

**A NOT SO INNOCENT VISION: RE-VISITING THE
LITERARY WORKS OF ELLEN LISTON, JANE SARAH
DOUDY AND MYRTLE ROSE WHITE (1838 – 1961)**

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Abstract

Foundational narratives constitute intricate and ideologically driven political works that offer new information about the colonial moment. They present divergent and alternate readings of history by providing insight into the construction of ‘national fantasies’ and the nationalist practice of exclusion and inclusion. White middle class women wrote a substantial body of foundational histories. They were influential mythmakers, historians in a sense, who actively manufactured compelling foundational stories of colonial possession and conquest, settler belonging and nation building. An interrogation of their writing casts fresh light on understanding how cultural discourses of national representation and identity often relied on a system of omission, misremembering and the dehumanisation of the Aboriginal peoples.

This thesis examines various literary works by three little known writers, Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Douady and Myrtle Rose White between the years 1838-1961 and investigates how they used prescriptive ideas on race, nation, landscape, domesticity and progress to advance notions of successful settlement in South Australia. Their narratives were much more than ‘sentimental diversions’. They were political works that operated within white structures of power, privilege and control. They were designed to validate colonial expansion and white occupation by normalising the position of the

white settler subject while simultaneously marginalising the ‘disorderly’ Aboriginal presence.

This thesis provides an analysis of these women’s novels, short stories, articles and unpublished manuscripts to reveal the unique agentive role that white women writers possessed. These authors didn’t just write to participate on the public scene and to advance women’s role as nation builders, they wrote as ‘politicians in print’, intent on constructing very clear ideas about social behaviour, cultural norms, national patriotism and racial hierarchies. Indeed, the concern over who rightfully belonged and who did not pervaded much of their writing, as did the derogatory scripting of others. In short, these women were assertive ‘nationalist managers’ who had a lot to say about the creation of their ‘homely nation’.

By applying theoretical understandings, such as the colonial rhetoric of exclusion and control, the historicisation of whiteness and the decolonisation of ‘national fantasies’, to these women’s narratives, this body of work builds on, and advances, new understandings of white women writers and the ethnocentric cultural assumptions which coloured their writing. It not only rediscovers previously published works but also introduces new unpublished archival material as evidence for re-conceptualising the power involved in producing and consuming women’s writing from the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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I also wish to thank the National Library of Australia for their assistance in allowing me to view the Myrtle Rose White papers and for their advice concerning the use of these papers. I want to additionally thank the Gender, Work and Social Inquiry Discipline at the University of Adelaide for the many useful comments made during departmental seminars and for the unerring encouragement and inspiration this discipline provides to its scholars.

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thoughtfulness will always be remembered. To my mother, Isabella, who asked me how it was going every time I spoke on the phone and to my father, Keith who, while on holiday at Elliston, decided to undertake a little research of his own and found me some useful information, I also wish to say thank you.

'Three corner jacks': Where it all began.

We seek, here, to open a dialogue, an investigation, on the subject of cultural identity and representation. Of course, the 'I' who writes here must also be thought of as, itself, 'enunciated'. We all write and speak from a particular place and time from a history and culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', positioned (Hall 1994: 392).

I have always lived in rural South Australia. As a child I can remember running barefoot across clinging red dust and hard-baked clay pans, often feeling the stinging pain of a three corner jack piercing dirt encrusted heels. I played for countless hours in unforgiving sweltering heat, heedless of the sun's rays on my freckles and would sit entranced on the hard better brick of the front fence watching golden sheafs of wheat dance in the wind. But perhaps one of my most vivid memories is of sitting around the dining table listening to the smooth tones of my mother as she proudly recounted stirring tales from a bygone era. Like a spider weaving a web in the anticipation of snaring its prey, she would spin her tale, pausing at all the right moments and hastening at others. The stories she told seemed unreal and yet as a child growing up through an era of badly scripted Tarzan films and western serials, they fed my thirst for adventure. Little did I know that some twenty-five years later; one of these stories would lead me to the research I have undertaken. Little did I know that such memories now signal my own whiteness, my own appropriation of the landscape and force me to question my belonging.

This land, in which I once felt so comfortable, now begins to scratch my conscience. It irritates my sense of white identity like an annoying rash that no simple medicinal cream will sooth. Scratching it only inflames it and yet I am masochistically drawn to doing just that as I attempt to somehow muddle my way through the murky haze that is my own whiteness. I now see this land I once considered part of me, and me part of it, as Aboriginal land. This land that I was planted upon, raised and nurtured upon is a land predicated on dispossession, and as uncomfortable as it may be, upon a hidden story of genocide. It is a land predicated upon an unmarked and un-named whiteness.

It may take a while to tell my story and get to the questions I seek to answer but for me this telling is needed in order to answer the question of my belonging and the questions surrounding the historical positioning of white women writers from the past. The journey, in a sense will be self-critical and will be an attempt to balance my voice with voices from the past and present. Before continuing, however, I find I must position myself as a middle-class white woman, a direct descendant of the dispossessors. I have never had to defend my colour, my nationality nor my right to live how I want to live – my whiteness has provided me with a privileged protection. For many years I have accepted this, never questioning, never wondering, never stepping outside the comfort zone. I now find, however, that it provides no safety net for my own self-analysis. After listening to Aileen Moreton-Robinson, a Geonpul woman from Quandamooka, speak at a conference at the University of Adelaide in 2000 I suddenly began to question my own whiteness and to question the basis

of my own identity. I also started to question how I position my historical subjects. The questioning starts here.

In 1843 a man by the name of George Tramountanous left his little fishing island of Lemnos to migrate to South Australia. On arrival to this foreign land, he changed his name to George North and embarked upon a new life in a new colony, which was being acclaimed for its humanitarian and egalitarian ideals. After living several years in Adelaide he finally settled on the Far West Coast of the state and became a prominent pastoralist near the township of Elliston. Acknowledged as the first Greek to come to South Australia and the first man to bring the merino sheep into the colony, he came to represent, for many, the ideal settler. Indeed, prior to the 2001 Federation celebrations the *Adelaide Advertiser* featured an article on this frontier pioneer, paying homage to his trailblazing exploits. Titled 'Pioneer blazed a trail', his story, not surprisingly, was bathed in typical hagiographical sentiment, describing him as 'not only the grandfather of SA's Greek community, but a giant figure on SA's early development', who had 'opened the path for the tens of thousands of Greeks who migrated to SA and helped mould the culture and character of the state'.

(Jory 2000: 18)

This 'grandfather of South Australia's Greek community' and 'giant figure' was also my great, great Grandfather. I must confess that over the years, the pioneering feats of this man, nourished a sense of patriotic pride within my family, as over and over again, we relived his brave accomplishments. We connected him to the growth of South Australia, smugly believing that we too

deserved some sort of accolade for his achievements. Unfortunately, while in the process of commemorating this individual, we were guilty of reinforcing not just his whiteness but our own as well.

No longer an eager child sitting around the dining table listening to the embellished themes of colonial endurance and hardship, I now question what I was told. Aided by the development of new modes of historical analysis, such as colonial discourse, whiteness and feminist readings of identity, I now seek to peel away the layers that have continued to protect South Australia's foundational heritage and to recast the men and women of our colonial past. Rather than confine them to the hero worship of hagiographic idealism, as many have done in the past, and still do, I now seek to redefine their identity and agency. In doing so, however, I raise a multitude of challenging and uncomfortable questions. For example, what happens when these characters from the past are no longer viewed just as pioneering heroes, but as the vanguard of an expanding western civilisation? Do labels such as 'hero' and 'intrepid explorer' still apply or do the other less benevolent labels of 'dispossessor' and 'exploiter' replace them?

And what you may ask, do these questions have to do with my great, great Grandfather or for that matter, my perspective research and the questions that I seek to answer in my thesis? In 1846 a massacre occurred on the Far West coast of South Australia. It is alleged that over 250 Aboriginal people were

killed.¹ The Elliston, or ‘Waterloo Bay, Massacre’, as it was to become known, continues to be one of South Australia’s great frontier mysteries with many people still believing that it never really happened. According to an article written in 1935, no other episode ‘in connection with the aborigines of South Australia has raised more controversy’. (*Chronicle* 1935: 14) The Elliston Centennial Book, *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay: Elliston 1878-1978*, includes a version of the incident using oral accounts from elderly people living in Elliston at the time of the book’s publication. The author writes that in 1848 John Hamp, a pastoralist, was murdered by natives, which subsequently led to a small force of men, comprising of troopers, farmers, and the local doctor, organising a punitive expedition against the local Aboriginals. According to the testimonies given to the author, a small group of Aboriginal men, women and children, ‘took fright when they saw the armed men’ and made for the nearby cliffs. (Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 9) ‘Some shots were fired... without effect other than to frighten the natives further’, who continued towards the ‘cliffs and jumped’. (Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 9-10) The author finishes his account by saying that he believed only a few Aboriginal people had died and that the majority had escaped, effectively dispelling claims that a massacre had occurred. The incident has resulted in a plethora of articles and editorials being written over the decades.² It has also

¹ The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis and refer to the first peoples of Australia, the original inhabitants of the land.

² Some of these include, ‘The Massacre That Mangultie Did Not Forget (Mac 1932: 16e), ‘A Reminiscence of Port Lincoln’ (Congreve 1880: 281c), ‘Waterloo Bay’ (Saunders 1926: 13e) and more recent articles: ‘The Waterloo Bay Story’ (Ballie 1971), ‘Another look at the Elliston
Janette Hancock

generated much public debate, the most recent occurring in 1970 when the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders approached the Elliston Council for permission to erect a monument to commemorate the massacre. The Council refused, stating that history had never proven that the event had occurred.³ No official reports, written documentation and an alleged pact made between those directly involved, has meant that this gruesome event remains shrouded in scepticism.⁴

Hidden amongst the stories told to us over the dining table was a tale describing this incident. By the time it reached my ears at the tender age of ten, details of the actual event had culminated into quite a chilling account. It was one story mum always used a sombre voice for and although I think she would have rather left it untold, she nevertheless felt compelled to tell it. Was this story told to us over the dinner table a mythical tale embellished over five

Massacre', (Wall 1994), 'The myth of the Elliston massacre: the value of memory' (Summerling 1995). In 1969 Elliston local, Neil Thomson, wrote *The Elliston Incident*, which included a detailed fictional representation of the incident.

³ According to information from *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* the Elliston Council would not agree to a cairn being 'erected to aborigines who died in the alleged massacre for the lack of definite proof, but consented to one being commemorated to "Those aborigines who lost their lives in the early development of this area"'. (Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 5) In fact no cairn was ever erected.

⁴ This comes from oral testimonies in *Across the Bar to Waterloo Bay* where it states 'Immediately after, Dr Browne addressed the men who comprised his punitive force, and told them bluntly that by killing a native, or natives, or being party to such killings, they had all broken the law, and could themselves be hung as murderers. He explained that the men had achieved the purpose of the expedition in wiping out the coastal natives, or by driving them to their death over the cliffs, so unless they wanted to be arrested for murder they should say nothing about the events of the last few days while even one of the party was still alive. So they all swore an oath of secrecy.' (Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 9-10]

generations of oral story telling, or was it a disturbing factual event that had never been buried quite deep enough as intended? And why, I ask many years later, was it a story told within my own family? What was the connection and where did my great, great Grandfather fit into the picture? Could he have been involved in the incident as my mother sometimes alluded to or merely one who felt the need to tell a story he too had heard? How many other families, I asked myself, had also passed down this very same story and did they, like us, keep it hidden within the immediate family? Perhaps one of the most provoking questions I was left with was: if no apparent official report was ever lodged was there any other written evidence of this alleged massacre? I was filled with tantalising questions and was reminded of Anna Haebich's answer to Henry Reynold's question when he asked 'why weren't we told' about the atrocities, murder and dispossession committed in Australia's past? (Reynolds 1999) She insists that we were told, 'but we chose not to notice or remember'. (Haebich 2000: 256) She also stated that collective memory relies on the forgetting of events which may 'belie the image of a moral community'. (Haebich 2000: 256) Was this what had happened? Had my family, like so many others, deliberately silenced the unsavoury bits of our history while regurgitating the bits it deemed worthy of remembrance? Did we bask in my great, great Grandfather's achievements while ignoring all else for fear that it may blemish his 'trail blazing' story? Was this how national histories were created and reinforced - by ignoring the stories which may scar the image of family, of community, of nationhood? Like the biting sting of a three-corner jack, which lingers for hours after it pierces your skin; these questions likewise lingered and niggled my conscience.

Rick Hosking has recently studied the texts of Ellen Liston, a governess who settled near Elliston some twenty years after the alleged Waterloo Bay massacre, and claims that her story 'Doctor' offers previously unnoticed evidence supporting the contemporary Aboriginal view that a massacre did take place'.(Hosking 1995: 74) He contends that her story represents historical truth, as it reveals some disturbing and convincing details of this supposed fictional event. When I decided I wanted to research South Australian women's pioneer narratives and I came upon Ellen Liston's name there was never any doubt that her story would form part of my work. In addition to the connection she may have had, or not had, with the story I had been told since a child, is the fact that she lived her last years as a postmistress at Marrabel, a small town only 50 kilometres from where I now live. In some quirky sense her journey from the West Coast to the mid north of South Australia parallels mine own.

Rather than leave her story as an isolated one, I decided to place her with, and against, two other women writers from South Australia's past, Jane Sarah Doudy and Myrtle Rose White. My desire to study these women was spurred on by other coincidences which popped up along my research journey. Although small, these coincidences created an ongoing conversation, so to speak, between these historical subjects and the present, helping me to locate my own understanding as a cultural feminist historian. One such incident occurred about two years into my research while holidaying on the small coastal township of Coffin Bay on the South Australian West Coast. For years my family had enjoyed this tiny township's relatively undisturbed beauty and

relaxed in its glorious sunsets. Countless times I had walked the two hundred metres to the little grocery store to purchase yet another carton of milk or loaf of bread when supplies in our somewhat dilapidated rented shack had run low. On each occasion, I walked past a small but tidy shack proudly displaying on its deck, in true fishing-town tradition, a bright orange life-preserving ring with the word 'Noonameena' painted on it in bold black lettering. I had always glanced over the word without really reading it and therefore never questioned the meaning of it, nor its origin until I read Myrtle Rose White's narratives. 'Noonameena', I discovered after reading White's personal papers, is an Indigenous name meaning resting place and is the name of the first station on which White lived. I had never seen the word used anywhere else but in White's novels until I finally realised it as the same word painted on the life saving ring. I felt feelings of exhilaration and disbelief that it had been under my nose for many years and yet I had looked right past it. The next course of action was to question the owners of the shack and ask them why they had used this Aboriginal word to name their shack. They proudly told me that when they had retired and bought the shack they had search through an Aboriginal naming book and found an Aboriginal word meaning 'resting place'. A simply enough answer but for me it raised quite a few questions about white belonging and appropriation. It fuelled my desire to explore this notion further in the writings of all three writers and reminded me of what Irene Watson, an Indigenous woman of the Tanganeakald and Meintangk peoples, claimed when she wrote 'we have now been bombed by the next wave of colonisation, the wave of cultural appropriation'. (Watson 2002: 45) In other words, and as Sam Furphy has pointed out, non-Indigenous Australians have often superficially

‘appropriated and adapted certain indigenous motifs’, such as Aboriginal words and names, as a means of ‘shallowly’ indigenising the Australian national identity and extending its history. (Furphy 2002: 59) Indeed, as Furphy explained, countless publications published throughout the twentieth century encouraged readers to use Indigenous words in any way they liked.⁵ Clearly the owners of the little shack at Coffin Bay did just that. While a small coincidence it was nevertheless a monumental experience for me, which only adds to the overall story which I am about to tell.

Coincidences aside, Sarah Jane Douady, Myrtle Rose White and Ellen Liston, the three women I have chosen to investigate, offer exciting examples of why we should explore and research women’s literature from our past. Liston, herself wrote in her unpublished manuscript, ‘Jean Kesson’,

books... teach so much of the feelings, thoughts and modes of expression of the people who live and move in the times of which they are written. (Liston n.d: 137)

A simple enough line from an old manuscript, but one which highlights how a woman writer from the nineteenth century believed writing, specifically her own writing, could be used as a tool to teach and mould society’s perception of itself and others - to create a foundational history, and, so to speak, a legacy. I

⁵ Furphy argues that ‘superficial appropriation of Aboriginal words and place names is a symptom of white Australia’s simplified and idealised understanding of Aboriginal culture’. (Furphy 2002 :68)

agree with Liston, books do teach us much about people, their 'feelings, thoughts and modes of expression,' of experiences of everyday life. They encode, as Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge suggest, 'the deepest desires and fears of individuals and groups...repetitiously insisting on flaunting secrets' and 'springing truths' before the 'public gaze'. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: xvi) Hence the reason, I believe, why we need to explore the literary works of these three white women writers who wrote foundational histories.

Before continuing I feel it necessary to define how the terms 'foundational histories/narratives', 'founding moments' and 'story of origin' will be used within this thesis. In simple terms, foundational histories/narratives and 'stories of origin' refers to a set of stories invented to explain a nation's beginning, its founding moment, or put more simply, the first few decades of settlement. They provide a literary means by which political societies could attempt to manipulate a historical memory in order to 'validate and legitimate form and experience'. (McHugh 1999: 98) Pamela Lukin Watson, for example, claims that:

Most - perhaps all - human groups pick and choose from among the myriad events, objects, behaviour and emotions which surround them, and weave what they find useful into a specific view of the world and their place within it. This origin story legitimises and usually sanctifies the group's existence, and it generally becomes reflected and reiterated in the roles people play in that particular society...Origin legends often endure over time and become popularly accepted as historical fact. (Watson 1998: 6)

In other words, foundational narratives and foundational histories/memories are seen as a means which writers used to construct notions of identity, feelings of belonging and histories of beginning. According to P.G. McHugh, foundational histories written in the colonial period, often celebrated white triumph, such as pioneer success, and endorsed the coloniser's right to play God while often silencing frontier acts of violence and dispossession. (McHugh 1999) Indeed, most foundational histories are seen as compelling stories of nation building, continuously evolving, legitimating and generating new forms of foundational myth whilst operating on systems of silencing and mis-remembering, the term myth of course representing a story/belief which has been socially constructed.⁶

In her study of Western American writing Laura Gruber stated that foundational stories, when taken together, made up 'an intricate national value system'. (Gruber 2005: 1) Their 'prescriptive ideas on landscape, race, masculinity, and progress...constitute an ideology in every sense of the word' and 'carry an enormous amount of weight in our culture, to the point that they take on a dogmatic tone'. (Gruber 2005: 1) The founding moment, as Gruber argues, has been appropriated again and again by artists and writers to the extent that it is so 'deeply woven' into American national identity that it has become impossible to escape from. Such stories, according to Gruber, are in

⁶ This concept of misremembering will be taken up in subsequent chapters. See Nettlebeck (2001: 97-106), Foster, Nettlebeck & Hoskings (2001), for more discussion of how this notion is used.

desperate need of critique as they have continued to operate on relations of unequal power and ethnocentric assumptions. What Gruber discovered in her study proved that foundational stories, or 'visions' as she also termed them, altered dramatically when looked at through 'different lenses: especially lenses of race, lenses of class, and lenses of gender'. (Gruber 2005: 3) They lost their 'absolute' and 'given' status and became 'jarring, fructuous, odd, frightening' creations that defied those popular representations which continue to dominate national imagery. (Gruber 2005: 9)

The following study takes up a similar position to Gruber, and locates foundational narratives as created constructs, or 'national fantasies', that constitute intricate and ideologically driven political works that now provide access points for dissecting colonial behaviour and norms. By examining the literary works by three little known writers, Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Doudy and Myrtle Rose White between 1838-1961, this thesis will demonstrate that white middle class women were influential mythmakers, historians in a sense, who actively manufactured compelling foundational stories of colonial possession and conquest, settler belonging and nation building. An interrogation of their writing casts fresh light on understanding how cultural discourses of national representation and identity often relied on a system of omission, misremembering and the dehumanisation of the Aboriginal peoples.

These women's literary narratives were much more than 'sentimental diversions'.⁷ They were political works that operated within white structures of power, privilege and control, using prescriptive ideas on race, nation, landscape, domesticity and progress to advance notions of successful settlement in South Australia.⁸ They were designed to validate colonial expansion and white occupation by normalising the position of the white settler subject while simultaneously marginalising the 'disorderly' Aboriginal presence.

This thesis provides an analysis of these women's novels, short stories, autobiographical narratives, articles and unpublished manuscripts to reveal the unique agentive role that white women writers possessed. These authors didn't just write to participate on the public scene and to advance women's role as nation builders, they wrote as 'politicians in print' and 'creators of historical memory', intent on constructing very clear ideas about social behaviour, cultural norms and racial hierarchies. Their tone was stridently patriotic, producing a South Australian nationalism that encouraged other like-minded

⁷ Although this will be taken up in following chapters, 'sentimental diversions' is a term that was used to describe women's writing and to place it outside the literary canon. See Nina Baym (1978), Dorothy Jones (1998), Kate McCullough (1999) and Catherine Kerrison (2003) for more elaboration on, and use of this term.

⁸ Race, class, gender and nation are understood within this study as 'highly contested ideological sites'- created by dominant discourses and acknowledged not as biological entities but as social constructs. (Sheridan 1995) All four sites are seen to be inextricably linked, allowing for a frame of reference which more thoroughly acknowledges the power relations existing within colonial society.

white colonists to 'reflect on their collective sense of self'. (Lattas 1997: 226)

Indeed, the concern over whom rightfully belonged and whom did not pervaded much of their writing, as did the derogatory scripting of others. In short, these women were assertive 'nationalist managers' who had a lot to say about the creation of their 'homely nation'.⁹ (Hage 1998) They additionally had a lot to say about the position occupied by the white woman settler, whom they saw, and thus represented, as national heroes.

All three wrote pioneer narratives but have suffered relative anonymity. Indeed, Liston's narratives have featured in only two literary analyses, one in 1988 by Patricia Clarke and the other in 1995 by Rick Hosking, while both Doudy and White's narratives have remained mere names on the Australian Literature Gateway database with only minimal detail about their lives and works available.¹⁰ This thesis therefore recoups and uncovers lost manuscripts, hidden stories and forgotten memoirs, all of which have scarcely been read since they were written and never before analysed. While the importance of

⁹ When I use the term 'homely nation' I am referring to the way these women wrote to create a feeling of homeliness within the nation, and a sense of belonging to the nation. This will be discussed in more detail in the chapter 'The innocent presence'. The term 'nationalist manager' will likewise be discussed but for the purpose of its inclusion here, the term, simply put, means one who manages the homely nation.

¹⁰ See Patricia Clarke (1988) Rick Hosking (1995) and the Austlit Literary Gateway Database. (www.austlit.edu.au) Fiona Giles (1998) also briefly mentions Ellen Liston in her book *Too Far Everywhere: the Romantic Heroine in Nineteenth Century Australia*, stating that Liston's stories have remained unrecognised despite their adaptation of the popular nationalist image, or the 'Lawson Tradition' as Giles explains, of the protective rural mother who must overcome hardships associated with the bush.

preventing these women writers from languishing in the forgotten pages of Australian literary history is undeniable, our recuperation of their life stories can not simply be a process of recovering and re-centring. Rather important questions need to be addressed, questions which rethink traditional historical paradigms and theoretical frameworks and extend our knowledge of these women's writerly conscience. An analysis based upon a combination of recent theoretical decolonising notions, which include the historicisation of whiteness, colonial rhetoric, feminist concepts of race, gender, nation, class and identity-formation, and notions of belonging and 'place', will hence be employed to advance existing work on colonial women writers and to unsettle the benevolent trope which has plagued historical analyses of white women in this country. With this in mind, I am interested in understanding how Liston, Doudy and White remembered and represented South Australia's foundational beginning. How did they help to create a sense of regional identity through colonial rhetoric and white structures of privilege? How were issues of nation, class, gender and race played out and used in these texts to create and exclude colonial identities? Why did they write and for whom did they write? How did they use their writing as a carrier of culture and how did their writing conform to, contribute, or challenge, the development of a national narrative, including its legends and values?

Such questions inevitably create a plethora of other questions regarding the validity of viewing women's narratives as sites of historical cultural, social and political investigation. While this will be taken up in further chapters, I wish only to argue here that narratives provide a multitude of exciting possibilities

for the researcher. Writing stories was a means that many women used to help them interpret and understand their world. By telling stories they were not only translating personal hopes and dreams, but also transmitting wider ideas about cultural beliefs, political issues, race relations and social practice. As Chilla Bulbeck has discerningly pointed out:

true a novel does not claim to reflect reality, while scientific theory does. But if we wish to know how people feel or how they evaluate the world, a novel or poem will give us as many insights as Einstein's theory of relativity. (Bulbeck 1998: 100)

A line taken from a poem, or a quote from a novel, thus provides, as Bulbeck suggests, an array of investigative possibilities, and, importantly for this thesis, places the literary works of Liston, Doudy and White, at the forefront of a historical analysis that is well overdue.

When considering all aspects of research and analysis for this thesis it is important that I acknowledge and locate my own raced/classed/gendered position in this first chapter and recognise that as a producer of knowledge I work from a position which is influenced by these cultural, political and social sites. Although not intended as a biographical piece of writing, this thesis does attempt to recover the life stories of three colonial women and as such needs to be located as a text produced by a writer who, in Liz Stanley's words, is a 'socially-located person, who is sexed, raced, classed'. (Stanley 1992: 7) While hesitant to place myself into any socially constructed box, I must nevertheless concede that I write from a privileged position as a white middle class female.

It is from this position that I research, analyse, critique and attempt to understand what it is that I see in the writing of these three women writers. In a sense, therefore, this thesis is not just about recovering history; it is, as Foucault would say, about composing history.¹¹ It involves a self-conscious reflection of my own political and social position and represents one interpretation from among a range of possibilities. (Stanley 1992) It is, as Stanley would claim, not 'full and complete truth'. It will, however, provide an alternative story which can be added to the myriad of historical interpretations which make up Australia's historiography. And hopefully, unlike many conventional biographies, this text will not be confined by a linear trajectory of these women's lives but will address the multiplicities of connectedness which coloured their lives and which make them subjects who have cultural interest.

It is also important that I define the terms 'women writer' and 'women's writing' from the start, as cultural and political constructs rather than biological, an approach, which in itself, is not without problems. The labels 'women writer' and 'women's writing' in themselves are titles which have tended to homogenise and presume that the representative 'woman' is white and often middle class. Indigenous, ethnic and working class women have consequently remained outside the loop. (Caine et al. 1998: 422) One way to overcome this dilemma has been to recognise the difference within women's

¹¹ Foucault believed that discourses consisted of various statements and events. He argued that historical rules and the role of discursive practices in constituting systems of meaning and truth production were always dependent upon a given domain and period with a social, economic, geographic, or linguistic zone. (Foucault 1972, 1981)

literary work and understand that there is no one authoritative voice which speaks for all women. Narratives written by Indigenous women, for example, have been produced within vastly different contexts from those produced by colonial white women. It is therefore imperative that I acknowledge that the three women studied within this thesis are not representatives of all women. As white middle class colonial women they had access to the dominant language, the Indigenous and working class people they sometimes wrote about did not. Thus when I use the terms ‘women writer’ and ‘women’s writing’ it is to illustrate the voices of some white middle class colonial women only, ‘authors and agents’ of colonialism, as Belinda McKay may refer to them, whose work did not speak for all women but only for a select few. (McKay 2001: 2004)

The purpose of this thesis therefore is to build on, and advance, new understandings of white women writers and the ethnocentric cultural assumptions, which coloured their writing. By rediscovering previously published works as well as introducing new unpublished archival material, this thesis provides new material for re-conceptualising the power involved in producing and consuming women’s writing from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. By re-conceptualising the story and achievements of these women writers’ lives and analysing the full-breadth of their work, we can begin to view them as cultural agents who sought to influence society in South Australia. In particular, if we see them as being instrumental in creating, modifying and circulating foundational histories, which were deeply implicated in whiteness and colonial rhetoric, then we can begin to unravel Ann Curthoys’ challenging claim that the white woman subject has tended to

remain an innocent bystander in many post-colonial studies of colonial expansion. (Curthoys 1993) Thus, while recognising the achievements of Liston, Douady and White in a male dominated society, we cannot ignore the complicity and agency which also marked their lives. As white settlers, writers, wives, daughters and mothers, they operated within discourses of power and privilege which ultimately sustained the dominance of white colonial subjects.

My analysis will rely on the interpretive genre of women's novels and autobiographies, acknowledging these as significant sites that expose many challenging notions of colonial contact. While historians, like Keith Windschuttle, may refute the use of these women's work as lacking in historical substance, there can be little doubt that the interrogation of these white women writers will add to Australia's field of historical contestation.¹² Their stories will provide new insights and form alternative understandings of South Australia during its foundational beginning, and will help to locate, either implicitly or explicitly, the colonial moment as a simultaneous setting for destruction and re-invention. (Rose 1999) The aim, therefore, is not about claiming 'truths' or 'facts' but about raising 'suggestions' and 'implications'. It's interesting really, how in Australia we often get caught up in labelling histories either 'black armband' or 'white blindfold', and yet in essence, the

¹² Windschuttle asserts that only 'first reports', such as police records and official documentation, be considered legitimate and reliable sources of evidence. Aboriginal oral memory and other alternate forms, such as novels, letters and memoirs are to be discounted as historical evidence as they are, according to Windschuttle 'less scientific', emotive and 'parochial'. (Windschuttle 2001, 2002)

creators of these histories, regardless of their political persuasion, have one thing in common.¹³ Like the women writers I examine, they also share in wanting the founding moment to be remembered in particular way. In a sense, they too are creators of the evolving story of origin, attempting, for various reasons, to define the nation's foundational history, and making decisions about who and what to include and exclude in their own historical renditions.

But why South Australian writers, you may ask? The answer is simple. In South Australia there has always been parochial champions ensuring that regional white histories have retained a sense of mythical utopianism. While undoubtedly many Australians have, since the arrival of Cook, craved anything which gave them some sort of foundation, any story which gave them legitimate meaning, in South Australia we went a step further and pounced on anything which proved that our state had been different, unique. After all, as the only state to have been planned, to have been settled without convicts and

¹³ The term 'black armband' was initially coined as a strategic swipe by conservative voices intended, as some have claimed, to illustrate the overly 'emotional' and unnecessarily 'bleak' flavour of the new revisionist history. Dubbed 'recklessly naive', judgemental and 'unAustralian', this narrative has been accused of creating and maintaining a 'culture of complaint'. As John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia, argues: 'I profoundly reject the black armband view of Australian history. I believe the balance sheet of Australian history is a very generous and benign one. I believe that, like any other nation, we have black marks upon our history, but amongst the nations of the world we have a remarkably positive history.' (Cited in Wimmer 2002: 13) Conversely, the White Blindfold label was directed towards those who were seen as down playing the wrongs committed in the past in favour of a triumphalist view of national progress. The use of both terms is part of a larger debate, which has been dubbed the History Wars. (Clark 2002; Evans & Thorpe 2001; Ryan 2001; Windschuttle 2000, 2001, 2002)

to have been acknowledged the world over as a reformist state it was only natural that many parade a ‘sense of difference’? (Rowley 1979; Graetz 1986; Whitelock 2000) We thus tended to place South Australia in its own little obscure corner of history, historically isolated, to a large degree, from questions of frontier violence and dispossession.¹⁴ Pervasive foundational stories of pioneering success and reformist humanitarianism reinforced the perception. Unfortunately, this sense of difference wasn’t as different as we had been led to believe. With the application of new and challenging questions and theoretical approaches, however, we can begin to deconstruct the voices from the past and reveal different memories.

The following thesis will be divided into four sections. The first section will provide a broad overview of the various scholarships that inform my research. The first chapter in this section, ‘An Innocent Presence’, will briefly examine how the founding moment has been, and is still being, remembered and represented within Australian historiography. It will discuss the continuum of debates that surround the ‘myth’ of Australia’s foundational beginnings, looking at how these discussions will influence my own examination of Liston, Doudy and White. This chapter will also look specifically at South Australia’s

¹⁴ I say historically isolated here to make the point that the prominence of frontier studies, such as those undertaken in the eastern states and Tasmania, has not occurred to the same extent in South Australia. While receiving some scholarly attention in such works as *Resistance and Retaliation: Aboriginal relations in Early South Australia* (Pope 1989) *Survival in Our Own Land: Aboriginal experiences in South Australia* (Mattingley & Hampton 1988), *Fatal Collisions: the South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory* (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001) and *Looking at you, looking at me: an Aboriginal History of the South East* (Watson 2002), to name a few, the ‘History War’ debate has not received as much public attention in South Australia as it has elsewhere.

own distinct blend of historiography and where it fits into the larger picture. As mentioned earlier, South Australians have continued to subscribe to an ‘air of difference’. It is an ideal which has constructed colonisation as unique, peaceful and successful. From before the first official arrival of British settlers to present day, writers, commentators and historians alike have continued to reinforce this perception.¹⁵ The three women researched in this study were no different. Recently however, Indigenous counter-histories have challenged this perception and have questioned its validity. Irene Watson’s revealing look at Aboriginal history of South Australia’s South East for instance, successfully debunks some myths about the state’s foundational history by turning the white gaze upon itself. (Watson 2002) Her de-colonising methodology provokes consideration of how Indigenous peoples construct and critique South Australian history and how important this interpretation is when trying to understand any relationship between the past and present. Such ‘telling stories’ draw new light on South Australia’s cultural, political and social history, and force us to place them against foundational narratives written by white colonists, and more specifically, against the narratives created by Liston, White and Doudy. What this means for cultural feminist historians, therefore, is that when we use women’s texts as new sites of historical investigation, South

¹⁵ Throughout this thesis I will use the term ‘settler’ to describe those who migrated to Australia. I am mindful however, that this term suggests that the land was settled peacefully rather than as an act of invasion. This is not my intent. Perhaps by retaining and using the words ‘settler’ and ‘settlement’, it may, as Tanya Dalziell suggests, highlight their inappropriateness and prove to be ‘unsettling’. (2004)

Australia's 'story of origin' again undergoes transformation, complete with new actors, new scripts, and alternative endings.

The second chapter in this section, titled 'Occupying an unsettled position', details how feminist critique has challenged and refined the historical process, enabling studies, such as this thesis, to take place. It will provide an in-depth look at recent overseas and Australian feminist historiography, explaining how this scholarship, whilst challenging the way we view the Australian story, has perhaps not gone far enough in its analysis. Post-colonial concerns, for example, have tended to be ignored by too many feminist historians. Recognising that their white female subjects were complicit in the dispossession of the Indigenous peoples has been a difficult concept for some to acknowledge. Rather than digest post-colonial concerns, many have ignored the alternative possibility. Others, however, have embraced the notion of white women's colonial complicity and agency. In more recent years Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians and literary historians such as Susan Sheridan, Patricia Grimshaw, Jackie Huggins, Kay Saunders, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Ann Curthoys, Margaret Allen and Belinda McKay have extended the image of the white colonial woman by locating whiteness as a marker of identity. They have tackled the issue of the white colonial woman as 'coloniser' rather than 'colonised', locating the multiple cultural complexities and signifiers which marked her identity. Not content to simply 'knead' national identity, these historians have endeavoured to uncover the cultural and political interconnectedness of race, gender, class and nation, thereby interrogating whiteness within the historical context. Part of this investigation has involved

recovering women's literature and examining its political, cultural and social implications for Australian foundational history. Thus, with this in mind, the chapter, 'Powerful Contributors' will emphasis how, as a historically and culturally produced category, women's literature provides an important analysis for creating a new history of colonial experience. Utilising studies from overseas scholars and recent initiatives undertaken by Australian scholars this chapter will explore how the white woman writer is, now more than ever before, important as a figure of historical substance, whose writing must be viewed as a form of cultural and political capital.

The final chapter of the first section, 'Decolonising the Neutral Identity', concentrates on the broad range of methodological approaches important to my interrogation of women who were white, middle class and colonisers. It will focus on the critical studies of colonial and imperial histories by scholars, such as Edward Said, Toni Morrison and Richard Spurr (to list a few), who have extended and complicated the range of questions being asked to create alternative historical constructions. Their search for new answers has led to the development and application of such theories as the colonial rhetoric of exclusion and control, the historicisation of whiteness and the decolonisation of 'national fantasies'. Such theoretical models provide incredibly important frameworks for understanding how foundational histories have been manufactured within discursive systems that sanctioned racial difference and dominance. The application of whiteness theory, for example, has drawn attention to the 'transparency of...normative representations that strategically enables differentiation and othering'. (Moreton-Robinson 2004: 77) This has

been particularly important for Australian cultural history, as it has enabled racialised power and privilege to become visible. More specifically, and for the purpose of this study, the white woman writer once normalised and unracialised, gains ethnicity and no longer remains a 'neutral identity'.¹⁶

The remaining three sections will each be divided into three chapters and will chart and analyse the life-story of, and the various literary works written by, Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Douady and Myrtle Rose White. The aim of these chapters will be, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's words, 'to loosen the binding of the book' and to highlight the connections between 'book and author, individual and history.' (Spivak 1985: 244) This will involve identifying the web of tropes and colonial discourses that join, and or, separate these women's texts, and locating the issues and themes crucial for their manufacturing of foundational stories. Much of this examination will rely upon extensive quotations taken from these women's various literary works in an effort to illustrate 'dimensions of meaning', 'patterns of language', themes' and 'displacements or deletions' present within the text, all qualities, as Hodge and Mishra argue, that 'disappear from a straightforward summary'. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: xvii)

I want to conclude this chapter with some final thoughts. Although many historians and cultural commentators have taken up the challenge to question

¹⁶ For more detailed discussion of the use of this term see Dyer (1997), particularly his Introduction and chapter titled 'The Matter of Whiteness'.

the way Australia's many 'stories of origin' has been remembered, there are still many who remain hesitant to interrogate the bleak side of Australian history. Historical memory is still often used as a means of explaining and legitimating white society's form and experience rather than as a means of dissecting the cultural construction of that society. In Australia, as in many other parts of the world, there remains a deep-seated ambivalence about the history of colonisation. The refusal to use the labels 'oppressor' and 'victim' or 'powerful' and 'powerless' when writing a national history thus inhibit many historians' interpretation of the past. (Curthoys & Docker 2006) Not surprisingly, words such as complicity, dispossession and exploitation generate intense debate amongst some of Australia's most esteemed historians, creating friction not just within academia but in society at large. Although aware that such words may create feelings of unease, this thesis will not be inhibited by, nor down-play, the implications that these words bring to this historical analysis.

I am also aware that I am only recording and centring white women's voice and experience and that this in itself is problematic but before some paths can be opened others need to be taken first. As David Spurr argues:

Criticism, and the interpretation of cultures as criticism, will not free us from the relations of power inherent in all discourse, but at least they may help us to know the consequences of that power. (Spurr 1993: 12)

I hope that by locating the role of three relatively unknown women writers within South Australian history and analysing how their foundational histories

A Not So Innocent Vision

were imbued with notions of race, gender, class and nation, we may have a better understanding of contemporary social and political cultural practices in Australia. I also hope to highlight the variety of voices, my own included, which interact to produce this understanding. I end with a suggestion from Linda Tuhiwai Smith when she points out that any historical journey is as much about rewriting history as it is about rereading history. (Smith 1999: 28)

‘An innocent presence’: Foundational histories and their prominent place in the stories of the nation.

Most new nations go through the formality of inventing a national identity, but Australia has long supported a whole industry of image-makers to tell us what we are. Throughout its white history, there have been countless attempts to get Australia down on paper and to catch its essence. Their aim is not merely to describe the continent, but to give it an individuality, a personality. This they call Australian but it is more likely to reflect the hopes, fears or needs of its inventors. (White 1992: 21)

It is 2007 and still many non-Indigenous Australians continue to hide within the comfortable haze of what has been termed the ‘victimological narrative’, a story which promotes a sense of historical innocence, of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and allows white Australians to see themselves as victims. (Curthoys 1999) As Ann Curthoys points out, there has ‘been a deep desire in non-Indigenous Australian culture’ to see itself as a historical victim – ‘of the land, of British imperial desires, of American powers, of world wars.’ (Cited in Veracini 2002) She further contends that:

this desire for the status of victim [has] made it extremely difficult for non-Indigenous Australians to recognise the history of their own country, and

especially the physical, cultural and economic violence that settlers perpetrated against Indigenous people'.¹ (Cited in Veracini, 2002)

This victimological narrative is a story that survives on rehashed tales of mateship and settlers' battles against the harsh environment and on images of ideal egalitarianism. It is a story that inscribes what it is to be 'Australian' and 'un-Australian'. The eternal Australian pioneering legend remains firmly embedded within this non-Indigenous Australian psyche, its flame kept alight with conservative politics and hagiographic reminiscence of foundational stories. The intrepid *white* explorer and the heroic *white* settler are central tenets of this 'achievement story'; their inclusion designed to manufacture a sense of unity, belonging and legitimacy for non-Indigenous Australians. Created and defined by a dominant white society, these iconic labels are now seen as belonging to a past full of unspoken assumptions about race, gender, nation and class, a past many historians are now claiming to have been built upon a tenuous foundation of half-truths and white mythical constructs. (Stanner 1969; Mattingley & Hampton 1988; Bulbeck 1998; Rose 1999; Curthoys 1999; Reynolds 1999, 2001; Curthoys & Docker 2001) These constructs are now seen to constitute politically and ideologically crafted foundational histories/narratives, stories which created a comfortable homogenous tale, an easily digested, if not commercially viable production of Australian historiography.

¹ See in particular Curthoys article 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology'. (1999)

The purpose of this chapter is to explore these implications further, foregrounding the discursive regimes employed, and assumptions held, by writers of foundational histories. It will therefore concentrate on how foundational stories have been useful strategies of legitimation that have long been shaped by images of the heroic pioneering nation builder who battles to transform the unspoiled virgin land into a pastoral New World of prosperity, whilst simultaneously hiding structures of white privilege and domination. These strategies, as will be shown in later chapters, and thus the reason for their inclusion here, were applied in the literary works of all three authors discussed in this thesis. As Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian women, Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Doudy and Myrtle Rose White endeavoured to legitimate the presence of the white settler by manufacturing stories that justified the settler's right to appropriate the land. Writing foundational histories provided these women a space to explore the notion of being an Australian, or to use Fiona Giles' words, to show they were 'clearly settled into their Australianness', or to be more specific, their South Australianness. (Giles 1998: 30)

The second half of this chapter will focus on the content and use of foundational narratives within South Australian historiography, concentrating on why they have been so readily written and consumed by the South Australian mainstream public. Also included in this discussion will be a summary of recent Indigenous and non-Indigenous counter-histories that have

questioned the cause and effect of these foundational histories, and exposed new stories that challenge the very foundations of foundational narratives.

P.G. McHugh stated that ‘there is almost something primeval in the need for political societies to locate themselves in some story of narrative or foundation’. (McHugh 1999: 89) The reason for this is quite simple. A ‘story of foundation’ gives societies legitimacy and justifies their presence within the landscape. For emerging colonial societies, not only did this ‘story of foundation’ become a focal point for nostalgic reminiscence and ‘repeated memorialisation’, but as Elizabeth Furniss suggests, it ordered, ‘the messy, complex, varied, and simultaneous events of the past into a linear sequence of extraordinary events’. (Furniss 2001: 284) In other words, this historical narrative not only made sense of the colonial process, but gave it purpose.

The foundational tales told, either in the form of a memoir, novel or non-fictional narrative, often fell into major groups – those that were produced during the first forty to fifty years of settlement, usually a generation after the first wave of settlers and written by people who had been part of the settlement process, and those created well after this time by writers who referred ‘back to [the] foundational period without bearing direct witness to it’.² (Nettlebeck 1999: 98) Both groups, despite the differences in which they were written and

² I draw on Amanda Nettlebeck’s work here when she argues that foundational memoirs can often be delineated into two groups. The first, as she argues, appeared during the first phase of settlement and were written by writers who were part of it and the second appeared during South Australia’s Centenary in 1936. (2001: 97-98)

the genre they fit into, nevertheless performed ‘a commemoration of colonial history’, recalling and memorialising events and people within romantic notions of national self-creation. (Nettlebeck 1999) According to Brigitte Georgi-Findlay, embedded within much of this congratulatory writing was the strategic creation of ‘innocent yet imperial narrative presences [and] the naturalisation of colonial space’. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: xi) The ‘innocent presence’ that Georgi-Findlay speaks of, was often the adventurous and heroic pioneer, whose presence conveniently neutralised any possible notion of invasion and dispossession. (Furniss 2001: 284) Indeed, this strategic creation of the pioneering hero, as an ‘initiator’ of colonial enterprise and ‘agent of history’, meant that the foundational narrative could function as a historical continuum that ‘unequivocally and irreversibly established the right’ of non-Indigenous inhabitants to transmit a ‘pattern of ownership from generation to generation’. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26)

Central to such foundational histories, as John Hirst argues, was the subduing and regeneration of the empty and hostile land from an uncultivated space into a flourishing and ‘homely’ place. (Hirst 1992) Before continuing, it needs to be briefly noted here that the word ‘space’ is used in this thesis and in this context to emphasise the perceived uncultured and unmarked landscape by white settlers. The term ‘place’, on the other hand, is used to represent a ‘space that has been culturally marked’- a space with history. (NSW Western Parks Projects: 17) Thus battling the unmarked land and its elements, as Hirst explains, made the ‘courageous and enterprising’ pioneers national heroes to be revered by all who followed in their wake. Hirst claims, for example, that:

The pioneer legend ... encourages reverence for the past...In claiming that the pioneers were working for us, it puts on later generations a special obligation not to tamper with the world which the pioneers made. (Hirst 1992: 206)

This pioneer tale, as Hirst points out, emerged as a 'people's history' during the 1880s and 1890s, at a time when 'new heroes and symbols' were being sought to help define Australian nationalism and during the time, it must be noted, that Ellen Liston was writing her last unpublished manuscript, 'Jean Kesson'. (Hirst 1992) It was readily embraced by the public as it allowed all who possessed the 'requisite qualities of diligence, courage and perseverance' to share in its honour. (Hirst 1992: 218) In simple terms it was an inclusive narrative that 'declared that the people had made the nation'. (Hirst 1992: 218) Indeed, its non-confronting focus on the heroism of the pioneers meant that 'the more complex social, economic, and political processes underpinning colonisation' could be glossed over. (Furniss 2001: 284) Any embarrassment of the 'convict origins of the nation', as Hirst contends, could thus be conveniently defused. (Hirst 1992: 219) Little wonder that by the early twentieth century it had become an easy and popular social history, which did not 'strain too much at the truth'. (Hirst 1992: 205) By the 1920s and 1930s, the decades both Jane Sarah Douidy and Myrtle Rose White produced many of their narratives; the popularity of the legend had abated little. It was still firmly entrenched within the national narrative with writers looking back at the 1890s as a time of 'retrievable certainties'. (Hooton 1990b) This was particularly so during the Depression of the 1930s as suggested by Joy Hooton, who argues:

Generally consciously preoccupied with discovering and possessing a useable past, the cultural commentator is bent on imposing a certain shape on time which will console the author and his readers with a promise of retrievable certainties. And, of course, from the 1920s on, it was the decade of the 1890s which appeared to offer most potential as a useable past. (Hooton 1990b: 317)

The pioneer as an ‘innocent presence’, to again borrow Georgi-Findlay’s term, was thus often the central tenet of the foundational narrative, producing a ‘feel-good’ version of history that celebrated a glorious past and generated feelings of belonging and legitimacy for white Anglo-British Australians. This ‘presence’, as will be shown later in the thesis, dominated many of Liston’s, Douly’s and White’s narratives, situating their works unquestionably within the realm of foundational histories.

