Voss’ racism are exhibited linguistically through White’s narrative voice. For all Voss’ claims to affection and respect for the Aboriginal people, derogatory language exposes him: from his first meeting with Dugald and Jackie, regretting Boyle’s intrusive presence that prevents him from making close communication with ‘these creatures’ P182, through his responding to the ‘gibberish of natives’ P218 and cursing ‘all black swine’ P291 – especially Jackie, ‘his slave’ – repulsed by ‘the smell of their rancid bodies’ P356 (this from a man who’s been wandering the bush for a goodly time and is himself P353 ‘disgusting to smell’) and puzzled that ‘primitive man cannot sense the sympathy emanating from relaxed muscles and a loving heart” P356-357, right until, close to death, he can still ‘smell the stench of their armpits’ P416.
105 For example: P291-292, P303. Voss’ arrogance is, of course, not confined to his relations with Aboriginal people. Generally, he holds himself above his fellow man: ‘He was indifferent to other men.’ P23. He shows contempt for Mr Bonner P23, Robarts and Le Mesurier P40, Turner and Angus P188, other men’s needs and fears P74-75 and their desire for an approachable God P211. And is unapologetic in his arrogance, since ‘humility is humiliating in men’ P361. Convinced of his communicative omnipotence P204: ‘he would interpret the needs of all men, the souls of rocks, even’, he elevates himself to the position of God over his beloved creation P385: ‘Of the three souls that were dedicated to him, Voss most loved that of the black boy. … “He will be my footstool,” he said, and fell asleep, exalted by the humility of the black’s perfect devotion and the contrast of heavenly perfection.’ Shades of Isaiah 66.1 and Acts 7.49: ‘This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.”’.
106 From his first introduction, Voss treats the Aboriginal members of the expedition as children, buying their attachment with trinkets P182-183: brass button for Dugald and clasp-knife for Jackie. He conceives of them as incapable of metaphysical investigation: ‘He pointed to the body of the
dehumanising as Angus’ bigoted disgust. It is not until he is forced to acknowledge his own human frailty that Voss is able to recognise the black man as a fellow human being. And while this is a turning point for the white man, and the saving of his soul (if not his life), it marks just one small moment for black and white harmony; the whole weight of a foreign invasion is not lifted through one man’s personal epiphany.

Despite his sincere attempts, Voss fails to make genuine connection with any of his Aboriginal fellow-travellers. His overtures of friendship are rebuffed, his peace-offerings misunderstood, and his intentions ultimately vilified; the climax of his failure held in his death at Jackie’s hands. And he consistently fails to acknowledge Aboriginal ownership of the land; this is his land, they are his people.

Voss’ inability to connect with the Aboriginal people is intertwined with his failure to connect with the land, through which White demonstrates the unequivocal right of Aboriginal sovereignty. This is Aboriginal land on which we tread: ancient land, over which our young white magic holds no sway.

It also embodies crucial struggles in Australian identity, which are contained as well in the problematic identities of individual characters. In addition to the gulf

aboriginal boy, whom they had forgotten, but who was lying within the light of the fire, curled in sleep, like some animal.’; but of superhuman virtue: “Then he will give up the purest” P385.  
107 P390 to Harry: “I am no longer your Lord.” P403 to Jackie: “Then you do not believe in me.” Voss’ acknowledgment of their equal human status is contained within his accepting the black man’s communion P413.  
110 One of the consequences of failing to connect with the Aboriginal people is, of course, the white men’s inability to survive in the land – the fundamental cause of the expedition’s failure. 
111 This is also contained within White’s depicting some of the invaded black experience (as discussed, for example, by Reynolds 1981). Palfreyman’s death, for example (P364-365), sets white and black experiences side by side – and, most poignantly, utterly ignorant of each other. His death is fundamentally miscommunication. But the black man’s right to protect against the intruder (P365) and to seek revenge for murder (P388) stands unblemished; as does the fitness of their seeking in Voss explanation for the comet (P403, P413, P416). 
112 White emphasises this in depicting Voss’ death as his salvation, attached to his renouncing himself as his own god and accepting the dominance of an external deity: the white man finally acknowledging that he is not the master of this land. The final word is given to the land which drinks his blood, conceding none of its own mysteries P419. 
113 For example: Mrs Bonner is ‘a Norfolk girl’ P55 – yet at the centre of colonial identity. As are the Palethorpes who consider England ‘Home’ and Fulham their ‘spiritual environment’ P374-375. All the men of the expedition find a bond in their ethnic roots – overriding their divisions of class, education, social status – which unites them against the Foreigner, and this is extended to the regional
between black and white\textsuperscript{114}, the mark between Australian and ‘foreign’ is blurry, reflecting deep uncertainties in the colonists’ common self-hood.\textsuperscript{115} Voss and Laura stand together at the fringes, as foreigners: both in the eyes of the colony and by their own identification.\textsuperscript{116} Yet these are the two who show most intent to establish a distinct and authentic \textit{Australianness}, and the most justification to call the land their home.

Voss earns his right to the land through his physical trials, and their accompanying spiritual developments.\textsuperscript{117} Laura’s emergent identity takes shape through his struggles.\textsuperscript{118} In this she enacts the colonisers’ opportunistic co-opting of indigenous history and experience: absorbing, from the colony’s security, all the benefits of his expedition into the unknown.\textsuperscript{119}

As Voss learns humility, exposing the vanity of the white man’s attempt to conquer the land, so Laura renounces the privileges of her class. Begun befriending her servant and continued in adopting her servant’s orphan daughter, Laura’s redemption climaxes with her willingness to relinquish Mercy\textsuperscript{120}: acknowledging that she has no more right to play God among the servant class than has Voss among the natives.

settlers P165: ‘… even the boldest did not presume to communicate on account of the peculiarities of his speech. However careful he was to imitate their own, the settlers preferred to address a member of his party …’ Note the similarities here with the Cretan’s identity hierarchy, see above, pages 64-65.\textsuperscript{114} This is the clearest distinction in the colony’s emerging identity: settler v native. It is blurred by Boyle, both metaphorically in his uncivilising of himself P178-180 and literally in his mixed-race progeny P184.\textsuperscript{115} This is summed up in the conversation of the three wee Marys (Hebden, Cox and Hayley), P423: ‘My father says that if you cannot be English, it is all right to be Scotch. But the Irish and everyone else is awful,’” said Mary Hayley. “Although the Dutch are very clean.” ‘But we are not English, not properly, not any more.’ ‘Oh, that is different,” said Mary Hayley. “Yourself is always different.”\textsuperscript{116} See, for example: P9-14; P112: “He is different from other men.”; P431: ‘Miss Trevelyan was really rather queer.’ When Voss first meets Laura, he assumes she’s Australian – part of the dominant culture from which he is excluded. He refers to the land as ‘your country’ P13. Once he realises that she’s also a foreigner, he instantly feels more comfortable with her. P14: ‘“So!” he said. “The niece.” / Unlocking his bony hands, because the niece was also, then, something of a stranger.’ From the start, Voss is “compelled into this country” P23; and his motives are mixed P31-32: “He does not intend to make a fortune out of this country, like other men. He is not all money talk. … He is obsessed by this country … But he is not afraid. / … It is his by right of vision.” These words of Laura’s are confirmed in his posthumous occupation of the land P472, P477-478.\textsuperscript{117} This enables her to make the journey from periphery (referring to Australia as ‘that remote colony’ P11-12) to centre (‘our country’ P475): an internal transformation rendered public through her movement from social estrangement (always withdrawing: retreating from church P10, from the company of her own family P32, a ‘stick’ at the Pringles’ picnic P63, in the garden at Mrs Bonner’s dinner party P92-98) to ‘holding court’ at Belle’s concluding party P476.\textsuperscript{118} Represented also in Laura’s adopting of the servant-woman’s baby: the conquering class appropriating the labour of the conquered.\textsuperscript{119} P239-242 P328-329 P394-395
While there are as many good intentions underlying Laura’s adoption of Mercy as there are in Voss’ desire to embrace the Aboriginal people, the selfishness of her patronage is evident in the sacrifice it is for her to conceive of letting Mercy go.\textsuperscript{121} And it is only once she shows herself sincerely willing to make such sacrifice – to subordinate her own wishes to the best interests of the child herself – that she becomes fit to take on parenthood.\textsuperscript{122}

And a functional model for the nation. Rejecting excesses of privilege, she compromises her own status in order to share the social necessities of legitimacy with someone less fortunate. It’s a win-win situation: Laura gains intimacy and purpose, Mercy security and sufficient social acceptance for her own independence, and society the labour of both women and their levels of contentment, and a practical example of resource redistribution.