In manufacturing this ‘feel-good’ version, writers of foundational narratives, as Hodge and Mishra have argued, often operated within a discursive regime that worked to ‘defuse, displace and negate the intractable conditions of the foundation event’.³ (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26) In other words, whilst endorsing the coloniser’s right to play God and build a ‘homely nation’, they silenced the more unsavoury aspects of colonisation or as Eve Vincent and Clare Land argue, the ‘Enlightenment and evangelical Christian world-view of

³ Hodge and Mishra define discursive regimes as ‘political and social facts which profoundly affect what is commonly said or communicated, and what is recognised to be legitimate meaning’. They argue that discursive regimes operate ‘to constrain’, shape and give ‘official currency’ to ‘particular pictures of world’, and that those who ‘deploy it are never innocent’. (Hodge & Mishra 1993: 26)

settlers' was used as 'a kind of ideological prophylactic against colonial violence and racism'. (Vincent & Land 2003: 19) Indeed, Deborah Bird Rose compared this process to a huge 'clean up the country' ruse, suggesting that 'in order to fulfil his vision of creation' the colonist had to first destroy that which may have challenged his right to occupancy and ownership. (Rose 1999: 12) As she points out:

The metaphor of right and left hands is useful for describing life during [the frontier] moment. The right hand of conquest can be conceptualised as beneficent: it brings productivity, growth and civilisation where these had not existed before. The left hand, by contrast, has the task of erasing specific life. Indigenous peoples, their culture, their conceptualisation of time and history, their sources of power practices will all be wiped out, and most of the erasure will be literal, not metaphorical... The left hand generates devastation so sudden and massive that the conqueror will never fully grasp the sense of it. (Rose 1999: 11-12)

Thus, the frontier, according to Bird-Rose, became a place that 'simultaneously revealed its capacity for destruction and reinvention'. (Rose 1999: 12) It presented, she asserted, a transcendental time and place of transfiguration which represented for white settlers a 'Year Zero', and became, not surprisingly, a period that writers of foundational narratives commonly depicted to fulfil notions of nationhood. (Rose 1999: 9)⁴

⁴ Deborah Bird Rose argues that the telling of history means locating the 'knowledge of brutality' and marking 'the unmarked places where the bones and blood...of Aboriginal victims are washed into the soil'. (Rose 1999: 3-19) She further states that the myth of creation

In order to sustain the foundational myth, not only did writers, or ‘nationalist managers’ to use Ghassan Hage’s terminology, employ a discursive system of silence, but they often applied a ‘nationalist practice of exclusion’ as well. (Hage 1998: 46)⁵ It was a process, according to Hage, in which ‘nationalists perceived themselves as spatial managers’ and that which stood ‘between them and their imaginary nation [was] constructed as an undesirable national object to be removed from national space.’ (Hage 1998: 46) Excluding and misremembering those deemed to be ‘unworthy’, or a ‘problem’, thus informed the nationalist process of exclusion and allowed the ‘nationalist manager’ to construct an imagined ‘homely nation’, or in the words of Freud, a ‘heimlich’ space which was both familiar and accessible.⁶ Hage’s theoretical approach offers an invaluable framework, I believe, for studying white women writers

was fulfilled thought ‘the torture and crucifixion’ of the Indigenous people. She thus believes that decolonisation will only come via a productive conformity ‘between event and account’ and the recognition of Aboriginal oral histories as legitimate and valuable sources of historical information. See also her book *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness* (1996)

⁵ Hage explains this ‘nationalist manager’ as one who had ‘managerial capacity’ over what they believed to be their national state. As he argues ‘one cannot define and act on others as undesirable in just any national space. Such a space has to be perceived as one’s own national space’. By defining this space as a ‘homely’ space, the nationalist manager conveys not only a relationship to the nation but his/her right to occupy a ‘privileged mode’ of inhabiting that space. (1998: 42)

⁶ Sigmund Freud used the two German words, ‘heimlich’ and ‘unheimlich’ to emphasise one’s sense of place in the world. Heimlich represents homely, intimacy, familiarity and domestic comfort, while ‘unheimlich’ connotes foreignness, uncanniness, unfamiliarity and inspires fear. For more discussion of these terms see the chapter ‘The Uncanny’ in James Strachey’s 1955 edited book *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

living within colonial societies. It provides new readings into how these creators of foundational histories applied systems of exclusion in order to locate and define their own national space. Thus, the novel once deemed an inconsequential romance can be re-examined as a political work that operated within strategies aimed at naturalising the settler presence whilst delegitimising the ‘unfit’ and ‘unworthy’ presence.

More often than not it was the Aboriginal peoples who were the excluded and ‘mis-remembered unworthies’, reflecting what William Stanner labelled in 1968, ‘the great Australian silence’.⁷ Their textual omission was, as Irene Watson has asserted, an important tool for affirming the settler presence and claiming cultural legitimisation for colonial development. As Watson succinctly argues:

The invisibility of indigenous peoples was a tool used by the colonists to steal our country and violate the law, as they did when they applied the rule terra

⁷ Stanner claimed that ‘a whole quadrant’ of the Australian landscape had been excluded from Australian history. Stanner’s controversial remarks exposed the one-dimensional nature of the then existing traditional histories, pointing out that ‘simple forgetting’ had ‘turned into habit and over time into something like a cult of forgetfulness practiced on a national scale’. (Stanner 1969: 24) As he asserted: ‘we have been able for so long to disremember the aborigines, that we are now hard put to keep them in mind when we most want to do so.’ (53) With his claims, Stanner initiated a challenge to both historians and to the wider community alike. His push for ‘another kind of history’, an ‘underworld’ history as he called it, helped to inspire a new era of historical studies, calling into question how the founding moment had been remembered and forcing non-Indigenous Australians to listen to an unaccustomed noise. (Stanner 1969)

nullius in terra eam locum habere. Bell hooks calls it 'white supremacy', the power to make black invisible, erasing all traces of subjectivity. Invisibility serves to marginalise all aspects of life, which stand in the 'white supreme' way, the way of progress. (Watson 2002: 83)

The strategy to render Aboriginal peoples invisible, as suggested by Watson, allowed writers of foundational narratives to accommodate memories and information that suited the purpose of authenticating and naturalising the settler. Thus, if the narrative of those who had been violated, exploited and dispossessed could remain outside the story of progress, then this story of creation could remain innocently detached from any negative image of colonial destruction.

While the repression of Aboriginal people from foundational histories served to obscure the impact of colonisation and solve the 'Aboriginal problem' it was the strategy of representing Aboriginal peoples using the rhetoric of race, that further advanced the perception of the settler's right to ownership. (Hodge & Mishra 1991) By presenting Aboriginal people as part of 'the inanimate world, a natural obstacle to acquisition' the colonial enterprise could be couched in terms of justifiable appropriation. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 4) Thus the Aboriginal presence was sometimes included, not to present alternate stories, but to further marginalise Aboriginal people within the story being told. As Robert Foster, Amanda Nettlebeck and Rick Hosking have pointed out:

While Aboriginal people were often present in accounts of pioneering experience, they were 'put in their place', the stories involving them usually

reshaped, in one way or another, to demonstrate the defining virtues of the pioneer. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001: 11)

In the foundational narrative attuned to the message of 'ever onward and upward progress' (Richards 1986) Aboriginal people, as highlighted by Foster, Nettlebeck and Hosking, remained in the shadowy margins, portrayed as dying remnants of a primitive civilisation, and often condemned as trespassers on European land. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001) They became the 'undesirable other', an 'unsettling' foreign presence always 'relative to the inside, the domestic, the familiar'. (Saunders 2001: 88) In effect, the Indigene becomes the foreigner, and to be foreign, as Rebecca Saunders astutely points out is perceived as:

not belonging to a group, *not* speaking a given language, *not* having the same customs, it is to be *unfamiliar*, *improper*, *incomprehensible*, *unnatural*, *uncanny*. (Saunders 2001: 88)

Thus, by applying a strategy of what may be termed 'defensive exclusivism', and representing the Indigenous culture and people as something which is frightening and unfamiliar, the defining character of the pioneer and their culture could be represented as familiar and safe and hence worthy of belonging.⁸ Not surprisingly, therefore, dispossession, murder and massacre

⁸ I borrow the term 'defensive exclusivism' from Rebecca Saunders to describe the strategy nations often employed when forming a national identity. Quoting Stuart Hall, Saunders explains how nations are driven 'by a very aggressive form of racism' when their national identity may be threatened by foreigner customs and cultures and thus seek to exclude that which is seen as foreign. Although Saunders is using this in the context of globalisation and its

were words, rarely, if ever, used in accounts of pioneering triumphalism. Rather stories of success, discoveries and progress shaped historical memories and dominated the foundational narrative. National foundational histories were, to quote Neville Meaney, 'absolute in their exclusions as well as their inclusions'. (Meaney 2001: 78)

This was no more so than in South Australia where foundational histories were culturally and politically employed to create a prevailing 'sense of difference' and the perception of historical innocence. From the very beginning South Australia manufactured the reputation of being the reforming colony, progressive in its ideals and humanitarian in its practice. Its non-Indigenous inhabitants prided themselves on being labelled a 'model community'- an enlightened society that was free of convicts and a haven for religious dissenters. (Pike 1957; Richards 1986; Whitelock 1977; Whitelock & Baker 2000) As Eric Richards points out, South Australia was seen to offer 'a social framework designed specifically to satisfy the cravings of the middling orders for security and respectability'. (Cited in Pike 1957: 123) Indeed, this Mecca for the middle-class, as it was promoted, was viewed as a new country in its own right, as the following assertion made in 1901 highlights:

Adelaide might exploit her neighbours' markets and gold, but she refused to share their origins and ambitions...Her people refused to admit that South

impact on nations, specifically on those deemed foreigners, its relevance can be historically applied to notions of nation building and identity formation. See Rebecca Saunders for more elaboration. (2001)

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Australia was ever a colony; it was an outlying English province with its own peculiar foundations, its own national song, its own commemoration day...Taught by the founders to dread the vulgarities of convict settlement, the urban pioneers abhorred the slur 'colonial'. (Cited in Pike 1957: 495-6)

The passage illustrates the happy, romanticised version of the past that many non-Indigenous South Australians believed. Accounts in numerous memoirs, autobiographies, novels and history books fondly remembered this foundational beginning.⁹ South Australia was painted an enterprising venture, which brought progress and order to a former 'waste' land. One such example of this was Rev. John Blacket's book *Early History of South Australia: A Romantic Experiment in Colonisation, 1836-1857*, first published in 1907.¹⁰ Written seventy-one years after first settlement Blacket's account presented a historical tale, which followed a linear trajectory from primitivism to modernity. South Australia had been, according to Blacket, an empty domicile 'awaiting' the hand of civilisation' as the following quote from his book testifies:

⁹ See for example Blacket (1911), Bull (1884) and Brown et. al (1936) This is only a few of the better known publications, the list is extensive.

¹⁰ John Blacket was a Methodist minister and was born on 13 February 1856 at Kent Town, Adelaide. He married Martha Fidler in 1885 and had fourteen children. He served in thirteen Methodist circuits in South Australia, most of which were located in rural areas. He wrote eight books and numerous articles on philosophy and history during his lifetime, many dealing with South Australian history. (Hunt, 1985) Eight years prior to his 1907 publication he had written *A South Australian Romance: How a colony was founded and a Methodist church formed*. In 1914 he wrote *Missionary triumphs among the settlers in Australia and the savages of the South Seas: a twofold centenary volume*.

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Before the foundation of the colony South Australia was almost a *terra incognita*... It was a well-appointed domicile awaiting a suitable tenant. It was made to be inhabited by the highest type of man, and until the purpose of its creation was realised there was something a-wanting and amiss. There was no lowing of oxen nor bleating of sheep; no ploughman's whistle nor milk-maid's song; no long freshly-turned furrows nor fields of waving corn. The air had not vibrated with the sound of horse's hoof or the rumble of wheels. The music of the whetted scythe had not fallen upon the ear. There were no roads, bridges, fences, nor houses surrounded by flowers and fruit-bearing trees; no honeysuckle and jessamine. Save the loud, ludicrous laugh of the jackass, the howl of the dingo, or the 'cooe' of the blackfellow few startling noises were heard. (Blacket 1911: 461)

A close reading of this extract illustrates the ways in which South Australia was represented as a neglected landscape, its bountiful potential under-utilised by the Indigenous inhabitant, whose presence, as indicated, belongs on the very edge of civilisation, placed alongside the jackass and dingo. This presence is further marginalised by the theme of white settler achievement and industriousness that Blacket portrays throughout the book:

The early settlers, who were as adventurous, courageous, and God-fearing a body of men as ever left the Mother Country, were undismayed by the difficulties they had to encounter. (Blacket 1911: xiii)

Their motto was:

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‘Conquer or die.’... Often surrounded by adverse circumstances and confronted by great difficulties, yet they made the wilderness... and the dessert blossom as the rose. (Blacket 1911: xvii)

It was not just a successful cultivation of the land that had occurred, according to Blacket, but also the cultivation of a prosperous society - a society that was free from the religious dissent and social disharmony which had plagued other Australian colonies. Of particular importance to Blacket was the belief that the new settlement promoted egalitarianism and alleviated poverty through its system of land ownership. Colonisation in South Australia had followed a plan developed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield which worked on a theory of regulated capitalism. In short, society was divided into two groups - capitalists and labourers. Labourers were given free passage to the colony to ensure that there was always a supply of labour. Labourers were not allowed to leave their employers until they had worked off their passage money. The price of land was fixed at a ‘sufficient price’ so that labourers could not buy it too soon, but low enough to ensure that they could save and eventually purchase their own. Planned immigration ensured that a balance between female and males immigrants could be maintained.¹¹ Also strengthening the belief in the colony’s superiority was its freedom from ‘convict contamination’. It was, as Blacket was proud of stating, settled by free men and women who shared humanitarian and enlightened principles.

¹¹ For more detailed information refer to Douglas Pike (1957) and Eric Richards (1986).

Blacket's version was typical of many other versions of foundational histories written during and after the time. Countless celebratory renditions told of the intrepid explorer, the hardworking settler, the liberal reformer and the Utopian idealism which made the colony unique. John Bull's memoir, *Early Experiences in South Australia*, first published in 1878, was yet another such example.¹² It centralised the worthy pioneer who triumphed over hardship to build a 'New Kingdom' in the New World. Interestingly, Bull's account did feature instances of frontier violence between settlers and Aboriginal people, which was at odds with many other accounts; however, it was fashioned in such a way that did not endanger the South Australian foundational story. Rather, as Amanda Nettlebeck points out, it consolidated the perception of white superiority and pioneer worthiness. (Nettlebeck 2001) Bull wrote, for example:

It is a sad reflection that the white men, in seeking to occupy the countries aboriginal races have previously wandered over, should have been under the necessity of taking their lives; but I do without hesitation assert that in South Australia the instances of wilful and unjustifiable destruction of them have been few in comparison to the cases of necessity. (Bull 1884: 73)

¹² John Bull arrived in Adelaide with his wife and two small sons in May 1838. He initially established himself as a land and stock agent but became a farmer in the early 1840s. In 1852 he went to the Victorian goldfields for a year, returning to South Australia to become a manager of a farm at Glen Osmond. He and his wife had ten children in total. His book first appeared in the *South Australian Chronicle* in 1878 and was revised and republished in 1884. (Finnis 1966: 175)

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This brief passage resonates with the previously discussed strategy of foundational narratives to position Aboriginal people as ‘natural obstacles’ to acquisition, thereby ensuring that the ‘intractable conditions of the foundation event’ were negated and the image of the settler maintained as an ‘innocent presence’, as no doubt Bull intended. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26)

The book *A book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years*, produced by a group of middle class white women to commemorate the centenary of the colony’s foundation in 1936 and edited by Louise Brown et al, likewise celebrated the history of South Australia as a success story. A compilation of stories, memoirs and essays, written by South Australian women, the book was composed, as stated in the foreword, to highlight the ‘achievement of the early women settlers who, by their fortitude in the face of privation and danger, played a novel part in the development the State’. (Brown et al 1936) Each narrative served as testimony to the strength of the pioneer woman and her role in making the South Australian experience a unique one. Ernestine Hill, one of the many contributors, wrote, for example:

The capital city was outback, indeed, in those days, out of the world, nothing but a maze of bushland in a strange country twelve thousand miles and many months from home. Struggles and failures were all to be shared... the pioneer woman never lost heart...The families grew and rambled, and the little bush wurlies grew and rambled until they became a city of streets and houses. (Hill 1936, 243)

The use of the Indigenous word 'wurlies' is interestingly employed here by Hill, suggesting an authorial intent to try to push the nation's past backwards, as Furphy would say, 'so that one of the newest societies on earth is given one of the longest histories'. (Furphy 2002: 60) At the same time that she is endeavouring to indigenise and extend the nation's history she also engages with the central metaphor of progress, a common occurrence in many of the other stories included in the book. Raw beginnings were shown to have prosperous endings, casting, as Nettlebeck argues, 'a line of continuity between the glorious past and the glorious future'. (Nettlebeck 2001, 103) Indeed, Nettlebeck claims that the collection of stories and essays in this particular publication enlists the powerful image of the frontier 'to celebrate the pioneer ethic and importantly, to carry that ethic into the future'. (Nettlebeck 2001: 103) Both Liston and White were contributors to the book; their short stories firmly entrenched within this 'pioneer ethic' as they too paid homage to the courageous spirit of the woman pioneer.

Early South Australian writers and historians were thus eager to promulgate a peaceful and successful rendition of the colony's foundation. As many of these writers had been involved in the colonisation process themselves, it was no surprise that they wished to look back upon their past with fond remembrance, or as R. J. Holton may say, with 'Whiggish vision'. (Holton 1986) Each version added to the South Australian story, strengthening a collective belief in the colony's uniqueness and difference. While it was a story, which shared certain characteristics with the early histories of other Australian colonies, it also served to create a distinctive blend of patriotic nationalism by highlighting

the many reformist ideals it had been founded upon. Indeed, one such ideal often emphasised in early histories, was the planned protection of Aboriginal people, a ‘notionally humane guideline’ that had been heavily influenced by the abolition of slavery throughout the British empire. (Evans 2001: 154) Thus, in 1835 the Colonial Office made the recommendation to compensate Aboriginal people for any loss of land they suffered with the coming of white settlers. Aboriginal land rights were to be recognised and a special fund set up with twenty percent raised from the sale of all land to be allocated to the welfare of the Aboriginal people. The Indigenous owners were also to be treated and given full rights and protection as British subjects. Any act of violence or injustice against them was to be punished, according to Governor Hindmarsh’s Proclamation in 1836, with ‘exemplary force’. A Protector of Aborigines was appointed to oversee matters pertaining to Aboriginal issues and was responsible for protecting Aboriginal people from violence and providing food, shelter and religious instruction.¹³

It is not surprising, therefore, that as the only planned colony not to have convicts, to have introduced policy to protect Aboriginal people, and also the first to give voting rights to women, many white South Australians saw themselves as being superior to other Australian colonies.¹⁴ As Eric Richards argued:

¹³ For more discussion on these policies see John Harris (1990) and John Summers (1986)

¹⁴ White women in South Australia won the right to vote on 1894, five years before Western Australia, and eight before New South Wales.

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In this noisy self-regard there lurked an assertion of superiority, a certain arrogance and moral rectitude, advanced thinking and scientific rationality...Free emigration, free trade, freedom of religion, free institutions, all placed this society a step in civilisation above any colony with which it could wish a comparison. (Richards 1986: 3)

But as C.D. Rowley, Christobel Mattingly, Ken Hampton, Irene Watson, John Harris and Alan Pope have pointed out, such noble 'self-regard' was perhaps a little too optimistic. South Australia, like the rest of the nation, had developed its own culture of mis-remembering. Despite the claims earlier writers had made, South Australia had been 'no different after all'. Investigations into the way South Australian historians and cultural commentators had founded a white celebratory history of the colony revealed a deeply embedded whiteness and Eurocentric rationale which spoke volumes about the way non-Indigenous South Australians had envisioned themselves and others.

At the forefront of this challenge were Indigenous counter-histories, which successfully performed, to borrow Anne Brewster's terms, a 're-membering and rememoration' of the people, moments and events that had been captured in white foundational histories. (Brewster 2002) The book, *Survival in Our Own Land: Aboriginal experiences in 'South Australia', since 1836*, edited by Christobel Mattingly and Ken Hampton, presented a particularly provocative challenge to the 'whitefella' framework of remembrance by offering new interpretations and questioning the social and cultural power of nostalgic

foundational stories.¹⁵ Written as ‘an expression of Aboriginal feeling about the loss of birthright’, it was a powerful reminder of a history ‘full of dark shadows, stained with blood, sparked with anger’. (Mattingley & Hampton 1988: xi) The book successfully wove together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge of the past to illustrate an often-chilling picture of colonial invasion. The following is a quote from the first few pages of the book and is included at length to replicate the impact it presented to the reader:

Goonyas came to the country with axe, plough, flock and fencing wire. They invaded it with roads and railways. They replaced its animals with sheep, cattle, camels, goats, horses, donkeys, rabbits and cats, and took the water for themselves and their beasts. Together they destroyed the trees and the life-giving plants. They suppressed the traditional owners of the land with firearms, chains, whips and arsenic. They forced their penis into the womb of our traditional society. They poisoned our people with their food, addicting our ancestors to sugar and flour, tea and tobacco. They laid the curse of alcohol upon our people. They introduced diseases, which decimated our population. They robbed us of our laws, languages and religion and imposed their own upon us. They destroyed sacred places of the Dreamtime and introduce their own religion. They took our children and educated them in their own way, deliberately teaching them to forget the ways of the Old People. They took away our peoples’ freedom. They took away our land. They eroded our

¹⁵ The book was reviewed as a ‘landmark’, ‘humbling’ and ‘substantial contribution’ to black historiography. (Headon 1993: 7)

economy with handouts. They reduced us from independence to the lowest rank in their capitalist society. (Mattingley & Hampton 1988: 5)

This passage of writing, highlighting Indigenous peoples 'ontological relationship with the land', was in stark contrast to the earlier pioneering reminiscence by Blacket which emphasised settlers' possession of the land. The difference between the two represented what Moreton-Robinson would later identify as the 'incommensurable difference between the situatedness of the Indigenous people...and those who have come here.'(Moreton-Robinson 2002: 7) The result of such a telling narrative revealed the fractures existing in the story of peaceful and righteous settlement depicted in foundational histories written by early colonists and historians. By 're-encountering the space of terror', *Survival in Our Own Land: Aboriginal experiences in 'South Australia', since 1836*, provided a compelling counter-history and effectively showed that the 'blossoming rose' of civilisation, so poetically penned by Blacket and the like, had lethal thorns.¹⁶

The putative benevolence of the pioneering settlers and their colonising mission was thus being contested on new grounds. The South Australian story had not been the romantic experiment in colonisation as proclaimed. Alan Pope succinctly summed this up when he argued that the social perception of

¹⁶ I borrow the term 'space of terror' from Anne Brewster who claims that 'the humanist history of the state...erases the space of terror'. See her article 'Aboriginal life writing and globalisation: Doris Pilkinton's *Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence*' for more discussion of this notion. (2002)

superiority had concealed many harsh realities, particularly concerning race relations. (Pope 1989) Frontier society, according to Pope, had not been for 'the faint-hearted':

As in other Australian colonies, it was often a brutal place, where violence was a part of everyday life and Aborigines were widely seen as objects for exploitation. Guns, swords and whips were carried by most frontier dwellers and few were reluctant to use them, particularly against Aborigines...By the end of the first decade of colonisation, the South Australian dream - of a colony without racial hatred and genocide - was a distant memory in the rural heartland. (Pope 1989: 105)

Any notion of humanitarian reform and peaceful settlement, as had been suggested in earlier memoirs and historical accounts was, according to Charles Rowley, Richard Harris and Alan Pope, ill conceived. (Rowley 1978; Harris 1990; Pope 1989) All three historians argued that economic interests had quickly replaced humanitarian rhetoric, and had effectively silenced any suggestion of Aboriginal ownership. Rowley, for example, claimed that 'despite careful planning', and with 'settler attitudes being what they were', the situation in South Australia moved 'precisely in the direction of other colonies'. (Rowley 1978: 78, 81) Aboriginal people were consequently given little rights and were often abused, killed, exploited, and in many instances, institutionalised. Nettlebeck, Foster and Hosking extended this sentiment a decade later when they argued that memories of early frontier conflict had often been manipulated in order to construct a false identity – namely the 'pioneer legend'. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001) Inspired to investigate

the circumstances in which historical stories were told, and to examine how events had been mythologised, these three historians examined regional and local histories for new and forgotten information. What they revealed directly challenged the strictures of South Australia as 'a place of difference'. Not only did they argue that much of the violence against Indigenous people was typically 'covert' but that its representation was 'clothed in euphemism', and often silenced by both settler and official alike. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001: 3) Indeed, their perception of what constituted the South Australian story was far removed from earlier accounts that had claimed the colony had been 'unstained by native blood'.¹⁷

Doreen Kartinyeri's work on the genealogies of Ngarrindjeri ancestry and the impact of colonisation on this tribal group, published in *Ngarrindjeri Nation: Genealogies of Ngarrindjeri families*, and Irene Watson's book *Looking at You Looking at Me: Aboriginal Culture and History of the South East of South Australia*, published in 2002, have further 'flooded the field with complex, engaging and challenging imagery'.¹⁸ (Cowlshaw 2004: 65) Both counter-

¹⁷ This phrase comes from a quote by Robert Gouger, one of the original founders of the colony who wrote: 'So many miseries have been sustained by those unoffending creatures in different parts of the continent that I felt particularly anxious that the annals of our province should be unstained by native blood'. (Cited in Whitlock 2000: 19)

¹⁸ Doreen Kartinyeri published this book in 2006 but has written extensively over the past two decades. Her work has influenced many Indigenous and non-Indigenous studies on the genealogy of Aboriginal families in South Australia. Some of her other publications include a co-authored book with Peggy Brock in 1989, *Poonindie: the rise and destruction of an Aboriginal agricultural Community*, *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, a book containing short biographies of Aboriginal men from the Ngarrindjeri community who had served as soldiers and *Narungga*
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histories were telling stories which resulted in the powerful deconstruction of foundational narratives, offering a forceful reminder of South Australia's destructive past, a time Watson refers to as 'before trousers'. (Watson 2002: 2) Their accounts functioned to inscribe a story of colonisation not impeded, to quote Watson, by Eurocentric logic. Indeed, Watson claimed that she did not take a position of 'all knowing' but rather told a story from a side which had rarely been given the space to speak.

Thus, when unmasked, foundational stories describing early settlement in South Australia have come to be seen by many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal historians and writers as a collection of selective and mis-remembered memories that shared a very similar characteristics to the rest of Australia, despite claims to the contrary. White foundational stories, however, have continued to permeate the South Australia's image and have obscured the exploitative relations that underpinned its white formation. Dependent very much upon the pioneer legend, these stories have maintained popularity amongst many people who prefer to celebrate rather than question.

Today white mainstream Australia is seen to continue the process of 'cleaning up' that Bird Rose refers to, only now the clean up involves seeking a positive 'balanced' account of Australian history. After all, a history, which criticises this country's achievement story and the formation of its society, is not a comfortable tale. John Howard's claim that 'the Australian achievement has

Nation in 2002, which traces the genealogy of Aboriginal families with links to the Yorke Peninsula.

been a heroic one, a courageous one and a humanitarian one', is, unquestionably, a simplified version which masks alternative readings of the nation's history. (Howard cited in Wimmer 2002:13) Has the Australian achievement been a heroic one? Has it been a courageous and humanitarian one? How do we know and why do we care so much? Despite what answers historians give, such questions highlight that foundational histories are not 'past events' but live very much in the present, and undoubtedly, well into the future. They also highlight how history is often deployed to legitimate particular claims to knowledge and truth. As Henry Reynolds argues:

Was there ever a time in the past when history was so central to the political debate?... Mainstream Australia seeks to reaffirm its roots in the continent. The past is consulted for explanations about present dilemmas and future prospects. Like the community, politicians turn to history for justification and inspiration (Reynolds 2002: 1).

Thus, when reading foundational histories, and in the words of Richard White, 'we need to ask, not whether they are true or false, but what their function is, whose creation they are, and whose interests they serve'. (White 1992: 22) They need to be understood and interrogated as artificially imposed intellectual constructs used at 'specific times to neaten an otherwise untidy collage of 'untidy social relationships, attitudes and emotions'. (White 1992: 22)

This study will be placed within such issues and notions as it investigates how the literary works of Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Doudy and Myrtle Rose White were implicated in the politics of creating foundational histories. It will

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examine how, why, and for whom, these three white women writers sought to record and preserve the social and cultural heritage of South Australia, or as Richard White might say, how they attempted to get South Australia ‘down on paper’ in order to validate the colonial presence. How did Liston, Douy and White commemorate South Australian history and its founding principles within similar literary structures outlined in this chapter? How did they enlist the pioneer ethic to legitimate, justify and order the colonial project and how did they mis-remember and mis-represent the Aboriginal people when constructing a homely nation? This thesis will seek to answer such questions.

‘Occupying an unsettled position’: Feminist historiography re-representing the white settler woman.

Over the past thirty years feminist history has successfully managed to break away from its position on the periphery to become a central player in Australian historiography. No longer considered disconnected from, and subordinate to, ‘real history’, it has been instrumental in reshaping Australian history. (Grimshaw 1985) As Patricia Grimshaw argued in 1985,

By placing women at the centre of their focus [feminists] are challenging conventional historical constructs in such a way as to throw a fresh and illuminating light on the total fabric of past societies. (Grimshaw 1985: 33)

The light that Grimshaw spoke of, however, has often only shone on a specific section of these past societies. The study of white women and race relations, as revealed by Jackie Huggins, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Patricia Grimshaw and Kay Saunders (to name a few) has often tended to remain in the shadows of gender and class analyses. While feminist history in Australia has been seen as successfully redefining the canons of traditional history and interrogating the multiplicities of the female experience, it has also been trapped by its own racialised position, or as Huggins and Saunders argue, by its ‘angloality’.¹

¹ This term comes from an article written by Jackie Huggins and Kay Saunders, titled ‘Defying the Ethnographic Ventriloquists: Race, Gender and the Legacies of Colonialism’. It is used by the two women to describe white women’s racialised position. According to Huggins and Saunders, when white women write history, they often fail to see the power and privilege they possess as white writers and creators of history. In other words, they are trapped by what Huggins and Saunders term their ‘angloality’ and as a result fail to see not just their own race positioning but that of their historical subjects. (Huggins & Saunders 1993)

‘While labouring to reduce andro-centrism in the historical record’, Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans point out, white feminists ‘tended to blink at the prevalence of Anglo-centrism’. (Saunders & Evans 1992: 3) As a consequence only sporadic attention has been given to white women’s role in the colonial project of expansion and colonial rhetoric. Race as a difference, as Aileen Moreton-Robinson has argued, ‘still belong only to women who are not white’. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 110)

This chapter aims to explore the path women’s history has taken over the past thirty years, and where it currently stands today. Particular emphasis will be placed on what has, or more specifically, what has not, been written about white colonial settler women as racialised beings, thereby highlighting some of the pressing concerns informing my own analytical approach and addressing the need to advance existing feminist historiography and scholarship beyond its ‘angloality’ limits. Looking back at what Grimshaw predicted over twenty years ago when she argued that a history of women promised ‘a clearer vision of the history of humankind’, some now question, myself included, whether this vision has continued to be coloured by the refusal of many white feminist historians to locate not just their own whiteness but their subject’s whiteness as well. (Grimshaw 1985: 55) Naming white women as agents rather than victims undoubtedly creates anxiety amongst some feminist scholars. But, as this thesis will show, if we choose to ignore both our own, and our subject’s racialised positioning, we fail to see the racial privileges and power colonial women possessed by virtue of their whiteness. (Haggis 1990)

It is now widely acknowledged that conventional academic history in Australia, from the mainstream traditional history to the radical nationalist tradition, concentrated on the public, the powerful, the ‘movers and shakers’, on governments and great events – in short, on men. It celebrated white male achievement, from prime ministers and governors, to shearers and convicts and defined an Australian character within this framework. The story of Australia was a phallogentric one. Few women featured in these histories and if they did, they represented the token woman.² History came to us, as Grimshaw stated, via ‘the lens of men’s observations; refracted ...through values which consider[ed] man the measure.’ (Grimshaw 1985: 35) These observations rarely extended to the private or the personal and as such, women as actors and agents were assigned minor roles, out of sight and effectively out of mind.³ By the early 1970s it was clear to feminist scholars that there existed only a meagre tradition of Australian women’s history. Anne Summers pointed out in her groundbreaking book *Damned Whores and God’s Police*, published in 1975, for example, that most Australian history works were so self-assuredly preoccupied with men’s activities, that to read them was to be ‘lulled’ into falsely assuming that women did not exist. (Summers 1975)

² See for example, W. K. Hancock’s *Australia*, (1964), Manning Clark’s, *A Short History of Australia* (1963) and Russell Ward’s *The Australian Legend*. (1958) All three major historical publications either left out women all together or made only passing reference to the token woman.

³ Grimshaw noted in 1986 that ‘women not only figured slightly in Australian history, but in the colonial period were seen as influential by virtue of their absence.’ (1986: 181)

To remedy this distortion and to show that women did indeed exist, feminist scholars in Australia mounted a challenge to both mainstream national history and the 'radical nationalist tradition'. To quote Ann Curthoys and John Docker, 'they wanted to shake history by the shoulders'. (Curthoys & Docker 2006:163) But how much shaking did they do and was it enough to unsettle the androcentric historical traditions that had dominated for so long? While feminist historians began to reassess the image of women in Australian history, bringing the private into focus, making women the leading actors, and adding women to the historical mix, this new recovery approach, more often than not, was criticised for failing to escape the very paradigms it was endeavouring to challenge – histories based upon male constructs. The work of Miriam Dixson and Anne Summers, for example, was criticised for its failure to question evidence written by male soldiers and government officials and its representation of women as passive victims. (Summers 1975; Dixson 1976) As a result, both writers tended to subsume their women subjects within a unique social and regional homogenous group, not only ignoring any differences which existed between women but also failing to recognise that Australia was part of a wider colonial experience. ⁴ Indeed, this failing occurred despite earlier warnings by American scholar, Mary Beard, who had argued as early as 1946, that women were not the subjugated victims many believed them to be but 'a powerful factor in... infamies, tyrannies, liberties [and] activities.'(Beard 1976: 282) They had, according to Beard, been active

⁴ Marilyn Lake and Patricia Grimshaw, to name two, are among those who have criticised Dixson's and Summer's earlier work.

participants in many of the world's conflicts. Beard's statements, however, according to Curthoys, proved to be 'seriously out of tune with the mood of female discontent and the new feminist polices that emerged in the late 1960s.'(Curthoys & Docker 2006: 161) Suffice to say, any claim that women may have been complicit agents in the colonisation of the Aboriginal peoples did not fit well with the then popular notions of white female oppression.

Gerna Lerner, another American scholar, was to later heed Beard's advice and in 1975 urged feminist historians to turn their attention away from a framework which centred oppression, and therefore the actions of men, towards an inquiry which highlighted the agency of women within their separate sphere. (Curthoys & Docker 2006) Part of this project involved incorporating gender into the historic analysis. Such an approach, it was argued, would not only centre women's experience but also provide, as Jill Matthews claimed in 1986, a 'space for their self-definition'. (Matthews 1986: 148) Indeed, Matthews saw the change from 'women's history' to 'feminist history' as a political move, believing that it would:

challenge the practices of historical discipline that have belittled and oppressed women, and to create practices that allow women autonomy. (Matthews 1986: 148)⁵

⁵ Matthews saw a very real distinction between 'women's history' and 'feminist history', arguing: 'To put it simply: women's history is that which seeks to add women to the traditional concerns of historical investigation and writing; feminist history is that which seeks to change
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Unarguably, gender became an important analytical tool for understanding power relations; particularly the developing notion that femininity and masculinity were socially constructed and evolving ideals. While Australian history started to look quite different with the application of gender as an analytical tool, there continued to be problems with the representation of white women, or more specifically, with their non-representation, as colonial agents. The political, it would seem, did not extend quite far enough to questions of race. Indeed, despite Pat O'Shane claiming in 1976 that 'sexist attitudes did not wipe out whole tribes of our people...racism did,' many white feminist historians continued to ignore race and difference within their studies, focussing instead upon the complex and often contradictory nature of white women's role within a patriarchal society.(O'Shane 1976: 33)⁶ Socialist feminists, for example, continued to emphasise that a class-based analysis would best represent the subjugation of women within a capitalist society, whilst radical feminists opted for an analysis based on sexual politics and patriarchy. Both schools of thought were highly critical of the other, with radical feminists believing that an analysis based solely on class neglected notions of patriarchal relations and did not adequately understand women's experience within the context of the time that they lived while socialist feminists argued that an analysis based solely upon gender failed to consider

the very nature of traditional history by incorporating gender into historical analysis and understanding.'(Matthews 1986: 148)

⁶ Pat O'Shane is an activist for Indigenous rights. She was the first Aboriginal to be appointed an Australian barrister in 1976 and the first Aboriginal woman to become a permanent head of ministry, Head of Aboriginal Affairs, in 1981. (O'Shane 1987)

the predominantly bourgeois nature of feminism in the late nineteenth century.

Whatever the position taken a number of 'woman-centred' texts were written during this time, with many continuing to adopt a positive evaluation of their female subject.⁷ Although Jill Matthews reflected upon this period of feminist historiography as an 'apocalyptic vision' which had gone 'beyond the fact-grubbing that hid and made mute the women of the past', there remained a very real reluctance by white feminist historians to look beyond the one-dimensional class or gender analysis. (Matthews 1986: 50)

In Great Britain several feminist historians had identified a similar flaw in British feminist history of the 1980s and, with the application of an analysis that located race and imperial politics at its core, undertook a re-evaluation of the existing imperial histories and a reconstruction of the new. Clare Midgley, for example, claimed that although:

⁷ One such example was Susan Magarey's 1985 biography of Catherine Helen Spence titled *Unbridling the Tongues of Women*. The aim of Magarey's work was to highlight Spence as a remarkable woman whom feminists of today owe a tribute to. Fore-grounded against a backdrop of her many achievements, Spence was portrayed as the 'progressive, 'independent' and 'assertive' woman 'whose growth on mind, body and soul was reflected in the colony'. (Hancock 2001: 18) Magarey's book offered new information on Spence – a woman who had been well known within her lifetime but somewhat forgotten after her death. An analysis based on gender in particular offered an important new angle for Magarey. Spence's many narratives, including an autobiography, articles and letters, were re-evaluated, their value measured not by previous canonical definitions but by their cultural significance to the history of South Australia. However, Spence as a colonial white agent was never explored. See my Honours thesis and article on Spence for further information. (2001, 2003)

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Such studies were valuable in that they drew attention to the important roles played by women in imperial contexts, and highlighted the value of studying the social and cultural as well as the political and economic dimensions of imperialism...they were marred by over-identification with their subjects. (Midgley 2001: 91)

Midgley thus argued for white women's role in shaping colonial societies to be more fully explored, not just along lines of gender and class but also within the framework of 'complicity' and 'resistance'. She maintained that feminist historians needed to treat both the coloniser and the colonised as gendered subjects and to recognise that imperialism was equally shaped by gender as well as by class and race.

Indeed, Midgley stressed the need to recognise how nineteenth century white British women promoted colonialism and contributed to colonial discourse as instances of self-assertion and negotiation. She thus acknowledged the importance of utilising post-colonial analysis as a theoretical tool in deconstructing colonial societies. In other influential British works, Catherine Hall similarly argued that the study of western women and imperialism was critical to any history of empire. (Hall 1994, 1995) For Hall this study involved a historical interrogation of race and the construction of white identities. According to Hall, such an interrogation not only helped to identify 'those traces of former imperial identities which survive in the present' but also challenged 'contemporary forms and discourses which perpetrate such practices'. (Hall 1995: 49) Among other British scholars to bring a greater focus to the way the imperial experience was shaped by white women, and

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white women shaped by Empire, were Vron Ware, Penny Tinkler and Antoinette Burton. (Burton 1992; Ware 1992; Tinkler 1998) All three women questioned the construction of women's identity within the nineteenth and twentieth century imperial context, particularly white women's role in the 'civilising mission' in imperial and colonial societies.

In Australia, however, this history of exclusion and silence, and of white women in the colonial setting as racialised identities, has appeared to hover nervously on the margins of feminist history, receiving only scattered attention from a few feminist historians. This is despite the awareness Jackie Huggins, Kay Saunders, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Ann Curthoys and Patricia Grimshaw have raised in regards to representing the agency of white women in the colonial process. Jackie Huggins and Kay Saunders, for example, have identified that:

Whilst it has taken historians such as Charles Rowley, Raymond Evans, Henry Reynolds, Lyndall Ryan and Jan Crichton much effort to address the collective amnesia about the realities and legacies of the frontier, the implications of these endeavours have seemingly been ignored by many feminist historians. (Huggins & Saunders 1993: 63)

Ann Curthoys has also argued:

The key dilemma for Australian feminist historians remains the gap between their endeavours and the writing of the history of colonial conflict between the indigenous and incoming peoples. (Curthoys 1993: 172)

Patricia Grimshaw has likewise summarised:

A white feminist historian has recently pointed to the distinctiveness in Australia of the historiographical traditions of gender, on the one hand, and colonial race relations on the other. As a result she discerned a tendency among feminist scholars to forget activist colonial women's own search for national identity, their complicity in desires for an all-white racist pure Australia. (Grimshaw 1996: 4)

Why have feminists in Australia 'lagged' behind their American and British counterparts and failed to investigate white women as signifiers and agents of colonialism? Kay Saunders has argued that unlike in the United States, where race and gender politics have historically been intimately linked, gender politics in Australia has followed a more separate path and has tended to focus on the white middle-class educated woman rather than address non-English speaking and Aboriginal women's rights. (Huggins & Saunders 1993) An inability to alter its 'conceptual paradigm' has, according to both Huggins and Saunders, hampered the feminist agenda in Australia. For feminist historiography this had meant that many feminist historians have neglected to investigate the 'angloality' of their white female subjects. In short, they have been accused of being 'far too kind' to their female historical subject and have either ignored or 'glossed' over significant elements of political behaviour. (Huggins & Saunders 1993) They have also failed, as Huggins has pointed out, to locate their own political and racialised position as creators of history. By beginning to understand one's own 'ethnocentric presumptions', Huggins claims, white feminists are better able to see the different faces of colonisation

and can move away from the stereotyping and ‘unwitting’ racism which has inflected much of their writing.⁸

‘Little real interchange’ between post-colonialism and feminism has thus meant, according to Curthoys, and I would agree, ‘a history of gender conflict located wholly within non-Aboriginal Australian society rather than a gendered history of colonial contact and conflict’. (Curthoys 1993: 172-73) Indeed, Curthoys further contends that white Australian feminists ‘have extreme difficulty in placing themselves on the side of the oppressors rather than the oppressed’ despite the continued publication of challenging Aboriginal historical narratives that have endeavoured, through autobiographical writings, oral histories, and story telling, to show that there were many sides to settlement stories. (Curthoys 1993: 172-73) Sally Morgan’s *My Place*, published in 1987, Ruby Langford Ginibi’s *Don’t Take Your Love To Town*, published in 1988 and Jackie Huggins’, *Auntie Rita* published in 1994 and her more recent *Sister Girl* published in 1998, (to list a few) have all highlighted the experiences of Aboriginal people in a colonised land and have underscored the racism operating as a dominant theme in Australian history. Their recounting of life-stories and histories of invasion, white aggression, resistance

⁸ In saying this Huggins also cautions white feminist historians against ‘taking advantage of their privileged speaking positions to construct a sociological external version of Aboriginal ‘reality’, arguing that ‘one may not rewrite the other’s world or impose upon it a conceptual framework which derives from one’s own.’(Huggins & Saunders 1993: 66)

and survival, have both challenged and critiqued the nature and content of Australia's settlement story over recent years, however, despite such 'telling stories' many feminist historians have continued to keep their white settler women unquestionably white and innocent, 'ahistorical beings', to quote Kay Saunders, who have been 'summoned and uncritically employed.' (Huggins & Saunders 1993: 72)

The studies of Aileen Moreton-Robinson have further illuminated these problems by underlining the tension, 'racial superiority and cruelty' which pervaded many relationships between white colonial women and Indigenous women. (Moreton-Robinson 2000) Moreton-Robinson's assertion that white historians continue to represent their historical white subjects as 'disembodied, disembedded and dominant subjects in their relations with Indigenous women,' has kept the realities of history at arms length. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 28) She therefore highlights the need to theorise the involvement of British settler women in imperialism and colonialism, thereby recognising their agency within systems of white control and supremacy. This much-needed analysis requires, as Moreton-Robinson points out, white feminists to grasp the hierarchical raced construction of not just their subject's femininity but their own as well - a challenge this thesis seeks to heed and confront so that 'the invisibility of unspeakable things' that Moreton-Robinson alludes to, are finally spoken. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 186)

The task of re-representing settler women as members of the colonising group, as outlined by Moreton-Robinson, Huggins, Saunders, Curthoys and

Grimshaw, is germane to this study of Ellen Liston, Sarah Jane Doudy and Myrtle Rose White. Ellen Liston, for example, has been publicly remembered, and formally recognised, for her contribution to colonial society, specifically to the rural community of Elliston.⁹ But what happens when Liston's agency within colonial systems of white control and supremacy is theorised, as Huggins and Moreton-Robinson suggests? Does Myrtle Rose White, the once acclaimed author of 'classic outback' novels, retain the image of a 'cheerful' writer, as she was labelled, when the appropriative nature of her writing is highlighted? And when we apply Grimshaw's research on the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the racialised position of its white members, to Jane Sarah Doudy, does this then alter the way her activism is viewed? Such questions can only be answered, if we are to heed Moreton-Robinson's advice, by understanding the colonising practices that influenced, and in turn, were influenced by, all three women.

So where to from here? How do we draw attention to the racialised positioning of colonial settler woman without seeming to 'muddle historical understanding' and create, rather than remove, binary oppositions as Marilyn Lake suggests will happen if postcolonial preoccupations, such as the historical construction of whiteness and white women's role in the colonial project, informs feminist scholarship? (Lake 2001) Indeed, as Lake argues 'the desire to demonise white feminists is an explicable post-colonial impulse, but hardly

⁹ This commemorative public remembrance will be outlined in the chapter 'There is always a note of striving'.

does justice to the historical subjects in question'. (Lake 2001: 339) Although Lake tempers this by stating that new postcolonial questions may also enhance historical understanding, it is clear that critical 'race-consciousness' creates a certain amount of anxiety. Lake thus believes the challenge is to not just 'register 'race' as 'difference', but to keep sight of the power relations – national and international - in which racialised identities are formed and given meaning. (Lake 2001: 342)

Tanya Dalziell has likewise perceptively cautioned against simply enforcing a feminist post-colonial analysis that creates a binary of complicity or resistance, claiming that such a model ultimately becomes unstable and unproductive. (Dalziell 2004) Dalziell argues, for example, that such a binary model:

At best...points out how disciplinary pressures shape contemporary analyses of historical subjects and their relations. At worst...promises to schematise these complex relations and gloss over the operations by which not-so-systematic class, gender and racial categories intersect to establish, sustain and challenge colonial endeavours. (Dalziell 2004: 82)

Dalziell thus maintains that 'questions of complicity and resistance are especially complex' (2004: 83) and do not adequately explore the contradictory positioning of the settler woman, a position that Ella Shohat claims, 'simultaneously constitutes "centre" and "periphery", identity and alterity'.

(Shohat 1991:11)¹⁰ The immediate answer, according to Dalziell, is a post-binary approach that illustrates how settler women could both comply with, and resist, colonial systems of power. Dalziell's move away from the either/or binary model is extended by Sue Kossew's suggestion that colonising women occupied an 'unsettled' position within the politics of colonisation, and therefore needs to be understood within the 'problematic relationships' that occurred between 'settler/white woman, land, indigeneity and identity'. (Kossew 2004: 10) Such 'links between land, gender, identity and indigeneity', as Kossew contends, 'are of increasing significance in settler cultures' and must therefore be investigated if the subject positioning of white women living at 'the margins of Empire' are to be fully understood and represented. (Kossew 2004: 10) Indeed, Kossew also highlights that the terms 'pioneer woman', 'colonising woman', 'settler-invader woman' and 'white woman' do not entirely capture the 'complexity and instability' of colonial women's identity. She suggests instead that the 'problematic' terms 'unsettled woman' or 'unsettling woman' be used, believing that they better represent the 'complicated axes of power and position, of opposition and complicity' that white women in colonial society occupied. (Kossew 2004: 10) While I believe the terms 'pioneer woman', 'colonising woman' and 'white woman' may not capture the complex and sometimes ambiguous position of white colonial women, as Kossew contents, they will be used throughout this thesis when

¹⁰ By this Shohat means that white women were both colonised by white men whilst simultaneously being colonisers themselves and sharing in the power that came with colonisation.

representing Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian women. To alleviate some of the problems that these terms may create, however, and to better represent these white settler women's 'complex cultural' positioning, they will be located within an interlocking theoretical framework that includes notions of gender, land, identity and indigeneity, as suggested by Kossew. Applying such an approach to Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Douidy and Myrtle Rose White will extend our understanding of how and why they resisted, complied and even created forms of colonial domination. Thus while this thesis recognises that these women occupied 'unsettled' positions, it also acknowledges that as white women they were neither neutral nor innocent inhabitants of the colonial space. Indeed Victoria Haskins' point that 'white women of the past were not born such, but became white women through their acts' is, I believe, an illuminating statement to consider when focusing on white women writer's engagement with colonial and racial politics. (Haskins 2006) It allows us to consider, as Haskins intended, 'those acts performed by women that enabled them to identify as white women and regulate their behaviour, as white women,' thus extending the subject position of the three women writers under review. (Haskins 2006)

To emphasise this point this thesis will draw upon the assertion that the story of white women's involvement in the construction of the nation was not as remote from 'colonial dispossession or from considerations of race in late nineteenth century Australia' as some may assume. (Grimshaw 1995: 41) Many middle-class white women, according to Grimshaw, were active participants in 'attempting to insert a woman's narrative into a developing

image of what the nation was, or wanted to become'. (Grimshaw 1995: 41)

This national narrative, according to Grimshaw, was specifically for white Anglo-Australians – Aboriginal women and men's lives existed outside the national image being formulated. Her later work on The Women's Christian Temperance Union was particularly critical of middle class white women's role in securing the vote for women. (Grimshaw 1998, 1999) Despite the obvious impoverished and marginalised position of Aboriginal women during this time, white women activists, according to Grimshaw, ignored their plight, instead focussing on their own rights to political, social and economic equality. Grimshaw elaborates by stating:

the women and men who became protagonists for women's suffrage made their case for equality and justice for the female sex in societies immersed in negative constructions of indigenous peoples of both sexes. (Grimshaw 1999: 31)

Fiona Paisley's work on Australian feminism and Aboriginal Women's Rights during the 1920s and 30s, follows a similar line of inquiry and likewise does not 'shy away' from issues of white women's complicity and resistance. (Paisley, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2005) While Paisley's account of white women activists during this time leans towards the sympathetic, it nevertheless foregrounds instances of complicity. For example, while highlighting the resistance such women as Mary Bennett, Bessie Rischbieth, Constance Cooke and Edith Jones, showed towards the Aboriginal child removal policy and their cry for greater recognition of the value of Aboriginal culture, Paisley also represents their ethnocentric presumption to speak for Aboriginal women

rather than with them and their endorsement of an agenda which sought to reform Aboriginal families through greater surveillance. Allison Holland's research has similarly shown that the feminist activism during these two decades supported an ideology of white women's authority and was framed within a discourse of race. (Holland 1995, 2005) Both studies emphasise the complexities involved in recovering and re-representing white women's complicity and resistance in settler colonialism and reinforces Gillian Whitlock's claim that the female subject 'is a site of difference'. (Whitlock 1985: 242) And, it is within this site, as Whitlock points out, that 'women at different moments in history have been both oppressed and oppressive, submissive and subversive, victim and agent, allies and enemies both of men and of one another'. (Whitlock 1985: 242)

Undoubtedly therefore, white settler women can no longer be represented as powerless victims, as the 'done to' rather than the 'doer'. (Gallagher & Ryan 2001: 3-4) While this thesis will draw upon the methodology of women's history, in that it aims to recover missing women and reinstate them as historical subjects, it will not be a simply recuperation exercise. Instead it seeks to create a more balanced and inclusive account of white woman and colonial relations by locating the racial privileges and authority colonial women possessed and the acts they performed that empowered them 'to identify as white women'. (Haskins 2006) White women's words, when read through such lenses, take on new meaning and are seen to function within ideologically and politically motivated agendas. The following chapter will

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show how feminist literary history in Australia has been an important part of the critical countermovement.

‘Powerful Contributors’: White colonial women as authors of colonialism.

Their writing brings to the fore the ‘less defined cadences’ of postcolonialism: politically flawed texts which rest uncomfortably on the cusp of coloniality, writings which work with rather than against European models, and feature difficult and sometimes ambiguous engagements with a history of invasion and dispossession. (Sheridan 1995: 45)

In conjunction with the rise of feminist historiography the list of Australian women writers has grown remarkably over the past thirty years, their stories re-discovered and re-recognised under the direction of feminist literary scholarship. No longer hampered by the weight of a narrow literary tradition, many nineteenth and twentieth century women writers have attracted revisionist interest. Paths once blocked have been opened and new ones created, adding significant departures in Australia’s literary history. What was once considered mundane and unimportant, patronised for its feminine content, is now awarded recognition for its contribution to the ‘complicated history of the evolution, production and maintenance of culture in Australia’. (Hooton 1990b: 310) Sentimental fiction, family histories, women’s life-stories - works once dismissed, are now seen as cultural artefacts, as sites of significant agency, which illustrate the power of women’s ‘own voices’. Unarguable, women’s literature has proven to be ‘profoundly revealing’. (Hooton 1990b)

This chapter will briefly explore the ‘coming out’ of women’s literature in Australia since the 1970s. It will highlight how feminist literary scholars have

challenged traditional studies of literature by creating new forms of interpretation and appreciation of recovered and forgotten stories. The recognition of a much broader selection of writing than previously acknowledged lies at the core of these projects. Life-stories, diaries, letters and memoirs, for example, forms of writing once considered outside the realm of the orthodox are now incorporated into literary research and valued for their 'highly artful' mode. Australia's cultural history has been given new life with the expansion of this literary investigation, in part due to the suggestion that white women writers were 'influential mythmakers' and historians who shaped foundational stories of possession, conquest, belonging and nation building. Indeed, the interpretation of settler women's narratives as historical sites has provided alternative images of frontier nationalism and revealed new insights into structures of white power, privilege and control, the implication of which will inform this thesis.

Before continuing, it is important to emphasise that this chapter focuses on research done on white middle class women writers only. The reason for this is simple. While there has been a growing awareness of the importance of reviewing Indigenous and ethnic women's literary works, this thesis does not seek to address this area of literary history. In order to interrogate Ellen Liston, Myrtle Rose White and Jane Sarah Douady to the extent needed for this particular study I need to analyse them within a specifically defined framework. This framework will become more evident as the chapter unfolds and investigates the work of other feminist literary scholars who have likewise

undertaken studies of white colonial women. By the end it will become clear how and why their work will influence my own study.

American scholar, Kate McCullough, succinctly pointed out in 1999 that:

At best, we have been trained to see the work of various women writers as marginal, as unrelated to each other, and as unrelated to the construction of a national literary tradition, while at worst; we have been trained not to see such texts at all. (McCullough 1999: 4)

‘Trained not see such texts at all’ had meant that thousands of women’s narratives have received little or no attention. In Australia, as in many other parts of the western world, the road to acceptance within the literary canon has, until the last three decades, been blocked to hundreds of women writers.¹ Not just rendered invisible within the annals of human history in general, women have suffered relegation and invisibility within literary history as well. Their stories receiving little or no acclaim, more often than not overlooked because of their feminine content. Indeed, M. Barnard Eldershaw argued in 1938 that women writers were judged differently than male writers because they could not be dissociated from their ‘sex’. As she claimed:

The scores are kept differently. Out of chivalry perhaps, an individual women’s failures are charged not against herself but against her sex. She is a

¹ By this I mean that women’s literary works were excluded from the canon of texts which were considered influential in shaping Australian culture.

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bad novelist because she is a woman. A man's failure he must bear himself. A woman in the world is a sort of collective noun; a man remains an individual. (Eldershaw 1938: 2)

Throughout history therefore women's writing has been received far differently than writing produced by men. Against an androcentric literary canonical backdrop, which promoted the political, rather than the personal and the public rather than the domestic, novels written by women were destined to receive little or no recognition. Nina Baym pointed this male bias out when she argued:

Women's experiences...seems to be outside the interests and sympathies of the male critics whose judgements have largely determined the canon of classic American literature...they ... have inevitably had a bias in favour of things male – in favour, say, of whaling ships, rather than sewing circles as a symbol of human community; in favour of satires on domineering mothers, shrewish wives, or betraying mistresses rather than tyrannical fathers, abusive husbands, or philandering suitors; displaying an exquisite compassion for the crisis of the adolescent male, but altogether impatient with the parallel crisis of the female. (Baym 1978: 14)

Trivialised, their content overlooked as mundane, domestic, and of little importance, hundreds of literary works written by women have been dismissed by the male literary critics of their time. The home and hearth, and love and marriage, were topics considered marginal to the 'Great Literary Tradition', hence explaining why Ellen Liston's, Jane Sarah Douidy's and Myrtle Rose White's narratives have received little or no recognition and attention within Australia's literary scene.

The label 'woman writer', however, has undergone significant re-evaluation and redefinition since the 1970s. Feminist literary critics around the world have reformulated literary categories and situated those fictions once deemed as 'sentimental trivia' to the forefront of academic research. A 'female tradition' has been developed which underlined the creativity of women's writing and emphasised that women writers 'were there'.²

Part of this cultural countermovement towards exposing the male categorisation of 'sentimental fiction' as a misplaced judgement, has involved locating the cultural significance and value of the female literary endeavour, and more specifically, highlighting the significance of women's fiction as examples of empowerment and agency. As early as 1978 Nina Baym suggested that writing provided the means to influence women's role within society, specifically within their domestic arena. One way for women to achieve this, she noted, was to publish religious tracts and conversion narratives as a means of delivering a message – a sermon to the people:

² In 1977 American scholar Elaine Showalter drew attention to the absence of women in literary history in her book *A Literature of Their Own*. Aimed at questioning the notion of a single traditional literature, Showalter's book explored the diversity of literary identity by highlighting the creativity of women's writing. She used 'an all-inclusive female realism' which recognised the 'broad, socially informed exploration of the daily lives and values of women within the family and the community'. (Showalter 1978: 29) Her study of nineteenth and twentieth century English women writers was a theoretical bid to emphasise how women writers 'were there'. While her work has been criticised for ignoring the agency of the female writer and the 'heroine' within the literary works studied, it nevertheless generated new avenues of social and literary understanding.

The task of guiding souls to God is no longer restricted to those who have been ordained in the patriarchal social institution. These women's novels give the hint that the women authors envisioned themselves as lay ministers, their books as evangelical sermons that might spur conversion. (Baym 1978: 45)

Underpinning this religious endeavour, as Baym pointed out, was the author's belief in their role as 'amateur ministers'. Middle class white women writers, according to Baym, believed they had a duty to spread a message, highly moral and religious in tone, about the proper management of the domestic and social self. Baym's analysis mirrored Ann Douglas's earlier claims that a range of sentimental novels written by women should be seen as 'theological texts'.³ (Douglas 1977) Baym maintained that women often crafted their narratives with a female protagonist who, possessing divine strength, virtue, intelligence and common sense, would herald a righteous message to other characters in the story. Baym thus saw women writers as agents of Christianity, a perceptive summation important to my own study of Ellen Liston and Jane Sarah Doudy. If, for example and as Baym suggests, women authors often imbued their

³ Both scholars argued that this role needed to be understood within the context of the times, in particular within the context of the feminisation of religion. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century religion in many parts of the western world, became 'feminised' - in essence, it became more sentimental, more forgiving and was based more on one's faith in doing God's work. Religion had moved away from the formal patriarchal religious adherence to Christian teaching to one which was more domestic, more emotional and more accommodating. In short, Christ acquired a feminised form. Accompanying, and indeed, fostering such changes, was an increase in women's awareness of how Christianity could be used to open up new doors of opportunities. It must be noted, however, that it was predominantly white middle class women who benefited from the change. Although denied positions of clerical and administrative authority within church hierarchies, these women sought to stake their claim as 'Christian regenerators'. Once conferred the role, they endeavoured to increase their authority in the running of the family, society and nation at large. (Baym 1978; Douglas 1977) Carey's book *Believing in Australia: A Cultural History of Religion*, (1996) Willis' edited book *Women, Faith and Fetes* (1977) and Welter's chapter titled, 'Feminisation of American Religion, 1800-1860' (1973) all discuss the feminisation of religion during the Nineteenth Century.

writing with a strong Christian faith as a means of articulating white women's role within colonial society, by portraying their heroines as messengers of God, both Liston and Douby were not only attempting to highlight the cultural, social and political power middle class women possessed, but were also justifying the presence of these women on the colonial scene.

Baym's later work on antebellum women writers extended her earlier research and again highlighted women's intent to carve a place for themselves within the public world of nation and politics through their writing.⁴ As Baym contended:

If women were not yet to be legislators, judges, cabinet members, or presidents of the nation- if they were not even to demand the right to vote for these officers until around the middle of the nineteenth century-nevertheless their writing shows that they thought themselves as part of the nonofficial public sphere and intended to make themselves influential in forming public opinion, whether as writers or mothers of spouses or all of these. (Baym 1995: 6)

In examining how women writers helped to inform and shape American culture, Baym emphasised the dangers of imposing our own 'misguided millennial narrative'. As she argued:

⁴ Antebellum refers to before the American Civil War.

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Their writings are not like ours, and they themselves, insofar as their writings define them, are not like us. They are also far from conforming to any paradigm of sequestered, submissive, passive domesticity that we might patronisingly attempt to impose on them according to some misguided millennial narrative of our own. (Baym 1995: 233)

Baym therefore sought to analyse her female subjects within the context of the time in which they lived, cautioning that: 'their writings are not like ours...they are not like us'. (Baym 1995: 94) The focus thus moved away from questioning whether these texts were 'any good' to questioning how they functioned within the context of the culture from which they were written.⁵ Using such an approach, Baym believed, would lessen the risk of patronisingly labelling them passive victims of domesticity and would more likely recognise their agentive and influencing role within society, particularly their role as writers of history. As she stated:

Few American women were original historians in the present-day sense of combing archives for previously unknown information about the past. Still by selecting, arranging, emphasising, and commenting on the record, the many women who published historical work were clearly shaping it. In addition, great many women consciously wrote to preserve a historicised archive for the future. (Baym 1995: 92)

⁵ Jane Tompkins, for example, believed that women's texts should not necessarily be evaluated on their literary merit but on their purpose and function. (1985)

This 'archive for the future' more often than not, came in the form of foundational histories. McCullough's study of American women writers from the 'century's cusp' also brought attention to the importance of recontextualising women's narratives as 'cultural artefacts' that exposed:

the ways that the privileging of a certain gender and of certain genres help[ed] maintain the fiction of a unified national literature while also shaping both the author's production and our reception of their texts.⁶ (McCullough 1999: 4)

She called for the recognition of women's unique agentive location, a position, she believed, which was often formed by a desire to forge a narrative of America.⁷

Surveying six women authors, McCullough interrogated how both region and gender was central to women's literary works. Femininity, as McCullough pointed out, was 'central to the working out of national and regional tensions'. (McCullough 1999: 7) This 'working out', according to McCullough, was

⁶ McCullough's research was informed by the knowledge that it would impact and challenge the way feminist thought. As she asserted: 'They confronted a range of identities and issues similar to those we confront today and they, like us, imagined solutions from within the terms of discourses of their culture... Perhaps by analysing these writers' attempts we can also become more aware of the limits of our own theories and praxis, more aware of how dominant discourse constrains our formulations both of capitulation and resistance, and as a result, more aware of the need to challenge the limits of our own understanding.' (McCullough 1999: 14)

⁷ According to McCullough, the dismantling of 'generic' labels, which she saw, as having trapped women's literature, would free women's writing from its narrow confines and signify its cultural significance.

achieved through a systematic process of ‘remembering’ and ‘forgetting’ certain events in order to construct an ‘imagined’ America. Indeed, McCullough argued that the formation of a nation, or ‘national fantasy’ as she referred to it, necessitated a system of misremembering, allowing for the creation of something imagined rather than real. Another American feminist scholar, Brigitte Georgi-Findlay similarly highlighted the interrelation between white colonial women’s writing, identity-formation and the creation of the American west. (Georgi-Findlay 1996) Critical of those scholars, who had continually cast an innocent light on their female subjects, Georgi-Findlay argued that the position women writers occupied was never innocent, nor neutral but firmly located within the expansionist process. Labelling them ‘influential mythmakers’, who had asserted their own kind of cultural power and control over the Indigenous peoples and the land, she argued:

women writers...adopted many representational practices that can be identified as part of colonial discourses, using them in service of their own empowerment.(Georgi-Findlay 1996: 291)

One of the representational practices that Georgi-Findlay identified was the construction of ideal domesticity. Imagery of the home and hearth were pivotal to women’s texts, according to Georgi-Findlay, as it provided a literary means by which writers could ‘domesticate’ and measure ‘disorderly others’. She argues, for example:

The domestic can be read not only as the basis for a female countervision to male fantasies of conquest and possession, but as a fact complementary to

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them: the ideal of domesticity, read in the context of empire building, also functions as an instrument for imposing cultural and social control and order upon the 'disorderly' classes of the West. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 30)

Thus Georgi-Findlay claimed that women asserted 'Euro-American cultural claims' over other cultures by assuming and manipulating 'cultural configurations of domesticity and femininity' through a process she labelled 'dialogue of domination'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 37) By locating the 'superior' maternal and domestic position of the white woman within their text, these writers were justifying their own presence on the frontier and assuming a strategically powerful role over the Native American people. As Georgi-Findlay explained:

The ideal of domesticity, read in the context of expansionism, potentially functions as an instrument of cultural and social control and order imposed on western disorder...imperial conventions are reinforced by the creation of an innocent female subject of romantic individualism, and the projection of domestic and familial fantasies upon the western landscape - which both obscure the historical processes that led to Native American dispossession and environmental destruction'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: xii)

Hence recurrent strategies which described Native American women as slaves and drudges, as unfit house keepers and unhygienic mothers provided white women writers with a self-authorized empowerment over their 'inferior others' and allowed them a space to partake in the literature of national self-creation.

Although admitting that these women did not occupy the same space as men, nor operate within the same expansionist framework, Georgi-Findlay's approach drew attention to the ways in which these settler women left an imprint 'on cultural narratives associated with the West', her findings raising significant implications for how I read the narratives of Liston, Doudy and White. All three women, for example, were fond of incorporating scenes of ideal domesticity when depicting the self or the worthy white settler. This representation, however, did not extend to their Aboriginal acquaintances and characters, particularly Aboriginal women, who they instead castigated for inappropriate gendering, domestic inadequacy and occupancy of an 'unhomely' space. (Allen 2003) The process effectively dismantled, as Raymond Evans would say, the position of Aboriginal women:

from being co-workers of equal importance to men in the balanced use of the environment to that of thoroughly exploited beasts of burden',

and ensured that their worth:

fell from that of being valuable human resources and partners within traditional sexual relationships to that of degraded and often diseased sex objects. (Evans 1999: 204)

It was a representational approach, according to Antoinette Burton's study on middle class imperial British feminism, that enabled British women to strategically cultivate their own 'civilising responsibility' as a means of confirming a liberating role for themselves within the imperial state. (Burton

1992) As members of the colonising power, Burton argues, British women often constructed women of the East as 'poor unfortunates'. Not only did this serve to perpetrate the myth that white women were more liberated than their colonised sisters, but it also confirmed their right to be part of the colonising process. (Burton 1992) Thus, according to Burton, they were clearly appropriating a role by using empire as a 'sphere of opportunity' and constructing an identity which was inflected with race.

Acknowledging the ethnocentric foundations that underpinned white women's writing, and understanding how this writing 'repeatedly coalesce[d] around a concern over national identity [and] women's relation to it' is critical to my own exploration of these women as carriers of culture, or as Georgi-Findlay would say, as authors of colonial expansion and domination. (McCullough 1999: 5, Georgi-Findlay 1996) The studies undertaken by McCullough and Georgi-Findlay in particular, highlight the importance of exploring the connections between the articulation of the classed, gendered and raced settler subject and discourses of domesticity in women's literary works. They also draw attention to the way this prescriptive discourse, to quote Gillian Whitlock, relied upon the notion of colonial society as a 'laboratory of modernity'. (Whitlock 2000: 51) In other words, and as Whitlock suggests, the construction of the white settler identity was often dependent upon the ideal that colonial society was progressive and forward-looking, and its social structure civil, refined and cultured, thus further illuminating the links between middle class white women writers as settlers, as mythmakers and as creators of historical memories.

While an increased awareness of the value of women's writing has seen a relative plethora of women writers 'inserted' into the storehouse of literary history in Australia, there has been only a small number of Australian feminist literary historians who have sought to explore these notions. As a result, the ways in which women writers used a 'dialogue of domination' and identified themselves as white settler women within, and through, their writing has received only scattered attention during the past two decades. Scholars, such as Susan Sheridan, Elizabeth Morrison, Belinda McKay, Margaret Allen, Cheryl Taylor, Patricia Grimshaw, Rebekah Crow and Sue Kossew, however, have chosen to undertake the task of bringing both renowned and unknown women writers, among others, to the forefront of literary studies and have broadened our knowledge of white women writers from the nineteenth and twentieth century.⁸

Susan Sheridan, for example, has made invaluable inroads into how settler women's texts should be read. While some of Sheridan's earlier papers were often consistent with the recuperative style of feminist reading during the early 1980s, focusing mainly on recovering lost female voices from the past and attacking and discrediting the male literary canon existing within Australia at

⁸ Their work has not only emphasised the relative absence of women in the Australian literary canon, indeed it contested the very notion of a canon, but also forced a reassessment of those few women who had already won some form of acclaim within this canon. Since the 1970s the whole fabric of Australia's literary history has been enriched with the publication of various critical essays as well as the reprinting of numerous texts including novels by Catherine Spence, Ada Cambridge, Rosa Praed, Catherine Martin and other nineteenth century Australian writers.

the time rather than critically examining the works themselves, her later work encompassed a new awareness of Australian woman writers.⁹ Her groundbreaking book, *Along the Faultlines: Sex, Race and Nation in Australian Women's Writing, 1880s–1930s* published in 1995 offered an influential commentary on the cultural agency of women writers.¹⁰ By pursuing an approach that highlighted how the 'intricately imbricated' concepts of notions of sex, race and nation were used by women when writing about their position within society, Sheridan constructed these women, not as 'the silenced outsiders that later historians and critics rendered them', but rather as cultural agents who generated a certain degree of social power. (Sheridan 1995: iix).¹¹

⁹ Some of these earlier articles included 'Ada Cambridge and the female literary tradition' (1982), 'Temper Romantic, Bias Offensively Feminine': Australian Women Writers and Literary nationalism' (1985) and 'Gender and Genre in Barbara Baynton's *Human Toll*' (1989) to name just a few.

¹⁰ Indeed, the book was reviewed as a 'substantial, original work of literary analysis', (Carter 1996: 407) which added 'layers of density to our cultural history'. (Carter 1996: 411)

¹¹ This point was made in the introduction of Sheridan's book *Along the Faultlines* when she claimed: 'Sex', 'race' and 'nation' are all terms for highly contested ideological sites rather than names for concrete realities or even for sociological categories. They are signs or key terms produced by the dominant discourses circulating in Australia in this period around the turn of the nineteenth century – discourses in the Foucauldian sense of available ways of speaking/writing in which social power operates to produce certain objects and effects. In an important sense, none of these signs exists except as it is constructed in discourse, in various ways of writing about, of imagining, relations between men and women, between white settler culture and indigenous Australians, and the larger political entity of 'nation' within which these orders of difference operate. (Sheridan 1995: ix)

She particularly emphasised the need to see how these women worked ‘within and against’ their separate sphere. In other words, to understand that rather than be hindered by dominant ideological public and private conventions, women writers often adapted and manipulated their position to gain a greater voice:

I see them, as writers, taking possession of various positions made available to them in colonial middle-class culture – whether as ‘lady novelist’ in literary production or as ‘woman comrade’ in radical journalism – and wielding their pens with a degree of social power. (Sheridan 1995: x)

Nationalist discourse in particular, Sheridan argued, provided many women an avenue to express their aims and desires as white Australian women:

it has to be recognised that women are designated specific positions in nationalist discourse and that women writers have often used them as positions of power from which to speak. (Sheridan 1995: x)

In order to illustrate this cultural power Sheridan highlighted the often-contradictory position that these women writers occupied. She sought to identify what it meant for a woman to be not just a white Australian but also a writer in nineteenth and twentieth colonial century society. This led Sheridan

to question the role white women played in the colonial dispossession of Aboriginal peoples, as demonstrated in the following passage from her book:

While some feminists were claiming that our foremothers has remained apart from the worst depredation of colonial racism because of their lack of social power, and their affinity with other oppressed groups, my reading of historical materials and postcolonial cultural theory, and my re-reading of white women's fiction and poetry, led me to conclusions less benevolent but, I think, more interesting about the ambivalent positions they adopted in their writing. (Sheridan 1995: 121)

Sheridan's 'less benevolent' claim those white women's writers had not 'remained apart from the worst depredation of colonial racism' exposed the faultlines that were present in so many other feminist readings of women's literature in Australia at the time. (Sheridan 1995:121) However, while it was clear that Sheridan's aim to draw attention to the relative lack of race analysis in women's writing literary studies and question the image of the colonial heroine, her approach received criticism for failing to move beyond an Indigenous/white binary. Damien Barlow, for example, was critical of Sheridan's particular 'mobilisation of race as a category' as it prevented her 'from analysing representations of other races and assume[d] a unified whiteness'. (Barlow 1999: 802) He also contended that her study of white women writers acted to reinforce the white feminist subject as the main actor, a result which proved to be counterproductive considering Sheridan's aim was to move towards a new 'community that might be truly postcolonial'. (Sheridan

1995: 169) Despite such criticism, Sheridan's work nevertheless highlighted that female narratives were to be valued as 'cultural capital'.

Margaret Allen is another feminist literary historian whose work on white women writers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century similarly represented a shift in the way colonial women's narrations could be read and whose work, like Sheridan's, will inform much of this thesis. Allen's approach included investigating the woman behind the writer – the wife, the sister, the daughter, the colonist and the subjective observer of society. (Allen 1987, 1991, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005) Her investigation of Matilda Evans' life-story and literary works, for example, revealed a number of the complex issues that affected many women from the nineteenth and early twentieth century through a framework that included an analysis based upon the important ideological constructs of gender, race, class and nation. Her research exemplified the importance of reading such texts as windows through which one could view a particular time and place without being confined by previous categorisations of women's writing. This was clearly shown in the way Allen positioned Evans not just as a middle class woman but as a *white* middle class settler woman within colonial society. Allen's refusal to place Evans within a hagiographical framework of 'settler heroine' meant that Evans' role within colonial society, particularly her attitude towards, and literary representation of, Indigenous peoples, was more fully scrutinised as an important site of investigation. By taking such an approach Allen demonstrated how colonising women narratives were imbued with prescriptive ideas on race, femininity, masculinity and progress. They created foundational myths, according to

Allen, which promoted ideas of *terra nullius* and legitimated the settler presence, as the following extract from Allen's article 'Homely stories and the ideological work of 'Terra Nullius' argues:

The body of literature Evans produced represents a homely, familiar South Australian landscape and its ideal colonists... Within Evans' texts, belonging is evaluated according to the criteria of middle-class domesticity. By these benchmarks, the presence of the Indigenous people in South Australia is contested and their rights of belonging are denied. Evans' works, far from being trivial, are seen as performing the ideological work of 'Terra Nullius'.
(Allen 2003:106)

Allen's multidimensional analysis clearly negated the claim that such literary works were only ever 'sentimental fiction' by highlighting the complexities and contradictions present within women's writing. It also raised important questions about power relations within these texts which had been previously glossed over. Her analysis, like Sheridan's, exemplified that categorising and labelling women's works within a hierarchy of literary value was not as important as identifying and understanding discourses of power and race within these works, an understanding germane to my own study.

Rebekah Crow's study of writer Mary Crowle reinforced this re/presentation of colonial women writer's narratives. Crow, too examined how ideas of race permeated Crowle's stories in ways that subsumed Aboriginal people under an umbrella of primitivism and reinforced notions of racial evolution. (Crow 2002) In a similar vein, Cheryl Taylor's work on the Australian writer,

Elizabeth O'Conner, explored how 'conservative values of the frontier' were ideologically implemented within O'Conner's narratives. (Taylor 2003: 20) Fundamental to O'Conner's stories, according to Taylor, was the assumption of Aboriginal inferiority and the denial of 'autonomy, dignity, and power inherent in indigenous culture'. (Taylor 2003: 32)

Accompanying such rethinking, and as a response aimed at preventing colonial women's writers from being represented just as complicit agents of colonisation, came the suggestion that many white women's stories also offered 'alternative insights' which acted to contest, rather than to comply with, the dominant colonial discourse. Patricia Grimshaw and Julie Evans, for example, pointed to the value of reading romantic and domestic fiction as sites that revealed different information about the colonial enterprise. They argued that many settler women writers, in this case Rosa Campbell Praed, Mary Bundock and Katie Langloh Parker, 'challenged accepted wisdom to affirm aspects of Aboriginal lives and cultures, while questioning white behaviour and practice' (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 79) They sought to examine how and why Praed, Bundock and Parker attempted to write about Aboriginal culture, particularly owing to the fact that such an exercise was usually dominated by male travellers, colonial officials and anthropologists. While they admitted that these women 'sustained and reinforced a prevailing culture of colonisation' Grimshaw and Evans nevertheless noted points of departure within their writing which sometimes provided an alternative tale as the following passage from their work asserted (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 81):

In a context of highly racist, negative contemporary representations of Aboriginal people, these white women offered fragmentary alternative readings that contested aspects of the dominant colonial discourse and presented Aboriginal women's lives in less negative ways. Their projects render perceptible the influence of Aborigines themselves on white cultural production, as well as Aboriginal resistances to cultural domination. (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 81)

Understanding white cultural production within women's writing within this instance was thus seen as a means of revealing different information about how women contested the 'dominant colonial discourse'. Grimshaw and Evans' claimed that settler women writings 'offered glimpses of the multifarious nature of the impact of settler colonisation on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people' and provided yet another variant on the notion of the woman writer as a settler woman, or as Sue Kossew might say, as an 'unsettling' white woman. (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 95; Kossew 2004) While their findings demanded that white women's literary works be examined for signs of resistance, as indeed they should, the danger, as Belinda McKay has pointed out, however, is that the figure of the sympathetic white woman, or 'trope of benevolence', continues to overshadow the figure of the complicit white woman. (McKay 1999, 2001, 2004) Belinda McKay, while commending the work of Evans and Grimshaw, has been more critical of narratives written by writers such as Rosa Praed and others.¹² For McKay, these writers positioned themselves firmly

¹² McKay has written on Queensland women writers in particular, questioning and examining the whiteness that informed much of their writing. See her articles 'The One Jarring Note: *Janette Hancock*

within the contact zone as complicit agents in the expansionist process. In other words, they acted within a system of 'power and knowledge' and were powerful contributors to the 'literary imaginative landscape through which Australian readers came to "know" Indigenous people'. (McKay 2004: 68) Whereas Evans and Grimshaw highlighted the humanist approach adopted by their female subjects, McKay saw them as 'authors and agents' of colonialism who had been:

active participants in the ongoing colonial projects of subjugating Indigenous people and managing public perceptions of that process. The appropriation of race issues by white women writers is an indicator ...of the credibility with the white Australian public of their claims to be knowledgeable interpreters of the contact zone. (McKay 2004: 68)

McKay's assertions draws attention to the ways settler women wrote to exculpate the white colonists. Her claim that their writing 'pitted civilisation against savagery' as an explicit means to justify the colonial project and control 'representations of the contact zone' is of particular relevance to my own study, highlighting as it does, colonial women writers' role in shaping foundational stories along an exclusionist path. (McKay 2004: 56-57)

Perhaps one of the most important aspects that these studies illuminated, particularly for my own reading and positioning of Liston, Doudy and White,

Race and Gender in Queensland Women's Writing (2001), 'Writing from the Contact Zone': Fiction by Early Queensland Women (2004) for further details.

was the proposal that many women's narratives constitute important forms of historical production. Baym, for example, has pointed out that sentimental novels were often thick with historical content because women writers wanted to 'bring civic understanding to the home', educating and enlightening women readers. (Baym 1995: 11) She elaborates by claiming:

Part of the job of the ...historian is to bring out the event's significance by welding the event to its historical meaning. There is no mistaking the gusto and passion with which women did this work. Assuming the historian's responsibility was, clearly, an exhilarating experience. (Baym 1995: 94)

Similarly, Mary Spongberg's more recent claim that women writers 'skilfully manipulated' the historical genre, 'often developing innovative methodologies' which allowed 'a woman-centred perspective' further extends the notion of women writers as creators of historical memory. (Spongberg 2002: 7) According to Spongberg, women were masters of feminising the history genre, successfully challenging misogynist representations by domesticating the national story. They did this by gendering the notion of patriotism within their writing, demonstrating their love of country and their moral rights, as mothers, daughters and wives, to help engineer their nation's growth, progress and identity. This was accomplished by merging romantic fiction with history of political polemic. Such language of patriotism, as asserted by Spongberg, enabled women writers to gain an implicit public voice and extend their rights as women as she perceptively points out:

Women historians influenced by first-wave feminism used history not only to highlight women's oppression, but to challenge the idea that women were only domestic beings; to force the lives of 'great women' into the popular imagination and to record their own struggles to gain greater political equality. (Spongberg 2002: 131)

Women's fictional narratives were thus seen as extending the realm of historical production by recording information often left out of those histories recorded by men. They provided both implicit and explicit comment on the running of the nation and demonstrated that 'world historical man was not the only actor in the human drama'. (Boutilier 1997: 58) Hence the reason, as Spongberg argued, for women to be recognised as writers of history whose work helped to shape and influence their respective societies. Their 'transgressive desire to domesticate the boundaries of traditional history', as Spongberg outlined, has created a world of new interpretative possibilities for scholars of women writers, allowing for narratives once labelled sentimental or romantic fiction to be reconfigured as important political and historical works. (Spongberg 2002: 125) Without such theorising, my own analysis of Liston's, Doudy's and White's literary works as foundational histories would not be possible.

While a lot of study has tended to focus on the novel there has also been a significant shift towards an appreciation of other genres such as autobiography and memoirs. Among the works of the three writers studied here there are a number of works which can be seen as autobiographical, a literary area feminist researchers have successfully shown to be 'a powerful reflector of the quality and variety of the past lives of Australian women'. (Hooton 1990: xi) Joy Hooton's re-valuation and re-positioning of many 'lost' women's autobiographies has pointed to their importance in terms of the

alternative tale they tell. (Hooton 1990a, 1990b) Although admitting that many early autobiographies written by women were a byproduct of an androcentric 'pioneering culture' Hooton claims that they soon established themselves as an 'alternative tradition'. (Hooton 1990a) With their insight into the personal, women's autobiographies have become significant sites of social production, valued for what they reveal about the writer's inward life and about their outward society and more importantly, as Hooton has emphasised, they expose what 'men often forgot to mention':

If the male writer... inscribes an achieving or enduring self and unified destiny, it is a fragmented self, largely silent about the personal and emotional areas of experience...Women display a more unified sensibility, while that of men is compartmentalised. (Hooton 1990b: 32-33)

Anne Summers has likewise credited the significance of autobiographical writing stating that,

I do not believe the burden of accuracy is any less with an autobiography than with, say, a work of history. If anything, it is greater because of the tricks of memory. (Summers 2000: 31)

Although aware of the pitfalls and inconsistencies existing in such writing, Summers nevertheless believes that autobiography illuminates 'core truths about our society in special and unique ways – in ways...that history or biography does not.' (Summers 2000: 36) So too does Gillian Whitlock, who highlights that autobiography reveals much about the gendered, racial and

domestic self. In her post-colonial reading of women's autobiographies she maps the location of her female subjects, positioning them within their sociohistoric and cultural contexts. (Whitlock 2000) She gives the autobiographical genre authority, locating it as a 'key site' where writers took up various discourses, either as points of resistance or complicity, to define the self and others. Thus, Myrtle Rose White's autobiographical trilogy and Jane Sarah Doudy's autobiographical articles will be shown to provide invaluable information about the personal and public lives of these women. These works, and the emergent discourses about race, domesticity, and nation within them, can be seen to constitute important ways of thinking about the gendered settler self, about colonial society, and about the creation of a 'homely nation'. They represent, to quote Dorothy Jones, 'that unseen borderline where history meets literary criticism'. (Jones 1988: 16)

I want to conclude this chapter with a statement Jill Matthews recently made when she claimed that feminist history had become 'yet another universal orthodoxy' that would eventually 'self-destruct'. (Matthews 2003: 4) It was a statement, I believe, which presented a rather bleak outlook for feminist history as it suggested that feminist history had nothing new to offer, that it had somehow lost its edge. As a younger feminist historian I found the comment a little disconcerting. Feminist history has definitely come a long way but has it come far enough? According to Allen, Spongberg, Grimshaw and McKay, Moreton-Robinson and Huggins there is still much to do. Acknowledging the 'angloality' of white women writers, as well as their own, presents new challenges for white feminist historians, myself included. It forces one to re-

conceptualise the power involved in producing and consuming knowledge. It introduces new notions about white women writers as settler women who were active in constructing foundational stories of the land and its people. In particular, it creates a realm of 'mobilising narratives' and 'ongoing conversations', which enhances and enriches rather than 'self-destructs', as Matthews contends, and most importantly, it brings to the fore those 'unspeakable things' Moreton-Robinson speaks about and confronts them at new levels of inquiry. With this in mind, the dissection of Ellen Liston's, Jane Sarah Doudy's and Myrtle Rose White's writing will provide the beginnings of new stories. It will show the 'unsettling' position these women occupied as settlers, as middle class Anglo British and Australian women and as writers who shaped a South Australian regional identity.

Chapter five: 'Decolonising the neutral identity': when the self becomes the other.

All of us, readers and writers, are bereft when criticism remains too polite or too fearful to notice a disrupting darkness before its eyes. (Morrison 1992: 91)

The greatest human invention of all is other human beings. (Connell 2002: 69)

The historicisation of whiteness, the theorising of colonial rhetoric, identity-formation and the language of landscape, when applied to Liston's, Douady's and White's texts, not only add layers of complexity to these women's authorial intent but highlights the systems of power and control within which they operated. Such contemporary innovative methodological approaches expose the various discursive modes employed by these writers when constructing stories of colonial legitimisation, specifically the representational dehumanising strategy they used to rank and essentialise Aboriginal peoples. The application of such multifarious methodologies not only acts to denaturalise the white author, but also identifies the racialised subject positioning from which this author worked.

The following chapter will discuss the cause and affect of such discursive systems, outlining how such modes of representation shaped, and gave 'official currency', to 'particular pictures of the world', particularly images of Aboriginal peoples. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26) No critical study of colonial women writers can be effectively accomplished, I believe, without

acknowledging that their works were implicated within a set of colonial tropes which not only constructed images of a colonised 'other' at the same time that it excluded that other, but also naturalised white privilege and authority, and imposed Eurocentric cultural symbols of ownership upon the Australian landscape.

Locating and historicising whiteness as a category of racialised being, as this thesis intends to do, has meant that the 'white norm' is no longer the measure, but has become the measured. What was once transparent and unmarked is now gaining colour and those little white lies that have become sedimented as truth over time, are now recognised as being founded upon a sectional and privileged white perspective. This unmasking of whiteness, as Mereana Taki points out, has challengingly involved 'looking into the corners and deep cultural spaces which so-called "modern" white societies attempt to keep hidden and repressed' and identifying the privilege and white dominance inherent within that society. (Taki 1999: 180) Naming whiteness and inverting the ways it recognises itself helps expose, as Taki maintains, the faultlines present within the white imagination, not only blurring the boundaries between white and black, but forcing white people to identify their own whiteness and confront their own ethnicity or as bell hooks suggests:

It would be just so interesting for all those white folks who are giving blacks their take on blackness to let them know what's going on with whiteness. (Taki 1990: 54)

Peter McLaren's claim that white people inhabit a space of privilege by having 'the luxury of having no colour' is similarly enlightening. (McLaren 1997: 25)

McLaren argues that:

Whiteness is not a pre-given, unified ideological formation, but is a multi-faceted collective phenomenon resulting from the relationship between the self and the ideological discourses which are constructed out of the surrounding local and global terrain. Whiteness is fundamentally Euro- or Western-centric in its episteme, as it is articulated in complicity with the pervasively imperialising logic of empire. (McLaren 1997: 21)

Thus, to 'dismantle whiteness' and to illustrate the cultural advantage of being white, according to bell and McLaren, is to focus on the self as a point of discovery rather than upon the other. For as Jon Austin and John McMaster explain, 'confronting the self is a far more powerful provocateur to social investigation than being confronted with images of the other.' (Austin & McMaster 1999: 241)

Part of the process of unravelling the cultural and social construction of whiteness and uncovering its deeply enshrined position of power, authority and knowledge is to reveal the inequalities, oppression, privileges and sufferings that whiteness harbours. (Dyer 1997; Bhabha 1999) Richard Dyer, for example, argues that:

White people have power and believe that they think, feel and act like and for all people; white people, unable to see their particularity, cannot take account

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of other peoples; white people create the dominant images of the world and don't quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image; white people set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail. (Dyer 1997: 9)

Ruth Frankenburg has similarly pointed out that whiteness makes itself invisible 'precisely by asserting its normalcy, its transparency, in contrast with the marking of others on which its transparency depends.' (Frankenburg 1997:6) Indeed, she suggests that by marking whiteness, a much broader historical understanding of racism and racialised subjects can be achieved. As she suggests:

This scholarship helps make it evident that the formation of specifically white subject positions has in fact been, at times as cause and at times as effect, to the sociopolitical processes inherent in taking land and making nations. (Frankenburg 1997: 2)

Frankenberg's notion that white subject positions had been 'inherent' in 'making nations' has been adopted in many Australian postcolonial studies, helping to reveal, according to Jenny Tannoeh-Bland, 'that non-Indigenous Australians have much to learn, and perhaps more to unlearn'. (Tannoeh-Bland 2000: 1) Learning to unlearn, as pointed out by Aileen Moreton-Robinson, has meant recognising that 'race' is always present in white constructions of subject identities. She succinctly argues, for example, that:

Australian cultural representation of mateship, egalitarianism, individualism and citizenship are reproduced through disciplinary knowledge that are

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presented and taught as though they do not have an epistemological connection to whiteness. Whiteness reduces the Indigenous other to being a function, and a means, of knowing and defining itself through representations. (Moreton-Robinson 2004: 87)

Highlighting the ‘inscriptions of whiteness within historical...Australian cultural formations’, as Moreton-Robinson’s challenging study does, forces white academics to theorise the white historical subject as a racialised identity and to name, interrogate and give meaning to the social construction of that identity. (Brewster 2005) Such a process not only reveals much about Australia’s colonial past but also about the white self creating that past.

Jane Durie, however, is somewhat sceptical about the process of theorising whiteness, believing that it may recentre the ‘centre’ whilst again silencing the ‘colonised others’. (Durie 1999) Durie contends that the study of whiteness has the possibility to create yet another space for white scholars to talk about themselves, shifting the focus away from those who are the object of racism and race practices. As she points out:

The work of whiteness studies must be to expose the complexities of being white in a gendered and classed world; must be to expose the heterogeneity of whiteness; and thus contribute to the work of deconstructing and decentring the ‘centre’ in ways that do not reclaim but rather expand the spaces of our understandings. Such work by white scholars requires constant vigilance and reflexivity in order that we can tell the stories of whiteness without reclaiming centre stage. (Durie 1999: 149)

Durie's point that the 'experiences of whiteness' and of 'white race privilege' are 'neither universal nor uniform', but represent shifting signifiers of realities and power relations must be considered when undertaking any study on whiteness and white colonial women (Durie 1999: 156) Thus, when positioning Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Doudy and Myrtle Rose White, I locate them as Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian women who, while oppressed by patriarchal structures in colonial society, were nevertheless complicit white colonisers. Recognising and acknowledging their whiteness enables a more thorough interrogation of how these women operated within a discursive system of power and privilege. It provides a space to re-view how, through their writing; they could, as Haskins may say, 'identify as white women' and 'regulate their behaviour as white women. (Haskin 2006) The thought that, to quote Susanne Schech, 'issues of race and whiteness have never been resolved since Australia's colonial days', is, I believe, a sobering notion, and one that stimulates my own drive to position 'the self', and the historical subject, as racialised beings. (Schech 2004: i) While such a study may seemingly appear to 're-centre the centre', I hope that ultimately, its function will be shift the centre to the edge as it makes visible that which was once invisible.

Whiteness studies alone, however, cannot map out, to quote Kay Schaffer, 'the various ways in which the history of Australia, its land and its people, have been constructed'. (Schaffer 1988: 57) The application of a textual analysis that works on the understanding that texts exist in:

a dialectical relationship with their social and historical contexts – produced by, but also productive of, particular forms of knowledge, ideologies, power relations, institutions and practices, (Williams & Chrisman 1994: 4)

is also needed when analysing white women's literary works. Such an understanding, I believe, will not only better interrogate authorial intent, but will highlight that a text is more than the sum of its words - its reach is wide and influential and its meaning a hundred-fold. Thus, understanding that the voice which speaks, be it in a memoir, autobiography or novel, represents an interplay between that voice's experience, imagination, subjectivity and cultural ideology, makes it easier to conceive these three women writers as both observers of their society and as active participants within that society. Mikhail Bakhtin's work on genre, character and dialogue, for example, emphasises the social and mythological functions of all genres. (Curthoys & Docker 2006) Bakhtin maintains that no voice can ever be isolated as it is inescapably intertwined and influenced by others: 'The living utterance...cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.' (Bakhtin 1981: 276) His theory on the way characters within novels are constructed by authors significantly highlights each character's specifically defined role and influence within the text. Read within such terms, the novel thus represents dissonant voices and ideological currents, each conflicting with the other to produce an interplay of dialogue, a multivocal text so to speak. (Curthoys & Docker 2006) Bakhtin's work, as Curthoys claims, has made 'available to history a sophisticated approach to the literary aspects of historical texts' and opens up an array of interpretative possibilities for

understanding how Liston, Douady and White left their 'determining print' on colonial histories. (Curthoys & Docker 2006: 196)

Of course, when locating this stamp of authorial intent, the application and theorising of colonial discourse becomes an integral factor in the analysis, helping to reveal, as it does, the various tropes and literary strategies present within the coloniser's dialogue. Edward Said's 'Orientalism', for example, underlines the 'class of strategies' employed by colonial authors when constructing images of the colonial 'other'. (Said 1978, 1994) 'Orientalism', according to Said, was a system of knowledge and political doctrine, which acted as a 'grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness'. (Said 1994: 132) This filtering system became a framework for Western sociologists, philosophers, scientists and historians to express, manipulate and control that which was Oriental - in other words that which was different and considered weak and inferior. As Said explained:

Along with other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilised and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or – as the colonial powers opening coveted their territory - taken over. The point is that the very designation of something as Oriental involved an already pronounced evaluative judgement. (Said 1994: 145)

Said's study on Orientalism has effectively demonstrated a manipulative system of 'othering' which Western governments and writers used to initiate and justify imperial rule. His work calls attention to the ways in which the West's 'superior' identity could only be conceived through the construction of the 'undesirable other'. The category of 'us' was thus classified according to the category of 'them'. This process of identification required that the West denigrate and essentialise the nature of the 'other', marginalising their position within society through a system of control and confinement. Self-scrutiny, as Said points out, was notably absent. (Said 1994) Rather the West, he argues, produced forms of knowledge which ultimately legitimised its presence and sanction its right to control eastern cultures.

Prompted by such understandings of colonial discourse, and in a similar vein, Toni Morrison has perceptibly suggested that an Africanist discourse, or Africanist presence as she put it, underpinned the construction of white American identity within literary works written in, and about, American society. (Morrison 1992) Arguing that the white writer 'always knows, at some level' that they 'transform aspects of their social grounding into aspects of language' so that 'all sorts of debates' are 'blanketed in their texts', Morrison claims that they could not separate their writing from ideological belief, particularly from any subconscious level of racial philosophy. (Morrison 1992: 4) Indeed, their own positioning, she emphasises, was only located through the presence of the Africanist other. As Morrison asserts:

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Americans choose to talk about themselves through and within a sometimes allegorical, sometimes metaphorical, but always choked representation of an Africanist presence. (Morrison 1992: 17)

David Spurr has likewise identified the basic rhetoric features of colonial discourse by extensively analysing nineteenth and twentieth century British, French and American imperial writing. (Spurr 1993) Although Spurr's analysis of colonial discourse neglected gender, it nevertheless shifted the way many historical documents and narratives had been viewed in the past, successfully making the historical subject, and the historical object, more identifiable. He asks, for example:

How does the Western writer construct a coherent representation of the strange and (to the writer) often-incomprehensible realities confronted in the non-western world? What are the cultural, ideological or literary presuppositions upon which such a construct is based? (Spurr 1993: 3)

Endeavouring to answer these questions, Spurr locates the author and exposes their ideals, beliefs and notions of the self, and 'others', which inflected their textual representation. Like Morrison, Spurr works on the premise that the author was always aware of their political, social and economic position when writing and could not distance themselves from this subjectivity when they wrote. As he explains:

The gaze is never innocent or pure, never free of mediation by motives which may be judged noble or otherwise. The writer's eye is always in some sense

colonising the landscape, mastering and proportioning, fixing zones and poles, arranging and deepening the scene. (Spurr 1993: 27)

Thus, the imperialist author was seen as constructing an image of a subject race where the 'other' became 'primitive' and 'irrational' while the self represented civilisation. Legitimacy could hence be conferred onto the coloniser. This colonial discourse, however, according to Spurr, was often balanced precariously upon an uneasiness or 'constant crisis'. He argues that at the same time that it wanted to marginalise its 'others' it was also dependent upon their presence, creating a state which was always driven by anxious hysteria. After all, as he claims: 'what is power without its object'? (Spurr 1993: 11)

In Australia, Marcia Langton's claim that 'Australians do not know and relate to Aboriginal people, they relate to stories told by former colonists' resonates strongly with what Spurr, Said and Morrison had argued in their respective studies. (Langton 1993: 33) Langton likewise identifies a 'rhetoric of control' in Australian literature, claiming that such a system consumed the Aboriginal 'primitive' whilst masking colonial relations of inequality and racism. 'Aboriginality' as Langton suggests, is a 'field of intersubjectivity', continually 'remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation'. (Langton 1993: 33) Moreton-Robinson has similarly argued that the representation of the Indigenous 'other' within white Anglo discourse was a de-humanising rhetorical strategy designed to legitimate colonial control and dominance. Since the arrival of Cook, and the first 'intrusive gaze of the settlers', she asserts, Aboriginal people have been represented in many ways, including as 'treacherous, lazy, drunken, childish,

cunning, dirty, ignoble, noble, primitive, backward, unscrupulous, untrustworthy and savage'. (Moreton-Robinson 2004: 76) By concentrating on the cruelty, primitivism and overall inferiority of Aboriginal culture, as Moreton-Robinson argues, dispossession and exploitation could be more readily justified. Indeed, such representational imagery, as recently pointed out by Michele Grossman, constituted a form of 'colonial gossip' in that it deliberately voided Aboriginal people's 'status as subjects', constructing them 'as merely and pre-eminently objects of imperial rhetoric and fascination'. (Grossman 2006) Grossman sees it as a 'mode of dialogue' in which the 'other' is spoken about 'outside of their presence or participation in the conversation'. They are written about and spoken off within a third person frame of reference – within the text but not really there. (Grossman 2006) As these 'objects of imperial rhetoric' Aboriginal people were conceived as belonging to an archaic and alien culture, their 'foreignness' marking their incongruence with the emerging colonial world of progress and settlement. Rod Macneil sums this up when he asserts that:

By creating Aboriginality as synonymous with the natural environment, the landscape becomes 'decultured' – a purely natural environment of flora and fauna, erased of an indigenous population and thus readily available for colonisation. Second, colonialism locates this 'natural' Aboriginality not within the colonial landscape, but in its past - on the Other side of a temporal frontier. It is this landscape – pristine, prehistoric, wild Australia – that colonial discourse makes available to Aboriginal people. Once its boundaries are crossed, however, and Aboriginal people take place within a contemporary

colonial landscape, they appear dislocated, lingering memories of a landscape that no longer exists. (Macneil 2001: 49-50)

Aboriginal people were thus, according to Macneil, constructed as ahistorical, as an anachronistic people who existed on the periphery of the Australian landscape.¹ Grouped together as an underdeveloped and stagnant race they were placed on the other side of the temporal frontier and measured as signifiers of an uncolonised landscape. Their presence was therefore ‘depicted via a series of contradictory signifiers, which described not the integration of Aboriginal people into colonial Australia but their dislocation and incongruity within it’. (Macneil 2001: 57)

According to the analyses put forward by Langton, Moreton-Robinson, Spurr and Morrison, literary works, such as those by Liston, Douady and White, were deeply imbued in colonial rhetoric. It will be argued here that all three women constructed representational images of their colonial ‘other’ to advance notions of their own culture’s progressiveness and right to belong. This was done using a language grounded in a racial discourse of exclusion and domination,

¹ Although Macneil’s study specifically analysed colonial artwork in his article, his understanding of temporal frontier and boundaries is a useful tool for examining the writings of white settlers and their representation of Aboriginality.

ultimately reinforcing the perception that Indigenous culture was degenerative, primitive, unproductive and destined to die out.