Broader application of the model Laura provides is evident in her finding self-awareness through \textit{dreaming}.\textsuperscript{123} The majority of Laura’s relationship with Voss is conducted through dreams and fantasy\textsuperscript{124}: the significance of which is emphasised in their final, epiphanic ride through the German landscape being presaged with the ‘cool wind of dreaming’.\textsuperscript{125} Dreaming is living Aboriginal history, linking the past with the future, the land with its people, and showing the law\textsuperscript{126}; all of which Laura uncovers through her dream-journeying with Voss\textsuperscript{127}. Such connection of white and black spiritual processing reinforces Laura’s role as a positive model for Australian

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\textsuperscript{121} P394 \hfill \textsuperscript{122} P421
\textsuperscript{123} In making this association of Laura’s dreams with Aboriginal spirituality, I am, of course, in danger of falling into the common misunderstanding condemned by Dorothy Green (1991:50): ‘Dreaming is what white people do when they are asleep. The subject-matter of Aboriginal songs springs from minds spiritually awake and intellectually alert’. However, I believe the correlation is not unjustified in this particular case, given the spiritual and emotional weight placed by White upon dreams in the text. Dreams and day-dreams serve as the predominant medium for the relationship of Laura and Voss, the implied context of much of the journey’s narrative, and the tool for Voss’ redemption.
\textsuperscript{124} Dreams: P149, P200-201, P287, P317. Fantasy: P154, P175, P205, P284. Laura’s fever: P376-421. It could also be argued that none of Voss’ journey beyond Jildra occurs other than in Laura’s imagination – there being no external verification – which makes the whole of Laura’s self-discovery a dream-spirit journey (see Tonkinson 1970: 280-281), and Voss her \textit{dreaming} companion.
\textsuperscript{125} P417
\textsuperscript{127} See, for example, P428-429, P475-478. Laura with Mr Ludlow P477:
“… we are in every way provided for, by God and nature, and consequently, must survive.”
“Oh, yes, a country with a future. But when does the future become present? …”
“Now. … Every moment that we live and breathe, and love, and suffer, and die.”
\end{flushleft}
identity. The antithesis of Jackie – lost in the gap between black and white – Laura represents an ideal Australia, of hybrid vigour: mingling of black with white, town with bush, the people with the land.

LANDSCAPES

Historical, social, and geographical contrasts between Crete and Australia show in the natural motifs. Crete is a small island, home to our protagonist people for many generations. The land has become familiar, and nature and her occupiers live intertwined in functional harmony. Kazantzakis’ landscapes glide smoothly from mountain peak to man-made tower. Natural elements antagonistic to the human presence are few; and consequently momentous, and deeply unsettling. The earthquake terrifies the community, causing them to search for why their land has risen up against them. Holding their land a predictable friend, the Cretans expect to find reason in natural caprice – unlike the white men in their ancient new land, who can place no demands of reason or affection upon natural forces.

Australia, the vast unknown, is a battleground. In the tiny urban areas of their control, settlers shelter behind barricades of camphor laurels, staking their claim on unfamiliar and inhospitable territory. Beyond civilisation, it is a land of extremes:

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128 White accentuates this P449-455 by endowing Colonel Hebden with dreaming while searching for the expedition’s remains, revealing to him the deaths of Angus and Turner. But Hebden’s closed white mind will not permit him to engage with the dreaming (reminiscent of Laura’s hiding from herself her erotic excursions with Voss P430). His refusal to embrace the whole of Australian spiritual experience keeps him divorced from the truth he pursues.

129 Most poignant in the land’s occupation of traditional culture, over a very long span; for example: religion (Winnington-Ingram 1980), mythology (Alexiou 2002), song and popular ritual (Alexiou 1974).

130 For example s 14-15 p8-9, s 42-43 p36-37, s 62-63 p53-54. This is summed up s 73-74 p65 in the eagle’s admiration for all the beauties of Crete: of both natural and human origin.

131 s 113-115 p105-106

132 s 116 p107: the Metropolitan interprets the earthquake as divine punishment for preaching politics at Lent. s 114 p106: Captain Michales claims it is the land’s role in the fight for freedom: zwntanō
prāma maej eihaIh(Krēth, kounietai: maunēa, qathideite nakoI hēi sth
El IaIa! (Crete is a living thing. It’s moving. One day you’ll see the way it’ll join on to Greece.) s 119-121 p111-112: Captain Polyxigis marks it as a physical manifestation of the shock of love he discovers for Eminé. Most interesting is the way such questioning enacts White’s claim P353 that: ‘men are convinced early in their lives that the excesses of nature are incited for their personal discomfort’.