The cornerstone of such rationale, as Nancy Stepan has defined, was nineteenth century paradigms of scientific ideologies of 'race' which placed Aboriginal peoples on the lowest rung of human evolution. (Stepan 1982) They were seen as belonging to the 'stone-age' – ancient ancestors of modern man who had remained static through time and would eventually 'die out'. In direct contrast, the European race was positioned at the top of the racial hierarchy and was considered to have reached the highest point of moral and intellectual life.

As Stepan explained:

By the 1870s Darwinism had won considerable acceptance by the general public...Evolutionism provided a new, emotionally charged, yet ostensibly scientific language with which to express old prejudices. Applied to lower races, the 'lower races' were now races that had 'evolved' least far up the evolutionary ladder...or they represented the evolutionary 'childhood' of the white man, 'atavisms' whose primitive physical structures and reduced intellectual and emotional capacities made them 'outcasts from evolution'. (Stepan 1982: 83)

Stepan also points out that such scientific racialism 'appealed to the general public because it appeared to agree with the European sense of themselves in the world'. (Stepan 1982: 46) Seeing themselves as the 'fittest and strongest' who had risen to the top, Stepan argues, the European race could therefore claim the right to rank and measure all human groups against an idealised

image of themselves thereby safeguarding and legitimising their role as colonisers. Joanne De Groot makes a similarly enlightening observation when she suggests that by late eighteenth century ‘changing views of cultural and physical difference between human groups’ occurred as a result of a combination of traditional religious and philosophical ideas and the new scientific disciplines of biology, ethnology and anthropology, which measured, theorised and classified the physical, mental and cultural differences and inequalities between races of people. (De Groot 2000: 41) De Groot thus points out that:

Increasing stress on physical characteristics (skull or brain size, bodily form and structure) and on biological heredity, redirected and reinforced social and cultural arguments about non-European societies...What became a widely accepted picture of the ‘savage’, ‘decadent’, ‘uncivilised’, i.e. *inferior*, character of African, Indian, Aboriginal, or Middle Eastern societies was based not just on prejudice or convention but on systematic comparisons, empirical detail and developed theoretical argument. (De Groot 2000: 41)

Johannes Fabian has likewise emphasised the anthropological ranking of societies as an ‘intellectual justification’ of the colonial enterprise. (Fabian 1983) He has argued that all living and past societies were ‘irrevocably placed on a temporal scale, a stream of Time - some upstream, other downstream’, as a means of measuring the advancement of western civilisation whilst downgrading those societies which were seen as existing down stream. (Fabian 1983: 17)

Essential to the ideological strategy of colonial discourse, as argued by Homi Bhabha, was an element of colonial anxiety. Bhabha suggests that discursive strategies, such as stereotyping, were a 'form of knowledge and identification which vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated.' (Bhabha 1999: 370) He also argues that when constructing 'otherness' within colonial discourse, a 'paradoxical mode of representation' was used – paradoxical in that the 'other' represented 'rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder degeneracy and demonic repetition.' (Bhabha 1999: 370) The colonial site thus, according to Bhabha, presented a 'complex intersection' of anxious 'fixity'.

Denis Byrne's recent study of Australia's cadastral system poses additional possibilities for understanding settler anxieties within colonial society. (Byrne 2003a, 2003b) Byrne points out that while the settler may have appeared in control by representing Aboriginal people as uncivilised beings who had no concept of Western laws and customs, there is the suggestion that they were also showing signs of uneasiness, that their claim to land ownership and belonging was not as absolute as they may have represented it to be. To prove his point Byrne argues that by continually poaching the boundaries imagined by white settlers, Aboriginal people 'kindled' settler anxiety. As he states:

The minority group subverted that system of spatial control, transgressing its numerous finely drawn boundaries, poaching on its preserves, tweaking the nerves of a spatial system which was inherently tense with racial foreboding, paranoia, longing, and deprivation. (Byrne 2003a: 170)

Aboriginal peoples thus, according to Byrne, occupied an 'in-between' space – a space which white people could never fully control. Aboriginal presence within this space served to 'tweak the nerves' of white settlers, continually threatening to undermine their sense of ownership and belonging. It was a 'highly unstable racial divide' where 'black and white populations existed in a state of mental and behavioural entanglement'. (Byrne 2003b: 15) Aboriginal people defied the boundaries of cadastral system by refusing to remain within its lines. They raided orchards, climbed fences and built campfires in parklands. It was an example, explained Byrne, of how Aboriginal people's refusal to be contained within a colonial system of boundaries and fences subconsciously increased settler anxiety.

Thus, according to Byrne's analysis, when reading settlers' accounts of Aboriginal trespassing, stealing and loitering, one needs to rethink how these acts, while seemingly written as simple explanations of Aboriginal unlawfulness, may actually reveal the writer's own anxiety over their inability to control that which challenged their right to belong. Not only does such an analysis illustrate how a writer's inscription of an 'imagined' space or world, in this case Liston's, Doudy's and White's inscription, was often premised on feelings of trepidation, but it also raises questions about the colonial space as a 'contact zone'.

Indeed, perhaps one of the most useful theoretical approaches to studies of colonial histories, and to this study of women writers in particular, is Mary

Louise Pratt's analysis of the frontier as a 'contact zone'. Defining the 'contact zone' as:

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict, (Pratt 1992: 6)

Pratt perceptively argued that European bourgeois subjects sought to 'secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony.' (Pratt 1992: 7) It was an 'imperial meaning-making' strategy of legitimisation which Pratt termed 'anti-conquest'. Brigitte Georgi-Findlay's similarly defined inquiry of the frontier as a 'conflicted and contested cultural space' which was 'marked by asymmetrical relations of power and authority between people of different cultures, classes and genders', reinforced Pratt's perception of the 'contact zone' as a cultural space of power, inequality, gendered, classed and raced identities. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 13) Both Pratt's and Georgi-Findlay's understanding of the colonial space as a 'contact zone', and as a space premised on the notion of an anti-conquest, is important to this study when we consider that all three women lived, at same stage throughout their lives, in what was perceived to be frontier areas of South Australia and it was often this experience they endeavoured to literarily represent.

Another particularly telling strategy employed by these three women, which also signalled their authorial intent to legitimate settler belonging and the appropriation of the land, was their repeated representation of the Australian

landscape as a wasted and alien land that was transformed and made productive with the coming of the white settler. Investigating the language of landscape within their literary works extends how we understand and recognise their desires as white women colonisers. Patricia Seed's work on the meanings of New World conquest and discovery, for example, has highlighted the importance of understanding the distinctive English cultural symbolism of 'occupation' and 'discovery' within literature, song and ritual. (Seed 1995) She argues that the act of delineating territorial spaces relied on the customary act of 'clearing', 'fencing' and 'gardening', thereby linking agriculture to land ownership. Thus, to clear land, build fences and plant a garden flagged a form of ownership. To write of such acts was to reinforce this notion. In Australia Paul Carter, Deborah Bird Rose, Katie Holmes, Jay Arthur and Roslynn Haynes have likewise interrogated how colonists, inscribed their 'possession of the New World by affixing their own powerful cultural symbols of ownership... upon the landscape' (Seed 1995: 25) and experienced Australia, as Jay Arthur would say, through a colonising language. (Arthur 2003; Carter 1997; Haynes 1999; Holmes 1999, 2003; Rose 1996, 1999) Fences and boundaries, for example were important elements within a constructed landscape as they signified structured geographical parameters of a particular world. Inside this world the imagined community was conceptualised and created - a world within which 'Englishness, progress, Christianity and civilisation predominated.'(Fitzgerald 2001:16) Katie Holmes in particular has emphasised the importance of 'reading' landscape through written texts as a tool for understanding how women writers rationalised their world. In her study of two white Australian-born women, Mildred Hood and Anne Tully,

Holmes has explored how individual negotiations occurred across the trinity 'land, landscape and place'. (Holmes 2003) Her study identifies how these women's individual lives and voices can be viewed through the 'reading' of gardens. According to Holmes, analysing what women wrote about their gardens creates new understandings of how they negotiated and shaped their environment 'and how intellectual landscapes influenced their transformations of the land around them'. (Holmes 2003:173) As she points out:

Gardening is an activity, which evokes ideas about landscape, space and place. It has been described as a 'ritual of habitation', an activity through which an individual interacts with the landscape, planting out meanings and claiming space. As such, it involves not only the actions and associations of individual gardeners, but reflects the fashions, fantasies and beliefs of their culture. (Holmes 2003: 172)

Read as 'sites of meaning' gardens come to function as a mode of revealing the 'individual aspirations of their creators and their cultural frames of reference.'(Holmes 2003: 173) The very act of gardening, according to Holmes, was an act of marking one's ownership and settlement of the land and became 'a means of disguising a history of conflict, not only with the indigenous owners, but with the land itself'. (Holmes 2003: 173)

The suggestion therefore, was that gardens represented an 'ordered controlled environment' that helped to transplant European cultural symbols of civilisation onto a native landscape. It was yet another disguised form of colonial appropriation and control, but evident nonetheless in foundational

narratives, particularly those written by the three authors in this study. Whether they were writing about the home, the settled areas, or the outback, Liston, Doudy and White tried to create images of normalcy and beauty within the landscape, endeavouring to make the unfamiliarity familiar for non-Indigenous inhabitants. This representation now signals their ethnocentric assumptions about the appropriation of the land and speaks volumes about their white subject positioning.

The land wasn't the only thing that these colonial writers appropriated, however. Indeed, an integral part of trying to legitimise belonging involved what Terry Goldie has labelled the 'indigenisation' of the Australian settler identity. (Goldie 1988) Goldie suggests that the settler's desire to belong also required that they mimic the Indigene and thus see themselves as 'indigenous'. Goldie claims that although 'the Aborigine is Other and therefore Alien,' he/she is also 'indigenous and therefore cannot be alien'. (Goldie 1988: 63) In order to attain a sense of belonging, many white Australians, according to Goldie, indigenised the Australian settler identity; thereby constructing something that was distinctly Australian. Tom Griffiths, in *Hunters and Collectors*, has similarly argued:

Throughout their history making, Europeans sought to take hold of the land emotionally and spiritually, and they could not help but deny, displace and sometimes accommodate Aboriginal perceptions of the place. They were feeling their way towards the realisation that becoming Australian would, in some senses, mean becoming 'Aboriginal'. (Griffiths 1996: 5)

This process of 'indigenisation' as argued by Goldie and Griffiths, thus enabled white Australians to develop a sense of 'true' belonging. For the women writers studied here, reaffirming what was distinctly Australian meant 'indigenising' the pioneering settler, thereby strengthening his/her identity and authenticating their relationship to the land.

I want to end this chapter with some final thoughts about the term post-colonialism and its use within this chapter and thesis. While I use the term, there is an element of unease when doing so. Although I agree with Leela Gandhi's theorising of post-colonialism as a 'theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath' and agree that we need to return to the 'the forgotten archive of the colonial encounter' to interrogate it as a place of 'intense discursive and conceptual activity', I, like Susan Sheridan and Ann Curthoys, question whether post-colonial theory aptly applies to the study of Australia's cultural history. (Gandhi 1998: 4-5) As Curthoys has stated:

Caught in that liminal, always undecided state, between a colonial past and a possibly post-colonial future, 'Australia' is a land, a society, a history neither colonial nor postcolonial. (Curthoys 1993: 166)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith has also demonstrated the inconsistencies within post-colonial theory, highlighting the resistance shown by Indigenous intellectuals to discourses of post-coloniality, claiming that:

Many indigenous intellectuals actively resist participating in any discussion...because post-colonialism is viewed as the convenient invention of

Western intellectuals which reinscribes their power to define the world. (Smith 1999: 14)

Tuhiwai Smith's point resonates strongly with the criticism labelled at the theory of whiteness - that it re-centres rather than decentres. Post-colonialism is, as Tuhiwai Smith suggests, similarly seen as yet another production of knowledge which appropriates objects of knowledge and reconstructs and strengthens white academia. I believe her use of the term 'decolonising', however, provides an alternative to the term post-colonialism, particularly when applied to Australia. If 'decolonising' is located as a means to dissolve, displace and overturn the colonial assumption than its application in Australian cultural and literary research can both challenge and reward the cultural historian. Colonialism in Australia, as Curthoys and Sheridan point out, needs to be displaced before it can ever hope to become post.

The various theoretical scholarships discussed in this chapter reveal the importance of studying Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Douady and Myrtle Rose White within a framework which addresses these women's whiteness and position as colonising women. It enables a more thorough mapping of their writerly conscience by recognises the 'complex network of remembrance and forgetting, spoken and unspoken, visibilities and invisibilities' which pervaded that conscience. (Tascon 2004: 32) By decolonising the neutral position that these women came to occupy, and indeed constructed through their writing, I hope to revisit that which has been forgotten and make visible that which has been invisible.

‘There is always a note of striving’: Introducing Ellen Liston

Ellen Liston’s niece, Ellen Harwood, wrote in Ellen’s posthumously published book, *The Pioneers*, that in Ellen there was always a ‘note of striving - striving to learn, striving to be good, and striving to be dutiful’. (Liston 1936: vii) I would also suggest there was a striving to be heard, a striving to direct, and a striving to construct very definite ideas about South Australia and its people. To put it simply, Ellen Liston ‘had plenty to say about the directions that colonial life was taking’. (Sheridan 1995: xii) She was, to use Richard White’s term, an ‘image-maker’ (White 1992), writing to impose a white colonial woman’s view of colonial expansion and conquest upon ‘supposedly uninscribed territory’. (Spivak 1990: 1) Her literary works were vehicles for conveying both implicit and explicit comment on the social, political and racial structuring of colonial society. They were decisive in their literary strategy, consumed with an authorial intent to record a nostalgic remembrance of South Australia’s pioneering past. As forms of advice literature, Liston’s works incorporated many areas of society, from women’s rights to give sermons, to their rights to education. Each point was infused with righteous rationale and the belief in the moral obligations and influence of white middle class women as domestic and national citizens. But more than this, and as Margaret Allen would say, they were political works that sought to define a cosy foundational settler narrative; explicitly reinforcing the perception of colonial society as a ‘laboratory of modernity’. (Allen, 2003; Whitlock 2000: 50)

Liston’s ‘note of striving’, however, did not equate into any real radical change. While she may have detested poverty and pauperism and wrote about

the horrific consequences of both, she did not seek to introduce reform to ratify these social problems. She did not attempt to look beyond the boundaries of white colonial society and identify the poverty and problems affecting the Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, this was a section of society which did not fit well with her imagined ideal colonial society. Rather Aboriginal people were essentialised and subsumed as a collective entity, remaining in the shadows of Liston's works as 'lurking intruders'.

The following chapter serves as an introductory biography of Ellen Liston's life. While outlining her life story it will also launch some ideas and notions about the literary strategies she employed to create a space for white women, like herself, to be viewed as independent and influential colonial agents. It will touch upon her subject positioning as a white settler woman whose writing showed clear instances of 'female imperialist interventions' in the 'contact zone', particularly through her persuasive inscription of ideal middle-class domesticity. (Pratt 1992) The virtues of her female protagonists, for example, were often represented through their domestic abilities to make the unfamiliar familiar and homely. This introductory look at Liston's life-story will lead into subsequent chapters which deal more specifically with how she sanctioned the 'innocent' settler presence whilst asserting cultural authority over the Aboriginal peoples and their lands. Rhetorical strategies concerned with the naturalisation of colonial development, the projection of a 'national fantasy' and the de-legitimation of Aboriginal culture will thus form the focus of analysis for the two chapters which follow and highlight why Liston's literary

works need to be re-viewed as foundational histories that often complimented colonial expansion and possession.

Ellen Liston was born in the County of Middlesex on the 25th March 1838, the second daughter of David John Liston and Mary Ann (nee Bone). Ellen was the fourth child; her parents already had two sons, David John Junior, Henry and a daughter, Mary. Two years after Ellen was born, a third son, William, was born. Ellen's father was a wine and spirit merchant during this time and was listed as landlord of the 'Dover Castle' public house, London in 1848.¹ The family had actually moved several times in and around London during the 1830s and 1840s while David was establishing his business. According to the family's Idsworth Journals, his involvement in the wine trade gave him the opportunity to 'become acquainted with many of the Nobility and Gentry, Naval and Military Offices, Clergymen, dignified and otherwise.'*(Idsworth Journal 1858: n.p)* For thirty-two years David was either a partner or the sole owner of a wine business. In 1850, due to excessive competition within his trade and the subsequent decline in profits the family decided to migrate to South Australia.² No doubt the new colony of South Australia, which boasted

¹ Much of the information about the Liston family comes via the family's *Idsworth Journals*, and *Rowdy Journals*, weekly 'family fun newspapers', as they were labelled, which make up a series of memoirs and stories written by various members of the family at various stages of their lives. The journals, written during the 1850s, outline much of the family's history, including their genealogy, experiences in England and South Australia, holidays and were often edited by Ellen. Many of the journal entries have author's names and dates attributed to them, however, some do not. The journals offer a valuable insight into the Liston family and the broader community.

² According to the family's journal, David: 'being then out of business and having the charge of a good round family and feeling in common with many others the great difficulty of rearing
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political and religious freedom as one of its major drawcards, appealed to the Listons. Both David and Mary Ann Liston were middle class religious dissenters who held strong liberal political views and came from a long line of 'political and religious reformers'. Indeed, after reading their family journals it becomes obvious that they were proud of this heritage, they claimed in one particular passage, for example:

Going back over the last half of the last century, tradition says that the family on the father's side as least have been known and distinguished as both Political and Religious reformers taking their origin in Scotland and the Northern County of Durham but little doubt exists that our ancestors were mixed up in and took part in all the Revolutionary movements, Political and Religious since the time of the Reformation and they always thought and acted on the side of freedom and against oppression. They have been Liberal in Politics and Dissenters in Religion as far as trace exists. (*Idsworth Journal* 1857: n.p)

Ellen's parents, as indicated by the number of journals, reminiscences and verses they left behind, were well read and keen to share their political and religious views with family and friends.³ At the age of seventeen, David had

them and settling them in life comfortably, made up his mind to emigrate, so took leave of his native country and removed to "Araby the Blest"³. (*Idsworth Journals* 1858: n.p)

³Ellen's father David reportedly came from a family of seventeen children (only ten survived to maturity, the rest dying in infancy and childhood). His father, also named David, was a watchmaker and was described by his son as a 'man of industrious, sober, fugal habits. He was a man of good sound understanding and competent mind which always gave him a superiority in all his associates in Politics although he never interfered'. (*Idsworth Journals* 1857:n.p) David described his mother as 'a prudent, careful, thrifty housewife and excellent manager...her life was devoted to the care, comfort and interest of her children.' (*Idsworth Journals* 1857: n.p) The children too were claimed as 'worthy members of society'.
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been introduced to a religious free-thinking body 'quite suited to his own opinions.' (*Idsworth Journal* 1858: n.p) This Church, according to the *Idsworth Journals* 'was founded at the latter part of the last century, a Dissenting Body in the strictest and fullest sense of that form'. (*Idsworth Journals* 1858: n.p) This Religious Body was to take 'full scope of his energies'. He became one of its chief speakers and advocates:

This union formed an epoch in Mr Liston's history and became that which is so important to youth, a point of attraction, an object of pursuit for life, and laid the foundation not only of his character, but of his mental and intellectual improvement. (*Idsworth Journals* 1858, n.p)

David and Mary represented the Victorian ideal of the 'Domestic Man' and 'Angel of the House'- he the competent breadwinner, rational and cultured, she the graceful but firm manager of her household. They encouraged their children to be well read, their stewardship no doubt influencing Ellen's lifelong interest in writing. Indeed, one of the first indications of her passion was a logbook she kept of her journey to South Australia aboard the *Chandahar* when she was only twelve years of age. The entries indicate Ellen's early foray into the literary world and demonstrate a sign of frank observation, which was to colour her future writing. This is evident in one particular entry in which she writes about the ship's doctor's prayer reading:

Undoubtedly the family unit represented the ideal Victorian family, and was one which, according to David, 'bore the air of respectability, were never in debt...were thoughtful, of good means and had more real comfort than families with larger means.' (*Idsworth Journals* 1857:n.p)

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The doctor read the prayers in the morning and very badly too, and as he left the people declared they would not attend again to such a stammering set out.

(Log Book 1850: n.p)

Ellen herself never went to school, due to her poor health and she received all her lessons at home under the tutelage of her parents.

When the Liston family arrived in Adelaide in 1850 they rented a property in East Terrace. The city was only fourteen years old at this time, in its embryonic stage, as Ellen was fond of saying. According to family journals and the writings by Ellen's niece, colonial life appeared to have suited the family. (Liston 1936) They did not mind the lack of domestic help; the heat nor other inconveniences associated with their move but rather enjoyed the relative freedom their new life offered. David Liston found employment relatively quickly and before long had purchased a block of land in Parkside, a suburb, near the city. A house was soon built, and as an early photo showed, it was comfortable with a long verandah, picket fence and enclosed garden. It was given the name 'Idsworth Cottage', named after a chapelry of Blendwoth in England where Mary Ann had been born, suggesting that although they were keen to start a new life in South Australia, they were nevertheless eager to retain some links with the 'old world'.

It was during this time that the parents and a few close friends, the Harwoods, established a society for the purpose of 'improving their minds'. (Liston 1936)

⁴ The society met on Wednesday nights for around two hours and produced numerous essays and papers covering religious subjects. It was soon suggested by Mary Ann Liston that they form a religious body in accordance to the ‘Free-thinking Christian’ doctrine they had adhered to in London. The group was formed with services being held alternatively between the Harwoods and the Listons. There were no ministers; services were conducted by the members of the group. According the Ellen’s niece ‘the congregation was composed of “thinkers”- men and women who had studied their Bibles, and had come to the conclusion that Church reform was necessary’. (Liston 1936: x) This continued for a number of years before the Liston family, sometime in the 1860s, began attending the Unitarian Church, which, according to Ellen’s niece, ‘resembled their own sect in teaching.’ (Liston 1936: x)

In 1863 Ellen’s parents died, leaving Henry and Ellen, the two remaining unmarried Liston siblings, at ‘Idsworth Cottage’. Both William and Mary had married the year before.⁵ Ellen had remained single; apparently despite two offers for marriage, and for the next four years was companion and

⁴ The Harwoods had been good friends with the Listons in London.

⁵ Ellen’s sister, Mary later married Jas. C. Harwood and it was their daughter Ellen whom wrote the preface for Ellen’s book *The Pioneers*. (Liston 1936) David Liston, the eldest brother, became an accountant and had four sons and five daughters with his wife Mary Ann. He contributed letters to the columns of *The Register* and died on the 29th November 1907. Ellen’s youngest brother, William became manager of the National Bank at Kapunda for a few years before leaving to work in the Northern Territory. When he returned to Adelaide he helped establish an auction firm and became an accountant. He had four daughters and like other members of his family, contributed to the *Register*.

housekeeper to her brother.⁶ In 1867, however, Henry married and despite pleas that Ellen stay at Idsworth with her brother and new wife, she declined. She apparently abhorred the thought of being dependent upon her brother and his wife. Although the following passage comes from one of Ellen's short stories it resonates strongly with her own life circumstances. The narrator is Allie; a young woman who decides to become a governess to a family in a remote area after her brother marries:

In two years more...Tom married, I was very discontented at Tom's marriage. It completely broke up home for me. We two were the youngest, and I thought we might have lived on happily together for a good many years. I was by nature jealous, and Tom had always been my favourite. I did not like him loving anyone better than myself; so I took umbrage; said a few bitter things, and went away to be governess...In my vexation with Tom, when he had invited me to remain with himself and his wife, I vowed never to live with any of my married relatives, being capable of earning my own living...I loved to fancy myself courageous and brave-hearted. (Liston 1936: 101)

Like the character in the passage just quoted, Ellen accepted the position of governess to a family on the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia. The station was situated on the very cusp of the South Australian frontier - the Eyre Peninsula had only been opened up to white occupation for a few years and

⁶ This is only speculation. In a short unpublished paper on Ellen Liston Constance C. Darling suggested that Ellen had two suitors. One of these was Joseph Ward, the son of the doctor who had saved Ellen's life in England who Ellen apparently refused to marry because of his 'wild ways'. Ellen's father had been appointed trustee to Joseph as a favour to Dr. Ward. (Darling n.d: 2)

was thus considered wild and untamed land at that time. John Chip Hamp, Ellen's employer, was the son of Mr. John Hamp who had been murdered by Aboriginal people in 1848. This incident, as footnoted in the chapter, 'Three Corner Jacks', is said to have been a catalyst for the Waterloo Bay Massacre, and as will be discussed in a later chapter, perhaps induced Ellen to write her short story 'Doctor'.

From 1867 to 1872 Ellen stayed with the Hamp family, undertaking governess duties to the five children and assisting Mr Hamp in general station activities, such as mustering and overseeing. She reputedly 'became an expert bush woman [and] an expert rider'. (Liston 1936: x) The following extracts from Ellen's letters to her family describe her various duties at Nilkerloo and the satisfaction she gained from doing them:

I certainly am clever. I have made a Crimean shirt for Mr. Hamp and it fits him charmingly. I sloped the top too much, so I cut it off to the size forgetting that it would make the tail too short. I then put a piece on the bottom that looks absurd but, 'That don't show' said Mr Hamp. (Cited in Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 3)

On another occasion she wrote:

In Mr. Hamp's absence I was promoted to Overseer and had to superintend the watering of the flocks and counting of them...The new year brought the advent of another baby to the pioneer family. The day Mrs Hamp was taken ill, we had not a horse or boy to send for the woman who lives 9 miles off, but as

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we expected hourly for Mr Hamp to return we are not perturbed. Towards evening a boy arrived with a note and the mail from Mr Hamp that he was remaining for a day or two in Pt Lincoln...The baby was born at 2 o'clock with nobody but Mrs Hamp and myself, in a terrible state of anxiety, present. Thank goodness all was right, and I washed and dressed the baby boy, in a fashion. I must have grown very weak minded lately, for when Mrs Hamp lay moaning I only saved myself from fainting by lying on the floor outside the door and when the woman came I was fool enough to cry. Mr Hamp expressed the utmost gratitude and brought me a present in town. (Cited in Elliston Centenary Committee 1978: 3)

During this time Ellen began to write poems and short stories, with several being published in the *Observer*, an Adelaide newspaper. In 1871 her long serial, *The Stauntons*, was published. Based upon the story of an independent young settler woman who must overcome the death of her parents, the responsibility of looking after her younger brother and the shame of learning she is illegitimate, the story had much to say about the fortitude of settler women and their domestic and national responsibilities. The serial ran for a little over two and a half months.

There is also some suggestion that Ellen was present during an Aboriginal attack on the Hamp homestead sometime between 1870 –1872 and is said to have organised the defence of the station.⁷ This story has become somewhat of

⁷ This is only speculation and cannot be substantiated. According to Constance Darling it is story which has been passed down through the Liston family and is 'firmly credited by Elliston and Tahlia people'. (Darling n.d: 5)

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a local legend but can not be substantiated apart from family and local memories.

Ellen only had one holiday during her five-year stay at Nilkerloo Station and by 1872 she was ready to return to Adelaide. Her popularity amongst the people of the district was made evident some years later when the township of Elliston was named after her in 1878.⁸ As *The Adelaide Chronicle* reported in 1947:

Miss Liston was one of the few women, other than vice-royalties, who could claim the distinction of a town named in her honour, Elliston, on the West Coast, being a contraction of her Christian and surnames. (*Adelaide Chronicle* 1947: 26]

Within months of returning to Adelaide Ellen began looking for another position. In 1873 she was accepted into the first Model School for the training of pupil teachers, receiving her teaching licence in January 1875.⁹ She was appointed to teach at East Wellington, a small South Australian country town, for twelve months. In her first year of teaching she had 42 students which

⁸ Interestingly, Liston had used the name Elliston as a surname for her heroine in the story 'How a woman kept her promise', written in 1869, nine years before the official naming of the township, Elliston. (Liston 1936)

⁹ Ellen applied to the Centra Board of Education in 1874 to receive training as a teacher. Her application was approved and she passed in October 3rd 1874. She obtained her licence on the 1st January 1875.(Darling, n.d)

increased to 66 the following year.¹⁰ Ellen stayed for two years, resigning, after the strain of teaching became too great for her health which had grown worse after a severe bout of illness.¹¹

Ellen then made the decision to join the Post and Telegraph Department. She worked at the General Post Office in Adelaide for a number of months, reputedly becoming the first female telegraphist in Australia. (Darling n.d) On the 24th October 1877, she became the Post and Telegraph Mistress at Watervale, another small country town in South Australia, receiving an annual salary of sixty pounds. (Darling n.d) It was while here that she wrote *Auckland Marston*, a long serial about an orphaned young man, who, after being disowned by his aunt and uncle, through no fault of his, follows a journey of self discovery and ultimately finds success and happiness. He is finally reunited with his family towards the end of the story when his aunt and uncle realise their error. Typically, the story has many moral messages for its readers, including temperance, the virtue of helping others and the value of

¹⁰ These figures come from *Sand on the Roof: The story of Wellington on Murray*. The book also mentions that Ellen complained to the Education Department because of the perpetual flooding of the east side causeway next to the school building. (Wellington Progress Association 1977)

¹¹ Ellen's niece explained the situation thus: 'There being no house near the school, she lived in the west side of the river; this forced her, in flood periods, to wade through water on her journey to and from school, and so caused the illness from which she never recovered.' (Liston 1936: x) In her early years Ellen suffered from tuberculosis of the glands and needed constant medical attention. As her niece explains: 'Ellen was a very delicate child, and her life was, at times, despaired of; but by careful nursing, and the unremitting attention of the family friend and physician, Dr. Nathaniel Ward, the eminent botanist and inventor of the Wardian case, her life was saved; and as the years passed she grew stronger, probably the change to the Australian climate helping a great deal.' (Liston 1936: x)

religious and intellectual pursuit. The serial won a twenty-pound prize offered by *The Melbourne Leader* in 1879 and was subsequently published in the same newspaper.

Ellen was transferred to the Marrabel Post Office shortly after, a small post office located in the mid north of South Australia and it was here, on August 19, 1885 aged 47 years that she died. Her health had slowly deteriorated over the years and despite offers of help from her brothers she continued to work until just before her death. As her niece claimed:

Beyond having a niece to help in house and office, she would accept no relief, struggling on at her work to within a week or two of her death'. (Liston 1936: xi)

It appears she had remained resolute in her desire to not be dependent upon her family, even when her health was failing. Her death notice in the *Observer* read:

Very sincere regret will be felt by many of our readers at the death of Miss Ellen Liston at Marrabel. Miss Liston was a lady of great literary talent whose writings have been for many years a source of great enjoyment to the readers of the weekly newspaper. For the past two or three years failing health prevented Miss Liston engaging in the literary work which she loved so well, but the charm of the tales and verses which have appeared under the signature of 'Ellie L.' will be long remembered. (*Observer* 1885: 30)

Ellen died leaving behind an array of published poems and short stories and two published serials, *Auckland Marston* and *The Stauntons*. Although Ellen's obituary stated that she had not written during the last three years of her life, Liston had, I believe, composed an unpublished manuscript, titled 'Jean Kesson', shortly before her death. The five hundred plus page manuscript followed a storyline structured around early pioneering feats and successes and commemorated South Australia's founding moment within hagiographic light.¹² It appears to have been named after a close friend of the family living in London whom Ellen corresponded with just prior to, and during her stay at Nilkerloo station.¹³

Ellen had also been on the corresponding staff of *The Kapunda Herald* and had numerous poems and verses published in the *Observer*, often contributing under the non-de-plume of 'Aunt Ellen' and 'Ellie'. In 1936, coinciding with the centenary of white South Australia, a number of her poems and short stories were published posthumously in a book, *The Pioneers: Stories by Ellen*

¹² After Ellen's death the manuscript was given to her niece. It was never reviewed and only read by one or two close family members after it was written. After an exhaustive paper chase, numerous phone calls and letters I discovered that the manuscript had not been destroyed, as assumed, but had been kept by a distant relative living in Adelaide.

¹³ There were five letters from a John Kesson written to Ellen during 1866 and 1867. John had been a good friend of the family when they had lived in England and enjoyed Ellen's letters describing life in South Australia. She also apparently sent him newspapers which featured her stories and he in turn gave her literary advice. In one letter, for example, he gave the advice not to be 'over-natural and ...fall into what we call the namby – pamby'...Let your aim be usefulness as well as entertainment, and, for God's sake, never fall into the slang of the day, in order to give the appearance of smartness to what you write... if you should ever find me a stern critic you will always find me a just one.' (John Kesson, n.d)

Liston. The *Adelaide Advertiser* reviewed it as 'a valuable contribution to the early literature and records of the State'. (*Observer* 1947: 26)

Ellen Liston's niece claimed in the foreword to this book that her aunt's work provided a 'means to promote the well-being of the human race'. (Liston 1936: xi) Indeed, there is little doubt that, inspired by the religious and political doctrine favoured by her parents, Ellen sought to deliver a message to fellow like-minded South Australian men and women, as her niece maintained, but it was a message that was very selective in whose well-being it wanted to promote. It revealed, for example, a quest to legitimise and complement colonial notions of expansion and possession, and thus the presence of the white settler, whilst simultaneously marking the Aboriginal peoples as 'outcasts' and 'foreigners' with little, or no, rights.

An important aspect of this legitimisation process, as evidenced in her writing, was the transformation of an unfamiliar space into a 'homely' place through the act of domestication. Indeed, the conviction that the home and world would be inseparable, that domesticity was, as Nina Baym argues, 'a value scheme for ordering all of life', was readily employed by Liston as she endeavoured to define, through her literary works, colonial women's participation in the formation of a new colonial culture. (Baym 1978: 24) If, as Baym contends, domestic ideology functioned as a system which, rather than sequester women from the public world, actually served to bring the world into the home, than by manufacturing images of colonial women successfully locating home and garden within the colonial zone Liston positioned these women as conquerors

in their own right, albeit in a moderately less evident form than that of the more popularly represented conquering male pioneer. To promote this ideal of middle class white women as nation builders, Liston used home and hearth as a backdrop for her many narratives, no doubt intended to portray this arena as a relative hub of regulation, where family, community and society could be monitored and shaped according to the interests of white settler women. As pointed out in the previous chapter on women's literature, writers such as Catherine Helen Spence, Matilda Evans and Elizabeth O'Conner, to name a few, also used discourses of domesticity to cement white women's role within colonial society. These writers constructed powerful images of peaceful homely dwellings - feminised spaces, which tempered the crudities of early settler society and evaluated belonging, as Margaret Allen suggests 'according to the criteria of middle-class domesticity'. (Allen 2003: 105) Such was the case with Ellen Liston. She too constructed images of ideal domesticity not just as a means of modelling respectable and appropriate behaviour within white colonial society, but also to stake a 'territorial claim' within a 'personal room-sized empire'. (Pratt cited in Georgi-Findlay 1996: 33)

One such example of this is Mrs. Rickner, from 'Jean Kesson, who represents ideal colonial respectability and good taste. Her house, although only small, is nevertheless tastefully decorated and appointed. Her garden in particular indicates her refinement:

A pretty cottage, with a tastefully laid out flower garden, the prettiest Jean had seen at Kaiserberg. The arrangement of the beds, the shrubs and the blooms showed care and taste. (Liston n.d: 288)

Anne Carlands, in *The Stauntons*, likewise brings cultured refinement to her father's domicile. When we are first introduced to the Carlands' station house it is described as a place in need of a 'woman's touch':

The floor was uncarpeted, and the windows bare of curtains...something about the place told that it wanted the skilful tasteful hand of a well-informed mistress. Poor Annie was too young when her mother died to have learnt much, and the rough bush servants were little calculated to cultivate her taste...she was well educated, and wanted but a little polish with some well-informed and cultivated ladies of her own sex to make her a superior woman.

(Liston May 22 1871: 14)

Anne does receive a 'little polish' when she attends Edith and Ellen Staunton's School. Here she is instructed on how to be the ideal domestic being so that when she returns home she is able to transform and refine her house:

The interior of Carlands is much improved...The floors are carpeted, the windows curtained, the furniture is elegant and well arranged, and all speaks of the cultivation which developed the taste of its young mistress. (Liston 26 August 1871: 14)

Such descriptions were designed to highlight the responsibility women had for bringing refinement to their surroundings, in particular, for bringing civilisation to the margins of Empire. They were used by Liston to demonstrate how the ideal domestic woman made the crude colonial home more civilised for their loved ones, for the wider community, and ultimately for the nation,

thus highlighting women's colonising role. The Hammond women from 'Jean Kesson' are also credited for facilitating such changes:

Those who know the wonders that an educated woman can work even with limited means, will well understand what a marvellous alteration quickly took place in the internal aspect of the house which soon assumed a thoroughly comfortable and homelike appearance. (Liston n.d: 47)

The influence and agency of the Hammond women and their manners, dress and domestic abilities are all used as indicators of desirable behaviour. They transform crudity into refinement by creating a 'homely space' and do so with 'neat, pretty dresses and smiling faces'. (Liston n.d: 47) They also accomplish this transformation with limited means, demonstrating their middle class abilities to be frugal and resourceful. Thus, despite their 'delicate nurture and previous enjoyment of every comfort and many luxuries' the Hammond women nevertheless prove 'their true woman-hood by cheerfully submitting to the unavoidable inconveniences and manifold discomforts in the new order of things' and create 'the home as a haven'. (Liston n.d: 45)¹⁴ The employment of such language and imagery represents a form of 'prescriptive writing', or to use Gillian Whitlock's term, 'conduct literature'. (Whitlock 2000) Indeed, in her study of Canadian women writers, Whitlock has pointed to the abundance of such conduct literature during this time, claiming that it presented:

¹⁴ They represent the true middle class ideal of womanhood, 'angels of the house' to quote Catherine Hall, who establish and maintain 'the home as a haven'. (Hall 1979: 15)

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a female subjectivity in terms of a grammar that invariably links virtue in a woman to good household management. The domestic woman emerged from conduct books...which defined the ideal woman. (Whitlock 2000: 53)

Liston's narratives fit within such a category. However, while such writing can be read as 'affirming counter hegemonic insights' in that it privileged the 'personal and domestic' it must also be seen, to quote Georgi-Findlay, as a 'feminised complement to conquest and possession'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: xii) By representing the ideal of domesticity as the path to taming and familiarising the colonial zone, or the 'contact zone' as Pratt would say, Liston was not only highlighting white women's engagement, her own included, within imperialist politics but also constructing a regional fantasy that could be used as a template for South Australian colonial society. What is not alluded to, however, is that this 'innocent' construction of this 'home as haven' comes at a cost for the Aboriginal peoples. Although this will be taken up in subsequent chapters, it needs to be briefly mentioned here that Liston's ideals of domesticity obscured the colonial process which led to Aboriginal dispossession and the destruction of their landscape, a strategy that Georgi-Findlay highlighted in her own study of white American women writers:

Houses and their interiors, standards of domestic comfort, and manners...provide important indicators for the cultural 'domestication' of an eccentric west that defines itself by its rhetoric, but not practice, of egalitarian democracy. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 29)

By projecting a domestic ideal upon colonial society, Liston likewise assumed cultural authority, imposing and affirming Western hegemony over colonial society, particularly its Indigenous occupants. In other words, she manipulated the ideology of domesticity in overtly imperialistic ways in an attempt to construct what Hage would call a 'homely nation'. (Hage 1998) Indeed, how Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants belonged and didn't belong to this imagined place inspired many of Liston's fictional characters and plots.

Thus, by centring the white colonial woman as a resourceful and civilised character, and middle class domesticity as the ideal, not only did Liston's narratives provide a space for justifying the dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples, but it also introduced notions of a female world that was significant to stories of colonial expansion. Clearly, as governess, teacher, telegraph operator and postmistress, Liston had herself lead an independent life, refusing to be beholden to her brothers, and thus wanted to promote the belief in women's right to be independent and direct the course of their own lives. This is made abundantly obvious through the portrayal of her many heroines, all of whom are intelligent, wise, responsible and rational women, able to conquer any hardships that came their way. Ellen Staunton, from *The Stauntons*, for example, overcomes the unexpected truth that she was born out of wedlock and that her father lied to her. Jean Kesson, the female heroine of 'Jean Kesson', is able to 'don her armour' when her father remarries and her fiancé dies whilst exploring, and Mercy Rushton, also from 'Jean Kesson', raises her niece when her sister dies in tragic circumstances. All these women are able to overcome their difficulties whilst still maintaining their gentility and sense of

independence, steadfastly refusing to be reliant upon, and subservient to, others. An example of this is in Liston's short story 'Louey and I' where the female protagonist, Nora, is indignant over the suggestion that she has a 'master':

I shall never forget the pang of indignation and I suppose wounded pride that shot through me at the remark one woman made. It was at a kind of eating-house, where we had stayed to dinner, and on leaving I enquired what I had to pay. 'Oh', was the reply, 'you are going to Mr. Marsh's; your master will settle that'...I was no longer Miss Carlon, my own mistress...but only 'Marsh's governess', and here was a woman I had never set eyes on before talking about my 'master'. I felt the blood rush into my face, and a choking sensation come into my throat. I don't know how I looked, but the woman appeared surprised, as I said haughtily 'That I would settle it', and then turned away. (Liston 1936: 16)

Many of Liston's heroines, like Nora, are serious, autonomous and are rarely submissive to a supposedly superior male intellect, perhaps an indication of Liston's view of her own position as a woman in society. Indeed, Liston used her heroines to advance the idea that middle class white women were intelligent and resolute beings able to determine the directions of not only their lives but the direction of national interests as well, fuelling her belief that with the attainment of a higher education, they would increase their role to successfully 'play a universally practical part in the affairs of life'. (Liston 1936: 72) The following quote from the short story 'How a Woman Kept Her Promise' illustrates this notion:

‘But, Mrs Rawood, asked a gentleman, ‘would you have woman leave her home sphere and take a stand in the outside ranks with men?’ ‘No; but I would have her take proper stand in the home. She has enough to do there if she knew but what and how. In many cases she has to go forth as the bread-winner, and in many, where actual necessity does not compel, I think she might help her husband often with advantage’. ‘What, help him to work, Mrs. Rawood?’” exclaimed several ladies, ‘you wouldn’t like to see us do that’. ‘Yes, I would like to see you able to take your stand in the position I think God intended you for; as a helpmeet for the men of your families - be they fathers, husbands, brothers or sons - to train, to raise, to encourage, to elevate, to enable, to advise, to assist; and so play your true part in the advancement and civilisation...When we have better knowledge we shall have greater power’. (Liston 1936: 72)

The idea here is that colonial women needed more independence and control over their lives, as Liston no doubt believed she herself had attained, and that by extending their roles as cultural agents, these women could become better colonial citizens, and ultimately better nation builders. Although not suggesting that colonial women from the middle ranks abandon their role within the domestic sphere, Liston did strongly urge that they be seen as influential agents and advisers in advancing colonial society, particularly masculinist culture. She particularly wanted to persuade readers to see this role as something not necessarily linked to the confinement of marriage and home but as something which transgressed these boundaries.

An example of this is Edith Staunton from Liston's serial *The Stauntons*, who is appalled by the idea that women can only be happy and their lives complete if they marry. She is determined to remain independent of male control:

Edith turned suddenly round, and said, 'The only thing I don't like in Currer Bell's writing is that she makes none of her women happy unless they are married. With most of the heroines it is 'the consummation devoutly to be wished'-the end and aim of their existence.' 'Ah I see Edith is never meant to be married,' said Edward laughing. 'No, I'll never be the slave of any man, to submit to all his whims and caprices. I mean to be my own mistress always'.

(Liston 3 June 1871: 14)

Here Edith condemns the writing of Charlotte Bronte who used the pseudonym Currer Bell when publishing her first two novels *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*. She is sceptical of the way Bronte represents her heroines as incomplete until they marry. She, on the other hand, believes that marriage is a form of imprisonment and opts to remain an independent woman, signalling a strong resemblance between Edith's character and Liston's own views. Like Edith, Liston chose to remain a single working woman despite her brothers' pleas to give up her work and live with them. Interestingly, in *The Stauntons* Edith's brothers also ask Edith to give up running her and Ellen's school but Edith refuses:

'I wish you would consent to give up the school, girls,' said Edward; 'it is not good for you.' The brothers had urged this proposal strongly several times since their return, but Ellen and Edith would not listen to them. 'Having tasted the sweets of independence and the pleasure of assisting others' said Edith,

'we have no intention of resigning such satisfaction because you Lords of the creation shake your heads and demur.' The young men did their best to argue the girls out of their determination, but without success; so for the present they abandoned their endeavours. (August 19 1871: 14)

Edith's story serves to highlight the dynamics of women's authority over their own lives, as did many of her other short stories, serials and manuscripts. Mercy Rushton, in 'Jean Kesson', for example, also remains unmarried, choosing instead to devote her life to raising her niece and focussing on providing care to her father and brother. Ina Gower, in *Auckland Marston* is unable to marry the man she loves due to ill health but nevertheless leads a life as an 'angel of peace doing good.' (Liston 1868: 301) Such women are not pitied for their circumstances but rather seen as exemplary women who have control over their bodies and minds. They are able to lead fulfilling lives not hampered by the idea that marriage is 'the end and aim of their existence'. They are seen as contributing to society and providing their families, and their wider community, with love, support and refinement. Perhaps Liston felt a need to construct such characters in her writing as a means of locating her own identity as an unmarried woman within colonial society, and to somehow resist the notion that colonial middle class women, particularly those that were unmarried, were not the 'shadowy figures' that hovered on the margins. After all, as Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain claim, unmarried women, as 'non-mothers', 'found it difficult to earn community respect, for in Australia a "good woman" was a married woman and any other version was a somewhat lesser being'. (Howe & Swain 1992: 164) Liston's representation, however, countered such societal notions.

Indeed, her representations dislodged, to no small degree, the popular representations of white middle class women as just mothers and wives, effectively expanding the visibility of these women's lives across the colonial scene. Sue Rowley has written that the 'woman-as-mother' and 'as-wife' representation dominated Australia's social memory, particularly from the 1890s onwards, and created a stereotypical view of pioneer women that has been hard to displace. (Rowley 1989) She also points out that such images reinforced the notion that women only gained a visible place in colonial society through their roles as mothers and wives. In short, 'there was nowhere for the Australian girl to go in this period, the only career offered being that of the Australian Mum'. (Caine et al 1998: 120)¹⁵ Liston's characterisation of her female heroines resists this representation. Her female protagonists, whether married or unmarried, mothers or not, are presented as influential and independent participants in the new colonial world order. It is they who make the decisions, who equally settle and work the land and who are responsible for controlling the moral, religious, educational and social direction of colonial society, from both within, and outside, the home. Georgi-Findlay's suggestion that women 'did emerge from their homes to explore, direct' and to intervene in the 'contact zone', is clearly evidenced in Liston's literary representation of

¹⁵ The writers of this book make an interesting point that many heroines, if they subverted the notion of ideal colonial lady, and 'kicked hard against patriarchy', were often killed off as a 'policing of the boundaries'. They cite, for example, Mary O'Halloran's death in Joseph Furphy's *Such as Life*, and the heroine Judy's demise in Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*. See the Chapter titled 'Gender, representation, and national identity for more discussion, particularly the pages 120 – 121. (Caine et al 1998)

colonial society. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 33) Her female pioneers are pivotal and central characters, responsible for directing and shaping the new colonial world. Indeed, as one who took over the running of Nilkerloo Station when her employer was absent, Liston no doubt felt a sense of pride in her own accomplishments as a woman and thus wanted to convince her readers that middle class women were capable community participants, as she believed herself to be. In a sense, therefore, Liston's writing provided an opportunity 'to imagine a world that celebrated [women] rather than suppressed them'. (Kerrison 2003: 515)

Perhaps this helps explain why Liston empowers her heroines with the role, to coin Baym, as 'amateur ministers'; buoyed with religious self-possession and the belief that they had been given, through her moral superiority, the right to preach, especially if it meant highlighting an injustice. This is particularly evident in Liston's short story titled 'Effie's Sermon' published in her book *Pioneers*. As the title suggests Effie, a young affluent woman decides to give a sermon at her family's Christmas party as a means of illustrating the benefits of forgiveness and kindness. Grieved by her brother Gilbert's slide into 'the temptations of alcohol' and frustrated by her father's unwillingness to help Gilbert, Effie hopes that by giving a sermon she can resolve the situation and bring peace and harmony back into the household. When she tells her younger cousin her intentions he shows surprise but she is quick to assure him that it is just as much her place as any man's to give a sermon:

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'I am going to preach a sermon, Clement.' 'A what!' the boy's eyes opened to their fullest extent. 'A sermon! Well I never! A girl preach a sermon; that is good', and he broke into a merry peal of laughter. 'Why, what put that in your head Effie. Papa was reading to us the other evening about a lady doctor, but I never heard of a lady clergyman. Are you thinking of taking orders coz? Are you going to read someone else's sermon, or make one yourself?' 'Write one myself Clem.' 'But it isn't woman's work writing sermons, Effie.' 'It is equally a woman's work as a man's to do good, and I hope my sermon will do a little.' (Liston 1936: 37)

The sermon is five pages in length, comprising one third of the short story and is purposely driven to seek forgiveness from her father:

'How can we with this book before us- (Effie laid her hand upon the Testament) - which we, as Christians, are bound to take as our guide and instructor in the high moral principles of our duty towards God and man, dare to withhold our forgiveness from an erring brother. Rigid consciousness may deal out justice without mercy; that is not the lesson taught by Jesus; that is not what we are hoping for, when we pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us'. (Liston 1936: 46)

The sermon does as Effie hopes it would, 'good'. Not only does Liston have Effie's sermon enthralling all her listeners but she also uses it as an illustrative way Effie could effect change within her family. Hence, her brother, after listening to her speech decides to give up his drinking while her father resolves to welcome his son back into his household:

‘Do you know, papa’, said cousin Clement, as he walked gleefully home from a happy party at Uncle Lincoln’s...’I think it is all because of Effie’s sermon that cousin Gilbert is come home again’. (Liston 1936: 51)

Liston thus positions Effie as a young woman who takes it upon herself to instigate change within her family. Although her father may be positioned as the ‘head of the household’ it is Effie whom the reader envisions as the moral shaper and regenerator of this household. By representing Effie as an ‘amateur minister’ Liston’s characterisation resonates with Baym’s claims that women writers often crafted their stories with protagonists who preached righteous messages as a means of demonstrating women’s moral and spiritual agency. There is little doubt that Liston was greatly influenced by a desire to have women seen as being instrumental in the religious and social advancement of their community. In all likelihood, she too felt this empowerment when writing her fictional sermons, or ‘theological texts’, as Ann Douglas might label them. (Douglas 1977) Indeed, it is highly probable that Liston delivered her own sermons during the religious services held at her family’s home. It must be noted, however, that her religious sermons were only ever intended to improve white society. At no time did she seek to include Aboriginal people within this doctrine of spiritual improvement, indicating that she considered them unworthy of similar consideration.

It is also important to note that while Liston’s trope of domesticity carried particular implications for middle class colonial women within settler societies, it also offered messages to middle class white men. Many of her literary works, for example, were mouthpieces for defining colonial manhood, an exercise

Marilyn Lake would identify as being part of white women's struggle to define national identity during this time. (Lake 1986) If, as Lake suggests, white men and women were locked in a contest over 'control of the national culture' at the end of the nineteenth century, with both battling over who and what represented the 'true' Australian identity, than by representing her male characters within specifically defined parameters Liston, from as early as the 1870s, showed a very real desire to participate in the formation of the national masculinist character. (Lake 1986: 2)¹⁶ Lake argues that women writers contested the national male character by reinforcing the notion of the 'Domestic Man' as opposed to the 'The Lone Hand', a representational image promoted by male writers and poets, such as Banjo Patterson and Henry Lawson, and particularly by the nationalist magazine *The Bulletin*.¹⁷ The image of the bushman, or 'Lone Hand', was used during the 1880s and 1890s as a

¹⁶ Marilyn Lake's compelling article on the 1890s masculine response to first-wave feminism provided significant analysis into white women's construction of national masculinity and helped to situate the creation of the 'domestic man'. She argued that a struggle occurred between an emergent feminism and a dominant masculinism, during the 1890s concerning control of the national culture. The Bushman, as Lake suggests, was a construct of city bohemians, created to oppose the image of the domestic man as endorsed by feminists. Her analysis facilitated new areas of debate and offered alternate female perspective on issues such as national and gendered identities and highlighted that white women were very much on the national scene during this time. See Lake's article 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context' for more discussion.

¹⁷ As a point of interest, although the work of Patterson and Lawson has been seen as 'the chief vehicle' for promoting democracy, collectivism and national patriotism, John Hirst argues that Patterson and Lawson were among 'the founders of the pioneer legend'. He claims that both poets, despite their overt radical social commentary, ultimately 'did more to help the conservative cause' through their use of generalist pioneer nostalgia. See Hirst (1992) for more discussion of this concept. *The Bulletin* was a Sydney based radical and misogynist periodical magazine which promoted ideals of republicanism. It wrote of women, to quote Susan Sheridan, 'as if they were by definition obstacles in the progress of democracy, whatever their class or politics', who denied masculine pleasures. (Sheridan 1995: 73)

symbol of nationalism and was promoted, according to Lake, by men who held firm beliefs about gender relations and venomously rejected the 'idealisation of Domestic Man'. This legend, later to be theorised by Russel Ward as the 'Australian Legend', was seen as marking the origins of the 'typical Australian'. (Ward 1958)¹⁸ Seen as deriving 'from the common folk' rather than 'the more respectable and cultivated sections of society', Ward traced the evolution of this legendary character, or 'national mystique' as he called it, in a bid to authenticate the ideals and traits that he perceived to be typically Australian. (Ward 1958: 1) This iconic itinerant male bush worker, according to Ward, was characterised as a rough and ready improviser, who drank, swore, hated authority but was 'very hospitable' and who stuck 'with his mates through thick and thin'. (Ward 1958: 1-2) The ideals and behaviour of this frontier 'nomad', as Ward argued, permeated much of Australia's literature and society and greatly informed the 'Australian character'.

¹⁸ The legend was representative of a radical-nationalist school of thought that emerged at a time when historians were endeavouring to cultivate a distinct national character. Prior to World War Two Australia only had a modest number of works exploring Australian national history. (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin 1989; Curthoys 2003) The majority of historical accounts were seen as merely an extension of British history. Ann Curthoys believes that this was because many thought Australia was 'mediocre, philistine, contemptible, forever doomed by location and distance and by its fraught penal and colonial origins.' (Curthoys 2003: 24) Post World War Two saw a shift away from this imperially framed history to a more patriotically driven style of history writing. (Curthoys 2003) Over the next two decades, academics, wanting to identify the uniqueness of Australia and to locate its place in the world, not as a derivative or echo of the British Empire but as an autonomous superior cultural force, began to shape Australian history as something that possessed a distinct history. Although a particularly patriarchal version of Australia's past, Ward's study resonated with the then current intellectual drive to create a history which was distinctively and uniquely Australian.

It did not, however, inform Liston's 'Australian character'. Whereas domestic and family responsibility was peripheral to 'The Lone Hand', Liston places her ideal bushman firmly within the circle of the family. (Lake 1986) Auckland Marston, the main character in *Auckland Marston*, for example is written to represent the 'true man' - 'gentle and polite from an innate chivalry of mind'. (Liston 1868: 59) He is a thoughtful, honest, intelligent, strong willed but empathetic man who finds solace in Freethinking Christianity. He abstains from alcohol, does not swear and believes in treating everyone, despite his or her station in life, equally. His cousin Tom, however, is the complete antithesis to Auckland - lazy, deceitful and avaricious. He is used to exemplify what colonial men were not meant to represent – drunkenness, idleness and selfish. The difference between Auckland and Tom are obviously stated by Liston. Whereas Auckland follows his own path to success, Tom depends upon the wealth and opportunities provided by his father. He enjoys socialising with other like-minded males, falling 'into temptation' and becoming an alcoholic. He is driven to embezzle money from his father's company to pay for his alcohol and entertainment and finds himself on the road to total 'wretchedness' until Auckland rescues him.

Clearly the use of such characterisation was aimed at reconfiguring colonial masculinity, dislodging the 'swaggering, brawling and alcoholic oblivion' that had dominated images of 'white manhood' from the 1860s onwards.¹⁹

¹⁹ Sara Cousins highlights that the magazine *The Dawn*, published during the late 1880s and 1890s was written by women to connote the vices of existing masculinity as 'drunkenness, gambling and swearing and the qualities of moral weakness, self-indulgent...selflessness and
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Raymond Evans notes that the 'preferred masculine type', tended 'to exhibit athleticism over introspection, brawn more than sensitivity, and an outward spartan demeanour rather than any overt displays of tenderness, love or affection'. (Evans 1992: 206) Liston, however, readily employs overt displays of tenderness, love, affection, refinement and sensitivity, when describing ideals of 'true' masculinity. Howard and Edward Staunton, from *The Stauntons*, for example, exhibit such characteristics. When both are forced to go to the gold diggings when their father's business is ruined, they are able to remain refined and cultivated despite their raw and crude surroundings.²⁰ While neighbouring diggers celebrate Christmas Eve by becoming drunk, for example, Edward and Howard refrain from such celebrating, content to stay in their tent and dine on a Christmas meal they had prepared for themselves. Their behaviour is described as exemplary as they strive to maintain civility and a certain level of domesticity and work hard to make money for their family back in Adelaide. They show a capacity for intelligence, an appreciation of religion, refinement and sobriety whilst maintaining a masculine identity of strength and assurance, a direct contrast to the dominant 'masculine type' later preferred, and promoted, by city bohemians, contributors to *The Bulletin* and male writers and artists.

neglect'. She further contends that the use of such 'language elevated womanhood as morally superior to manhood in an attempt to gain positions of power for women'. (Cousins 1999: 85)

²⁰ Ellen's brothers went to the 'diggings' at the Snowy River gold fields for a year, returning to Adelaide at the end of 1861. Howard and Edward are very likely based upon Ellen's two brothers.

Liston's characterisation of her heroes and heroines is thus clearly framed within middle class philosophy of responsibility and rationality. It is an ideology which had grown in popularity during the 1800s and involved a recodification of notions about men, women and the wider community. According to Catherine Hall, the rise of a new bourgeois way of life during the 1830s and 1840s in England had redefined 'available cultural norms' and encouraged 'a new seriousness and respectability in life'. (Hall 1979: 16) Central to this new seriousness and respectability was a 'view of desirable lifestyles' which included distinct ideas of morality, rationality, ideal domesticity, national reform and appropriate behaviour. (Hall 1979) Within this realm of bourgeois ideology middle-class men were required to be strong and rational providers for their families while women were to be the moral regenerators of society, providing a 'haven' of comfort to their husbands and families.

Growing up within a Victorian family which prided itself on its 'industrious, sober and frugal habits'; it is little wonder Liston brought these middle class liberal ideals into her writing. Her male characters are thus predominantly practical and moral men and despite the rudimentary nature of new colonial surroundings, they are always true gentlemen as the following few lines from 'Jean Kesson' illustrate:

My brothers, nephews and Frank Rushton are thoroughly happy in the untrammelled freedom of this new life, and they do not find it essential to forget that they are gentlemen either. (Liston n.d: 119)

Representations such as these provide examples of Liston's desire to explicitly influence colonial society and shape South Australian white cultural identity. They were highly politicised representations, clearly depended upon distinctions of class, gender and race and designed to reinforce the social, political and cultural authority of white colonial women. They were additionally designed to signal Liston own position as a white middle class settler woman.

In concluding, it is evident that Liston's writing can be viewed as a vehicle through which she could promulgate and champion ideological social and political concerns. In doing so, she utilised femininity and domesticity as central tenets in her narratives of female empowerment. Clearly Liston did strive to be an influential mythmaker and cultural agent, a women writer who wanted to be heard. The following chapter will elaborate upon this notion further and deal specifically with Liston's construction of South Australia and its white inhabitants. It will investigate how her writing created a space for the 'innocent presence' of the pioneer which enhanced the perception of South Australia as a land of 'milk and honey' and egalitarian ideals. Immersed within a trope of worthy white characters, who struggled and succeeded against adversity, such narratives ultimately framed the founding moment within the themes of settlement rather than invasion and produced a 'feel-good' version of events.

Chapter eight will analyse Liston's use of what Moreton-Robinson would call a 'dehumanising rhetoric strategy' when representing Aboriginal peoples

within her texts. (Moreton-Robinson 2004) It will explore the ways in which she scripted a subject Aboriginal race where the 'other' became primitive while the white self remained civilised. Part of this strategy, it will be argued, relied upon a dialogue of control and exclusion and worked, as Georgi-Findlay would say, from 'positions of innocence and detachment'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: xi) This chapter will highlight how Liston's foundational narratives were grounded in racial discourses which justified and perpetuated white culture while excluding and rejecting the 'disorderly' Aboriginal presence.

For the townspeople of Elliston, Ellen Liston is publicly celebrated and remembered as a remarkable woman. Since the establishment of the township she has gained larger than life status, her memory marked by a giant mural painted on the walls of the Community Agricultural Hall. The mural itself is painted to honour the early pioneers, an attempt to mark the beginning of successful white settlement in the region. It is a distinctive visual commemoration. But there is much more to the story of Ellen Liston than this painting might suggest. This chapter has only scratched the surface. The following chapters will deepen the investigation.

'An Apostle of Labour': The Bush, the Pioneer and a South Australian Identity.

The first rude evidence of the occupation by civilised man of this forest wilderness...The work of surveying and laying out a township was going on and all seemed cheerful bustle and good-humoured adaptability to roughing it.

(Liston n.d: 1)

The above passage is an extract from Liston's unpublished manuscript, 'Jean Kesson', written shortly before she died. The two sentences quoted illustrate Liston's desire to naturalise the 'innocent presence' of the pioneer and legitimise their place within the founding story of South Australian history. Predictably this story has many hallmarks generally associated with foundational histories. Notably, for example, and as evidenced by the quoted passage, there are countless detailed descriptions of the heroic first white inhabitants, 'Apostles of Labour', as Liston labels them, who leave the relative comforts of their home in the 'Old World' to tame the vast wilderness and ultimately find success in the 'New World'. These 'Apostles' are not just white men, however, but also white women. Indeed, Liston's celebration of the pioneer woman, her commemoration of what she perceives as the perseverance, courage and adaptability of this pioneer subject, occurred well before women were popularly incorporated into the pioneer legend, as John Hirst contends. Her stories embraced the notion of the pioneer women as a 'special breed' of people before many others were to popularly incorporate them into their writing. Thus, while she participates in a nationalist discourse which emphasises the figure of the bushman, she tends to place these figures

alongside of, if not sometimes a step behind, the 'strong', 'nurturing' and independent pioneer woman. A white middle class woman rather than the traditional iconic bush male hence often represent the national characters within Liston's foundational stories.

The following chapter will look at how Liston tried to get South Australia 'down on paper' through the construction of a very gendered pioneer story. It will interrogate how and why pioneering women were often portrayed as powerful influences, responsible for transmitting an aura of refinement, intelligence and comfort in what was seen as an uncultured land. Alongside this figure was the pioneer man, similarly refined and cultured, and like his female counterpart, presented as an 'innocent presence' who rightfully came into possession of the land. Also included in this chapter will be a look at how, in some instances, Liston's ideal pioneer was not always of British origin but occasionally of German heritage, presenting a somewhat alternate tack to the tale of South Australia's founding found in other women writer's tales during the time. What will become obvious throughout the chapter is the way in which Liston's narratives nourished a refined image of the colonial presence and naturalised European settlement. Both were literary acts which mark her short stories, serials and unpublished narratives as political and cultural works. Liston's 'gaze was never pure', as David Spurr would say. (Spurr 1993) Her literary works were deeply implicated in the colonial endeavour, aimed at peopling the South Australian imagined landscape with good white industrious settlers who forged a Godly society. Indeed, Hage's argument that:

as much as the nation is imagined as a homely construct, the nationalist body is also imagined to inhabit it in a specific way such as it can cast its managerial gaze on the home (Hage 1998: 45)

is an important one for this chapter. Liston's literary works very much embodied assumptions on who rightfully belonged to the national home. Classified as sentimental fiction during and after their time, but viewed in this thesis as highly contested historical sites, Liston's works offer a new evidence for locating the colonial woman writer as a politician in print.

An 'Apostle of Labour' is the label Liston gives to Max Rechner, one of her main characters in 'Jean Kesson'. It is used as a somewhat spiritual reminder of what the ideal pioneer, or bushman and bushwoman, titles Liston also used, needed to represent - a diligent champion of work who seeks fulfilment from their labour rather than from inherited riches. They are modest, resourceful and considerate people, committed to developing a happy and secure home for their family within an unfamiliar and somewhat 'primitive' environment. Their hard work in taming and transforming their newly acquired land is celebrated by Liston and is seen as not only marking the ideal settler's industriousness, but, as Ann Curthoys and Deborah Bird Rose might argue, as a sign of their right to work and own their own piece of the Promised Land. (Rose 1999; Curthoys 1999) Curthoys, for example, argues that settler Australians, particularly those of British origin, envisioned the Australian land as a Promised Land that had been 'reserved by God for his new chosen people'. (Curthoys 1999: 4) It was a land that was seen as offering 'tragedy and suffering' but also rich reward for those who 'forsook the green fields and teeming cities of Europe and beyond,

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setting out like Abraham and Moses' (Lattas 1999: 234) to take up their rightful place, as God ordained, and transforming it into, a 'pastoral New World garden', as Georgi-Findlay might say. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 2) Indeed, Liston describes this process of transformation almost poetically, indicating that she wanted to preserve this act as something to be appreciated and cherished by subsequent generations of South Australians. The following passage comes from 'Jean Kesson' and describes the work of John Kesson, one of the main characters:

Soon the echoing sounds of the axe strokes and the musical ping of the crescent saw, mixed with the notes of the wild birds that were startled at the novel minuetions on their domain and by and by, the great trees crashed down, and were cut up and dragged on one side; brushed wood was levelled and burned and a clearing made on a rich flat ready to plough for their first crop. (Liston n.d: 20)

Much later the scene is described as a place of beauty and productivity:

Its farmland is green with waving corn, and its pastures with grass and lucerne. Stretching down the slope in front of the house stands an orchard, its trees a sweated mass of delicate fruit blossom.... At each side of the house and right in front, are clusters of English trees, chestnuts, walnuts, elms. (Liston n.d: 134-35)

The clearing of the bush in the first passage quoted takes on a 'romantic' tone where John Kesson is envisaged as the creator of progress who hastens the birth of nationhood. This 'adventurous' pioneer is not represented as an

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interloper, or foreigner, disturbing his new surroundings but rather as an 'initiator of enterprise', an agent of history who symbolises the foundational story of hard work and success. He represents, to use Franz Fanon's words, 'the absolute beginning', and the rightful owner of the land, taking that which is 'naturally given'. (Fanon 1973: 39-40) Indeed, through the employment of such colonial rhetoric, Liston strategically positions colonisation as a non-violation with nature rather than as an exploitative act, or to follow Louise Pratt's theory, as an anti-conquest. If we consider Georgi-Findlay's point that 'the myth of the innocent in the New World garden conceals human intention...by transforming the historically made into the naturally given', then by positioning John Kesson as an 'innocent presence', rather than as an 'invader' or 'destroyer', his levelling, burning and clearing of the bushland thus becomes a natural and justifiable act. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 4) In fact, it becomes an act that is shown to regenerate the land not destroy it. Represented within such rhetoric, John Kesson can legitimately, and deservedly, transform the land into a farmland 'green with waving corn...its pastures with grass and lucerne'; its form now domesticated and controlled. It represents, to quote Jay Arthur, a 'coming-into-being' of the South Australian landscape. (Arthur 2003) Indeed, trapped, as Arthur would say, by a colonising language that compared the Australian landscape with the English landscape, the naming of English trees is done to locate the young colony within the British Empire and to show the successful appropriation and transformation of the land.¹ Liston thus

¹ Arthur argues, for example, that 'the language of the colonist remembers another place because it originated elsewhere and its vocabulary was imprinted with that other place'. (Arthur 2003: 27)

indicates an awareness of both 'the colonised landscape and the landscape of origin', as she seeks to mark the beginning of South Australia. (Arthur 2003: 27) The scene thus symbolises a 'homely nation' where nature and settler come together to create order and productivity. Such representational image bears strong resemblance to John Blasket's recorded foundational history of South Australia quoted earlier in the second chapter but quite at odds with those recorded by the also quoted Indigenous writers. It also reaffirms David Spurr's suggestion that 'colonial discourse takes over as it takes cover', appropriating territory while also appropriating the 'means by which such acts of appropriation are to be understood.' (Spurr 1993: 28) Spurr argues, for example:

The colonizer speaks as an inheritor whose very vision is charged with racial ambition. Simultaneously, however, this proprietary vision covers itself. It effaces its own mark of appropriation by transforming it into the response to a putative appeal on the part of the colonized land...This appeal may take the form of chaos that calls for restoration of order...of natural abundance that awaits the creative hand of technology. (Spurr 1993: 28)

John Kesson becomes this 'creative hand'. To reinforce the perception of his 'innocent presence', Liston depicts him as the ideal settler - practical, careful and astute. He leads a life of spiritual, economic and social fulfilment after settling in South Australia, reaping the rewards of his hard won achievements. Although he is left widowed when his wife dies on their voyage to the colony he endeavours to fulfil his wife's dream of raising their infant daughter, Jean, in South Australia. He buys a small piece of farming land thirty-six miles from

Adelaide and successfully builds a comfortable life for himself and his daughter. He makes lucrative deals and continues to buy and clear more land. Liston is careful not to portray him as an avaricious man who exploits the land for profit, however, but as one who gains just reward from helping and guiding others. His industriousness marks him, as Liston intended, as one who rightfully belongs to the nation and who, to apply Ghassan Hage's theorising, thus has the 'right to benefit from the nation's resources, to "fit into it", or "feel at home" within it'. (Hage 1998: 45) Indeed, his household is described as a place of domestic 'homely' harmony and balance, representing the supreme colonial middle class sanctum of rationality and order, as the following passage shows:

There was an atmosphere of good will and kindly consideration about the whole place...Neighbours used to say, if they fell out with each other, or grew vexed over difficult business transactions, or troublesome domestic matters, that it was better than hearing half a dozen sermons just to go over to Kesson's for an hour or two. Not that he ever preached to them, nor ever talked what is called 'religion'; but his advice, if asked, was always readily tendered, was always sound and thorough. (Liston n.d: 145)

John Kesson is clearly given the role of kindly educator who always gives sound and fair advice to those around him, and helps to create a society that is 'Godly' and just. Throughout the story he is characterised as a highly intellectual man, well versed in languages, the classics, religion, history and science. He treats everyone his equal: 'why should you not treat mankind at large in the same way', and is a loving and caring father and husband. (Liston

n.d: 152) He personifies Lake's ideal Domestic Man - a sober, practical man who devotes his life to educating and raising his daughter:

As soon as [Jean] was strong enough to bear the fatigue, she was his constant companion indoors and out. He...told her stories, weaving with them, as she grew older, something of truthfulness, nobleness and duty...He made a companion of her and devoted his leisure to her amusement and instruction.

(Liston n.d: 26)

John Kesson is clearly exemplified as the ideal father, husband and settler by Liston. It provides just one example of how she peopled her literary landscape with such characters in an effort to strengthen her white settler ideology and to show readers how to be worthy South Australians. It also served to advance the notion of the white British settler as the rightful occupier and defender of the land. (Curthoys 2006) Other characters in 'Jean Kesson', whose representations furthers this philosophy and additionally shapes Liston's construction of the 'typical' bushman, include the Hammond and the Rushton men. Both families fill the role of ideal settler families, migrating to South Australia in the hope of building a future in the new colony. Frank Rushton, for example, comes to South Australia when his father, James, decides his son needs to be removed from the temptations of the Old World. South Australia, according to James, provided the best avenue for his son's new life:

I will take him to this new colony that is so much talked of. He shall fight the wilds and take possession of them...and South Australia gained a strong, self reliant, indomitable colonist. (Liston n.d: 73)

The suggestion that Frank is to 'fight' and 'take possession' of the wilds is used by Liston in this passage to conjure up an image of South Australia as an untouched, primordial land, a *terra nullius* that awaits the hand of progress. When represented thus, the settler's presence is more easily explained and validated. Indeed, such imagery followed popular ideas on the law of nature and nations of the day that advocated the right for mankind to gain property through his labour. It was an ideology founded on the belief that when man had removed himself 'from the state of nature', had 'located himself in one place', enclosed and cultivated the earth, he could then 'gain property through his labour'. (Janson & Macintyre 1990: 66) From Genesis, Grotius and Locke, for example, it was understood that land rightfully belonged to those who were Industrious. John Locke, a late seventeenth and early eighteenth century philosopher, for instance, claimed that land was only settled once it had been enclosed and cultivated. (Locke 1960)² Frank Rushton, as the cultivator and tiller, was thus given the right by Liston to possess the land.

The passage also implies that Frank must do battle with, and tame, the land. The landscape is hence envisioned as not only empty, waiting for the hand of white civilisation, but as something which is also harsh and cruel, needing to be fought and conquered, resonating with Jay Arthur point that colonists were constructed 'as a military force engaged in a hostile relation with the

² Locke, for example, argued: 'As much land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates and can use the Product of, so much is his Property. He by his labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common...[For God] gave it to the use of the Industrious and Rationale (and Labour was to be his Title to it)'.(Locke 1960: 333)

indigenous place'. (Arthur 2003: 123) While such imagery is underpinned by a colonial rhetoric which mediates and justifies the rights of the colonists to claim ownership to the land, it also symbolises the status of the 'worthy' pioneer who 'answers the call of the wild' and fights a 'worthy' battle. For, as Andrew Lattas perceptively claims, pioneering figures who battle the land are seen 'to gain spiritual possession' through their suffering, which in itself 'takes on the epic proportions of pilgrimage that redeems and heals the nation'. (Lattas 1997: 234) The simultaneous creative imagery of the conquest and taming of the land is thus employed by Liston as a declaration that the early pioneering tale, exemplified here by Frank Rushton's story, was to be embraced as a form of commemorative foundational history that memorialised the pioneers as national figures who gave 'birth to nationhood'. (Lattas 1997: 234) She wanted to ensure that the hardships suffered, and the heroics displayed by her 'Apostles' was remembered and appreciated by later readers. The following passage from her short story 'Doctor' demonstrates this desire:

You colonists of today have very little idea, if any, of what our life as pioneers in the far bush was in those days. We were one and forty miles from the most embryo township, and that was in the very wilds itself; from it we had to get all the necessities of life; the luxuries that fell to our lot were very small. (Liston 1936: 134)

The pioneering settlers thus become 'icons' in Liston's narratives. Her bushmen in particular, display great 'masculine power', are fine of form, 'daring', 'unerring', and are ready for any emergency. They adapt to colonial life and to the Australian bush and develop new distinct identities, complete

with a cockatoo feather or two pinned to their hats to symbolise their Australianness.³ The following extract, from 'Jean Kesson', for example, describes Burton Hammond; another of Liston's many bushmen characters:

Burton Hammond...stands...one arm thrown carelessly over his steed's neck, and the other hand looped in the folds of a scarlet sash that is twisted round his waist. He is of medium height, flexible, wiry, elastic in head and bearing, evidently of great muscular power and endurance; a well formed face, and fine grey eyes. The mouth is firm; but a reckless, go-to-the-devil expression haunts his countenance. (Liston n.d: 35)

Although Burton is labelled here as a reckless man with a 'go-to-the-devil' countenance, Liston nevertheless portrays him as a serious, hardworking settler who provides guidance and understanding to his friends and family. Indeed, Liston is careful to point out in her works that her bushmen are more than just physically strong and able. They are also intelligent and though some are occasionally brash at times, are always refined and cultured. Another example of this is Mr. Laurie, a bushman from Liston's short story titled 'Louey and I'. He is described as one whose: 'manner and speech stamped him as a thorough gentleman. There was a quiet ease and kindness of bearing, quite free from conceit or assurance.' (Liston 1936: 19)

³ Liston was fond of describing the attire of her bushmen, often placing them in moleskin trousers, riding boots and cabbage tree hats. On many occasions she would make reference to a cockatoo feather tucked into their hat.

Such characterisation is designed to offer an alternative female vision of the South Australian bushman, representing a subversion and challenge to the masculine stereotypical legend of the Australian national character that was to preoccupy discourses of nationhood during the 1890s onwards. By embodying her male characters with refinement, kindness and culture, rather than drunkenness and dissidence, Liston is defining ideal masculinity, or the 'True Man', not in opposition to feminine domesticity but as a complement to it. Thus, as the following quote highlights, the bushmen in Liston's works appreciate the refining influence of their mothers, sisters, aunts and wives, holding them in high esteem:

At the end of a hard days work, when they had been busy amongst their stock, it was charming, after changing their garments and making themselves cool and tidy to sit down to a meal served with taste, and with a well-appointed table surroundings once more, presided over by a stately, beautiful woman.
(Liston n.d: 101)

Clearly therefore, Liston wanted to show colonial society as refined and cultured despite its raw elements. Like other South Australian women writers of her time, Catherine Spence and Matilda Evans for example, she located her work within a pervasive trope which constructed South Australian society as something which was a haven for respectable and industrious middle class families. (Allen 1991, 2003) Not only did this serve to reinforce the notion that South Australia was in some way unique but it also helped to establish a historical continuum that legitimised 'a pattern of ownership' for generations of non-Indigenous white South Australians. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26)

As pointed out earlier, Liston's colonial discourse set up specific roles for white pioneering women in order to present them as powerful and influential agents. Consequently, such female characters are assigned major roles, in many cases, the primary role, and are often depicted as brave women undertaking hard work in extreme conditions. Indeed, Liston positions them as lynch pins in the success of their families' colonial outcome, sharing equally in the recognition as pioneering heroes. While many of these women, are shown to possess the necessary domestic attributes, they are not confined, as Sue Kossew would say, to 'captivity in the domestic sphere'. (Kossew 2004: 29) Instead it is their display of remarkable expertise outside this sphere which Liston wants highlighted. They are thus positioned as indomitable characters who create order out of disorder, harmony from disharmony and provide the framework for successful colonial expansion. Although engaged in hard physical labour, there is no sense that these women take on inappropriate masculine traits and abandon their femininity. It is very likely that Liston called upon her own experience when writing about such women. As a governess living on a remote station she was often called upon to help with shearing, wool scouring and overseeing general station work when her employer was absent. She described herself as an accomplished rider and enjoyed helping to muster cattle. It is therefore probable that when writing, Liston was not just imagining the experiences of her pioneer women characters but also reliving some of her own experiences as well.

This is made somewhat evident in a short story titled 'How a woman kept her promise', wherein the female protagonist, Maggie Elliston, not only helps to improve her husband's intellect and create a domestic haven out of nothing, but works resolutely by his side outside the house:

Everybody who has been amongst sheep knows that they should be out of the yard at sunrise and not in till sunset, so there is little time for domestic work if the wife is a shepherd; but this young lady was up, had put her house straight, breakfast was ready, dispatched, and cleared away and by the time the sun showed his face fairly both were off to their work, carrying their days provisions with them; she took needle-work with her, and when not that a book. (Liston 1936: 74)

Here the emphasis is on showing that Maggie is never idle but is always doing something useful or improving, even while watching the sheep. She represents a true 'Apostle of Labour', not only adapting to the harsh realities around her whilst maintaining her gentility and domesticity but successfully working as well as any man. This is made even more evident later in the story when Liston writes:

I have seen her on horseback tailing cattle day after day for weeks together. I have seen her shepherding in all weathers; helping to draft and brand; harnessing up the horse and fetching a load of wood, or dragging timber for fences, or busy amongst her household duties; but she never lost caste by it; she was always in everything - by action, manner, speech - a lady. (Liston 1936: 76)

Hence, Ellen represents the quintessential pioneer heroine, resourceful, hard working but always a lady - a notion which is at odds with later representations painted by popularised male bush writers such as Henry Lawson and Edward Dyson. Both writers often described the loss of femininity and gentility experienced by women pioneers who were forced to work outside their domestic sphere. In his poem 'Borderland', for example Lawson described his female pioneers as 'gaunt and haggard', while in his short story 'The Drover's Wife', the pioneer woman is both physically and mentally weak. Dyson, in his story 'The Washerwoman of Jacker's Flat', represents Brummy Peters, the female pioneer, as possessing unfeminine traits.⁴ Liston, however, while wanting to inspire readers to appreciate the life led, and the work undertaken, by these women, is careful to ensure that her female characters continue to retain their position as genteel ladies who bring refinement to those around them. This is particularly evident in 'Jean Kesson' where the Ruston and Hammond women, although undertaking new work as pioneers, bring 'light' to their unfamiliar surroundings:

They throw the light of their love and labour, not only over us individually but over every thing around us for our sake. I have been surprised at the ready adaptability that we have proved in them. (Liston n.d: 125)

⁴ I am drawing on Richard Waterhouse's argument here when he points out in his article 'Australian Legends: Representations of the bush, 1813-1913', that Lawson and Dyson were two writers who portrayed women pioneers as masculine and haggard within their writing. (Waterhouse 2000) Sue Kossew also emphasises Lawson's work for its perpetuation of the pioneer woman as a mother of the nation and prisoner to the bush. (Kossew 2004)

Liston's works are aimed at not only translating the female subject in their new environment but also re-formulating them as well and highlighting their coming into their Australianness. She wants to illustrate that although emigration created destabilisation within conventional gender divisions it did not mean that women pioneers were unfeminine or unbecoming. In essence, she wants to show that the changes facilitated in these women's lives were mentally and physically stimulating, indeed, beneficial to middle class colonial women. The following passage, for example, demonstrates Liston's intent to promote the 'goodness' of colonial life, and how it offered new realms of empowerment and agency. It is again written in reference to the Hammond and Rushton women:

It was singular to notice in after years, how the dominant spirit that filled the minds of these three ladies in their early colonial life, tinged them after reminiscences of those days, when speaking of them to others. The two Hammond women, whilst they admitted drawbacks, inconveniences, discomforts... spoke of the healthful, spirit-stirring charm of life in their bush home, the fun and amusement that they got out of their new experiences, the many beautiful features of the scenery, though strange to their English eye and always expressed their readiness to go through the same again. (Liston n.d: 100]

Here Liston briefly mentions the drawbacks of colonial life but sets it against the many advantages it provided colonial women. She wants to emphasise the practical role these women had in building the 'New World', and to show their adaptation to their new circumstances through their willingness to relinquish

the English customs and manners that had become inappropriate in colonial society. In short, she aims to show the birth of the female 'settler subject', a subject seen not as a chattel to their husband, but as a heroic, self-contained and very patriotic individual. Mercy Rushton, for example, although at first reluctant to view her surroundings as anything amounting to beauty and pleasure: 'I was not brought up in this dreadful colony Jean but amongst civilised people, when things were done properly', she eventually begins to see splendour in the things around her. (Liston n.d: 363) Her story is one of growing self-awareness and transformation. She changes from a reluctant settler who despises the Australian landscape: 'But oh, these miserable wilds, this semi-savagery of existence', to one who views her surroundings with newfound appreciation and fondness, thus becoming a true settler who realises the value of colonial life. (Liston n.d: 99) Liston's female pioneer characters are therefore decisively portrayed as influential agents who come to Australia and take charge of their lives and their families:

They... had come prepared to find things rough in a degree and uncomfortable in many ways, but to be quietly put up with and made the best of, till time should shape the new into some semblance of the old and they would do what they could to aid the shaping. (Liston n.d: 134)

In her study of Louisa Lawson's story 'The Australian Bush-Woman', Sue Kossew draws attention to the way Louisa placed particular emphasis on the next generation of bushwomen, referred to as the 'Australian daughter', who were national figures in their own right, and who possessed 'iron strength of character, patience and endurance'. (Kossew 2004: 29) Louisa's story

represented, Kossew contends, an alternative to her son, Henry's, formation of the pioneer woman, who as noted previously, depicted pioneer women within stereotypical imagery of the haggard wife and mother. I would argue that Liston, in her characterisation of the female protagonist, Jean, in 'Jean Kesson' also offers a similar alternative. While Liston places great emphasis on those women who had left the old for the new; she is also keen to introduce the birth of the 'native' Australian woman.⁵ Her character, Jean is therefore portrayed as one born to the South Australian land, who loves the 'shea-oak flats covered with its long waving grass', the 'ever-green gum trees', and the wide-open spaces of her surroundings where she could roam and explore at will. (Liston n.d: 97) She enjoys a life of relative freedom, not forced by her father to undertake 'lady-like employment' such as music; singing and fancywork as her English counterparts are often represented as doing. An accomplished horsewoman and dray-driver she sometimes assists her father doing farm jobs, but is also adept in executing domestic duties. Indeed, Liston ensures that her female protagonist sees her domestic life as an important area of her work and represents her running her father's household with consummate skill.⁶ Her appearance, like Liston's descriptions of her bushmen characters, denotes strength of will, perseverance and high bearing:

⁵ The word 'native' was used during this time, and for many years after, to describe those who had been born and raised in Australia rather than emigrating from other countries.

⁶ Margaret Allen also points to this type of literary strategy in her PhD study, highlighting how Matilda Evans, Catherine Martin and Catherine Helen Spence all celebrated the colonial accomplishments of their female protagonists.

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She was tall and lithe, with a certain easy strength of manner and bearing which was the result ...of thorough healthfulness of mind and body.’(Liston n.d: 201)

She is also characterised, as a paragon of virtue, believing it is her duty to help the ‘helpless’ but to seek no reward. She despises falsehood and selfishness and adamantly believes in equality among the classes of people, as the following passage demonstrates:

‘Jean! Jean!’ exclaimed Miss Rushton; ‘you cannot like rough, course farm-work, as well as you would the delicate handling of silks and wools’. Jean looked up with the proud handsome face with a steady look, as she replied, ‘It would make no difference to my very self, dear Miss Rushton, what I did with a right purpose. It is not by what a person does, by what he is, that he ought to be judged’. ‘So then, you will think as highly of the woman in my kitchen who washes the plate and dishes and cooks the dinners, as you do of me?’ ‘I suppose so if the only difference between you is the different methods of employing your time’. (Liston n.d: 212)

Liston’s portrayal of Jean, as the passage demonstrates, is aimed at positioning Jean’s versatility, strength of character and egalitarian outlook. It is intended to show that this young girl, although probably considered uncouth by British traditionalists, is a product of her new environment – a ‘refreshing’ breath of air who is not stifled by the ‘flippancies’ and conventionalities of the old world but a girl of great resourcefulness and patriotic pride. Although clearly adept at executing work considered outside her sphere Liston is careful to demonstrate that she is no less refined than her English counterparts. Margaret Allen argues

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that the 'category of the colonial or Australian woman was contested' during this period, claiming that:

Through much Australian literature written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we can read a concern about the colonial girl and woman. In comparison with her English, and at times British sisters, the question was asked whether she was too forward, too precocious and too well developed. (Allen 2000: 98)

Such anxiety perhaps inspired Liston to ensure that her female subjects were not 'rough and ready', un-sexed, colonials but moral, righteous women who could successfully shape the world around them without forsaking their gentility and to show 'that it was possible to live a worthy and religious life in the young colony'. (Allen 2000: 98)

This is made even more obvious by defining Jean through, and in contrast to, other less 'worthy' settlers. The character of Mrs. Lang, for example, is constructed, as Mikhail Bakhtin might say, to specifically highlight the worthiness of Jean as an 'Australian daughter'. She is portrayed as an 'unfavourable' colonist, a petty, pretentious; ungrateful who is unable to appreciate her new environment. As a minister's wife, Mrs. Lang firmly believes that her family, 'by position and education' rightly belonged to the upper layers of society and is appalled when she discovers things are not what she expected they would be when her family migrates to the young colony. As Liston writes:

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Mrs Lang... had fondly thought that in Australia, where there were neither squires...nor lords, the position she would hold must command a double reverence. But the spirit of the genuine emigrant is akin to the spirit that shakes off serfdom and the badges of servantorship, dimly recognising and asking its fellows to recognise that there is equality in man's right and that equality shall be maintained. Mrs. Lang regarded with horror the idea that Jack was as good as his master...there were no paupers of whom she could assume complete control. The farm-labourers were well-paid, well-fed, well-clothed and though their dwellings were made of wattle and in rough slabs, that was simply incidental to the new order of things. (Liston n.d: 264)

Mrs. Lang is clearly satirised as a superficial and pretentious woman whose inability to understand the advantages colonial life offers places her outside the 'worthy' colonist category. Indeed, her characterisation is used to posit South Australian society against English society in an attempt by Liston to strengthen the ideal of South Australia as an egalitarian utopia where no paupers exist and even the labourers are well off. The cities of England, in contrast, are described as 'miserable, wretched and crime-stained', full 'of thousands of drink-besotted poor' who live dreadful lives with little or no rights. (Liston n.d: 13)

The story of Jean's mother, Ellen, for example, is written to symbolise the wretchedness of urban life in London. As a young girl Ellen moved to London seeking employment but was only able to find work as a poor shirt maker. Unable to pay her rent she was thrown out of her home and would have died from starvation and exposure if not for John rescuing her. Just before she dies she pleads with John to never return to England but to raise their daughter in South Australia away from the poverty and despair:

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Let her grow up in Australia...there must be plenty of work in a new country; she could never come to be as I was. I have so hungered for years to see the grasses and tress in a real wood, away from houses, such as I lived with when a girl, before those dreadful London days. (Liston n.d: 10)

London is thus depicted in very bleak and dark terms. In comparison, South Australia is represented as a land of imagined paradise – no poverty or squalor, a place where ‘Jack is as good as his master’. Indeed, it is interesting to note that when Liston does describe cases of poverty in Australia it is in her published serial *Auckland Marston*, a story set in New South Wales. In this particular narrative Sydney is seen as a city harbouring criminals and degenerates, where disease-ridden slums are in abundance and children suffer from abuse and malnutrition. South Australia and Adelaide, however, escape such critical scrutiny, reinforcing its position as a land of ‘difference’. The foundational myth of prosperity and freedom from ‘convict stain’ is thus maintained and reinforced throughout Liston’s narratives, demonstrating how she produced fiction which repeatedly revolved around a concern over the South Australian identity. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s understanding of how cultural discourses of national representation and identity were continually shifting strategies which relied on categories of otherness is important here as it demonstrates that national ‘fantasies’ were representative of various historical moments and embodied positions. She points out, for example:

The ‘other’ of the nation in a given political or historical setting may be the prenational monarchy, the local ethnicity, the diaspora...ideological, religious, or ethnic unit, the sub-national locale or the ex-colonial; the colony may become national vis-à-vis the homeland, or the homeland become national vis-

à-vis the nationalism of its colonies; the nationalism of the homeland may be coextensive with or oppositional to its imperialism; and so forth. (Cited in McCullough 1999: 6)

Discourses of national identity were thus seen by Sedgwick as intersecting and complicated representations which reflected shifting historical moments and ideologies and were very much dependent upon various categories of otherness. The emphasis was placed on who and what gets to represent the 'national fantasy' and was often depended upon diverse pressures. (McCullough 1999) In Liston's case, the other could be England and those settlers, such as Mrs. Lang, who were incapable of adapting, or other Australian colonies that were seen to be 'contaminated' by the convict presence. Liston's 'imagined community', thus operated, as Richard White would say, at sub-national levels in that 'Australians were encouraged to see themselves as Queenslanders or Victorians', or in this case, as South Australian. (White 1992: 13)

Interestingly, Liston's notion of who could belong to her imagined 'homely' nation included German settlers. This varied greatly with some other South Australian women writers, particularly Matilda Jane Evans and Catherine Helen Spence, who portrayed German settlers as crude, slovenly and unrefined. German women, in particular, were accused of blurring domestic work with farm work by working in the field alongside their husbands and thus were

represented by Spence and Evans as unfit mothers and wives.⁷ Liston, however, endeavoured to show German colonists in a good light and depicted them as hard working settlers, whose ‘plodding’ perseverance was highly valued. In ‘Jean Kesson’, for example, Liston positions Pauline and Carl Hofmann, two German settlers, as important characters in the storyline. Pauline, for example, looks after Jean and helps to raise her, becoming an important mother figure for the young girl, while her husband Carl initially works for John Kesson but eventually becomes his partner. Rather than being portrayed as crude or slovenly, Pauline is depicted as a happy and domestically capable woman as the following passage indicates,

Pauline soon put their limited stock of household goods in order, commanded their industry, admired Carl’s garden, for which she had brought some additions, and when Kesson asked her if she thought she could bear with the loneliness of life out there, gave a cheerful laugh, saying, ‘Ja, ja, with Carl and Jean...and the garden, I will have no time to feel lonely’...and if ever a busy little, hard-working woman was happy it was Pauline Hofmann. They formed a peaceful, pleasant little household...Kesson, unaccustomed to the working of women in the fields, was surprised to find that Pauline was such a valuable addition to them in the harvest operations. He, a raw beginner, was nowhere near her at reaping, binding or even thrashing, and he acknowledged to himself that Carl had not at all over-estimated her working capabilities. (Liston n.d: 24-25)

⁷ Margaret Allen argues this in her study of Evans’ narratives. See in particular her article
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Pauline is presented here as a hard-working settler who contributes much to the Kesson household and to the colony in general. Rather than represent Pauline's work in the field as something which sets her apart from British settler women, Kesson acknowledges Pauline's work in the fields as valuable. She is, in all respects, representative of Liston's much-admired 'Apostle of Labour'- doing God's work and being industrious. Any suggestions of inappropriate gender divisions of labour are therefore overlooked.

Liston's serials, short stories and published and unpublished manuscripts were thus clearly political works, full of empowering strategies aimed at manufacturing a respectable and popular foundational settler story that made sense of the colonial process by memorialising it within romantic notions of self-creation. Her pioneering characters, who are always white, always British, although occasionally German, and always refined, are centralised and normalised within this regional 'fantasy'. They are deemed as worthy inhabitants, their perseverance and courage legitimising their right to belong. Thus Liston's fiction, as Georgi-Findlay might say, 'reinforced the colonialist fantasy of an empty and uninhabited land' and made space for its transformation. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 41) Her literary works were underpinned by a genesis type notion which conceived South Australia as a land of hope and desire, a land awaiting transformation at the hand of the industrious, modest and hard-working 'Apostles'. Appropriation of the land

'Homely Stories and the ideological work of "Terra Nullius"'.(2003)

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could thus be justified; silencing the consequence of frontier expansion and exploitation and promoting the ideal of the 'all conquering' pioneer, be they male, but more specifically, female.

‘Those infernal wretches’: Liston’s narratives and the Aboriginal subject.

An ideology is made of what it does not mention; it exists because there are things which must not be spoken of. (Mackerey 1978: 132)

When analysing nineteenth century Australian literary works J.J.Healy wrote:

I was struck by how often a consciousness of [the writer] became tied into the quality of their contact with Aborigines. It occurred to me that the novel itself was a field of consciousness, one which had been alerted into existence by a disturbing experience; the working through of the experience became possible only through the form of the novel. (Healy 1989: xv)

The above quote from Healy, and in particular his phrase, ‘a field of consciousness’, is well suited for understanding Liston’s literary representation of Aboriginal characters within her narratives, ‘those infernal wretches’ as she so often labelled them. It helps locate, I believe, the whiteness of this colonial woman writer, specifically highlighting her intent as an author of colonial domination. Often this authorial intent, as previously mentioned, embodied a ‘rhetoric of control’ which served to naturalise the white colonial identity, positioning it as something normal and ordained while at the same time disconnecting it from anything that may destabilise it. Notions of colonial guilt, therefore, were kept absent from Liston’s foundational narratives. The dehumanisation of the Aboriginal peoples, however, was not.