133 Introduced in 1828 and designated a noxious weed in the early 1980s (Lazarides et al. 1997, Bootle 1983), the laurel signifies the human invasion of the natural landscape. As does the Bonners’ garden, all roses, rhododendrons, camellia, bamboo P17, P59, P167-169: a triumph of civilisation over nature, encapsulated in its being ‘a natural setting for young ladies’ P167.
drought\textsuperscript{134}, flood\textsuperscript{135}, desert\textsuperscript{136} – \textit{hell before and hell behind}.\textsuperscript{137} White explores the land with inexperienced white eyes: an alien environment with its alien moons, lilies, butterflies, birds.\textsuperscript{138} Awesome, but palpably strange; and threatening.

When Voss’ expedition seek protection in the cave, it is against the onslaughts of nature.\textsuperscript{139} In contrast, the Cretan women and children shelter in their cave from the violence of men.\textsuperscript{140} Kazantzakis’ natural landscapes are consistently morally neutral. Even the plane tree, so deeply symbolic of Crete that it serves as Captain Michales’ Cretan identity\textsuperscript{141}, is fundamentally nonpartisan, and may be adopted by any cause. There are two plane trees of significance for \textit{Captain Michales}. The one is in the Pasha’s compound, from which Cretan rebels have been hanged for centuries.\textsuperscript{142} The other is in the village of Vrises, and has, for as many centuries, provided for the rebels shade and shelter.\textsuperscript{143} Nature itself is not the threat; but rather its employment in human hands.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{134} P224: ‘In the white light of dawn, horses and cattle would be nosing the ground for any suggestion of leaf, any blade of grass, or little pocket of rock from which to suck the dew.’; P227: ‘barren hillside’; P229: ‘mouths of dust’; P233: ‘blazing land … the bed of a dry creek’; P258-260: ‘the quiet death of the first sheep, with its neck out-stretched along the ground … dry, powdery earth … udderless cows’.

\textsuperscript{135} P267: ‘uncompromising rain’; P285: ‘rain like bullets … men and beasts were humped against it for a whole day. Their misery continued into the night … Nobody could conceive of eternity except as rain. … the solid rain.’; P309: ‘the interminable wet’.

\textsuperscript{136} P221-P224: ‘a dead country … crumbly earth … all else in the landscape appeared to be dead … the humped and hateful earth, which the sun had seared until the spent and crumbly stuff was become highly treacherous. It was, indeed, the bare crust of the earth.’; P262: ‘perpetual dust’; P358: ‘plains of grey saltbush, which the rains had not touched … hell … devilish country … tortuous winding gullies’.

\textsuperscript{137} P368

\textsuperscript{138} P189-190 P199-200 P153 P277-278

\textsuperscript{139} P298-317 This is augmented in the expedition’s leaving the cave when the floods recede P353-355, with Voss as post-diluvial Noah (Genesis 6.11-8.22). The men blame the rains on their sins, seeing the end of the floods as a new beginning. Before leaving the cave the ground is tested, to ensure the waters have subsided. We’ve even a representative bird. White invests his cave with a wealth of significances. It is Calypso’s seduction away from the arduous journey (Homer’s \textit{Odyssey} Books I:13-15, V:57-80, Murray 1995a). It is Plato’s cave, which Voss has to leave before he can see the truth of Frank’s poems (\textit{Republic} Book VII, Shorey 1935: 199-233). It is the shaman’s retreat: a mystic entity, place of vision, foretold by Frank P288-289, achieved through trial (Drury 1989). It is ‘the eternal cave’ P307. And it carries all the weight of the Aboriginal nations for whom it is sacred: a place of ‘good magic’ P292.

\textsuperscript{140} s 386 p341, s 428 p372 That Kazantzakis’ characters are retreating from society not nature is reinforced by Captain Michales’ grandmother spending her last twenty years in a cave, in voluntary hermitage s 16 p10.

\textsuperscript{141} s 101: \textit{e̱a}j \textit{pl atanọj rižwe kaif ouhtwse mea tou, tou=trwge tos pl aknotou.} (A plane tree took root and grew inside him, it was eating his entrails. p92)

\textsuperscript{142} s 377 p332

\textsuperscript{143} s 62: \textit{to}Mega\textit{lO Pl atanọ, to}xristianọf\textit{a}(the Big Plane Tree, eater of Christians); \textit{Bruše}j, s 379 p334

\textsuperscript{144} An excellent example of this is \textit{to}Kako\textit{h} \textit{Droj} (Bad Mountain), so called not for its physical treachery, but its use by the Turks, s 73: \textit{katarameño, ki o̱poij xrístianoj to}perrañi, kañi
Human landscapes are developing processes; the intersection of physical, social and emotional environs. Such complexity allows Old Séfakas’ commitment to his homeland to preoccupy him beyond his ability to enjoy it. It allows Voss to claim ownership of the land before he’s even held it. It is expressed in the natural world’s mirroring, countering, and disregarding of human experience. And in the mutual multiplicity of influence between land and its people.

Human landscapes are shaped by our relations with the land and each other; and how we conceptualise these. Perceiving Crete as one with their struggles, the Cretans invest her with their pain and emotions. Their landscape suffers under the Turks. Not so the muezzin’s. In exactly the same physical and social nexus, he finds only harmony: a landscape rejoicing in Turkish rule. The Bonners’ Sunday roast stands to staurostou kai blasthmai thn Tourkia giai selo poia ol akoka h skalisej, selo poia sphliai qa breij koka la apokristianouj skotwnouj. (An accursed mountain. Passing it, a Christian makes the sign of the cross and curses Turkey.)

See, for example: Kleist and Butterfield 1994, Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, Brinckerhoff Jackson 1984, Appelton 1975.

P44: “I will venture to call it my country, although I am a foreigner … And although so little of my country is known to me as yet.”

For example: §215 p190: the sun’s pleasure at the marriage of Tityros and Vangelio, loving and gentle with the landscape and the people: xaleye … xarhke (caressed … rejoiced); P164-165: setting off from Rhine Towers for Jildra, the expedition is all optimism: joyful anticipation and pleasure in the present, all represented in the natural environment: ‘These were sparkling, jingling days … the yellow sun … that radiance of light. The very stirrup-irons were singing of personal hopes.’

For example: §182 p173: amidst the brewing Troubles, Spring flourishes; P82-83: when Rose tells Laura the terrible story of her transportation (and how she killed her baby son), she sets the scene in idyllic natural circumstances: “It was a happy place … the picture of perfection.”

P11-14: we see the influence of people on land in the human-made environment; which reacts, in turn, against the natural world – the dark, heavy room keeping out light, sun and heat – and at the same time shaping and reflecting the separate and combined experiences of Laura and Voss.

Yi-Fu Tuan (1979b:90) claims that: ‘Landscape is an ordering of reality from different angles. … It is an achievement of the mind.’ Further emphasised by Simon Schama’s (1995:10) etymology of the word ‘landscape’, finding human location and perception central to its very meaning.
for them as the pinnacle of Australian life – and repulses Voss. Mr Bonner’s Australian landscape is the *Colony*: man’s domination of the land.¹⁵⁵ Voss’ is the vastness, ‘ennobling and eternal’, even in its brutality.¹⁵⁶

Perceptual conflicts are the hallmark of complex engagement, and characterise the landscapes of *Voss* and *Captain Michales*. Palfreyman hides from human intimacy in dead birds, Chrysánthe from her loneliness in her brother, and Captain Michales from Eminé in martyrdom.¹⁵⁷ Captain Polxygis sees love in his relationship with Eminé and Turkish fingerprints at her murder; Eminé sees a sea of men and freedom from the veil.¹⁵⁸ Laura’s young ladies consider her *disappointed*, her peers deliberately unconventional; Laura’s own landscape centres on ‘the country of the mind’: complete and self-contained.¹⁵⁹ In his uncle Androulios, Charidemos finds the triumph of man over nature, and Kosmas of nature over man.¹⁶⁰ And Voss finds God, after all, in humanity.¹⁶¹

**HUMAN NATURE**

Conflicting perceptions are a constant of human interaction, summed up in Laura’s realisation that *all truths are particoloured*.¹⁶² Bertódulos’ self-protection is Captain Michales’ shameful effeminacy.¹⁶³ Una Pringle’s excellent catch is Laura Trevelyan’s ‘marriage with stone’.¹⁶⁴

Underlying both texts is the human being’s vast complexity. Human nature is selfish¹⁶⁵, vain¹⁶⁶ and nasty¹⁶⁷, and empathic¹⁶⁸, generous¹⁶⁹ and brave¹⁷⁰. Characters

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¹⁵⁵ P32: “Look at our homes and public edifices. Look at the devotion of our administrators, and the solid achievement of those men who are settling the land. Why, in this very room, look at the remains of the good dinner we have just eaten. I do not see what there is to be afraid of.”