Nineteenth century western scientific and philosophical racist rhetoric was strategically employed by Liston to marginalise Aboriginal people from colonial society and absolve settler responsibility. Within this realm of literary imaginings was a set of guidelines governing the portrayal of what was perceived to exist inside and outside the norm. As a result, unbridgeable social and cultural boundaries between Aboriginal people and white British settlers were continually created by Liston as a means of reinforcing the notion of Aboriginal people as 'uncultured others'. Her Aboriginal characters were thus placed on the periphery of colonial society, consigned to ruthless, often villainous roles and defined within notions of lawlessness and chaos. Labelled 'treacherous devils' and 'troublesome creatures' they were consistently depicted as the enemy - ruthless 'devils' who created havoc for the 'brave' settlers by stealing their food and killing innocent colonists. They were thus given little consideration and representation within Liston's narratives except as 'infernal wretches'. Penny Tinkler's statement that: 'The capacity to ...define ...others is clearly an important aspect of the exercise of colonial authority and power' is germane to this particular area of Liston's literary works. (Tinkler 1998: 220) Her writing was politically positioned within a system of power and control, a position which had the power to influence and shape how Aboriginal people and race relations were to be viewed. The cruelty and violence of these representations form a curious but powerful foil to the pleasant sentimental description of worthy settlers described in the previous two chapters, a technique intended by Liston to legitimate ownership and belonging for white settlers.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the ways Liston constructed herself and her fellow white colonists through the configuration of Indigenous people. This will involve interrogating how her literary approach created the 'disturbing presence' of the Aboriginal 'other' as an overt strategy of exclusion, justification and control. It will show how her explicit accounts of Aboriginal and white settler encounters, rather than unbalance the perception of colonial innocence, served to strengthen the cultural act of legitimisation. The language used by Liston on these occasions, as will be highlighted, was often gruesome and matter-of-fact with little or no sympathy for her Aboriginal characters. It resembles those accounts by many early settlers, such as John Bull, who positioned frontier violence as a justifiable means to an end, something to be written about but only to highlight and celebrate settler success. It also confirms Georgi-Findlay's claim that for many women writers 'national destiny prove[d] to be stronger than personal sympathy'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 42)

In 1882 Liston wrote a short story titled 'Doctor' which centres around a young settler woman, Kit, who endures isolation and danger on the fringe of the South Australian frontier. Kit is given the distinction of being the first white woman in the district; an inhospitable landscape described by Liston as 'no place for a nervous lady'. Kit, the narrator, describes her circumstances thus:

I was the first white woman in that district, and the only one for some time...I was young, with plenty of strength and nerve, and as I was to share in the ease and independence we meant to gain, I elected also to take a little of the

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preliminary hardships and discomforts. Our hut was on the border of a pretty shea-oak flat; but all round for many miles was an almost limitless light scrub...Sometimes, on still, quiet days, the solitude would seem almost oppressive; a vast and terrible stillness seemed to lie over everything; frequently it would press so heavily upon me that I was tempted to flee away shrieking as from some unholy presence. (Liston 1936: 58)

Kit proves to be anything but a nervous lady, however, and is instead characterised as a strong woman, capable of hard work and quiet resolve. She is more than just a 'bush mother', however. She remains, at all times, her husband's equal, working by his side and sharing the 'hardships and discomforts'. Indeed, despite not having contact with another female for four years, Kit does not complain. Rather she frames her life on the frontier within a positive light:

But still, Jack and I had a very happy time of it; we did not tire of each other's society; we were not oppressed by the cares of fashion; we had no routine of outside social duties to drum through; the question of servants troubled us not... Jack often used to say... 'Never mind, Kit, we'll be rich some day and make up for all this.'(Liston 1936: 58)

However, it is not just the foreboding landscape and crude conditions that Liston has her pioneering characters battling in this short story but the presence of a dangerous 'other' who threatens their very existence and is central to Liston's portrayal of Kit as a pioneering woman. This 'other' is an Aboriginal man called Coomultie, a lawless savage, as described by Liston, who attacks Kit and her son when Kit's husband, Jack, is away tending sheep. The episode,

which is quoted here at length, is a sensational one, dramatically written to appeal to the anxieties and fears of colonial readers. As Liston writes:

My back was towards the door, which suddenly went shut, and an uncomfortable presence seemed to fill the hut. I turned hastily round, to meet the grinning gaze of a powerful blackfellow. He was stark naked, and carried a waddie, the whites of his eyes and his teeth looked horrible... I knew him-Coomultie by name, and by report one of the worst and most brutal of his tribe. If hearts ever do stop beating in the midst of life, mine did for a second, but I retained my outward self-possession; if he was one by himself he might not mean any harm, though from his character I mistrusted him ...he stood a pace or two forward, putting out a hand to grasp me. I shrank back, and poor little Johnnie set up a terrified cry. Coomultie snatched him up with one hand, and swung his waddie round the other. You have read of the tiger that leaped into the camp and rescued her chained-up cub. I think I must have felt like she did, as with a rush forward I tore the boy away, and put the table between us and our assailant. It was only a temporary respite; I knew it by his ugly look and angry mutter. What could I do? Useless to make a dash for the door, for it was behind Coomultie, as also was the entrance to the bedroom where our firearms were.... Not even a knife on my side of the room; and what would it have availed against a stalwart black with a waddie? He stepped back, and poised his weapon. Whether he meant to throw it, or spring on us and beat us down, I don't know. Involuntarily I bent forward over my closely-clutched boy, and raised my arm to parry the blow. From under my arm I saw him advance one step-two. There was a sudden rush of something through the window behind me, and over the table a hoarse growl from a dog, and a yell from Coomultie. The waddie went shivering amongst some bottles on a shelf above my head, as the black went down borne forcibly to the ground but the

swift assault of the 'mange cur', who was seeking to fix his teeth in the fellow's throat ...It was an awful struggle...Once having got a hold, all Coomultie's desperate efforts to free himself were in vain. I believe you might have torn the dog limb from limb before he would have let go. (Liston 1936: 137-39)

The words 'powerful', 'horrible' and 'ugly' are used throughout the passage to portray the depravity of the Aboriginal subject. By constructing Coomultie as a savage brute, he becomes an evil and dangerous intruder whose 'uncomfortable' and threatening presence is strategically placed against the innocently positioned settler. His presence becomes even more sinister because of its transgression into Kit's domestic sanctuary. Although his death is quite brutal Liston renders it justified because of this intrusive transgression, and thus shows no sympathy for his fate. He is simply but deliberately positioned the dangerous trespasser and rendered a dehumanised 'other', his 'undesirable' presence marking the boundary between the civilised white pioneer and the savage Aboriginal intruder.

It needs also to be noted that there is no attempt made by Liston to explain why Coomultie attacked the hut. Consequently, the possibility that Coomultie's attack was motivated by hunger, the invasion of his land, or ill treatment by white settlers is never raised in the story. His aggression is strategically left unquestioned, leaving the reader to imagine him an inherent thief and villain who possessed an uncivilised mind and body which lacks discipline and control. It is a strategy which effectively enveloped Coomultie within a rhetorical 'debasement of the cultural other', tainting him as a dangerous object

to be removed from colonial society. (Spurr 1993:76) In contrast the settler remains centralised and is positioned as the rightful proprietor of the land, and thus the victim whose home has been invaded. Indeed, by employing a victimological rhetoric, Liston simultaneously advances notions of sympathy and admiration for Kit, the nurturing and fiercely protective mother and ‘guardian of the family unit’. (Kossew 2004: 29)

Coomultie is cremated upon Jack’s return. Kit, no doubt as a literary ploy by Liston to distance her from what was to follow, falls ill shortly after the attack and when she comes ‘to her proper senses’ learns that a ‘muster of several hands from several stations’ had gone on a ‘crusade against the natives’. (Liston 1936: 139) The ‘crusade’, as Liston labels it, is a brief inclusion¹:

They [the station hands] cannot be blamed, for we were too far from civilisation to depend on lawful redress, though without doubt many of the unoffending suffered with the guilty, but that is not a result confined to dealings of whites with blacks – it tells both ways. (Liston 1936: 139)

Although the passage briefly alludes to the killing of innocent Aboriginal people, it is framed within an imperialist discourse of colonial anti-conquest. Indeed, the word ‘crusade’ has been employed to position the settlers’ actions

¹ Interestingly, this same passage of writing was excluded from the version of ‘Doctor’ published in Louise Brown’s et al *A Book of South Australia: Women in the First Hundred Years* (1936), no doubt because it may have disrupted the book’s intended purpose of commemorating the pioneers. Rick Hosking also makes this point.

as more a reforming enterprise than an unlawful act of brutality. There is thus little real remorse shown towards the ‘unoffending’ Aboriginal victims. Rather Liston’s main concern is justifying the actions of the station hands. David Spurr argues that writers employed such literary strategies as a means of ‘positive self-definition’, particularly during times when the sociocultural position of colonists was threatened. (Spurr 1993: 76) As he argues:

When notions such as ‘civilization’ and ‘reason’ are in danger of being called into question, their definition, as well as their identification with particular people, is established by pointing to their supposed opposites, to what can be designated as ‘savagery’ or ‘madness’. (Spurr 1993: 76)

Coomultie is thus portrayed as this ‘supposed opposite’, allowing the voice of reason to proclaim his death as an act of self-defence and the subsequent ‘crusade’ as a justifiable retaliation: ‘They cannot be blamed, for we were too far from civilisation to depend on lawful redress.’ (Liston 1936: 139) By displacing responsibility from the settlers to the Aboriginal intruder, the sociocultural position of the station hands is therefore not undermined. The white ‘crusaders’ remain within the law, justifiably policing their rights as settlers against a menacing ‘other’ who threatened their existence. Clearly, therefore, Liston developed discursive strategies that defused and negated, as Hodge and Mishra would say, the ‘intractable conditions of the foundation event’. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 26) For as John Noyes perceptively argues:

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If it is to be shown that possession is strictly in the hands of the coloniser, discursive strategies must be developed to ensure that the marks of suffering of the colonised are obliterated, or in some way neutralised. (Noyes 1992: 242)

The settler could thus remain an innocent presence while the vision of creation could prevail unchallenged.

Rick Hosking has reviewed Liston's short story 'Doctor' as 'a useful insight into the typical valorisation of some of the experiences of the settler-colonist through a conscious process of selective reporting'. (Hosking 1995: 62) As mentioned in the first chapter, Hosking suggests that this particular story is loosely based upon the Waterloo Bay massacre, an incident which occurred on the West Coast of South Australia and allegedly involved the murder of over two hundred Aboriginal men, women and children. Hosking's article is an interesting one, offering a plausible explanation of how Liston's story can be located as a historical site.² He concludes that Liston's 'Doctor' should be viewed as an example of what Mishra and Hodge have labelled the 'dark side of the dream'. For Hosking, it reveals racial conflict and frontier violence, something which, he points out, many of Liston's contemporaries tried to keep silent. It is a revelation; however, somewhat tempered, as Hosking argues, and I would agree, by an unease, a desire to keep some questions left unanswered.

² Hosking writes: 'Liston's version is closer to the historical truth, suggesting that she based 'Doctor' on anecdotes she heard at Nilkerloo between 1869 and 1872'. (Hosking 1995: 75) Liston, Hosking argues, would have listened to stories told by her employer, John Chipp Hamp, whose father was allegedly murdered by Aboriginal people and sparked the Waterloo Bay massacre, and threaded it into her own storyline.

Whether the story is directly based on factual events or a fictional tale, Liston is still hampered by the need to evade some issues while elaborating upon others. As Hosking claims:

...although she is prepared to admit that such 'crusades' occurred, Liston's character decided to remain silent about the details. She suggests that what gives her the right to make such judgements is her colonial status as an individual who had endured not only solitude but also the 'awfulness' of the wild blacks. Such courage and endurance endows the right to call the bush 'ours'. Coomultie no longer lives to offer a rival claim- he has been literally written out of sight, and his story (incomplete as it is) is understood by Liston as nowhere near as significant as Kit's 'her-story'...The writer is thus an active participant in not only suppressing certain aspects of 'her-story', but in sanctioning others' silences and evasions. (Hosking 1995: 77-78)

I agree with Hosking's summation that 'Doctor' is an example of how this nineteenth century writer consciously sought to shape history. As author, Liston is in control of what she wants her readers to imagine. Her technique suggests that she is seeking to legitimise the colonial project by denigrating the Indigenous subject and, although writing them into the story, she effectively writes them out and signals their unwanted presence. Although her writing does not completely deny the murderous actions of settlers, it is nevertheless framed within a suggestion of innocence and pardonable behaviour. Instances of genocide and dispossession are therefore overridden and skimmed over as an inevitable and justifiable, even natural, consequence of the 'savagery' of the Indigenous peoples, effectively marking Liston's deployment of a colonial

rhetoric that turned, to use Edward Said's argument, difference into exclusion and relied upon a lack of self-scrutiny. (Said 1978, 1983)

Liston's story 'Doctor' is not the only example of Liston's selective representation. She employs some of her most explicit and derogatory depiction of Aboriginal people in her unpublished manuscript 'Jean Kesson', where numerous instances of racial conflict and violence are described at gruesome length. Her representations of Aboriginal characters within this story are harsh and unforgiving, strategically framed to construct the Aboriginal 'other' as an 'undesirable national object to be removed from national space'. (Hage 1998: 46) Indeed, these representations cannot be overstated, shaping, as they did, the Aboriginal peoples as 'disturbing anomalies' and 'social deviants', filling, to quote Raymond Evans, 'all the stereotyped categories of "subhuman...menace...object of dread...diseased organism [and]...object of ridicule"'. (Evans 1999:145) Written as possibly her last piece of writing, 'Jean Kesson' now provides fresh new evidence for unsettling the settler presence and understanding Liston's framing of the white settler identity in terms of Aboriginality.

As has already been outlined in the previous chapter, 'Jean Kesson' is a tale about the worthiness and adaptability of South Australia's early pioneers. Their industriousness and heroism is reinforced not just through self-representation but more so through the configuration of an Aboriginal 'other'. As with her story 'Doctor', Aboriginal people are portrayed as threatening, thieving, brutal and dispensable heathens worthy of little consideration beyond annoyance and

hatred. Their presence is seen as an intrusive nuisance, as illustrated in the following passage:

‘Though we have had no trouble yet with the blacks there is no telling which minute the treacherous devils might come down on us’...Burton set his foot down fiercely, as if he were in the act of stamping out the blacks. (Liston n.d: 40)

Aboriginal subjects are introduced in ‘Jean Kesson’ from the start as ‘troublesome’. The language employed conjures up images of Aboriginal people as unwanted pests who needed to be squashed, or, as Liston frames it ‘stamped out’. When these ‘treacherous devils’, as they are labelled, do try to take a couple of sheep later in the story they are unsympathetically dealt with:

‘Blacks about’ was the cry, and a fierce, implacable light came into Burton Hammond’s eye. ‘Look to your arms, lads,’ he counselled all.... ‘Fred, you will come with me. You don’t feel frightened boy?’ ‘No, I don’t as yet,’ was the quick answer, ‘and shall try not to’. ‘That’s right, your father says you were a good hand with the gun among the hares and rabbits in Berkshire. It will be larger game tonight, and if you get a chance to fire, don’t miss. Never you miss a black-fellow as your names Hammond.’ Fred thought it sounded rather a vindictive speech, but possibly the occasion might require it. (Liston n.d: 42)

The skirmish, as Liston calls it, ends in the death of two Aboriginal men. Little compassion is shown for the deaths, rather Liston writes:

‘Do you think you have killed him?’ said Fred who had been taught to consider human life of any kind too sacred to be taken without contemplation especially to save a sheep or two. ‘Think!’ replied Burton and his voice had a hard ring to it. ‘No! I don’t think. When Burton Hammond misses the black-fellow he shoots at, his last hours have come.’(Liston n.d: 44)

The interchange between uncle and nephew in both passages is blunt and harsh. Despite Fred’s brief sign of ‘contemplation’ about the lives taken, there is little real thought given to the two un-named Aboriginal men. They are mere extras added to exemplify the hazards of early settlement and the ‘steely’ resolve of the settlers. Indeed, the Aboriginal men are described as ‘game’ and compared to rabbits and hares, feral animals who do not rightfully belong to the Australian countryside and thus must be ruthlessly removed from the landscape. Their crime of stealing sheep is presented as an act of treachery and crime, deserving of punishment, rather than seen as an act of survival. Again there is a lack of interest shown in contemplating the possible reasons for the conflict. Consequently there is no suggestion that such an act of theft was simply a ‘new adaptation to the old pattern of living off the land, of availing oneself of what the land had to offer’, as Denis Byrne would say, or that it was likely motivated by hunger and that these supposed ‘devils’ were not the intruders, but people driven to defend their country and livelihood. (Byrne 2003: 82) Such a consideration is not on Liston’s mind, however, when she describes the episode. To do so would have undermined the celebratory story of pioneering endeavour she is attempting to create and call into question any external social, political and economic factors which may have been motivating forces for the attack. Thus frontier violence is portrayed as something which is

initiated by the Aboriginal subject and any subsequent retaliation and violence by the white settler, rationalised as an unavoidable outcome. Colonial expansion is therefore justified within terms of settler self-defence and survival, thereby ensuring that the foundational tale remains innocently detached from anything which may call into question the putative benevolence of the colonising mission.

Indeed, any kind act towards the Aboriginal people is warned against in the manuscript, with the implication being that Aboriginal people are too brutal and primitive to understand settler generosity. During a conversation with his brother, for example, Burton Hammond warns:

‘There is no knowing when the wretches may come. Thanks to the dressing down the devils on the Rufus got at last from Moorhouse and Robinson, they have begun to learn a little. I wish I had been there. But whatever you do Mark, if they come about warn them off. Don’t be friendly, don’t give them anything to eat. They don’t want it, they can’t appreciate a kindly action; they think you give from fear of them.’ ‘But it might be good policy, Burton, to conciliate with them.’ His brother rose and strode across the room. ‘If tigers came prowling round your door mark, you wouldn’t feed out your sheep to them to conciliate them. I know more of the blacks than you.’ (Liston n.d: 48-49)

As this passage highlights, Aboriginal subjects are vilified as untrustworthy ‘wretches’. They are positioned outside of rationality and predicability and therefore can not be known or trusted. They are thus placed within a separate

frame of reference from that of the pioneer, cast as ‘uncanny, threatening’ and as an ‘unsettling sign of something society has ostensibly left behind’. (Saunders 2001:91) Indeed, Liston wants to impress upon her readers the supposed dangerous and unpredictable presence of the Aboriginal. She accomplishes this by drawing a parallel between Aboriginal people and animals, labelling them ‘prowling tigers’, and implying that they are beyond any hope. Any act of conciliation is thus deemed a useless exercise. The implication therefore - better to leave them alone to ‘die out’.

Race relations are thus presented within the binary image of the ‘warring’ Aboriginal perpetrator and the ‘defending’ settler. The inevitable and supposedly ‘appropriate’ outcome of this relationship, as Burton points out, is the subjugation and punishment of the Aboriginal people. This view is particularly emphasised by Burton in the previously quoted passage when he uses the example of the Rufus Creek incident and the actions by Moorhouse and Robinson. The Rufus River Massacre, as it was later to be called, was an actual event which occurred in 1841 and involved several violent clashes between European settlers and the Maraura people of the upper Murray districts of South Australia. It resulted in the massacre of over 30 Maruara men, women and children.³ An official court of inquiry into the incident

³Tensions in the Murray River region had heightened after an attack by the Maraura people had caused the dispersal of five thousand sheep and eight hundred head of cattle which had been enroute to Adelaide from the eastern states. The encounter between the Maraura and the party resulted in the death of a Maraura man. Details come from ‘Deposition of Inman’ (1843) Anxiety over the attacks led to government assistance being given to subsequent overland expeditions. The incoming Governor Grey, who adhered to a humanitarian school of thought, ordered that the rights of Aboriginal people be safeguarded during these expeditions and that no guns be fired, except in self-defence. Grey believed that Aboriginal people had the same
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deflected all responsibility away from Matthew Moorhouse and his party.

Indeed, it was found that the action taken was justifiable and unavoidable and that no 'unnecessary severity against the natives' had occurred. (Bull 1884: 171)

Although receiving attention in the local newspapers at the time, Amanda Nettlebeck notes that there was little written about the Rufus Creek Massacre after its occurrence. (Nettlebeck 1999) In 1878, however, the incident was resurrected with the publication of John Bull's book, *Early Experiences of Life in South Australia*. Bull's version, as argued by Robert Foster, Rick Hosking

rights as British settlers, claiming that 'to regard them as aliens, with whom a war can exist, and against whom Her Majesty's troops may exercise belligerent rights, is to deny that protection to which they derive the highest possible claim from the sovereignty which has been assumed over the whole of their ancient possession'. (Cited in Nettlebeck 1999: 77) In order that these orders were carried out Matthew Moorhouse, Aboriginal Protector was to accompany the escort party. Before the party could give assistance to the overland expedition travelling from New South Wales, a clash had already occurred between the incoming overland party and the Maraura people, resulting in the death of four stockmen. Although none of the stock was lost, the death of white men further fuelled settler's desire for revenge. Following this incident another expedition was organised to again meet an overland party and give assistance and protection. Moorhouse was in command of this expedition and although ordered by Grey to resist any violent clashes between the two races, was unable to comply. Moorhouse gave up his command to Shaw, second in command, when he believed an attack from the Maraura people was impending. Wedged between the government party and the overlander's party, the Maraura could offer little resistance. The official number of Aboriginal people reported killed was 35. These numbers are now seen by some historians as an underestimation. Amanda Nettlebeck claims that later records cast doubt on this number. She uses James Hawker's memoirs as example where it was stated by Hawker that 'in later years, when I was residing on the Murray and had learnt the language of the natives, I ascertained that a much larger number had been killed, for Mr Robinson's men were all picked marksmen'.(Cited in Nettlebeck 1999: 78)

and Amanda Nettlebeck, was somewhat embellished and dramatised. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001) His account, as mentioned previously in the second chapter, aimed to celebrate the pioneer, offering exciting tales about their endurance and suffering while understating the more unsavoury consequences of colonisation. As a result, incidents such as the Rufus Creek conflict focused 'less on the causes of conflict than on the drama of the contested frontier itself'. (Nettlebeck 1999: 79) Understanding the Maraura people's reasons for confronting overland travellers is therefore not high on Bull's agenda when writing his memoirs, nor is it high on Liston's list when incorporating it into her own passage of writing. Liston, as an avid reader, more than likely read Bull's memoir and used it as a source of historical information for her story. Indeed, her inclusion of the Rufus Creek incident suggests she included it to add credence to her own portrayal of frontier violence. However, as Nettlebeck points out, Bull's account, written a generation after the incident, is a highly dramatised version of the event which elaborates on some points while omitting others. (Nettlebeck 1999) According to Nettlebeck, Bull is critical of Governor Grey, for example, condemning him as weak, whilst applauding the brave actions of the Moorhouse and Robinson parties. Any responsibility for the Maraura massacre was deflected from the Europeans and was labelled an 'act of necessity' by Bull. (Nettlebeck 1999) Like Bull, Liston also writes an account which justifies Indigenous bloodshed. As with her story 'Doctor', she seems intent only to absolve settler responsibility from instances of frontier violence. As a result, retaliation and prompt punishment on the settler's behalf is portrayed as a necessary act if Aboriginal dissidence is to be curbed and obedience taught, as her line:

'Thanks to the dressing down the devils on the Rufus got at last from Moorhouse and Robinson, they have begun to learn a little,' implies. (Liston n.d: 48) Thus, the importance of the actual massacre is diminished and instead labelled merely as a 'dressing down'. Indeed, Liston explains it as an essential form of 'educational' punishment.

It needs to be noted also that Liston's mention of Moorhouse and Robinson suggests she wants to impart snippets of South Australia's history into her own story to perhaps strengthen its consumption as a foundational narrative, and bringing, as Baym might argue, 'civil understanding to the home'. (Baym 1995: 11) It provides an excellent example of women writers, to quote Mary Spongberg, 'subtly manipulating ... genre to carve out their own particular history' and, in the case of foundational narratives, smooth over the messy and disquieting events of the past. (Spongberg 2002: 6)

Indeed, Liston is able to 'smooth over' and justify Burton Hammond's bloodthirsty attitude in 'Jean Kesson' by writing him in as a victim of Aboriginal violence. We are told later in the story that Burton's fiancè and her family had been murdered in an Aboriginal attack, their deaths serving as a horrific reminder, for Burton, of Aboriginal savagery and treachery. He relates the story to his nephew thus:

'Queenie was lying on the soft rich grass nor far from the river's edge. A blow on the side of the head had killed her and her masses of brown hair was sodden with blood. The accused, the thrice accused wretches, had they only killed her,

I might had borne it better but I know too well that far worse than death had

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come before it...My hands were dripping with her blood as I laid her down. I stretched them out over the three corpses and said when my hands are as red with the blood of those who have done this as they are now then only shall I stop from hunting them to the death.'(Liston n.d: 65)

The perpetrator of the murder, as explained by Burton, was a 'half-tame black-fellow' named Jacky who was working as a station hand. According to Burton, he was good to guide you 'in the wilds occasionally, or act as interpreter', but not to 'put much faith in,' suggesting that even the Aboriginal who is close to, and in, white society, still can not be trusted. (Liston n.d: 64) Indeed, Jacky is not the only one in whom Burton did not have much faith. He apparently put little credence in the government's ability to see justice done. Following the attack, an official request was sent asking him to make a report; however, he ignored it, believing that to do so would only hamper his retaliation. As he explains:

'An official document from the Colonel Secretary [was sent] desiring me to come in and report fully, when a party would be sent to arrest the murderer. I tore it up. I would take in my report when I had finished my work. I knew too well what government measures meant; there would be months wasted and either no arrests made, or those arrested would be acquitted for want of evidence...But since that awful night, the sound, the sight, nay the very thought of those infernal wretches is to me as the smell of a negro- to an infuriated blood hound.'(Liston n.d: 66)

Clearly Liston includes these few passages to justify Burton's earlier hatred of, and actions against, Aboriginal people. The death of Queenie, an innocent
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young settler woman, is designed to horrify colonial readers. The lines ‘her masses of brown hair was sodden with blood’ and ‘my hands were dripping with her blood as I laid her down’, along with the suggestion that she had been raped, encourage the reader to imagine the moral and savage degradation of the perpetrator. Jacky is thus constructed as a barbarian, whose actions show neither self-restraint nor rational thought. Again the Aboriginal subject is essentialised and defined within terms of non-Western otherness and presented as a ‘treacherous alien’. Although it is Jacky who commits the crime, Burton extends his hatred to all Aboriginal people, subsuming them all within one category and apportioning the blame to all. The suggestion is that Aboriginal people share inherently debasing traits, savageness, treacherousness, and primitiveness, and that all must be treated accordingly.

When we do read about Burton’s eventual capture of Jacky and the subsequent punishment, it is framed not in terms of brutal torture and death but in terms of justifiable revenge, an ‘eye for an eye’. Although Liston does not include all the grisly details, her portrayal of the event, as intended, gives the reader sickly pause. The episode is narrated by one of Burton’s oldest friends, Long Jim,

‘It was this month some years ago one of those black wretches [Jacky] got his desert. It was awful what they were, but he deserved worse...We was two years on the track of that fellow...There was lots of others, but we shot them down in fair fight and took our chances; but we didn’t shoot that cursed fellow, we wanted him alive...There was a splendid upstanding colt, some four years old and only half broken in, a good stout surcingle was securely fastened round him and to this a stout rope was made taunt on each side. The

ends were brought together about a couple of feet behind him, and to this with a strong girth round his middle, the devil was made fast. The colt had to be roped whilst this was done, then the panel was taken down and he was loosed. You can guess what happened.’ (Liston n.d: 128)

The description of Jacky’s death ends with the line: ‘A perceptible shudder went through his [Long Jim’s] listeners.’(Liston n.d: 128) It is a harsh and merciless account, made more shocking by its intended omissions. Despite the grim and horrific circumstances of Jacky’s death, the implication that it was well deserved is obvious. Jacky’s death, and the death of other Aboriginal people killed during Burton’s attempt to capture Jacky, is presented as a justifiable retribution for the death of Queenie and her family. Burton’s private ‘crusade’, although not sanctioned by government orders, is nevertheless represented as the right course of action. The hunt, capture and eventual brutal murder of Jacky is quantified by the colonists’ right to rid society of yet another supposed ‘menace’, particularly if that menace was a threat to white settler women.

Georgi-Findlay makes an interesting suggestion when she points out that many American frontier wives often transformed the actions of their husbands from unprovoked conflict and conquest into the protection of white women on the frontier. (Georgi-Findlay 1996) Thus, any action against the Native American, as Georgi-Findlay claims, which may otherwise have been seen as an affront, could be explained within justifiable terms of protection and defence. By portraying the sexual threat to female settlers, Liston likewise excuses settler violence. Inexcusable retribution against the ‘predatory’ Aboriginal male could

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thus be absolved. Hence when portraying Queenie's death, it is not so much her murder but what had come before which is designed to incite horror in the reader. The suggestion that she was raped is meant to add weight to Burton's revenge and indicate the sexual threat white settler women faced when living on the edges of the frontier. The very thought of an Aboriginal man raping a white woman was abhorrent to white society and although an offensive implication, it is a fear Liston seems fond of representing within her writing. No doubt it is used to enhance the settler woman's bravery and boldness, that despite the danger of captivity, rape and murder, the white woman nevertheless lived on the frontier and helped establish respectability and refinement in an otherwise uncivilised environment. On another occasion in 'Jean Kesson', for example, an encounter between the Hammond women and a group of Aboriginal men is used to illustrate these anxieties. On this occasion emphasis is placed upon the appearance of the Aboriginal men to heighten their sexual and predatory threat:

The startled women rushed to the door and looked out...horror of horrors! Coming across the flat straight to the water holes, were between twenty and thirty natives, tall, lithe naked fellows, each carrying his bundle of spears, bark shields and waddies and with white strips painted on their bodies, making them look still more repulsive. (Liston n.d: 51)

The implied attack, however, is curtailed by the arrival of the Hammond men. Although no violence entails, the arrival of the 'lithe naked' Aboriginal men on the scene is meant to capture and highlight the risk posed to settler women. The physical appearance of the Aboriginal men is designed to demonstrate the

difference between the supposed 'primitive' rapacious Aboriginal society and the more cultured civilised white society. While the Aboriginal men are portrayed as naked, repulsive and warrior-like, the white settler men, as discussed in the previous chapter, are assigned more refined and courageous attributes, as 'gentle and polite', possessing 'an innate chivalry'. (Liston 1868: 59). Liston thus decisively denigrates and essentialises the nature of the Aboriginal male through a de-humanising colonial rhetoric that controls, defines and ultimately excludes his presence within the emerging colonial world of progress and civilisation. Such measuring and ranking, to use Nancy Stepan's and Johannes Fabian's theory of nineteenth century race ideology, gave the colonial settler, in this case Liston, the intellectual justification for legitimising colonial enterprise and their role within it. Inevitably, therefore, and as Rod Macneil argues, within colonial discourse 'identities of colonial Australia and its Other coincide and are negotiated in terms of each other'. (Macneil 2001: 48)

Although assigning some of her Aboriginal subjects with names, and occasionally a voice, Liston's characterisations nevertheless remained subsumed within an essentialised image of debasement that articulated them as objects of ridicule. They are thus presented as beings with little intelligence and no redeeming qualities. The focus consequently, is thus placed upon the Indigene's 'lack of' rather than any positive attributes they may possess. 'Billy the blackboy', a bit - character in *The Stauntons* is one such example. Depicted as comical, superstitious and untrustworthy, he represents the antithesis of the 'worthy' white settler. When given the task of taking a pair of trousers to his

father after they have been badly scorched, for example, he is presented as incompetent and childlike, incapable of fulfilling the simplest command. As Liston writes:

one leg was scorched to such an extent as to render them unfit for the owner's wear, 'therefore', said he, 'give them to a blackfellow'. Consequently Lizzie handed them over at once to a native boy who was there, telling him to carry them to his father, adding a caution of 'Don't you keep them for yourself, or you will get a thrashing.'... Now Billy, when he had got a little way from the house amongst some trees, saw no reason why he should not try these garments on... he accordingly proceeded to invest his lower limbs in the habiliments of civilisation...He thrust his hands into the pockets to try the effect of at least one strut about. His fingers came in contact with a letter, which he hastily pulled out. To most natives a letter is a mysterious thing, and many regard it as possessing life and power...Billy's organ of conscientiousness, although small, was roused by the fear that perhaps this letter would tell of his endeavour to appropriate to himself the garments intended for his father, so he resolved to get rid of it. He was afraid to tear it up lest it should entail upon him some evil effects, so he determined to hide it. Looking about for a place of concealment he espied a fallen tree... The letter was quickly thrust out of sight... 'Whitefellow mucka find him there-Billy all right,' he said; and divesting himself of the trousers on he went. (Liston 1871: 14a)

The emphasis is on the scorched trousers that are no longer fit for their white owner but are deemed suitable for 'a blackfellow'. Indeed, the trousers are described as a symbol of refined culture, something which Billy is seen as not

possessing and can never acquire. Even when he tries to invest himself in this 'habilitation of civilisation', albeit comically, he fails and is ridiculed for his attempts to imitate European forms of customs. Billy's ignorance of and superstition about the letter is also written in to highlight his inept intellectual capability, as is the claim that he had a small 'organ of conscientiousness.' The fact that Billy is threatened with a 'thrashing' should he fail to take the trousers to his father, suggests that punishment is needed to keep control of the 'natives' and that their subordination is justifiable. Billy is thus characterised by his inadequacies, a strategy, which not only reinforced the cultural and scientific arguments about the inferiority of Aboriginal people as social and emotional 'outcasts from evolution' but also helped position the white settler at the top of the hierarchical ladder. (Stepan 1982: 83)

Liston's personal letters sent home during her time as governess to the Hamp family also show signs of this assumption. What becomes clear from these letters is the position of power Liston held over Aboriginal people whilst living and working at Nilkerloo Station. In one letter, for example, she wrote: 'In Mr. Hamp's absence, I was promoted to the position of overseer, and had to superintend...the boys and a lubra shepherding.' (*Adelaide Chronicle* 1947: 26) The 'boys' in this case were Aboriginal male workers and the 'lubra' an Aboriginal woman. Given no names, no voices, these Aboriginal workers are referred to impersonally and unemotionally. While Liston writes explicitly about her own endeavours, particularly her successful adaptation to station life and work, there is very little written about the work undertaken by the Aboriginal workers around her. They are merely used to illustrate her position

as overseer, and their position as inferior subjects. As one who, herself, felt indignation over the suggestion that her employer, Mr Hamp, was her master, she has no qualms about her role as mistress over Aboriginal workers. Clearly, and as explained in the first chapter, she rejected the idea that white women, herself in particular, should be unnecessarily beholden to white men, but quite naturally assumed that white women held a position of power over Aboriginal people. It is an assumption she maintains in all her narratives featuring Aboriginal characters. They are therefore only ever given roles as criminals or domestic servants and play no part in the development of the colony. This role, as highlighted in previous chapters, is assigned to white settlers like herself. Aboriginal people are thus not seen as co-inhabitants, friends or allies but rather as essentialised subjects, their dehumanised presence used to affirm the validity of the expansionist project.

Unarguably, therefore Liston's foundational narratives etched a Eurocentric fantasy onto the South Australian landscape, which positioned the white settler as the naturalised occupier while the Aboriginal peoples, to use Edward Said's theorising, were 'analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or...taken over'. (Said 1994: 145) Any guilt of dispossession, exploitation or murder could thus be displaced onto the Aboriginal 'other' while the colonial endeavour remained untainted. There is an interesting conflict which occurs within Liston's narratives, however. While she endeavours to present an image of South Australia as an egalitarian, humanitarian utopian – a 'land of milk and honey', she simultaneously and paradoxically, describes the frontier as a space of terror and does so, as

evidenced in this chapter, in quite graphic terms, something that was unusual for women writers of the time. The colonial moment thus oscillates between something that is controlled and yet uncontrolled. It becomes, as Deborah Bird Rose would say, a moment where 'the left hand generates devastation so sudden and massive that the conqueror will never fully grasp the sense of it', or if they do, they misrepresent that which may destabilise the story being told. (Rose 1999: 11-12) While it can't be denied that Liston included frontier violence in her narratives to mythologise the courage of the pioneers and create an 'undesirable other', its inclusion at all nevertheless belies and unsettles the perception of historical innocence and tends to undermine the 'ethical sense' of the colonisers as 'the chosen people'. (Brady 1994: 94) So too does it undermine her portrayal of the refined and cultured colonial male and 'homely' domesticity.

There is little doubt that Liston's representation of Aboriginal characters within her narrations was influenced by her time as governess on the Hamp station. One has to question; for example, whether it was here that she may have heard, or possibly witnessed, the types of punishment and actions towards Aboriginal people that she writes about in her writing? It is a similar line of thought that Rick Hosking asks himself when analysing Liston's story 'Doctor'. While only speculation, such questions need to be raised in order to understand the position Liston took when writing about Aboriginal/settler conflict - that 'field of consciousness' which has been brought into 'existence by a disturbing experience' and worked through in the 'form of the novel' as Healy talks about. Liston's narratives reveal a consciousness which is a

combination of lived experience, nineteenth century racial ideology and the re-telling of previous frontier stories. This combination tends to nourish, one may say, recollections that are often 'out of focus' and 'blind to all but the group it binds'. (Pierre 1989: 8-9)

Clearly Liston did not feel the need to impart any real knowledge of Aboriginal culture to her readers, nor demonstrate any feelings of sympathy for their obvious plight within her writing. She did not consider, for example, how the 'innocent presence' of the white settler brought about dependency for the Aboriginal people, disrupting their livelihood and ultimately their culture. This wasn't part of the story she was striving to tell. Rather, Aboriginal people represent a foreign presence, their removal from the colonial scene perceived, and thus presented, as a necessary step along the road to nationhood. After all, and as Elaine Barker has noted, 'the question of race relations could not easily be incorporated into plot structure except in a superficial fashion' to promote the colonial project. (Barker 1989: 467) There is little doubt that Liston's use of anti-conquest rhetoric did just that. But with the gaze now being turned back onto the self, the anti-conquest becomes anything but superficial. And when we return to the mural painted on the Elliston Community Agricultural Hall, which has Liston pictured in a pale blue dress standing demurely by her employer John Hamp, the portrayal now seems a little out of focus and appears somewhat removed from the woman who wrote such detailed stories of frontier violence in her unpublished manuscript 'Jean Kesson'.

‘Sweetening the World’: Introducing Jane Sarah Douady and her agenda for a white colonial community.

Jane Sarah Douady wrote in her novel *Growing Towards the Light*:

There was her voice and the gift of expressing herself in writing; were either of these the means by which she was to achieve the distinction, and do the good on which she had set her mind. (Douady 1928:213)

Although the lines were written as the thoughts of the female protagonist in the novel, they highlight, I believe, Douady’s own desire to ‘express herself in writing’. Despite perhaps not receiving the distinction to which she may have aspired, Douady, like Liston before her, used her voice to project an image of an ideal colonial community. Embedded within this literary construction were very clear ideas about social behaviour, cultural norms, colonial patriotism and racial hierarchies. The concern, over whom rightfully belonged and who did not, pervaded much of Douady’s writing and exposed her motive for defining the self through the derogatory scripting of others. Her activism, while advocating equality and higher education for women, did little for the rights of the Indigenous people and lower class women. Instead it was aimed at prescribing to her middle class readers how to think and act, specifically, how to be good white South Australians. There is thus little doubt that Douady wrote with a purpose, and with a clear agenda, gaining a huge amount of pride and satisfaction with the knowledge that through her writing she could ‘reach out a finger here and there and influence events’. (Douady 1928:304)

This first chapter will be a recuperative but critical introduction to Jane Sarah Douady. It will outline her life story as a white colonial woman who migrated to the colony of South Australia while in its early infancy. It will look at how she made the colony her home for eighty-six years until her death in 1932 and how she appreciated the opportunities it provided her as a white colonial woman. It will analyse how she actively sought, as a writer, activist and educationalist, to construct a societal order which reflected a white Anglo ideal of womanhood and domesticity. This middle class doctrine was aimed at providing like-minded settler subjects with a sense of identity, belonging and legitimacy, all of which complemented colonial possession and conquest and confirmed her own place within this society. Douady was a driven and opinionated writer who imposed a collective sense of behaviour and morals on disparate individuals. This collective sense, as will be highlighted in all three chapters dealing with Douady's literary works, often contributed to a cultural discourse which operated on a system of exclusion and inclusion.

Jane Sarah Douady was born Jane Sarah Stanes in London on the 28th of September 1846. She was the first child born to Henry James Stanes and Anne Thomas (nee Smith).¹ When Jane was three, the family, by then consisting of two daughters, Amelia and Jane, and one son, Henry James, migrated to South

¹ Anne had been a widow who had a daughter, Amelia Anne from a previous marriage to a sea captain.

Australia aboard the *Casper*. The decision to move to South Australia may have been precipitated by some unwise business ventures which had forced the family into financial ruin.² They arrived in the capital city of Adelaide on the 10th of September 1849. Within months Sarah's father began work as a clerk and then as a draper on East Terrace. They made their home on North Terrace and over the next ten years Anne gave birth to three more sons, Fredrick, Edgar and Arthur. (Statton 1986) After nine years as a draper Henry changed occupations becoming a green grocer on Kermode Street.³

Jane lived all of her childhood in the city of Adelaide. By age fifteen she was working alongside her mother in their greengrocer shop but had ambitions of becoming a teacher. An avid reader and learner, Jane's ambitions were fully realised when she decided to open up her own small school in Adelaide in the 1860s, however by 1870 it was swallowed up when a larger school in Hindmarsh was established.⁴ The new school, opened for poor children of all

² This is only speculation but Douy makes reference to this occurrence in her novel *Growing Towards the Light*.

³ Much of the personal information about Jane and her family was given to me in written and personal communication from Jane's great grand-daughter.

⁴ Again this information came via personal communication with Jane's great grand-daughter. It is also worth noting that it was very popular for middle class women to become principals and proprietors of private schools during this time. It enabled them to maintain their genteel position and status within society whilst still earning an income. See, for example, Marjorie Theobald's chapter 'The lost ladies schools of colonial Australia', in *Knowing women: origins of women's education in nineteenth century Australia* pp. 151 - 164.

denominations, was run by Eliza Davies and funded by Mr. George Fife Angas, a leading colonist at the time.⁵ Jane became an assistant and friend to Eliza for four years until she was appointed the first Infant School mistress of the Grote Street Infant Model School in Adelaide in 1874.⁶ Two years later the Grote Street Model School Girl's department was opened and Jane was promoted to Headmistress of the department.⁷ She attained a First Class Teaching Certificate in 1878.⁸ During this time the South Australian government responded to calls for the increased education of women and as a result established the first government high school for girls, the Advanced School for Girls in Franklin Street, in October 1879. Catherine Helen Spence, in particular, had urged for the education for women and was one of the main

⁵ George Fife Angas was a founding member of the South Australian Land Company. He had been interested in South Australia and its founding principles since its inception, believing that systematic colonisation, particularly the exclusion from convicts and the freedom of religion. He migrated to South Australia with his family in 1852, when he was 62, becoming a wealthy landowner and member of the Legislative Council. He made large contribution to education and benevolent institutions throughout his lifetime, becoming one of the colony's leading philanthropists. He was a Baptist and a deeply religious man. (Grenfell 1929; Pike 1957)

⁶ She was considered by the Board as the best out of twelve possible candidates. She was twenty-eight years old at the time and held a IIA Teaching certificate. Personal communication.

⁷ It was to be a distressful few months for Jane, however. Her much loved father Henry died on the twenty-fourth of July 1877 after a long battle with illness. The death affected Jane greatly and she was reported to have suffered from illness following this time. This comes via personal correspondence with Douidy's remaining relatives.

⁸ The requirement for attaining a First Class Certificate at this time was a two-year tenure as Head Teacher.

instigators of the establishment of this school.⁹ Doudy was appointed Headmistress of this institution after being selected from applicants from across Australia. At 34, Doudy was an independent, career-oriented woman but in April 1880, after only a few months as Headmistress, she resigned and married Henry Alfred Doudy, a First Class Mounted Constable in Mount Gambier, South Australia.¹⁰ In 1882 she bore Cecil Roy, her only child. While Doudy may have left her life as a working woman, she did not give up her ambitions to ‘express herself’ through writing and activism. Indeed, she kept a keen interest in women and education throughout her life and on one particular occasion attacked the Education Department for not providing enough assistance to female teachers. In a series of letters to John Harley, the then Head of Department of Education, Doudy accused the department of failing to understand the needs of women teachers, stating that it was a cruel system of employment which forced a large number of women to break down. She wrote:

⁹ It was argued that Adelaide lacked a school for girls interested in continuing their education. Spence argued that ‘a thorough’ and ‘serviceable education to serve the urgent needs of the great middle class was desperately needed’. (Mackinnon 1982:63)

¹⁰ In May 1880 the Inspector General of Schools, John Hartley accepted Jane’s resignation. There is some suggestion that her resignation was due to illness; brought on by the death of her much loved younger brother Arthur Minchin Stanes who died of liver disease aged 24. (Personal communication) There is some evidence that Henry and Jane had known each other for many years – his signature appeared in an autograph book years prior to the marriage. Henry had been born in South Australia on the nineteenth of August 1849. He was one of fourteen children born to William and Bridget Doudy. Prior to becoming a Police Trooper at age 21 he had assisted his father on the land. (Statton 1986)

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I know from personal observation how large is the proportion of women who either collapse utterly, or else drag on a miserable existence, battling against the weakness and weariness which are gradually unfitting them for their work. (Cited in Condon 1976: 223)¹¹

It was just one example of how Doudy fought to change a system she considered unfair to women and exemplified how, for much of her adult life, she sought to effect change within the public and private arenas, for what she saw as the betterment of colonial society.

Indeed, Doudy's life story can not be understood without locating it within the framework of first wave feminism. She lived during an era when women were seeking to extend their participation and rights within society. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a time of intense social and political struggle and re-defining for middle class women which saw the establishment of various organisations, debating societies; groups and clubs all striving for the increased recognition of women's rights.¹² Middle class women were

¹¹ John Hartley responded to Doudy's accusations in a series of lengthy letters, all claiming that Doudy's observations were unfounded. Hartley, according to G. E. Saunders was a 'stern and austere' man who 'won respect from all but affection from only a few'. Saunders also claimed that 'by nature he was autocratic and his Wesleyan faith and sense of mission inculcated in him a rigorous sense of duty which tolerated no failing in his subordinates'. (Saunders 1972:356-7) Little wonder his responses to Doudy were harsh and unforgiving, accusing her of having little knowledge of the conditions faced by women teachers. These letters can be read in Condon, Brian. (ed.) 1976, *The confidential letterbook of the Inspector-General of schools, later Director of Education, 1880-1914: containing letters by J.A. Hartley, A. Williams and M. Maughan.*, Murray Park College of Advanced Education, Adelaide

¹² Each organisation had their own agenda, with each representing different issues depending upon member's circumstances and ideologies. For example, in South Australia the Women's Committee of the Society for the Promotion of Social Purity was established in 1885 to campaign to raise the age of consent from sixteen while the Women's Suffrage League formed in 1888 to lobby for women's right to vote. There were many other organisations formed in South Australia, as in the other colonies – all promoting different ideals but all lobbying under *Janette Hancock*

advocating for a wide range of rights, which included amendments to divorce and custody laws, the rights of property ownership for wives, the right to vote, birth control and better protection against domestic violence. The aim was to give wives and mothers greater autonomy within the home and to promote the ideal of women's moral superiority over men. Such activism was not so much an aim of middle class women to transgress their private sphere and have independence, but to procure, as Marilyn Lake has argued, a 'more secure dependence'. (Lake 1986) Private battles thus became 'collective mobilisation' as women followed a campaigning rhetoric designed to increase their power and agency within society. (Lake 1986) Women writers in particular took it upon themselves to persuade their fellow colonists of the benefits of various social reforms. Doudy was no different. Although writing after the women of South Australia had already won the vote she continued to campaign for the right of wives, daughters and mothers and to effect change within the political and social arenas. This was not, however, to be at the cost of women's role within the home but rather as a strategy to underline the agency of mothers and wives, for as she argued: 'when a woman rules a growing household well, her powers, be they ever so varied, find ample scope within'. (Doudy 1928:356) She thus impelled her audience to appreciate the cultural agency of white colonial women, whom she saw as worthy participants on the national stage. She placed herself amongst these 'worthy participants', taking it upon herself

the platform of societal improvement. Refer to Lake, Marilyn, 1986, 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', *Historical Studies*, 22, 86, pp. 116-131 and Katie Spearitt's chapter 'New Dawns: First Wave Feminism 1880-1914' in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans' 1992 edited book *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, pp 325- 249 for more discussion.

to define a 'sweeter' colonial society; the sugar she used to sweeten, however, was always refined and always white.

An example of this was her participation in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), a worldwide organisation which campaigned for the abolition of alcohol, women's suffrage and various social reforms, such as Home Protection. As chairperson and President of her local WCTU branch Doudy actively sought to be an 'uplifter', a 'moral guardian' who advocated women's right to procure substantial reform within society. As President of the Mount Barker branch of the WCTU for example, a position she held from the 8th of July 1910 to August 1917, she showed an earnest endeavour to 'thoroughly awaken' the district to 'its responsibilities' with regard to the traffic of alcohol. (Women's Christian Temperance Union Mount Barker Local Union, Vol. 4, SRG 186/608) Participating within a middle class feminist rhetoric intended to inspire a New World order; she thus attempted to spread a message to her fellow white colonists. It was a message designed to instruct other like-minded men and women about their role within the new colonial community and not surprisingly followed a moralistic tone. Female equality, temperance and the recognition of women as 'individual souls' who were capable of introducing and policing social reform were high on Doudy's agenda of reform.

Indeed, described as 'an earnest church worker' and a devout Congregationalist, (*Port Lincoln Times* 1932:1) she firmly believed that 'God had given her a power in pen and voice'. (Doudy 1928:330) No doubt

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influenced by the religious doctrine of her parents and other family members, who, apart from her brother Edgar, were all Congregationalists, Douady's prescriptive literature, like Liston's, was often 'theological' in content and was underpinned by a desire to spread a morally religious message to her readers. She saw herself as serving God, as a helper preparing the world for a new era of purity and peace, a notion which Anthea Hyslop notes in her study of the Victorian WCTU that all members of the WCTU shared. (Hyslop 1977) As Hyslop argues:

For all they undertook, whether temperance work, women's suffrage or social and moral reforms, the women of the WCTU sought always to advance their ultimate Christian purpose – the preparation of the world for the Coming of the Redeemer. (Hyslop 1977:58)

Douady's writing certainly did this, as the following passage from her first novel *Growing Towards the Light* demonstrates:

The perfect day of which the dawn rose when the first soul distinguished between wrong and right, and consciously chose the right. Each aeon since has brought us nearer to the goal of perfected humanity. Mists and clouds now obscure the risen Sun of Righteousness, but we thrill with the warmth that precedes His glorious shining for...I repeat tonight the Master's words, Follow Me, deny yourselves, take up your cross. Stand firm against whatever tends to corrupt humanity. (Douady 1928:192)

Doudy's aim was to create an ideal community, which was not only socially pure but also one that accepted white women into partnership with white men 'in the house-keeping of the nation'. (Doudy 1928:239)

But the day of better things are dawning. Our little Queen Victoria is a herald of the new epoch, and this fair land of Australia will, I firmly believe, show to the world in time to come a race of fine people, whose men and women stand side by side, both working together, hand in hand, instead of having often to crouch in the mud, in order that the other may use her as a stepping stone to his pleasures or ambitions. (Doudy 1924:49)

Her vision was of an ideal community based upon middle class ideals and reform. Those existing outside this centre, the lower classes and Indigenous people, were never really considered 'a part of' this culturally constructed group but rather 'apart from'. Her activism in the WCTU never addressed the oppression and political rights of Aboriginal women but rather maintained, as Patricia Grimshaw might say 'a solid wall of silence'. (Grimshaw 1999:30) This was despite having first hand knowledge of some of the problems experienced by Aboriginal people. In 1889, for example, her husband, then a police trooper stationed at Kingston, wrote a letter to the Protector of Aborigines, complaining about the treatment of Aboriginal people by the presiding medical officer:

I have the honour to state that this morning six aboriginals of Kingston waited upon me and desired me to inform you that they are thoroughly dissatisfied with the treatment their sick receive at the hands of Doctor Holmes. They say

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it is difficult to induce him to visit their camps when a case of sickness is reported to him, and when he does visit he appears disinclined to examine or indeed even to touch them. They say that though (name deleted) has been suffering from a serious illness for several months the Doctor has paid her absolutely no attention, not having visited her for at least 4 weeks, though he has been requested. In the treatment of a case the patient seldom derives any benefit from his care. (State Government Records GRG 52/1/1890/5)¹³

Doudy would have been aware of these problems but not once, however, was she induced to fight for the rights of the Aboriginal peoples and consider their plight. Although discussed in greater detail in the chapter 'Jolly Good Fellows' it needs to be briefly stated here that like so many of her WCTU counterparts in the colony Doudy followed an agenda which further marginalised the Aboriginal people of South Australia, focussing instead on the injustices suffered by middle class white women.

One of Doudy's strongest appeals to her fellow white countrymen and women came in the form of a pamphlet, the *White Cross Movement*, published by the WCTU in 1897. It represented her first real foray into writing, an ambition she

¹³ I have deleted the Aboriginal woman's name so as to not offend the woman's family. The letter ended with Henry asking the Director to not mention his name in connection to the complaint, as it may have been 'untoward to be on unsatisfactory terms with the only doctor in the place'. (State Government Records, GRD 52/1/1890/5)

had apparently held dear since a child.¹⁴ It was circulated as a type of instructional pamphlet educating its readers on the fatal effects of alcohol, drugs and impurity, as indicated in the opening paragraph:

Drink, opium smoking, impurity – three woes united in close companionship march from one end of the globe to the other, sowing broadcast diseases, insanity and death. Wherever they go the tracks of their loathsome steps remain. They breathe upon reverend age, and lo! its hoary head is debased in the more; they touch laughing childhood, and its winsome beauty turns to rottenness. They look upon youth, and it shrivels to ashes. Their shadow falls upon purity, and its whiteness becomes the darkness of Hades...Under the blight of their presence, man, made in the image of God takes on the likeness of a devil, woman, who might be as the angels becomes a very vampire; and children whose little hand should ever point upward, it turned into a demon of corruption. (Doudy 1897:1)

Throughout the pamphlet, and as highlighted in this passage, intemperance, sensuality and decline are all linked to contagion in a rather dramatic attempt to show that drink and impurity destroy rationality and subvert the foundations of family and community. Both the guilty and innocent, as described by Doudy, suffer under the ‘darkness’ brought about by drink, and beauty ‘turns to rottenness’. The pamphlet also seeks to instruct both men and women on

¹⁴ Indeed, there is some speculation that during her adolescent and early adult years she tried to be published in the *Register* under a pseudonym but was rejected. Reference to this is made in her novel *Growing Towards the Light*.

how they could fight these woes, or as Douidy zealously described it: ‘swell the tide of pollution that threaten[ed] to overwhelm [the] land’ (Douidy 1897:6):

Let each woman be true to herself...and refuse to countenance immorality either directly or indirectly. Let each man do his utmost, both publicly and privately, to support the women of the household who so act. (Douidy 1897:6)

Here the plea is for women to sustain morality and purity within society and for men to offer their wives and mothers assistance, both within and outside the home. Indeed, much of the pamphlet is aimed at defining masculinity, outlining the path Australian males must follow in order to keep them from ‘indulging in vice’. They are told to be masters over their own bodies:

Let men learn that true manhood consists of being master and lord over their passions, that the mental and bodily health of themselves, their wives, and their children depend upon the keeping of nature’s laws; and the greatest of the evils that curse our humanity will be removed. (Douidy 1897:12)

This was to be accomplished through moral education both from within the home and within the public domain as well:

We should concentrate our attention chiefly then on the education of men and boys in the law of purity, and teach the tremendous issues involved in it. (Douidy 1897:12)

Here, as in the other passages quoted, Douidy is mapping out the appropriate behaviours and morals for society as a whole and for boys and men in

particular. This push for greater moral education and supervision of young men is seen as a necessary step to insure that they gain an 'internalised moral code' before they leave home.¹⁵ Husbands, bachelor and fathers are also being urged to re-define their masculinity, to encompass morality, virtue and sobriety, the very essence of Marilyn Lake's *Domestic Man*. Indeed Douady quotes Huxley, a middle class social commentator at the time, to emphasise this point:

That man, I think, has a liberal education, who has been so trained in his youth, that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine...whose mind is stored with knowledge of the great fundamental truths of nature... one who is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will. (Douady 1897: 17-18)

Self-discipline and management over the male social body is the message Douady is trying to endorse in this pamphlet. She is attempting to define white colonial masculinity and thus define the domestic milieu. She makes a claim to moral and cultural authority, striving to re-shape her immediate environment and in doing so identifies herself, as Margaret Allen might say, as a member of *The New Class*. (Allen 1991) Defined as an ideological arm of the middle

¹⁵ Mary Ryan has pointed out that the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain changed the structure of the middle class family unit. Rather than follow their fathers into a trade or occupation sons were more likely to be geographically and occupationally more mobile, working in different locations and occupations than their fathers. Realising this, women urged their sons to undergo moral education before they left home. See Ryan (1981) and Davidoff & Hall (1987) Margaret Allen also discusses this in her PhD thesis (1991), particularly her chapter 'Religion, Class and Social Reform', pp 29 – 55.

class, 'The New Class' emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Australia. Dubbed possessors of 'capital capital' this particular section of middle class society sought to critique many elements of society and impose their own set of reforms. (Allen 1991) They did this through persuasive communication. Alvin Gouldner, for example, comments: 'The central mode of influence used by and characteristic of the New Class is communication – writing and talking. Unlike the old class, they do not buy conformity with their interests but seek to persuade it...The New Class gets what it wants, then, primarily by rhetoric, by persuasion and argument through publishing or speaking. (Gouldner 1979:64) *The White Cross Movement* is very much a form of 'persuasive communication' in that it sought to guide members of Doudy's own class. By normalising the position of middle class white men and women within a world undergoing rapid transformation, its base of reference was only ever directed at and for white Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian colonists.

Twelve years later Doudy published her first novel *Growing Towards the Light* in 1909. It represented a dream fulfilled for Doudy. Although a novel, it followed a similar prescriptive tone used in *White Cross Movement* and formulated an ongoing production of ideas about domesticity, masculinity, bourgeois values and civility. Set in the early settlement years of South Australia, it revolves around the life of Anne Castles, a young woman who succeeds in fulfilling her dreams as a writer and temperance activist. As the heroine of the story Anne is positioned as a strong and virtuous young

woman.¹⁶ She grows from an inquiring young child: 'a dreaming volcano', to an independent, self-defined woman who wields her power with calculated consideration. This consideration includes a desire to facilitate change within colonial society and thus she assumes a responsibility for re-arranging and taming the young colony as the following passage demonstrates:

she must strive, must take her place definitely among those who unselfishly fought for the uplifting of the masses, must contribute her mite to toward the solution of some if the great social problems of the day, and brooding over these things she again began to try and express her thoughts in writing.
(Doudy 1928:284)

Temperance, women's suffrage and women's moral righteousness becomes the weapons Anne wields in her bid for cultural reconstruction. In a sermon-like discussion she has with Mr Scott, a somewhat sceptical newspaper chief of staff, Anne argues, for example:

I think...that women should go anywhere and do anything where need is shown for them; their brooms and scrubbing brushes would often do the work better than men's spades and rifles. This drink question...seems beyond the power of men to set right; let, then, women try their hand. Give them equal political rights and let them band together for the suppression of the drink traffic. Women for the sake of their homes and children, would be far more

¹⁶ There is some suggestion that this novel is loosely autobiographical in nature. Anne has a strong relationship with her father, as did Doudy. She is a temperance activist and also becomes a teacher like Doudy.

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emphatic in their protest, for they suffer more than men from the miseries caused by drink...Soon will occur something...which has never happened before in the history of the world; women will be given not only equal opportunities of education with men, but also equal political rights. Morality will enter more and more into political life. (Doudy 1928:294-5)

Although Anne narrates this passage the message in it resonates strongly with Doudy's views from her published pamphlet *The White Cross*. It also adheres closely to the philosophical position adopted by the WCTU, which itself promoted the ideal that 'woman must be acknowledged as the equal of man in reasoning, adjudicating and discharging business generally'. (*White Ribbon Signal*, cited in Hyslop 1977: 53) Women's equality in education and political life is thus advocated by Doudy as a means to achieve an 'ideal' world of sobriety and civility. The notion of women as 'moral agents' is again featured and the idea of 'home protection' is also endorsed. Doudy thus argues, via Anne, the advantages of giving middle class colonial women the right to rearrange not, only their own lives, but others as well. After all, as Doudy writes: 'it is from women that the great purifying influences come...women have quicker insight and more single-mindedness'. (Doudy 1928:238-39) She thus wants to credit women with the recognition as 'the chief factor... in the cleansing and reforming of the world'. (Doudy 1928:294) As a member and branch president of the WCTU herself, no doubt Doudy considered herself among those deserving such recognition.

Growing Towards the Light won a literary prize at the Australasian Exhibition of Women's Work in Melbourne, and was reviewed in the *Register* as an

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‘earnest and powerful’ temperance sermon and a ‘delightful’ tale of Adelaide’s early history:

The chief interest of the book to any one other than a fervent temperance advocate lies in the frequent glances at the infant city and its surroundings. It will be seen that the book has three aspects. As a temperance sermon it is earnest and powerful...As a story of love and character development, it is quite good...As a picture of this community under conditions which the present generation knows little of, it is delightful. (*Register* 1909: 12)

It was also given glowing reports in the *Public Service Review*, which claimed that, the novel ‘will be welcomed by those who are interested in the earlier history of South Australia, as well as to all zealous in the cause of temperance reform...it is a simple story, simply told’ (*Public Service Review* 1909:57) Indeed, a simple story it may have been, but it promulgated an influential message. Utilising ‘persuasive communication’, Doudy had written a novel that highlighted elements of society she thought needed reforming. At the forefront of this critique, and no doubt influenced by middle class feminist rhetoric of women’s empowerment, as much of her writing reflected, was the need to advise readers on how to be a reputable member of colonial society. Although temperance is clearly the story’s dominant theme, it is used as a base for more widespread reform such as promoting parenting, women’s independence, morality and the higher education of women. Hence, Doudy is able to create a domestic responsibility and ‘code of conduct’, as Gillian Whitlock might argue, for white middle-class colonial men, women and children. (Whitlock 2000) Read in the context of whiteness and colonial

expansion, however, this imagined identity functions as a tool to enforce cultural control over those sections of society deemed unfit and in need of uplift. Ideals of appropriate femininity and masculinity could thus be projected upon the new colonial landscape as a means of centralising and empowering the white middle class idealist, whilst marginalising the lower classes and the Indigene.

In 1914 Douady published a treatise on the higher education of women, *The Higher Education of Women: Is it of Benefit to the Human Race?* As with her other instructional published work, this treatise was moral in tone and attempted to advocate the necessity of furthering women's education for the betterment of society. As a former headmistress of a model girl's school, she was convinced of the benefits gained through higher education for women, believing that they should have the opportunity to expand their field of knowledge, not as a means to transgress their domestic life but as a means to enhance it. Although stating in her treatise that the making of the house was the chief field of work for women, Douady argues that higher education was crucial to women as it expanded their minds, making them both mentally and physically more alert and thus more capable of performing domestic duties. As she writes:

An acquaintance with even elementary physiology would teach a woman how to care for her own body, and how to keep it in good working order, both brain and muscle. We should then hear less of nervous complaints, less of weakness; she would be a more cheerful companion, a more useful helpmeet to her

husband, a firmer ruler of the household, a more intelligent citizen. (Doudy 1914: 10)

Women who have gained higher education are thus seen as being more ‘companionable to the men of the house’ and better able to provide a more loving and comfortable home for the family. They are also deemed better prepared to benefit national interests. Doudy hence, rather manipulatively argues, that from higher education:

arises a better balance of [women’s] power, more knowledge, more usefulness, consequently more happiness and comfort, and enhance their beauty and attractiveness. And this higher education of women...must ultimately result in an immense elevation, both physically and mentally, of the whole human race. (Doudy 1914:16)

Such passages provide excellent examples of how, as a middle-class woman, Doudy advocated for the right to increase opportunities for women on the platform that it would ultimately benefit and uplift the ‘whole human race’. It demonstrates the agency of this woman writer in trying to effect change by using her writing as a social and political weapon, highlighting how ‘cultural capital’ was used during this time. However, not once did Doudy’s fight to increase women’s education include Aboriginal women and rarely did it include women from the lower classes, unless it was to use them as examples of unfit mothers and wives. Rather it remained firmly confined within a bubble of middle class ideology, excluding those elements considered polluting and not worthy of the same consideration she gave to white middle class colonists.

Her consideration of ‘the whole human race’, it needs to be stated; only ever extended to a small and select group.

Perhaps the literary work which best demonstrates Douady’s desire to write a foundational history was *The Magic of Dawn: Sturt’s Explorations*, published in 1924 when she was 78 years old. It was written with a historical and social purpose in mind, the aim being to record a part of South Australia’s history which had previously been given scant attention by historians. This work drew upon a published autobiography, titled *Story of an Earnest Life: A Woman’s Adventures in Australia and Two Voyages Around the World* written by a former friend and work colleague of Douady’s, Eliza Davies.¹⁷ Included in the story is reference to an exploration journey which occurred in the very early days of South Australia’s establishment, known as the Mount Bryan Expedition. The expedition took place in 1839 and was undertaken to explore the farming potential of South Australia’s land beyond the city limits. It involved travelling up South Australia’s major waterway, the Murray River,

¹⁷ Eliza Davies (nee Arbuckle) immigrated to Sydney in 1838 at 19 years of age after a ‘severe rift’ with her mother. She became servant to Captain Charles Sturt, then Surveyor-General of Sydney, accompanying the Sturt family to South Australia a year later when they moved. In 1840 she married William Davies but the marriage was apparently an abusive one and she left for Europe in 1842. She returned to Australia in 1858 and opened a school in Sydney. When revisiting South Australia she discovered her husband, who she thought dead, was alive and had remarried. She filed successfully for divorce. In 1870 she opened a school in Hindmarsh, Adelaide, as mentioned, which she ran successfully for a few years. In 1874 she gave up her teaching duties and left for San Francisco. She later published her autobiographical novel. Joy Hooton has reviewed Davies’ autobiography, labelling it a ‘long-running melodrama’; ‘immensely long-winded’ and over dramatised account. Hooton points out that in her efforts to describe her life story, which includes her travels around the world, particularly her time in Australia, and her unloving relationship with her mother, Davies sensationalises the normal and mundane. It is a self-absorbing account, according to Hooton, which includes other characters only as literary ‘commodities’ and has a ‘didactic purpose’, to show ‘the workings of God in an individual life’. (Hooton 1990a:59-60)

and then travelling back inland to the city. It was led by Captain Charles Sturt, renowned explorer, and included the then Governor of South Australia, Colonel Gawler. What was unique about this particular expedition was the inclusion of three women – Colonel Gawler’s daughter, Julie, Captain Sturt’s wife and Eliza Davies, servant to the Sturt family.

In what can only be described as an interplay between historical writing and romantic fiction, Douady uses much of what Davies writes in her autobiography as a template for her own story, hoping to restore something, which she believes, has been lost to the public – the tale of Eliza Davies’ involvement in the exploration of Mount Bryan. The end result is a combination of historical interpretation, embellished thematics and literary strategies interwoven not only to highlight the expedition’s significance to the people of South Australia but to justify Douady’s own usefulness as a writer. It provides an excellent example of how this woman writer often took it upon herself to act as an historian, recording and commemorating events within the pages of her novels to extend her own rhetorical authority. As outlined previously, both Spongberg and Baym have argued that writing history provided a doorway through which women could pass into the public arena, shaping historical events and identities as they went. (Baym 1978, 1995; Spongberg 2002) It gave the women a great sense of agency and accomplishment knowing that their work may, to quote Baym, ‘bind [women] to the polity, and transform them from silent, appetitive beings into vocal partisans, exemplars, and conservers of the national character’. (Baym 1995: 13) In her efforts to write the history of the Mount Bryan Expedition, Douady was consciously preserving ‘a historicised archive

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for the future', (Baym 1995:92) making women's 'contributions to culture', as

Dianne Hallman would argue, 'more widely known'. (Hallman 1997:35)

Indeed, Hallman's claim that:

history became almost a heuristic device to illustrate the unity of providentialism, progress, and a particular construction of National character – one that assumed a Eurocentric bias, Christian values, and differentiation by gender (Hallman 1997:35)

is particularly germane to positioning Doudy's literary works. As author, Doudy consciously shaped historical memory from a 'woman-centred perspective', creatively transforming and reinforcing deeply embedded cultural ideologies and identities while so doing.

The Magic of Dawn received scathing criticism in a review from the *Bulletin*, where it was stated that Doudy was 'the most delightfully unsophisticated novelist that ever wrote', and that the hero of the book, Ronald, was a 'prig'. (*Bulletin* 1925: 3) It further claimed:

Her method is as transparent as a child's...The atmosphere of 80 years ago is obtained by making somebody find a copy of the REGISTER and read out items about Queen Victoria the Good and her courtship with Prince Albert the Better. The pioneers converse like a chorus from Euripides, except when they discuss politics in the manner of a leading article. The hero is a prig. [Emphasis in the original] (*Bulletin* 1925:3)

Such criticism is not surprising when considering that throughout the story Doudy contested the construction of the Australian identity by espousing the virtues of the Domestic Man and domesticity, directly challenging the *Bulletin's* misogynist philosophy. *The English Review* however, gave it a favourable review stating:

It's refreshing, now and then, to read a thoroughly Victorian romance full of high-souled and ultra-benevolent people whose only weakness is love-needless to say, with the most honourable intentions and unerring delicacy. Such a story is Mrs. Doudy's 'Magic of Dawn', with South Australia as its principal scene, and the newly-pegged out city of Adelaide, complete with local worthies and historical facts seen through the glamour of a perfectly respectable enchantress in a cottage bonnet...This gives the author a chance of rewriting some Colonial history and exploration, which she does cleverly and picturesquely. (*The English Review* 1924:582)

Although designed to bring Davies' exploration story to the wider public, *The Magic of Dawn* also included strong moral and social messages for white middle class colonists, aimed at raising the tone of colonial society. Temperance, appropriate masculinity and femininity again feature prominently, threaded intrusively throughout the storyline and offering a blended social and historical commentary on the new freedoms colonialism presented middle class white women. These new found freedoms, however, as will become increasingly evident in subsequent chapters, were, as Susan Sheridan would claim, 'still purchased at the cost...of other women, white working-class [and] indigenous'. (Sheridan 1995:45)

The basis of Douidy's last work ever published revolved around the experiences of her early married years spent in the small coastal township of Kingston, in the Southeast of South Australia where her husband was stationed as a police trooper. From December 1927 to February 1928 the *Register* published a series of five articles under the pseudonym 'Yakunga' written, as the paper introduced her, 'by the wife of a highly respected member of the South Australian police force, now retired. ('Yakunga' 1927:5) Unlike her other narratives these articles were autobiographical works describing some of her most memorable experiences while living in Kingston. This included details of her initial feelings of apprehension, to her growing fondness for her new home. Jane, as indicated throughout the articles, initially looked upon the move with apprehension and regret; unhappy that she and her husband had been forced to leave their 'happy home'. In an article titled 'Brownweed', for example, she wrote:

We had been compelled to break up our pretty home, where we had passed such happy years, and come here, because the Brownweed Station had been mismanaged for some years, first by a man who drank, and so neglected everything, and next by one who was thoroughly incompetent. When the inspector explained this and said that it was because he knew Jack would evolve order out of the present chaos that he sent him, we were of course pleased at the compliment, but hated leaving the home that we had improved and the station that Jack [Henry] had got into good working order. ('Yakunga' 1928:13)

It becomes evident throughout the articles that Douady was to look upon these years in Kingston with growing affection, believing that she had successfully created a space for herself and her family within the new police station confines. She presented it as a 'homely' space, complete with a new sense of refinement and homeliness. Her garden, as the following passage from her article 'Brownweed' attests to, represented a 'little paradise' and was an area she took great pride:

I came out and looked round with thankfulness on our little paradise; at the house covered with climbing plants, on the smooth clipped hedges, the stately trees, the graceful bamboo, the bright blossoms, and the miniature lawn, and I felt certain that if we had to make a fresh start I should never be so despairing again; no matter how discouraging the outlook. ('Yakunga' 1928:13)

Indeed, fuelling her growing sense of belonging was her belief in her family's social standing, seeing herself and Alfred as belonging to the 'silver-tails' – a local name given to the upper class section of Kingston society. The lower classes were given to name 'Barracooras'. She forms close friendships with other 'silver-tail' residents - the Vaughans (the local doctor and his wife), the Fairleys (local bank manager and his wife) and the McDonalds (the local schoolteacher and his wife). ('Social Life in Kingston' 1928) She also claims to have close 'acquaintances' with a few local Aboriginal people, many of whom she met when they come to the station house to collect rations. ('Brownweed', 'Queen Catherine' & 'Other Black Friends' 1928) However these relationships, as will be taken up in the chapter 'Jolly Good Fellows', do not seem to have

attained the same level of friendship and respect that she shared with the Fairleys, McDonalds and Vaughans. Clearly notions of race interceded.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects to these articles was the pseudonym Doudy used when publishing them. Rather than use her own name, as she did when publishing her two novels and the prescriptive texts, Doudy used the name 'Yakunga'. This could have been to distance herself from the more personal autobiographical accounts she wrote about or perhaps it was a name given to her by the local Kingston Aboriginal people. As the word 'Yakunga' does not feature in any South Australian Aboriginal language books it is hard to know where the name originated. It may have been misspelt by Doudy, it may have come from the Mount Barker region or Farina region where she was to later live, or it could simply have been a name she created. Interestingly, although using different names for her husband and son, Doudy retained the correct names for all the other people featured in the articles. We can only surmise her reason for doing so. Indeed, it has only been in recent years that these articles have been attributed to Doudy after the original typescripts of the articles were discovered in an old satchel in the roof of her son's hanger in Port Lincoln, many years after Doudy's death and their publication. The value of these articles is significant and cannot be overstated. They offer new sites of investigation for locating Doudy within specific sociohistoric and cultural contexts, revealing, as autobiographical critics, Joy Hooton and Gillian Whitlock might claim, the gendered, racial and domestic positioning of the self and others. (Hooton 1990a, 1990b; Whitlock 2000)

While residing in Kingston Henry undertook a veterinary course and passed with credit. He left the police force to take up an appointment as Inspector of stock in Farina, an isolated town in South Australia's far north, remaining there until 1898 when they moved Mount Barker, another small town in the Adelaide Hills. During this time Henry was Deputy Inspector of Stock and Brands. Like his wife Henry 'took a keen interest in public affairs and was a well-known correspondent to the press for a number of years'. (*Port Lincoln Times* 1931:9)

In 1922, at the age of 71 he resigned and they relocated to Port Lincoln, on the Far West coast of South Australia, where their only son Cecil Roy lived with his wife and family.¹⁸ The remaining years of Jane's life were spent at Port Lincoln. In August 1931 Alfred died and a year later, on the 17th August, Jane also died. She was buried alongside her husband in the Port Lincoln cemetery. The obituary notice in the *Port Lincoln Times* claimed that she had been:

one of the outstanding educationalists in the early days of the state...An earnest church worker, she took a deep interest in prohibition and fought valourously for this principal the whole of her life. (*Port Lincoln Times* 1932:1)

There is little doubt that Doudy did fight for social reform, particularly for prohibition. Her writing had a strong ideological element and purpose which reflected this idealism and which she used as a vehicle to guide others. Indeed, the following lines from *Growing Towards the Light*, say something about Jane's aspirations as a writer to persuade others:

¹⁸ Cecil became a prominent lawyer in Port Lincoln.

The sense of power that comes to the writer who is able to reach out a finger here and there and influence events, is at times almost ecstasy. (Doudy 1928:304)

The sentence suggests an empowerment Doudy felt when she wrote, particularly when she knew her narratives were to be consumed by colonial readers. She must have gained a huge sense of satisfaction believing that through her writing she could attempt to shape society, complete with the ideal man and ideal woman in an ideal white Christian nation. Her various narratives, be they novels, pamphlets, theses, or articles, were intended to first and foremost instruct and inform rather than entertain. This was often accomplished through the utilisation of literary techniques aimed at reinforcing imperial conventions, more specifically, to use the words of Georgi-Findlay, through the 'creation of an innocent female subject of romantic individualism, and the projection of domestic and familial fantasies upon the... landscape'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: xii) Doudy's characters, particularly her female heroines, are thus often portrayed as genteel, pure, intellectual and virtuous. Anne Castles from *Growing Towards the Light*, for example, is consistently depicted as deeply religious, well educated, sensitive to others, independent and self-sacrificing. She works from an early age, first as a domestic helper then later as a teacher, making money for a family whose father's health prevents him from working. She is characterised as being mindful of marriage believing that it should be a union of equality and one, which allows women a role as guardian, and helper of her partner. As she states in one particular passage during a conversation with her sister Jessie:

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Jessie ...went on... 'I shall marry somebody with heaps and heaps of money, so I won't have to work at all.' 'That would be a poor way of getting a living,' and Anne's lip curled contemptuously. I shall never marry anybody, but if I did, I would like to marry some one I could help. It must be horrid to have somebody else giving you everything and you doing nothing'. 'Horrid! I think it would be lovely. Nothing to do but dress up and ride in a buggy or a carriage'. (Doudy 1928:168)

Anne does marry but only after much consideration and after rejecting an unworthy suitor. The marriage is considered a companionable one, founded upon mutual respect and a sharing of common values. Such decision-making is designed to emphasise Anne's independence and power as a woman, thereby demonstrating appropriate self-discipline and rationality. Jessie, as the passage indicates, is the weaker of the two sisters, who seems likely to become worthless until she too learns the value of hard work and independence. She becomes a small market gardener; a genteel occupation considered suitable for middle class women, and is hence saved from her frivolous life, becoming a respectable member of society. Mrs Sturt in *The Magic of Dawn* is likewise presented within terms which define appropriate domesticity and refinement and highlight women's instrumental role in introducing standards of domesticity within the newly formed colonial community. Although living within crude surroundings, Mrs Sturt is nevertheless able to retain the mark of culture and elegance:

The furniture of the sitting-room was of the simplest, but showed unmistakably the marks of culture and refinement. There were books and fine

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sewing...water colour paintings...a piano...and beside it a harp. (Doudy 1924:58)

The brief description of Mrs. Sturt's home is done to illustrate her qualities as a mother, wife and member of society. The sewing, books, paintings and piano suggest intelligence, culture and domestic order, all necessary for the successful running of the home and transforming the New World into an ideal society.

Like Liston, Doudy too employed such characterisation to emphasise the agency and influence that middle-class women had within their community. It was used to direct attention to those who did not fulfil the ideals of domesticity. An example of this is Mrs. Brown from *Growing Towards The Light*. While Mrs. Cassels, Anne's mother, is portrayed as the hard working, loving mother who provides for her family during her husband's illness, Mrs. Brown, a woman from the lower class, is represented as a slovenly drunkard who neglects her family and home:

'I met that little Brown girl coming through the yards and she was drinking out of the jug. She looked so dirty and ragged and half starved too'. No wonder, poor little thing; that wretched woman neglects her children shamefully; she and the man both drink.' (Doudy 1928:45)

Mrs. Brown is represented as the 'other' through such dialogue. She is depicted as belonging to the lower social order that has no self-control, no domestic capabilities and no maternal instincts. Unlike Mrs. Cassels who is able to

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manage her family and house, Mrs Brown fails dismally. She is one of those whom the middle class reformers see as 'polluting' society and therefore in need of 'uplifting'. We thus see Doudy's use of characterisation here as a means to promote reform among the lower orders of society. Thus, characters such as Anne and her mother are written into the storyline as vehicles to spread middle-class ideology. The work of Nina Baym is relevant here as it draws attention to the way such class ideology was employed by authors, such as Doudy, to provide examples for others to imitate. As Baym argues:

Insofar as she operated directly outside her home, the domestic heroine served as a model of genteel behaviour. Her behaviour provided an example that the worthy poor might imitate and hence be saved. (Baym 1978:47)

It is obvious that Anne, Mrs. Sturt and Mrs. Cassels represent the 'domestic heroines' to whom Baym is referring here. Employed as the 'gracious' and 'worthy' archetypes, and armed with all the attributes to 'sweeten' and 'uplift' the world, these women become the yardstick by which to measure others. Clearly, however, Doudy's measuring rested on a very real notion of unequal cultural influence and power between people.

Doudy's gaze, however, as already mentioned, did not just fall on colonial women but looked squarely at colonial men as well. Her earlier prescriptive description of appropriate masculinity in the *White Cross Movement* was adopted throughout both her two novels, with various characterisation employed to further middle-class reformist ideology concerning the ideal husband and father. Laurie Leigh, Anne's childhood friend and later husband

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in *Growing Towards the Light*, for example, is written to embody, to use Marilyn Lake's words, 'the truly noble man...whose affections lure him to the serene enjoyment of Domestic Life' and where he enjoys 'the status of "Serene Highness"'. (Lake 1986: 118) Laurie is depicted as capable, thoughtful, manly, intelligent and compassionate. He is a successful doctor; however, material wealth is not his motivation. He wants to commit his life to helping others, particularly those whose lives have been affected by alcohol. He remains a loyal father and husband and provides a stable environment for his family. Interestingly, if we reflect back upon the last paragraph in Douady's pamphlet, *The White Cross*, it is clear that the character of Laurie is created to exemplify Huxley's idea of the perfect male:

whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine...whose mind is stored with knowledge of the great fundamental truths of nature... one who is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will.
(Douady 1897:17-18)

Indeed, Laurie's masculinity is placed against the masculinity of other males who are unable to control their passions and are presented as culturally inferior, or to quote Lake, the 'abandoned ones' who refuse the 'joys of domestic life'. (Lake 1986:118) These males, often portrayed as rough and ready, are portrayed as worthless fathers and husbands. They spend their money on drink rather than on their wives and children, finding 'agreeable accompaniment to the swallowing of beer and spirits'. (Douady 1928:182) The outback workers and shearers in *Growing Towards the Light* for example, who come to Adelaide to spend their entire earnings at the public houses, are

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singled out as 'uncouth' men who show little intelligence and self-control. They represent rebellion rather than conservatism, uncertainty rather than security and weakness of mind rather than strength of character. For Douady, as for Liston, it is clear that such men did not represent national heroes but rather the exact opposite.

Good South Australian stock, therefore, according to Douady's prescriptive writing, represents respectability, rationality and order as opposed to chaos, greed and pollution. Her literary work sets up a series of oppositions and binaries aimed at not only defining appropriate femininity and masculinity within colonial society, but also as a means of defining the self. By portraying her main characters as intelligent, refined and domestic she was attempting to subdue feelings of inferiority inherent within the colonial position. Such feelings were caused, as argued by Angela Woollacott, by colonial women's 'in-between ranking' in imperial history. (Woollacott 1997, 1998) Woollacott points out that to overcome their inferior colonial position Australian women sought to emphasise their cultural superiority. She further argues that they worked within an insider/outsider framework in that they were insiders because of their whiteness but outsiders because of their colonial origins. Consequently, while they might have seen themselves as above non-white colonials they still nevertheless occupied a position below Britain. By nourishing the idea that colonial society was civil, refined and socially progressive Douady could affirm her, and her fellow middle-class compatriots, a place within the Empire. This may also help to explain why Douady often made reference to the pauperism and social regressiveness in London whilst commending the reformist

programs being developed in her own colony. Thus, while presenting South Australia as part of the British Empire, Douidy also often defined it, as many like minded colonial women writers did at the time, against Britain, attempting to highlight its perceived social and political superiority, its 'air of difference' so to speak.

When examining Jane Sarah Douidy and positioning her literary works as foundational narratives, it is therefore necessary to locate her as a mother, a wife, a teacher, an activist and as a white settler subject whose notions of femininity, masculinity and domesticity needs to be read in the context of how it attempted to impose social and political control over groups of people deemed as disruptive and undesirable elements. As a member of the WCTU she actively sought to increase and improve the rights of white middle class women, believing that it was their role to morally regenerate and save society, while as a white settler woman she tried to legitimise white occupancy and belonging. Her ideas of regeneration, whether it pertained to the people of South Australia or the land, however, relied heavily on class, gender and race distinctions.

The following chapters will delve a little deeper into these suggestions, demonstrating the social, racial and political implications embedded within Douidy's foundational narratives. They will further interrogate how her reformist, historical and fictional literature was influenced by a desire to write about the creation of South Australian culture and community. Despite writing some of her articles and novels many years after the colony had been

established, Douady's fictional narratives were nevertheless dominated by the process of nation building and the founding moment. She was, as Amanda Nettlebeck would say, one of many first wave settlers who enjoyed 'harking' back to the foundational period. (Nettlebeck 2001) The result was a combination of congratulatory rhetoric and prescriptive formulations of race, domesticity and progress. Laura Gruber wrote that women writers on the American frontier were:

acutely aware of and even complicit with their audiences' expectation of what the West [was] supposed to be, how it [was] supposed to look, how its inhabitants [were] supposed to act and interact, and that self-consciousness inform[ed] much of their art. (Gruber 2005:12)

Douady was likewise self-consciously informed by similar expectations and thus wrote foundational narratives which conformed to her, and her fellow colonists', desire to justify and legitimise their belonging and presence, as the following two chapters will further demonstrate.

‘Laying the Foundations of our State’: Jane Sarah Douly and the peopling of a ‘regional fantasy’.

The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. (Renan 1990: 11)

In 1836, the year South Australia was formally settled, John Morphett, one of the first businessmen to arrive in South Australia, wrote:

I do most confidently believe that the shores of South Australia will furnish, not only a happy and prosperous home for thousands of England’s sons, and of the ‘finest peasantry in the world’...but that the colonisation of South Australia will furnish to civilization another resting-place, whence she may spread her magic influence over a large and hitherto untrodden portion of the globe. (Cited in Whitelock 2000: 4)

Morphett’s sentimental summation captured the imagination of colonists, young and old alike, who wanted to confirm their right to be ‘suitable tenants’ of the new colony. Jane Sarah Douly was no exception to the rule. Like Liston, she was part of a group of colonists whose retrospective accounts of the early founding years promoted the worthiness of both colony and colonist, creating a pioneering image of initial struggle and eventual success, as illustrated in the following extract from the *Magic of Dawn: A Story of Sturt’s Exploration*:

The young South Australians of today have a magnificent heritage, but they should never forget that they owe it largely to the religious ideals, the faith, the grit, the energy, the perseverance and the high principles of those who loved

the beautiful country they have made their home, and who unselfishly fought for and won political and religious liberty, thus laying the foundations on which South Australia at the present moment securely stands. (Doudy 1924: vi)

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse how Doudy's narratives were enmeshed in ideas of nation and nationhood, more specifically, how they employed gendering notions of patriotism when developing images of South Australia and its white inhabitants. It will examine how this story acknowledged the female domestic heroine, reinscribing her, as Spongberg might say, as a role model for other middle class women and ensuring her a place within history as a contributor to the foundations of colonial society. (Spongberg 2002) The hybrid nature of her romantic/historical texts will thus be deconstructed to explore, not only the unique role given to white women in the nationalist mythology, but the various colonial discourses and tropes utilised to create a collective cultural story and national fantasy. In so doing, the analysis will demonstrate how Doudy's national epic relied upon notions of new beginnings, progress and rapid change, where women as well as men dominated the colonial landscape. It will also show how Doudy's construction of the South Australian identity was often defined not only in connection to English culture but in opposition to it as well.

For Jane Sarah Doudy, the colony of South Australia represented a blank canvas that she could decorate with a particular set of ideals, desires and nostalgic memories. Although much of her fictional work was published some seventy to eighty years after South Australia was founded, its main focus was

on the early settlement years – just prior to and during her own childhood and early adolescent years in the colony. After reading her narratives, it soon becomes clear that she saw herself as a purveyor of history, in the sense that she consciously selected, arranged and emphasised events from the past as a means of preserving a ‘historicized archive for the future’, to quote Baym. (Baym 1995: 92) She was clearly exhilarated by ‘assuming the historian responsibility’ and shaping South Australia’s ‘historical destiny’. (Baym 1995: 94) Although not claiming to bear eyewitness to some of the events she recorded, Doudy nevertheless claimed a privileged position as the historian of such events through virtue of personal relationships. An excellent example of this is stated in her introduction to *The Magic of Dawn: A Story of Sturt’s Exploration* where she wants her relationship to the main character to be known. The introduction states:

I have striven in this book to show something of the charming picture South Australia presented to the hardy Pioneers who, in the years 1839 to 1844, were laying the foundations of our State... In my youth I frequently met a lady who told me that she, when a young girl, accompanied Captain and Mrs Sturt from New South Wales to South Australia...How Mrs Sturt, Julia Gawler and herself had been among those of the Gawler exploration party when Mr. Bryan was unhappily lost...Some years ago this lady...published her autobiography...I found herein much of what she had previously told me, particularly her account of the exploring expedition...with minute details of what occurred, matter that does not appear in the extant reports of the Governor and Captain Sturt, but is deeply interesting to any who, more than

eighty years after, try to picture those past scenes. ...All this is historical, but woven in with it is a love tale, of course imaginary. (Doudy 1924: v- iv)

The first sentence in this passage shows a clear desire by Doudy to assume the role of historian. She is making it clear that she has written a story which she believes should be accorded some recognition as a historical narrative. Indeed, by celebrating the notion of a heroic female she is actively gendering the South Australian story so that future generations can learn to appreciate a slightly different, but no less celebratory, tale of beginning and progress. It is what Spongberg may mark as an assertion of women's historical subjectivity, 'feminising history by insisting that history had to be amended to acknowledge the feminine'. (Spongberg 2002:111) Doudy thus insists on re-creating a part of history from a woman's perspective, to present an account, as she stated, which included extra 'matter' that did not appear in official records. She is distinctly wielding her pen to not only give herself a voice but to also show the agency of a woman who had been left out of the colony's history, an early form of feminist recuperation one may say. Her association with Eliza Davies, the autobiographer mentioned in the introduction to the book, who becomes Elsie, the main character, also highlights Doudy's desire to be somehow personally connected to South Australia's colonial exploration and endeavour, that in some way, it is as much her story as the authoritative recorder, as it is Eliza's. Although not an eyewitness, Doudy could nevertheless 'bring history into her [own] account' and applaud her own usefulness for doing so. (Baym 1995: 94)

It is also worth noting here that Douady's intentions could have been a response to criticism Miss Jessie Ackermann made in 1913 concerning the absence of women from published accounts of Australian society. Ackermann was a world missionary and member of the American Christian Temperance Union. In all likelihood, as a member and local branch President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in South Australia, Douady would have read Ackermann's publication titled *Australia From a woman's Point of View* in which she stated:

So far as I am aware, a woman has not yet written a book on Australia. Those which have appeared present the man's point of view; consequently, the position of women in the country which pioneered them into citizenship has hardly been touched upon, much less properly set forth in its vital bearing on national life. (Ackermann 1913: vii)

Such a statement may have induced some women, in this instance Douady, to take up the pen and 're-write' the position of women within the nation's history. Her novel, *The Magic of Dawn: A Story of Sturt's Exploration*, suggests she was attempting to address Ackermann's observation by locating herself within the literary scene as an historian and author of a national story which made room for women as empire builders.

The Magic of Dawn, published in 1924, was set during Captain Charles Sturt's first year in Adelaide, and focused primarily upon the Mount Bryan Expedition

of 1839.¹ As indicated in her introduction, Doudy uses a relatively unused source of information for re-telling the story of the expedition. Drawing upon details from Eliza Davies' autobiography published in 1881, Doudy sought to provide an alternative tale to the one made public by Governor Gawler and Charles Sturt². Believing the information in Davies' autobiography to be 'a faithful recital of the route travelled over', Doudy felt compelled to construct a more gendered vision of the expedition. In other words, she read Davies' autobiography as a source that offered a new avenue for historical research. Although written as interplay between romantic and historical genres, Doudy's endeavour was nevertheless to create a story which told a non-fictional tale.

The main character, Elsie, based on Eliza Davies, is an eighteen-year-old girl who leaves her mother in England to sail to Australia. She becomes a servant within the Sturt household in Sydney, a position clearly beneath what she had previously known in England but with no one to support her in new country she has little alternative but to work as a servant. She agrees to accompany the

¹ Charles Sturt was a renowned explorer in Australia who 'discovered' the Murrumbidgee-Murray-Darling River (Australia's primary river system). He conducted several expeditions across New South Wales and South Australia, and held the position of Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Colonial Treasurer while residing in Adelaide. He later returned to England, shortly before his knighthood was gazetted. One of his first exploring expeditions he undertook upon moving to South Australia was the Mount Bryan Expedition. (Gibbney 1967; Grenfell Price 1929)

² Sturt's official record of the expedition was published only seven days after the party returned to Adelaide. There was suggestion that the report was fast tracked by Governor Gawler in order to contradict unofficial reports about the expedition and to help justify the trip. There had been controversy over the death of Mr Bryan and the reasons for the expedition. This is explained in more detail in Sturt's *The Mount Bryan Expedition 1839*. (1839)

Sturt family when they decide to move to Adelaide and whilst there is included within the exploration party to Mount Bryan. Elsie's romantic interest in the book is Ronald Lindsay, whom Douy characterises as a hard working Scot with high social and religious morals. Other pivotal characters include Governor Gawler and his daughter Julie, Charles Sturt and Ronald's two friends, Robert Scott and Jim Fraser. All accompany Sturt on his exploring expedition up the Murray and across the country towards St Vincent's Gulf. Sturt's wife is also included. The inclusion of three women on the exploring expedition was quite unusual at the time but was done, according to Eliza's autobiography and official records, as a means of attracting investment to the colony. It was believed that if South Australia was seen to be safe for white women, then capitalists and prospective settlers would be encouraged to migrate. Douy referenced this in the novel writing:

the Governor urging that it would give people in England much more confidence in the country if ladies could say they had travelled unharmed through it and those capitalists would, in consequence, be more ready to invest their money in the new settlement. (Douy 1924: 93)

The five-week expedition occupies much of the storyline. When compared to the official record recorded by Sturt this version is, as Douy stated, inclusive of 'minute details' previously not made public. The result is a more personal and intimate account, obviously dramatised on some occasions but nevertheless providing an alternative depiction of events. Rather than be hampered by a patriarchal convention of including only a public sanitised version of events, Davies and Douy could elaborate and extend their own

versions to include dialogue and personalities, indicators of identities often left out of official records. It is a literary strategy reflective of a 'new historical age for women' whereby new feminine historical processes dealing with emotion, morality and spirituality evolved in response to the realisation that the then existing historical practice was dominated by 'masculine brutishness'. (Spongberg 2002: 126) Mary Spongberg argues, for example, that history written by men was seen to be:

essentially flawed because it dealt with politics rather than patriotism, rationality rather than emotions, man's understanding of the world rather than God's divine plan. Women, because of their moral superiority and civilising influence, came to see themselves as bearers of the new historical age...one on which the feminine...transcended those of the masculine. (Spongberg 2002: 126)

Little wonder then that the exploration journey recaptured by Doudy takes on quite a different perspective to official records. Described as an illuminating but also a horrific event for the three women and seventeen men, Doudy typically accentuates the hardships faced along the way as a means of highlighting the courage and fortitude of those involved. Harrowing periods of starvation and dehydration, life-threatening accidents and the death of one of their party, Henry Bryan, are thus dramatically presented within the story. For Elsie it is an important time for reflection. She comes to critique some of the social and cultural conventions of England as artificial, learning to appreciate and adapt to the new emerging South Australian community. When the party do finally return to Adelaide Elsie is forced to return to Scotland because of her

mother's failing health. She spends the next few years in London and whilst there establishes a school to educate women in domestic service, believing that such training can only better society. She misses South Australia greatly: 'longing for the land where the magic of dawn still reigns', and when Ronald comes to London to visit his friend Robert Scott, who had been forced to return to London after discovering he had inherited a dukedom, she agrees to marry him. (Doudy 1924: 243) Elsie and Ronald return to South Australia and live a prosperous life as landowners.