¹⁵⁶ P211  P21: ‘How much less destructive of the personality are thirst, fever, physical exhaustion, he thought, much less destructive than people. … Deadly rocks inspired him with fresh life.’

¹⁵⁷ P89, P279-282  S 89 p91  S 432 p375-376, S 533 p464-465


¹⁵⁹ P425  P465  P475

¹⁶⁰ S 531 p462-463

¹⁶¹ P414-418

¹⁶² P473

¹⁶³ S 333-334 p292

¹⁶⁴ P72-73


¹⁶⁶ For example: Voss at the wharf basking in his own success P117-126; Captain Michales’ belief that his sense of honour is of more value than Eminé’s life S 416-417 p369-370, S 378-385 p334-340.
are shaped by their environment, but also reveal an essence beyond social influence\textsuperscript{171}: an unpredictable mingling of nurture and nature\textsuperscript{172} – both of which range across the breadth of the ethical spectrum. Laura, for example, despairs of her own weakness and pride and attempts to better herself through humility.\textsuperscript{173} Every step in the moral improvement she prescribes for herself incurs someone else’s condemnation: compassion for Rose and Mercy, desire to be socially useful, self-effacing modesty, financial and personal independence, and self-control.\textsuperscript{174} As do qualities more widely conceived of as moral strengths: searching for meaning, her intelligence, personal strength and honesty, and even her patriotism.\textsuperscript{175} None of our virtues, it seems, are self-evident.\textsuperscript{176} 

Human complexity finds unification in its differentiation from animals. Divers and socially relative\textsuperscript{177}, human nature is still distinct\textsuperscript{178}; marked fundamentally with the inquiring mind: ‘man is the animal that questions’\textsuperscript{179}. White presents this most strongly through the comet.\textsuperscript{180} Across immense geographical and cultural distance, 

\textsuperscript{167} For example: Voss deliberately causing Frank to have diarrhoea, in order to hurt Judd P302; Captain Michales’ pleasure in the humiliation of his cellar-guests S 111-115 p103-106, S 120-122 p111-112, S 136-141 p126-132.
\textsuperscript{168} For example: Voss’ caring for Frank P286-290; Captain Michales’ genuine compassion for the injured Nuri Bey S 275-280 p243-248.
\textsuperscript{169} For example: Voss never resents Jackie – his “I do not blame you” P388 stands, right to the end; Captain Michales listens to Tityros’ May 29\textsuperscript{th} speech S 242-243 p216-217.
\textsuperscript{170} For example: despite his fear, Voss faces humility and truth (and death) with dignity P414-418; Captain Michales rescues Paraskevás from a crowd of angry Turks S 315-316 p275-276.
\textsuperscript{171} For example: Thrasáki mimics his father’s model of masculinity, as an aggressive bully S 124-127 p114-117, S 297, S 392-393, S 418-425 (all not in translation), but finds in himself compassion for the Spanish rabbi S 187-190 (not in translation) and Paraskevás S 315-316 p275-276; Vendúsos, with a self-righteous dominating older brother, has become easily-cowed and irresolute – and suddenly exhibits the strength to stick to a difficult decision S 513-514 p446, unto death S 538 p470; Tityros, having internalised the emasculating derision of his family and community, is timid and gentle, favouring reason above force, yet uncovers sufficient mercilessness to murder his brother-in-law S 298-299 p259-260, S 308-309 p268-269.
\textsuperscript{172} Steve Pinker (2002) provides an excellent overview of the long-running investigation into human nature, and the roles for internal and external influences.
\textsuperscript{173} P198-199  P256
\textsuperscript{174} Decried by: Mr and Mrs Bonner P238-242, P328-329, P429; the other women at Belle’s party P465; Una McAllister P437; Colonel Hebden P440-441.
\textsuperscript{175} Decried by: Mrs de Courcy P476; Channie Wilson P342; the Misses Linsley P430-431; Mr Ludlow P477.
\textsuperscript{176} This is echoed by Laura herself P351: all human virtues are \textit{mythical}.
\textsuperscript{177} Qualities stressed by Freeman 2001: 41 and Cairns 1999: 172.
\textsuperscript{178} For further discussion of the uniqueness of \textit{human} nature see Ridley 1996.
\textsuperscript{179} Captain Séfakas S 499 p433  Reminiscent of Katharine Hepburn’s character in The African Queen: “Nature is what we are put on this earth to rise above.” David Friedman (2001:190-191) posits (from Freud) a slightly alternative distinction: it is our capacity for \textit{shame} that makes us human – evocative of Kurt Vonnegut’s universal embarrassment. See, for example, \textit{Cat’s Cradle} (1963).
\textsuperscript{180} P399-416
the comet receives multiple significance; but only from the humans. Only we humans seek to understand: interpret, predict, control.

Human relations with animals expose individual and social moralities. Animals fall in a hierarchy, according to affection and usefulness. And while utility is important, affection overrides. Thus for the expedition, losses of livestock cause much less distress than of horse or dog: explained by Angus as the relative worth assigned to commodity and animal. Slaughtering one of the sheep for food is a matter of scant moment. Shoving Gyp the sheepdog once her role is gone (since there are no more sheep) is a much more significant affair: heavy and complex. Although they, like the other animals, are part of the expedition because of their usefulness, the dogs are in many ways more akin to the men than the livestock; shown in their being given names and sleeping among the men. And their role extends beyond practicalities, into the emotional, providing companionship, devotion and affection: ‘dog-eyed love’. Bonding with the dogs is an appropriate human response – even Turner recognises this. All the men are shocked and moved by Gyp’s death, acknowledge the fitness of solemn burial, and leave Voss space to grieve.

Bonding with livestock, in contrast, signifies a man at the end of his strength. Kazantzakis uses ovine imagery for ignominious slaughter. Judd recognises his need to turn back by over-identifying with the cattle, sensing ‘the threat of the knife,

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181 P276
182 See, for example, the entertainment in Judd’s slaughtering the Christmas wether P211-212 and the two whose carcasses are retained for food when the rest are abandoned P275-276.
183 P283-285: ‘He was cold with sweat. He could have shot off his own jaw. … The man scraped a hole in which to bury the dog. … After going about for several days like one dead, Voss was virtually consoled.’ Turner: “What does it matter? It is only a dog. … Only, in these here circumstances, we are all, every one of us, dogs.”
184 Note the correlations with the Aboriginal men, as discussed earlier (see note 89 above): dogs and black men require only one name, just sufficient to indicate their individuality. Note also that both the dogs and Dugald and Jackie make their allegiance specifically to Voss, not generally to the expedition – comprising the master’s entourage.
185 P285
186 Turner, ‘who had been amongst the most vociferous in Gyp’s defence’ P285.
187 See also Chapter One: Food and Hunger, page 21.
188 S343 p301: At the captains’ council in the mountains, Captain Michales wants to fight. He argues that the bloodshed by the Turks must not be taken lying down: we are not lambs. Lambs go passively to the slaughter – the Cretans must not do this. S359 Furógatos’ death: Five or six Turks surrounded him; he fell upon them savagely, but others joined them and they threw him to the ground.
never far distant from the animal throat’. As the expedition member in charge of food provision, Judd has borne the role of butcher. He is the wielder of the knife. To feel its threat now upon himself indicates powerfully the extent of his spiritual erosion. We see this again in Voss’ last hours, feeling the massacre of horses and mules:

at one stage the spear seemed to enter his own hide, and he screamed through his thin throat with his little, leathery strip of remaining tongue. For all suffering he screamed.

Horses are particularly emblematic. Although not individuated in the anthropomorphised manner of dogs, they are set apart. Eating horse is unconscionable for the civilised. The deaths of horses are significant events, individually documented. The gelding who falls down a gully and lies screaming represents all the men’s anguish, shown in Judd’s losing control, furiously pelting the corpse.

White’s horses reflect their riders, enacting their emotions. Kazantzakis cites the old Turkish mandate forbidding Cretans to ride horses, associating horse with social power, which association continues in the sway exerted by Nuri’s stallion.
A noble beast and faithful companion to the Bey, he requests it be slaughtered on his grave – but not even Sulieman, unafraid of any man, can bring himself to kill it. Nor will the horse allow itself to be taken by any of the other men; including the Pasha. It chooses rather to die of starvation on his master’s grave. Only the horse has sufficient strength of character to enact Nuri’s dying wish.

Nuri’s horse evokes, too, associations of women and sex. Our first introduction compares Nuri’s horse with his wife, leaving many of the Cretan men unable to choose whom they would prefer to ride. Captain Michales’ lust for Eminé is expressed in his approaches to the horse: ‘He could not restrain himself … He was near it now: his hand itched to touch it, to feel the heat of its body, to brim itself with foam.’ Eminé is jealous of the horse, demanding Nuri kill it; confirming both the associations between her and horse, and Nuri’s divided loyalties.

Eminé as horse makes her wild, strong and challenging, corporeal and Other. Her sexuality emerges in her whinnying. Like the ‘filly from Arkalochóri’ with whom Kasapákis is cheating on his wife Marcelle. And Ruhéni: ‘that gleaming black mare of a Moorish woman … a mountain of dark, glowing flesh with a necklace of

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197 For example: s 224 p198: when Nuri fights Manúsakas, he ensures that the horse cannot see them – in the same way that Manúsakas does with his wife and sons; s 227-228 p201-202: after Nuri has killed Manúsakas but is seriously injured himself (stabbed in the testicles), he manages to crawl to his horse. He hasn’t the strength to mount it, and so the horse kneels down, allowing him to climb on. The horse then takes him home – to the correct summer (country) house, depositing him at the front door.

198 s 283-284 p250-252, s 289 p256 The power of the horse is further evidenced in its death symbolising the end to hopes for (at least temporary) peace on Crete.

199 White also makes use of sexual overtones in horse imagery. For example: at the wharf when Tom’s horse lashes a woman in the face with his tail, disarranging her bonnet P125; Laura’s sexualising of the ordinary P128; Harry’s first time on the horse P133 and his developing dominance P193; Ralph Angus’ dreaming of Judd’s horsemanship P275.

200 This issue is eventually resolved by the Pasha in the horse’s favour s 280: Na\ to\ kabalh\ sei, nato sfi\ sei ah\ stagi\ gorata\ tou, nqun\ hei\ tani\ fa\ tou … (He wanted to mount it, to squeeze it between his knees and remember his youth … p249 my alternations) Any woman would for the Pasha be a poor substitute for this horse. The verb is, like ‘mount’ in English, ambiguous. (M\ pan\ pin\ whj 1998: 801 kabalw/5. (oik.) sunusia\ tonai, ef\ tonai ses sec\ oualikh/epafi\ (slang) to have sex, to come into sexual contact.)

201 s 20: dekrati\ tan\ pia\ h\ palamh\ tou\ laxta\ fise\ na\ gitei, na\ w\ sei\ th\ zestasi\ tou\ korm\ mou\ tou, na\ gen\ sei\ afrou\ h\ fou\ ta\ tou. See also s 20-21 p14-15.

202 s 23 p17 The one significant point of variance between the wild Circassian and the horse is that the horse is declared to have a soul s 284 p252 - which is neither said nor implied of Eminé.

203 s 58: x\ i\ m\ it\ ri\ ze\ sa\ for\ da

204 s 62: mia\ for\ da\ apo\ to\ Arkal ox\ w/fi
thick glass beads – the kind usually worn by horses – round her neck, and with breasts that drooped right down to her belly.\textsuperscript{205} 

Woman as horse enlists her with the natural realm, in man’s vying for dominance: part of the landscape to be conquered.\textsuperscript{206} Captain Michales’ railing at Eminé drives him to spur his mare so hard her belly bleeds; but finds satisfaction only in murdering the woman herself.\textsuperscript{207} Defining her as beast elevates her death to animal sacrifice; and his crime to the triumph of man over nature.

\textsuperscript{205} s122, s92: h’Arapiña, mau fh forada gua li steh/... e’ha bound’ mauo gua li stero\krea\j, m e’ha gior tahi xontre’ gal azopetre’ stol amio/ apo keinej pou lbazounst’ al ogata, kai met’ ma stafia pou’th= krenountan w’ thikoli/ 

\textsuperscript{206} This is emphasised in Barba Jannis’ logical transferring of the skills of his father, the blacksmith, in assisting at the births of horses and donkeys, to becoming midwife s56-57, p48; equine, feminine, the associations are portrayed as intuitive and obvious.

\textsuperscript{207} s378 p334  s430 p373