The hero and heroine must therefore undergo a series of exploits and adventures before the story can culminate in marriage and ideal domesticity. The story concludes with an account of South Australia eighty years later where the colony and people are shown to have prospered and progressed:

The Forest City of Adelaide has given place to the Queen City of the South...On hill and dale and by river side dwell a happy and prosperous people, gathering in rich fruits of the earth, and the products of the mine, and in far back country tending hundreds of thousands of cattle and millions of sheep that wander over the immense pasture lands. (Doudy 1924: 287)

While the underlying romantic plot of the novel tends to be predictable and heavily reliant upon chance and coincidence, it is clear that Doudy's main concern is to celebrate the early pioneering years and those figures she sees as having an impact on the outcome of the colony. She sees this period as an important transitional time for South Australia, an era which she herself could mythologise with foundational stories of worthy pioneering characters and

their literal and symbolic transformation of the landscape. Not surprisingly, therefore, she oscillates between describing the idyllic and beautiful virgin landscape to 'ecstatic' scenes of progress that replace it. She thus writes of the, 'primeval forests and glorious hills and valleys of extraordinary richness and beauty stretched around in all their virgin freshness' (Doudy 1924: 92) in one breath while in the other writes:

the Adelaide Plains are being covered with farms and gardens...there are vineyards, orchards...corn is being exported, while the lately discovered mines are bound to become a source of immense wealth.(Doudy 1924: 277)

The central metaphor of progress is being utilised here to show the industriousness of the pioneers and to portray, through Elsie's eyes, the early settlement years as a glorious time, as a 'new dawning' for the colonised world:

Still I am glad to have been allowed to live in this delightful forest city. There may be more comfort and luxury in the future, but never again the same charm, the same romance, the same freedom. One is continually reminded that we are on the threshold of a new era, founding a new nation, a Great Britain beyond the seas... it is now 'The Magic of Dawn.'(Doudy 1924: 223)

Here Elsie is describing Adelaide as an enchanted place. The language used is designed to encourage the reader to imagine South Australia as a utopian wonderland. Words such as 'Forest City', 'romance' and 'charm', for example, conjure up notions of fascination and allure, depicting an idyllic time in the colony's past and mythologising the process of first settlement. It represents

for Douady the first dot along the timeline of South Australian history, 'Year Zero', to borrow Deborah Bird-Rose's term, when 'history began' and 'the clock started to tick'. (Baym 1995: 128)

Indeed, if we utilise Patricia Seed's theorising of English cultural symbolism of ownership we clearly see that Douady is attempting to delineate a place for white settlers and naturalise their presence. (Seed 1995) Seed's argument that the legitimacy of English ownership relied on the metaphoric use of such words as 'gardening', 'improvement' and 'cultivation' within written works correlates well with Douady's own narratives. The foundation and territorial possession of the land is legitimately mapped and given cultural meaning through Douady's countless descriptions of cultivation and development. She writes on another occasion for example:

When they settled down on this little spot it was densely wooded and required infinite patience and toil to clear away the forest. The men felled the giant gums and the women cleared the undergrowth and did the fencing... Gradually, beautiful, well-cultivated farms are arising... Almost every cottage is covered with climbing plants and has a flower garden in the front. (Douady 1924: 279-80)

The empty, under-utilised land thus becomes dotted by cottages, gardens and pretty plants, transformed into a 'heimlich' place, offering familiarity and solace for the new inhabitants. Both men and women share in the toil of this transformation, patiently, as Douady frames it, converting what is naturally perceived to be their land by virtue of their labour. Such representational

imagery clearly operates within a discursive regime that establishes the settler's right to belong and thus ultimately, their right to destroy that which existed before. The clearing of native trees, for example, and to quote Denis Byrne, could produce a 'clean slate' for the new 'lines drawn by wire fences' and for the 'mosaic of white farms' that dotted the countryside. (Byrne 2003:174) The land could therefore become marked and historicised and thus legitimately claimed.

It is important to note that as Douady had not been an eyewitness to the events she describes she relies heavily on previously recorded first hand histories written by early settlers. Threaded throughout her narrative therefore are snippets of South Australian history told through the memories of John Bull, John Blacket and Mrs. Watt.³ As explained earlier, such memoirs and accounts celebrated colonial expansion and placed particular emphasis on the exploits of the first settlers, officials and explorers. Douady's novel, not surprisingly, absorbs the commemorative discourse present in these accounts and combines it with her own celebratory rhetoric, manufacturing a foundational narrative that selects, arranges and highlights specific events and peoples which emphasised South Australia as a 'light to lighten the world'. (Douady 1924: 197) The following passage is an example of this aim – again it comes via Elsie:

³ Douady writes in her introduction: 'To Mrs. Watt's "Family Life in South Australia," Bull's "Early Experiences", Blacket's "Early History of South Australia", I am largely indebted'. (Douady 1924)

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We speak often of the great future which we feel sure is awaiting South Australia, and the part each one hopes to play in assisting to lay the foundation of a splendid nation...I hold that every man and woman should do his best to purify society; to make the world better and sweeter for the generations to come; to hand on the glorious traditions of freedom for which our forefathers fought with such passion and died so nobly. (Doudy 1928: 189)

Elsie is clearly expressing her pride of being among the founding pioneers whose role it was to 'purify society'. Such dialogue is designed to affirm the important role played by the 'first arrivals' and to promulgate a popular image of colonisation for succeeding generations to appreciate. In the addendum Doudy again reinforces this notion when she writes:

Australia must take every possible means to keep in memory the great deeds of its noble Pioneers, those Pioneers who ever point the way for future generations to follow. (Doudy 1924: 289)

Of course it needs mentioning that Doudy's husband, Henry, had come from a family of farmers who had travelled overland from New South Wales in 1844 to take up farming land in the Lower Light region of South Australia, giving Doudy even more reason to authorise and cultivate a romantic perception of settlement and the work undertaken by the early pioneers. To do otherwise would have undermined her and her husband's position as white settler subjects.

Before continuing it is worth commenting that much of what is implied in *The Magic of Dawn* comes to us via a narrator. However the reader is encouraged to see everything through the eyes of the main characters, in this instance Elsie. It is through her experiences and her thoughts that the reader sees colonial society. We are guided to see her intelligence, strength and growth as a colonist. Likewise, it is through the thoughts and experiences of other pivotal characters that the novel advances a 'social purpose argument'.⁴ In this sense Douly's novels are characterised, as Bakhtin would argue, by a 'variety of individualised voices', each representing different points of view and perspective and each with a specific ideological dimension. (Bakhtin 1981: 286) Thus, the characters of Ronald, Elsie, Captain Sturt and Robert Scott for example, represent 'individualised voices' - each written into the storyline to advance a particular point of view. Both Ronald and Elsie represent the 'ideal' settler, their characterisation promoting the 'worthiness' and 'respectability' of colonising a new land. They are used to delineate the quintessential pioneer character, resourceful, moral, hardworking and intelligent. Ronald, for example, is described as 'strong', 'resolute' and 'full of resource', a man who has:

⁴ Susan Magarey has pointed out that many women writers, particularly South Australian historical and public identity Catherine Helen Spence, promoted a social purpose argument in that they attempted to improve society through their writing. They were trying to 'uplift' Australian culture through social reform and improvement – constructing the ideal 'nation'. See Magarey's chapter, 'Catherine Helen Spence: Novelist', in Philip Butterss (ed.) *Southwords: essays on South Australian Writing*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town pp. 27-45.

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such a clear sense of justice, such lofty views of life, is fired with so real a passion of pity for the toiling, ignorant masses, and has such a very lucid way of exposing his meaning. (Doudy 1924: 189)

He represents 'the stuff of which good colonists were made'. (Doudy 1924: 35)

Likewise Elsie is depicted as a woman of high moral value, intelligence and strong conviction about her role in society. She is not afraid to speak her mind about such issues as temperance and equal rights for women and is thrilled by the freedom colonial life provides for women. Such characterisation provided a means to demonstrate how many pioneer women were able to extend their role beyond the traditional private sphere of Victorian womanhood, adding additional substance to notions of colonial superiority over its 'mother country'. Indeed, Doudy makes direct reference to this when she compares the homely and practical work of colonial women to the flash and shallow 'flippancies' of English ladies as the following passage demonstrates:

'Fancy,...what hands of horror our London friends would hold up if they saw us in this rig, going out as washerwomen. We who were supposed to do nothing more useful than strum the piano or harp, and paint silly little pictures... I like this life, oh, so much better than the old one; it is so much more natural and free.'(Doudy 1924: 25-26)

This speech is made by Miss Burleigh, a middle class English woman, who, having migrated to South Australia, had 'discovered' new avenues of opportunities offered by colonial life. Similarly, Elsie is described as being excited about the same opportunities. She finds immense satisfaction in her

new domestic role as servant to the Sturt's, believing that such work offered 'refined, educated women' a means to no longer be 'hampered by the conventionalities of the old country'. (Doudy 1924: 229-230) In one particular passage, for example, she expresses these thoughts to her friend Meg:

I know I have been very happy with my cooking, cleaning and looking after the children; far happier and infinitely more healthy than if I had been shut up in a schoolroom, trying to earn my living at a calling for which I have no vocation. (Doudy 1924: 229-230)

Clearly, as the author, Doudy is trying to illustrate the differences between 'idle' life in England, which she represents as a place where ladies are only expected to 'strum the piano or harp, paint silly little pictures' and be shut indoors, to the 'enterprising' life in South Australia, where ladies learn the virtue of hard work, and in some cases, learn to 'rough-it' in the bush or be involved in exploring expeditions. This trope of representing colonial women's new acquired freedom, present also in Liston's narratives, was common amongst many colonial women writers at the time, particularly South Australian women writers. Catherine Helen Spence, for example, in her novels *Clara Morrison* and *Tender and True*, tried to show how colonial women had risen to the challenge of living on the fringe of empire by acquiring skills that were more conducive to being productive within society. The central character in *Clara Morrison*, Clara for instance, who is much like Elsie, learns the benefits of hard work as opposed to the idle pastimes, which had previously occupied her time when living in England. She thus sees the value in, and enjoys the satisfaction gained from, scrubbing floors, washing clothes and

general housework as opposed to the more 'delicate' and feminine past time of more leisurely pursuits. Spence, like Douady, and like Liston before her, was careful to point out that the new skills and hard work did not detract from the heroine's femininity but rather enhanced it and aligned it to middle class ideology. Douady thus wants to evoke an image of South Australia as being a land of new horizons and opportunities, correlating with Fiona Giles' point that many women writers writing romance often entertained such 'transgressive behaviour' as a literary strategy to illustrate the journey undertaken by the heroine. (Giles 1998: 19) As she points out:

Many of the romance novels thus allowed the heroine to try on a variety of subject positions... Added to the expansion of opportunities for women, often based on the needs or deficiencies of the developing economy, the colonial heroine could thus experience options outside the social order in the family, such as a career, religious agnosticism, exploration or camping-out in the bush. (Giles 1998: 19)

Elsie's character has undertaken such a journey. She follows a path of developing awareness and appreciation of the colonial experience. By the end of the novel she has grown into what Douady believed the 'ideal settler' epitomised. She is described as a worthy colonial citizen who feels a strong sense of patriotic pride and, in particular, is seen as being committed to the future of the colony. She becomes one whom Liston would have referred to as an 'Apostle of Labour'. Colonial society in South Australia, as emphasised by Douady's writing, has therefore provided a 'progressive' space in which Elsie could belong – an inclusive frame that she could shape with her own cultural

beliefs and practices and in turn be shaped by what was around her. In all likelihood Doudy saw some of herself in Elsie, a type of cultural agent within colonial society who had grown into a worthy patriotic community member. In a sense it marks the act of a middle class woman becoming a white settler woman, and demonstrates her contentment with her emerging South Australianness. Indeed, Doudy was probably less likely than Liston, who had been twelve when she came to South Australia, to struggle with the idea of developing a South Australian identity.

Interestingly, and no doubt to acknowledge the historical worth of women who had successfully settled into this identity as South Australians, Doudy extends some of her most nostalgic and commemorative accolades for Catherine Helen Spence, whom like Eliza Davies, is a woman Doudy greatly admires.⁵ Although *The Magic of Dawn* is set before Spence's many achievements had been accomplished, Doudy is able to reconcile this by incorporating a futuristic dream chapter, albeit a fanciful and somewhat disjointed chapter, into the storyline. It focuses on South Australia eighty years in the future and features Spence prominently throughout. The sequence of described events is, as the following passage highlights, an obvious attempt to commemorate Spence's

⁵ Doudy's narratives, from her prescriptive writing to her fictional story telling, constantly makes casual, but very deliberate, reference to famous women in history. In *The Higher Education of Women*, for example, she writes: 'women like Harriet Martineau, Mary Sommerville, Florence Nightingale, France Cobbe...have been the very salt of the earth'. (Doudy 1919: 14) In *Growing Towards the Light* she briefly list the names of prominent queens and their accomplishments, making a point that 'less than five per cent of men sovereigns were ranked as eminent or illustrious, but fifty per cent of women. Five kings out of a hundred, but fifty queens out of a hundred'. (Doudy 1928: 101)

life, not to 'present new information' but rather to 'remind readers of what was already known': (Baym 1995: 217)

She listened as they spoke of the greatness of her to whom that day, when her statue had been unveiled, the people had paid homage. A black-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy stood while bearing in his hand a golden buttercup. 'You cared for orphans,' he said, and laid the shining yellow cup and beautiful buds and leaves at her feet. An old and crippled woman hobbled up. 'You never forgot the poor and the sick,' and a little bunch of violets, plucked from her tiny garden, was placed beside the buttercup. A merchant prince and his wife followed. Each laid a glorious orchid...upon the pile. 'A grand citizen,' he commented. His wife turned pensive eyes upon the marble face. 'A sweet woman...she had room even for the poor rich in her great heart.' Two men came, walking together. One guided the helm of the State; the other sat in the Chief Judge's seat. 'A patriot,' said the first. 'One of the salt of the earth,' commented the other...Then, as they disappeared Elsie went forward and looked up...After a moment Elsie raised the rose garlands that, hanging down, hid the base of the statue and saw, cut deep into the marble, in letters of gold, the name: 'CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE.' [Emphasis in the original] (Doudy 1924: 112)

The dream chapter is a clear attempt to ensure that her account of South Australia's foundational history includes Catherine Helen Spence; a woman who Doudy believed had laid substantial building blocks for the colony. Although the title of the novel may suggest a tribute to Captain Sturt, which undoubtedly the book is, its purpose was evidently also a means of memorialising the efforts and achievements of 'women worthies' within South

Australian history, so that they too may share the podium of historical recognition as colonial agents.

Another point of interest evolving from the dream chapter is the emphasis Doudy placed on promoting the image of South Australia as a 'forward' looking and successful experiment in colonisation. Doudy employs an obvious celebration of the social, political and economic progress of the settlers, and characterises it with a Eurocentric logic of enterprise where wealth and business created a dynamic colony 'unrivalled' in other parts of the world. This is clearly evidenced in the following passage wherein Doudy proudly describes the progress South Australia, and in particular the city of Adelaide, had made since 1839:

Here were wide, clean streets, flanked by splendid buildings and stately towers, that rose high into the blue sky. No slums were to be found between the four terraces, for the cottages of the poorest were clean and wholesome. The merchandise of the world was housed in the city's marts, and silks from the looms of the East, and jewels from the mines, flashed in the shining windows...On the outskirts of the metropolis were lovely villas and exquisite gardens... There were splendid public schools, free to all... There was a fine Public Library and Art Gallery, and a University which, from the moment of its inception, has flung wide its doors not only to men but to women also... But the people! The crowds of people! They streamed hither and thither, well dressed and contented looking; no sordid rags, no faces pinched in poverty; and their speech, even that of the poorest, was almost free from the disfigurements common to the old country...For in this favoured land

education had been placed within the grasp of all, and to every boy and girl the key of knowledge had been delivered. (Doudy 1924: 106-107)

The notion of South Australia as a socially forward-looking and egalitarian colony is clearly being advanced in this passage. There is particular emphasis upon the 'splendid' free educational program which is available to all South Australians regardless of their wealth, gender and class position. Indeed, great importance is placed upon the progressive culture of the colonists themselves. They have accordingly overcome the poverty associated with the 'old country' and entered a new era of refinement. There are no slums or 'faces pinched in poverty' and the apparent 'sins' of the old have been purged and replaced by a new 'purified' and 'progressive' culture. It is, as Doudy claims, the 'dawn of a new beautiful social era' which vividly contrasts:

to the fading day of European lands, whose dew drops have dried, whose flowers have withered, whose peoples, tired and weary, are longing for rest and peace. (Doudy 1924: 47)

South Australia thus represents a new beginning – that blank canvas talked about earlier, upon which Doudy could construct an 'imagined community'. It is a community, which distinguished South Australian colonial society as something grand and which stood apart from Britain. Indeed, when Ronald and Jim visit London after a few years absent they are no longer portrayed as English gentlemen, as they were at the start of the story, but as South Australian colonial graziers. During their visit, for example, Ronald manages to subdue a run-away horse and carriage, thus saving several Londoners in the

street and demonstrating his newly acquired colonial skills, while Jim specifically marks his colonialism by shouting 'cooe' across the street when he sees his friend, Robert Scott and rather recklessly crosses the street to greet him. Douady describes the event thus:

[Jim] was looking about with an air of the keenest enjoyment, when suddenly he stopped, stared intently, put his hand to his mouth and gave a peculiar, long drawn-out call. Then, to the horror of a policeman and the bystanders, he darted across the street right under the noses of some big van horses, in front of several cabs and a couple of horsemen, but emerged safely on the other side... 'If this isn't luck' said his Grace, squeezing the other's arm with his. 'I did not know you were in England until the cooe stopped me'. (Douady 1924: 248-9)

Both acts were designed by Douady to show that living in South Australia had created a superior race of Great Britons, 'embodying the national characteristics of independence and tenacity'. (Crow 2002: 3) The call of the 'cooe' on the streets of London, in particular, was no doubt written, as Richard White would say, as a 'nationalist performance', enacted to distinguish the uniqueness of the Australian identity. (White 2001: 109) However, while this sense of South Australian patriotism dominates Douady's narrative there still remains some degree of loyalty to England. For example, while there is clearly a desire to represent to readers the glorious life South Australia offers as compared to Britain, there is still a sense that Britain and South Australia remains essentially two halves of the same whole: 'we are...founding a new nation, a Great Britain beyond the seas'. (Douady 1924: 223) There thus

appears, as Amanda Nettlebeck would describe it, 'no crisis of loyalty'. (Nettlebeck 2001: 98) It also resonates with Neville Meaney's claim that 'Australians had two views of Britain and the Empire, which while they overlapped were quite distinct.' (Meaney 2001: 83) Meaney suggests that one view:

treated Britain as the metropolitan superior, the heart of the Empire, and Australia as the colonial subordinate, a peripheral adjunct,

while the other view:

saw the Empire as a multi-polar structure, an alliance of British peoples in which all the white constituent elements were entitled to consideration and dignity, Australia equally with Britain. (Meaney 2001: 83)

Doudy could thus define South Australian identity either in connection to or in opposition with, Britain without any concept of betrayal. She further enhanced this identity at a sub-national level through a very parochial championing of South Australia's assets as compared to the perceived inadequacies of the other colonies. Like Liston, Doudy similarly claimed superiority over her eastern and western neighbours. The following quote demonstrates this sub-nationalist pride in the colonial creation of South Australia and its energetic and ambitious colonists:

It's a grand land for those who are not afraid of work, but there is no room for idlers here. We have begun all free men, no convict trait. When the Home Government wanted to send out convicts we told them we wouldn't let them

land. I suppose in the history of the world a colony was never founded before like this one. (Doudy 1924: 35)

Here Doudy is emphasising the ‘convict free’ zone upon which South Australia had been founded. She is also intent on promulgating the notion of settler industriousness. She often highlights the perseverance of the pioneers, relating their success to an ‘ever onward and upward’ march. ‘Thriftiness’, ‘self-reliant’ and ‘industrious’ are all words used by Doudy to exemplify those who had settled the colony. Such language is designed to show that South Australia was the ideal egalitarian society, which rewarded respectable middle class settlers and consolidated their place as a leading economic, political and social performer. Ultimately, such representation helped reinforce the foundational myth of South Australia as a land of ‘milk and honey’.

By promoting such social and political uniqueness, and the ‘immaculate respectability’ of South Australia, Doudy’s version unarguably contributed to the Whig theory of history in relation to South Australia. If we consider that the Whig historian more often than not missed the ‘specific, historical colourations of people in the past’ when writing history, particularly foundational histories, then Doudy’s version of the South Australian story clearly takes a whiggish standpoint. (Schuster 1995: 283) It assigns merit and value to the colony of South Australia and its white people, particularly through its discrediting of other Australian colonies, while at the same time distorting and misrepresenting the harsh realities connected with colonisation in South Australia. It fails to record, for example, the compromises and failures of many of the initial founding principles - downfalls she would have been

aware of when writing the book eighty years on from 1839. Economic downturn, overspending, primary production vulnerability, and failure to protect and give recompense to the Indigenous peoples are deficiencies not recorded by Doudy when she describes South Australia's history in the future.⁶ Rather she seems intent only to represent the founding principles as set out by the British Government. The actual outcome of these principles remains unwritten, not surprising when we consider Ernest Renan's suggestion that 'the essence of a nation' relies on many things being forgotten. (Renan 1990:11)

Clearly therefore, Doudy sees herself as living within a 'golden age' in South Australia. It is a time she wants to celebrate as unrivalled in world history. She thus attempts to differentiate between earlier 'ignorant' civilisations and present 'superior' reform orientated civilisations, which had evolved with the 'coming of intelligence', or 'cultural capital' as referenced earlier. This is made obvious in the following passage from *Growing Towards the Light* in which Anne states:

The masses in the old civilisations were steeped in ignorance; they knew naught of the few philosophers and writers. The time is now close at hand

⁶ In its early years South Australia struggled against Government overspending, limited labour and as an agrarian community was susceptible to external fluctuations in world market prices. The South Australian experience had been promoted by its 'founding fathers' as a virtuous undertaking, one which was to overcome problems faced in other colonies. Social, economic, religious and political equality and prosperity was the predicted results of initial endeavours undertaken by the Commissioners but the actual outcome fell well short of expectations. Areas of class developed in Adelaide, with the working class often situated closer to industrial sites and the 'urban elite' having the money to acquire bigger blocks. There was also dissatisfaction with the government, resulting in the recall of several governors. (Holton 1986)

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when every one of our men and women will have enough education to open the treasure house of knowledge; and in a very few generations that must tell immensely. The women of Egypt and Greece, and even Rome, were most of them virtually slaves, and women are becoming more and more free every day. (Doudy 1928: 294)

The passage reflects nineteenth century liberal confidence and self-representational notions of progress. Ancient civilisations are condemned for their lack of knowledge and their treatment of women. Words such as ‘slaves’ are used to draw comparisons between the old world order and the new enlightened world order where women are no longer ‘downtrodden’ but enjoy a certain amount of social and political freedom.⁷ Such language is designed to promote the idea of social and political progressiveness present within the new ‘golden age’. Indeed, the title of the novel itself is used as a metaphor throughout the story, symbolising the way middle class society and the people within it were ‘growing towards the light’. The light represented the attainment of intellectual, political and social superiority; Doudy saw South Australian society as growing towards this ideal. She thus wanted to record its uniqueness within a celebratory foundational narrative.

Not surprisingly, intertwined within this notion of uniqueness was, to quote Nettlebeck, a self-conscious ‘vision of colonial enterprise as God-ordained’. (Nettlebeck 2001: 98) Thus, the view that the ‘new world’ being created in

⁷ This point will be expanded upon in the last chapter.

South Australia was ‘fresh from the hand of God, a sort of Garden of Eden’ was a common ideal present in much of Douady’s writing, as it had been in Liston’s. (Douady 1924: 46) It reflected the same trope used by Liston that legitimised Western concepts of property and colonisation through a religious rationale that ordained that God had given land to the ‘Industrious and Rational’. Thus when Douady pens the lines, narrated by Elsie:

I wonder if this coming nation of Australia will be all its founders hope. Their yearning hearts look for a new heaven and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Shall the vision of the Hebrew seer be fulfilled here in this southern land and the righteousness that exalteth a nation raise this one to a pinnacle of glory never before attained in the history of the world? (Douady 1924: 96)

she was endeavouring to proclaim the ‘righteousness’ of colonisation within the colony of South Australia. It is interesting to note Douady’s use of the Hebrew seer here as it resonates with what Ann Curthoys claimed in her article ‘Expulsion, exodus and exile in white Australian historical mythology’ when she points out that many Australians viewed their settler presence within terms of religious rationale. (Curthoys 1999) Drawing on work from Regina Schwartz and Deborah Bird Rose, Curthoys argues that the stories of the ‘Fall and expulsion from Eden’ and of the ‘Exodus from Egypt’ for the promised land are both pertinent for understanding how popular Australian historical narratives ‘embody major themes of Judeo-Christian history’. (Curthoys 1999: 4) She succinctly explains how such stories have been used in America and

Australia as 'the foundation of an enduring national dream of a distinctive... mission'. (Curthoys 1999: 5) Quoting Bird Rose, Curthoys points out that,

Australia...was from the first conceived as hell on earth, and the foundation owes more to the myth of Expulsion than any myth or dream of liberation. In the first decades the majority of the people who settled here did so not to escape Pharaoh, but as the precise will and directive of Pharaoh...The expulsion myth situates Home as Eden, the monarch as God. (Cited in Curthoys 1999: 5)

Thus when Douady locates her own narrative within this Judeo-Christian theme she is envisioning South Australia as the 'Promised Land', 'reserved by God for his new chosen people'. (Curthoys 1999: 5) Her position and that of other settlers could therefore be justified and any suggestion of invasion could be marginalised and squashed.

As I draw this chapter to a close I would like to highlight the observation Margaret Allen made about the political nature of Matilda Jane Evans' religious and domestic narratives in her article 'Homely Stories and the ideological work of "Terra Nullius"'. (Allen 2003) Allen argued that Evans presented 'colonial readers with representation of a settled colony, an established place of belonging' and in so doing carried 'out the "ideological work" of settlement'. (Allen 2003: 106) Similarly, Douady's narratives can be categorised as carrying out 'ideological work'. Not only did they seek to enshrine the attributes of the pioneers themselves but they also attempted to show that their presence was a thing ordained by God. The virgin country

being transformed into a productive agricultural landscape was perceived and represented as a 'New Kingdom' offering a 'homely' space for those, to quote Allen, 'who have been cast out of Britain by economic troubles or by its harsh class system may rightfully come into their own'. (Allen 2003: 115) The colonial space could thus be more easily imagined as the 'Promised Land' and its white occupants its rightful owners, enabling the 'national dream of mission' to be legitimately crafted as a foundational story of beginning.

Doudy's narratives are thus telling literary works which were intended to produce a neat and ordered version of the colony's foundational history and were ultimately designed to evoke favourable perceptions of a pioneering past. Each facet of literary strategy and characterisation served to nurture a settler-culture and develop South Australian patriotic pride. The reinscribing of 'women worthies' formed an important part of this nurturing, with Doudy believing that history needed to be revisited and written from a woman's perspective. The Aboriginal peoples, however, as the following chapter will argue, did not feature in this nationalistic literature except as 'unfit' objects destined for extinction. They did not fit neatly into a rhetoric which was aimed at authorising colonial expansion.

‘Jolly Good Fellows’: The object of colonial knowledge.

Eurocentricity legitimised the taking of all things Aboriginal- our lands, our lives and our culture. (Watson 2002: 5)

I begin this chapter by asking the question: how does literary utterance arrange itself when it tries to imagine an Aboriginal ‘other’? It is a question, slightly altered and borrowed from Toni Morrison’s work on the literary representation of an ‘Africanist other’. (Morrison 1992) Her reflective questioning also enticed her to ask two other significant questions:

What are the signs, the codes, the literary strategies designed to accommodate this encounter? What does the inclusion of Africans or African-Americans do to and for the work?

She answers by stating:

As a reader my assumption had always been that nothing ‘happens’: Africans and their descendants were not, in any sense of that matters, *there*, and when they were there they were decorative - displays of the agile writer’s technical expertise. I came to realise the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer. The fabrication of an Africanist persona is reflective; an extraordinary mediation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious. It is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity. (Morrison 1992: 16-17)

Although Morrison is looking at American literature and the representation of the African-American image within it, I am interested in how her theorising can help to unveil the 'longing', 'perplexity', 'shame' and 'magnanimity' which resides in the 'writerly conscious' of Jane Sarah Douady. The representation and construction of Aboriginality within Douady's narratives, as will become evident throughout this chapter, was as much about self-representation as it was about the representation of the Aboriginal 'other'.

The purpose of this chapter therefore is to interrogate how Douady constructed an Aboriginal 'other' within her writing. It will seek to explain how this presence functioned within her literary imagination, and how it revealed the thoughts, beliefs and anxieties of a white British culture. It will look at how this presence, or perhaps this non-presence, as the case may be, was vital for Douady's formation of her own identity as a white colonial settler. By seeking such answers we can hopefully begin to understand, as Morrison has suggested, how literary 'blackness' reveals much about literary 'whiteness'. (Morrison 1992) The first part of this chapter will focus on Douady's two novels as a means of foregrounding her participation within a colonial discourse which produced 'the colonised as a fixed reality'. (Bhabha 1999: 371) The second part will discuss her Yakunga articles and explore how and why her representation of the 'other' altered slightly within these published articles to encompass a more anthropological style of writing, and in so doing, presented the reader with a multitude of issues that serve, unintentionally I believe, to fracture notions of colonial control, and to ultimately unsettle the settler.

Like Liston, Douady's representation of the Australian Indigene needs to be read in conjunction with her representation of 'worthy' white settlers to fully gauge her deployment of colonial discourse. Her novels, as outlined in the previous chapters, were deeply implicated in the colonial endeavour. They attempted to define the development of a particularly refined colonial society and frame the commitment of its 'loyal' subjects. This was reinforced through the celebration of the talents and attributes of the settlers who, after leaving the Old World, earned rewards for their hard work in the New World. This 'imagined' space was, as Douady was fond of writing, a 'light to lighten the world'- a 'grand' land which offered 'religious and political freedom, equal opportunities for all, [and] no bitter grinding poverty'. (Douady 1928: 39) This light, however, only shone on a section of the population in Douady's novels. The equal opportunity for all and political and religious freedom that she continually promulgated was for white colonists only. The Aboriginal peoples, a race she gazed at through evolutionist eyes, remained on the margins. Thus her drive for egalitarianism and social reform was effectively negated by her lack of effort towards improving and understanding the most underprivileged members of society, the Aboriginal people. They occupied a very different space in colonial society for Douady, as they did for all three writers analysed in this thesis. While this position may have altered slightly during her lifetime as her experiences and association with Aboriginal peoples changed, it never attained that 'egalitarian' footing she was fond of writing about in the South Australian society she envisaged.

Homi Bhabha argues that 'being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification'. (Bhabha 1990: 313)

While this is undoubtedly true, the word 'forget' tends to conjure up, I believe, an unconscious form of innocence. I therefore want to rearrange Bhabha's statement slightly and argue that the process of imagining cultural identifiers involves the deliberate and strategic omission of the facts. The 'writerly conscience' does not forget, but is instead acutely aware of what is being written, it is constantly on guard, always seeking to legitimate its own presence. It is a process which strategically orders memories by omitting that which may disrupt the conscience. By adopting this understanding, I believe, one can better identify the process many writers used when trying to formulate their own 'imagined community', particularly the three writers in this thesis, who were trying to legitimise their presence within an already occupied land. Deliberately omitting Aboriginal people, marginalising them within colonial rhetoric and silencing the impact of colonisation, as outlined in previous chapters, was necessary for forging a new Australian identity. It allowed, as Irene Watson argued, the marginalisation of all aspects of life which stood 'in the white supreme way, the way of progress' and helped sanctioned the construction of a 'national fantasy'. (Watson 2002: 83) Doudy, for much of her writing, was no different in her approach to Aboriginality. This is particularly evident in her novel, *Growing Towards the Light*, published in 1909. Aboriginal people do not 'people' the Adelaide landscape at all in this novel apart from a few brief walk on roles. There is 'black' Pamela, who begs for 'some bed and sooger' and is a washerwoman, and a 'black' boy whose great

dark eyes 'shine in the light of the moon' and is a tracker. Both are given only a few lines, their presence rendered of little consequence to the story of South Australia. Indeed, towards the end of the book when Laurie returns to Adelaide after a six-year absence he notices the changes of Adelaide:

Signs of prosperity and advancement were everywhere...A fine new bridge spanned the Torrens, and amongst the trees on the north side there were glimpses of the fence and pavilion of a cricket oval, while further on the cathedral reared its lofty walls. All so changed from the Parklands where the campfire of the blacks gleamed at night. (Doudy 1928: 3)

The last line here is a telling one. While Adelaide has become a place of 'prosperity and advancement', complete with a 'lofty cathedral', fences and a beautiful pavilion, the 'campfire of the blacks' has become an obsolete item. It is a 'doomed' Aboriginal beacon that no longer belongs to the present Adelaide and is effectively written out of the landscape. It represents something which only exists in the past, and thus apart from progress, or as Johannes Fabian would phrase it, as existing 'downstream' the temporal slope of Time. (Fabian 1983) Such a passage, although brief, ignores the residence of the Kaurna people, the original inhabitants and owners of the Adelaide Plains area. Doudy spent most of her childhood and early adult years in and around Adelaide and would have been aware of the local Kaurna people and yet she fails to acknowledge their presence, apart from a fleeting throw away line or two. The process of strategic omission, is clearly used here by Doudy to create a space for imperial progress and a space for the settler - there is no space left for the Aboriginal peoples, however. Their land has been appropriated, transformed

and replaced with foreign customs, buildings and farming practices without any thought to what this meant for the Kurna people. Indeed, the transformation is represented as a harmonious and non-exploitative inevitability, as evidenced in the following extract from the novel in which Douady describes the little garden belonging to the Cassels' family:

Enclosing a tiny slip of flower garden was a low paling fence and a small white gate. A large date palm, grew on one side of the porch and a tall aloe on the other; under the palm was a seat formed of portion of the sawn-off trunk of a huge gum tree, that had been growing there when white men first set foot on Australian soil. (Douady 1928: 23)

While appearing a brief passage fondly describing a small garden with flowers, paling fence and date palm, these lines, when read through a de-colonising lens, do more than just depict a cherished scene. They symbolically celebrate the Cassels' successful settlement of the Adelaide landscape through the appropriation, the destruction, and the transformation of the Kurna landscape. The huge gum tree that had been there well before 'white men set foot on the Australian soil' is cut down, demolished to make way for fences and foreign plants, its sawn-off trunk a sad reminder of what once existed. It represents what the Indigenous writers of *Survival In Our Own Lands: 'Aboriginal experiences in South Australia' since 1836* claimed when they simply but poignantly stated: 'Together they destroyed the trees and the life-giving plants'. (Mattingley & Hampton 1999: 4) Any notion that this scene represented destruction, however, is overridden by Douady's desire to envision a utopian 'wonderland', complete with the imprint of settler culture and order.

There is thus no sense of guilt connected with the idea of appropriation and expansion. J.J Healy's statement that: 'The destruction of the Aboriginal society went hand in hand with the formation of a European society' is a pertinent one here as the above passage clearly reflects such a process. (Healy 1989: 2)

Unlike *Growing Towards the Light, The Magic of Dawn: A Story of Sturt's Exploration* features many instances of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interaction. As a narrative it clearly demonstrates nineteenth and early twentieth racial assumptions of Aboriginal inferiority, endorsing such concepts as Aboriginal 'laziness', 'primitivism', 'child-like' mentality and 'savagery'. Indeed, as author Doudy constructs Aboriginal people as fixed visible objects and renders their existence as belonging outside the order of white civilisation. This is particularly evident in a passage which features a conversation between Elsie and Mrs. Sturt:

'I might get black Sallie to do the scrubbing. Mrs. Bull tells me she is not bad at it if she is looked after; and she sometimes has her to wash as well when she cannot get other help.' 'I can manage' said Elsie cheerfully, 'and would rather do it myself than have Sallie coming indoors. When she washes, it is out of doors, so that would not be so objectionable', and she wrinkled up her nose expressively. 'I would prefer her not to cross the doorstep, good-tempered and good-natured as she is. Then, too, her husband Jimmie, is getting a dreadful nuisance, continually coming around and begging for biscuits and baccy, and pretending he wants to cut wood, though he is too lazy to live'. Mrs. Sturt laughed. 'Yes, he carries out the tradition of his race that the women must be

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beast of burden, and he lord and master'. 'I feel as if I should like to bang him with the broomstick' said Elsie viciously, 'standing about doing nothing but grin and show his white teeth, while Sallie is hard at work'. (Doudy 1924: 60)

Black Sallie and her husband Jimmie are portrayed here as 'outcasts' of white society. They are transformed into servants and beggars, requiring constant supervision and charity. Sallie's domestic help is seen as a 'last resort', suggesting that she possesses none of the domestic qualities of the 'ideal' white women. Indeed, whereas Elsie is characterised as the hardworking, resilient and graceful colonial pioneer woman, Sallie represents the exact opposite. The claim that she needs 'supervision' also alludes to her inferior mental and childlike capacity. Indeed, her presence is perceived as an 'outside' one in that she is not considered worthy of entering the inner sanctum of the settler domicile. Elsie is repelled by the thought of Sallie entering the house and is determined to do the scrubbing herself to prevent this from happening. This passage illustrates how many Aboriginal women were both included and excluded from the wider society in accordance with their 'perceived' biological and cultural inferiority. Aileen Moreton-Robinson has discussed this model of exclusion and inclusion, claiming that it was often 'reproduced in communicative exchanges'. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 27) As she argues:

Indigenous women's physical contact or presence in relation to certain contexts and items were deemed to be polluting and purifying. The contradiction between these two positioning is clear. Indigenous women were allowed to be in contact with material items and operate in certain contexts as servants (that is, as objects), but to allow them the same service or use of the

same material items meant recognising them as equal subjects. Such recognition would have disrupted the ontological basis for hierarchy and discrimination. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 27-28)

In a similar rationale as outline here by Moreton-Robinson, Doudy positions Sallie as one who is permitted to perform duties outside as befitting her position as an Aboriginal 'servant', but her presence within the household is seen as 'polluting'. Indeed, the very name 'black Sallie' is used as a reminder of Sallie's physical blackness and is likely used to strengthen the links between filth, depravity and Aboriginality.¹

Elsie is also disgusted at the thought that Sallie is forced to work, while Jimmie, her 'lord and master', is 'too lazy to live'. Such representational characterisation draws upon a pervasive discourse popular at the time, that in inferior societies women were dominated by men, while in advanced societies men and women had companionable marriages and were more equal. Such theorising was popularised by the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill whose work influenced many white middle class women during this time with his claim that women in 'savage' societies were often forced into a 'state of

¹ Sue Kossew similarly draws the connections between Louisa Lawson's characterisation of 'Black Mary', in the 'Australian Bush Woman', and the 'dirt, immorality and 'blackness' that colonial discourse promulgated'. (Kossew 2004: 31)

bondage' because of their inferior position and lack of physical strength.²

Males within these societies, on the other hand, due to their superior strength, could 'seize on anything' they desired - 'might was right' in the very 'earliest twilight of human society' according to Mill. (Mill 1983: 8) As Douady owned a copy of Mill's book *The Subjection of Women*, his philosophy no doubt influenced her characterisation of Sallie as a 'beast of burden' and Jimmie as 'lord and master', and, in all likelihood, shaped her portrayal of Aboriginal people as a 'race' trapped within the bounds of primitiveness, their supposed indolent and shiftless customs preventing them from moving forward and progressing through time.³ It is reminiscent of Matilda Jane Evans' representation of Aboriginal people, where, as Margaret Allen highlighted, Aboriginal people are presented as 'outsiders', their perceived moral degradation explicitly described to mark their uncanniness. (Allen 2003) 'Good' white British stock, however, is seen to have emerged from this state and had, according to Douady's representational imagery of colonisation, successfully advanced along the evolutionary time line. Words such as 'laziness' and 'primitivism' are thus threaded together and used frequently

² John Stuart Mill has been described as 'the hero of the nineteenth century women's movements', a 'respected, venerated, even worshipped' eminent intellectual who criticised the situation of women and demanded that the legal, economic and social status of women be reformed. His work *The Subjection of Women* published in 1869 was an attack on women's position within nineteenth century society and was used extensively by British and American women's movements. It is now regarded by many as a classic liberal feminist text. Refer to Barbara Caine's article for more discussion on Mill's work. (Caine 1978: 52)

³ Mill's book is now in the possession of Douady's great grand-daughter.

within Douady's colonial discourse when characterising Aboriginal people as a means of creating a polarising classification between the coloniser and the colonised. It operated within a system of white domination and control that not only helped appease the guilt of the colonising power, and thus justify the invasion of an occupied land, but it also served to disempower Aboriginal men by suggesting that they were not masculine enough to care and provide for their women.

Typecasting Sallie as an unfortunate 'down-trodden black women' who leads a life of drudgery and debasement also advanced the perception that white women were more liberated than their colonised 'sisters' and thus helped strengthen the legitimacy of their presence on the colonial scene. (Burton 1992) Indeed, Georgi-Findlay's claim that the inclusion of native women in women's narratives 'served as metaphors for the discussion of women's rights' is important when thinking about Douady's literary representation of Aboriginal women. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 63) By portraying Sallie as a 'beast of burden', a drudge who is oppressed by primitive economic and marital customs Douady is constructing her as a 'poor unfortunate' who has none of the rights enjoyed by the more civilised white woman, such as herself. Such characterisation demonstrates an imperial discourse of othering, which delineates the inappropriate gendering of Aboriginal women. Indeed, by denoting Aboriginal women's victimisation within Aboriginal society, as Sheridan has argued, white colonists could justify the interference within their lives and reinforced the notion 'that the civilised white race never oppressed women in comparable ways'. (Sheridan 1995: 126) Colonisation could therefore be represented as an

uplifting process which saved the 'less fortunate' Aboriginal woman from the 'debased' Aboriginal man. It was a rhetoric that completely disregarded any cultural rationale for Aboriginal social customs and practices, but perhaps not surprising when we consider Nina Baym's claim that:

Believing that Christian society was better than any other culture where women were concerned, believing that the state of savagery was characterised by oppression of women, these women could never cross the literal and metaphorical borders on which so much of their history writing was situated. (Baym 1995: 103)

Another point of interest arising from the previous passage is the annoyance Elsie displays towards Jimmie's 'begging for biscuits and bacchy'. Elsie shows no interest in understanding Jimmie's supplication but rather sees it as another sign of his unwillingness to work for a living, which in itself is seen as an offence to Elsie's culturally specific notion of industriousness. The thought that his dependency was likely due to the depletion of Aboriginal food source through colonisation is thus not explored but rather exploited. Indeed, any physical and mental suffering is seen as an indication of the 'moral and intellectual degradation' of Aboriginal and their inability to adapt to a 'superior' civilisation. In short Jimmie's and Sallie's characterisation signals the 'dark precolonial chaos' of Aboriginal society, ultimately serving to demonstrate its incommensurability with white settler society. (Spurr 1993: 78)

The notion of Aboriginal women's 'lowly' rank within Aboriginal society, particularly their vulnerability to Aboriginal male's 'might', is repeated again

in the storyline when Douady depicts a scene in which Ilkabidna, an Aboriginal interpreter assisting Captain Sturt, tries to kidnap an Aboriginal woman whom the exploring party encounter along the River Murray during the Mount Bryan expedition. Douady describes the event thus:

Hardly had the boats turned a protecting point when the occupants heard tremendous yells and there was Ilkabidna in full chase after a number of black women. When he got up to the flyaways he coolly selected one and, in spite of her struggles, brought her back. Captain Sturt called to him to let her go and, very unwillingly, he at length complied. (Douady 1924: 173)

While much of this passage is copied from Davies' autobiography, there is, however, a notable difference between Davies' version of this event and Douady's version. Whereas Douady describes the intervention of Captain Sturt and his subsequent order to Ilkabidna to let the woman go, Davies account instead reads:

All this was very amusing to the white men... Tommy was compelled to let his black beauty go free. (Davies 1881: 143)

While the obvious name change from Tommy to Ilkabidna is obvious, the omission of the line 'All this was very amusing to the white men' from Douady's novel is a telling one. Clearly Douady was unwilling to include this in her version, perhaps signalling her desire not to record any information which may have tainted the character of the white men in the exploring party. It is a telling omission which serves to implicate the actions of the Aboriginal man,

suggesting Douady is hesitant to write of the involvement of white men in oppressing the unnamed Aboriginal woman or even the possibility that they could enjoy seeing this woman helplessly trying to ward off her male capturer. Thus, while Douady is careful to emphasise the suffering of the 'less fortunate' Sallie earlier, she does not want to step completely over the line by hinting here that Aboriginal women's suffering may also have been due to 'irresponsible white men'. This is despite the fact that issues such, as the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women by white men was topical during the 1920s when the book was published. As many scholars, Fiona Paisley and Alison Holland in particular, have pointed out, the involvement of Australian women activists in Aboriginal women's rights during the 1920s and 1930s drew attention to the 'silent suffering' of their 'less fortunate sisters' (Paisley 1998: 70) at the hands of white men. (Holland 1995, 2005; Paisley 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2005) Women activists, such as Mary Bennett and Constance Cooke had controversially claimed that 'the greatest obstacle to the uplift of Aboriginal women was their widespread sexual exploitation by irresponsible white men of the frontier'. (Paisley 1998: 70) Douady, however, seemed unwilling to include any such suggestion within her own foundational history. Rather she shaped a creative version which had Captain Sturt intervening to save the Aboriginal woman, again encouraging the reader to see the consistently exemplary character of this much 'honoured' explorer. While only a small omission, it nevertheless provides a valuable example of how colonial writers often left out information which may have contradicted and disrupted, however slightly, the foundational myth they were attempting to construct. It

also shows their desire to add additional information to further strengthen this foundation.

Doudy's literary creativity was also influenced by discourses of racial difference which classified human groups according to physical differences. Her comparison between Captain Sturt, the upright and civilised white man, and Ilkabidna, the lawless savage 'black' man is one such example. In one particular passage, for example, Doudy describes the party's first encounter with Aboriginal people along the Murray and while the event is again taken from Davies' autobiography, almost word for word in some instances, there are some slight variations that once more develop a dichotomy between the 'respected' Captain Sturt and the more lowly placed Aboriginal men in the story. The passage reads for example:

On a rock near at hand sat a solitary black man...He sat aloof both from his own tribe and from the white invader...His forehead was low and his head receding. His large black eyes, glittering and fierce, were overhung by shaggy brows and when he opened his thick-lipped mouth rows of magnificent teeth were visible. (Doudy 1924: 164)

Much of this is taken from Davies' book, however Doudy adds the following:

Captain Sturt came up to him and Elsie thought what a contrast the two men presented - the one so dark and savage-looking, the other's blue eyes and fair hair fitly typing his benign disposition and beautiful, unselfish character. (Doudy 1924: 164)

Nineteenth century and early twentieth century articulations of racial boundaries and binarisms between white and black, as articulated by Nancy Stepan, are obviously stated here. (Stepan 1982) Doudy's comparison between the 'fair' and 'beautiful' Captain Sturt and the 'dark' and 'savage' black man' again signals her participation in a colonial discourse which construed the Aboriginal peoples as 'degenerate types'. She readily employs a literary strategy which aligns 'black' with images of fierceness, slovenliness and ugliness while portraying 'white' as something which is inherently safe and unselfish. Indeed, the black man is assigned the animalistic characteristics of 'glittering eyes' and 'shaggy brows'. By enhancing such fantasised differences between the two races of men, Doudy is evidently drawing upon popular scientific reasoning of the time that stressed the inferior physical characteristics of non-European people. Body form and structure of non-European people, as Joanne De Groot argues, was emphasised by scientists, anthropologists and writers alike as a mark of their 'savage', and 'uncivilised' character and evidence of their cultural and social inferiority. (De Groot 2000) It is a construct which Doudy uses quite often in the novel and although it is reflective of Davies' ideas and notions within her own autobiography, Doudy readily accepts these beliefs and indeed, elaborates upon them.

Clearly Doudy's system of 'othering' relies, if we use Bhabha's work, on colonial discourse producing 'the colonised as a fixed reality which is at once "other" and yet knowable and visible.' (Bhabha 1999: 371) Hence, her Indigenous characters become fixed objects, voiceless entities that could be viewed, ranked, classified and 'obsessively' used, as David Spurr would claim,

as 'justification for European intervention and as the necessary iteration of a fundamental difference between coloniser and colonised.' (Spurr 1993: 78) They occupy a contradictory space which is both 'knowable and visible', subsumed within imagery of 'pre-colonial chaos'. (Bhabha 1999: 371) They thus become at once visualised as child-like and therefore needing the presence of the coloniser to 'uplift' them, and also as savage and therefore requiring the controlling hand of the coloniser as the following passage from the novel demonstrates:

I went to the festivities, but Ronald could not; it would not do for us both to leave our flocks and herds. Though our black boys are jolly good fellows, the temptation to have a big feed of mutton or beef might overcome them. (Doudy 1924: 241)

Aboriginal identities are embodied here under the collective label of 'blackboys'. They are at once 'jolly good fellows', but also thieves who can not be trusted. They lack self-restraint and self-discipline; both important elements in middle classed and raced discourses. Like Liston, Doudy makes no attempt in her writing to understand why Aboriginal people needed to take stock for food, but merely accepted it as a sign of their untrustworthy disposition. The use of the word 'our' also clearly implies an imperialist power based relationship existing between the coloniser, in this case Ronald, and the colonised, his Aboriginal workers. It insinuates that Aboriginal people are 'serviceable' objects who need constant supervision, ultimately creating an unbridgeable gap between the two cultures and also highlighting the ethnocentricity of the author.

A particularly telling moment of the dehumanising rhetoric employed by Doudy, again from her novel, *The Magic of Dawn*, is her account of Elsie's and Julie Gawler's 'terrifying' capture by Aboriginal men. Having wandered away from camp one evening, the girls encounter twenty 'naked, black savages', decorated and glistening, as Doudy writes, 'in grease and hideous war paint'. (Doudy 1924: 174) Although frightened by their appearance, Elsie is able to still her 'tumult of nerves', calmed by the belief that God would 'deliver them' to safety:

She resolved on a bold step; it might cost her her life, she thought, but she must take the risk; it was fraught with greater danger to remain inactive and leave the natives to start the initiative. (Doudy 1924: 176)

Despite being repelled by the 'thick-lipped mouths and gleaming teeth' and 'the close proximity' of her capturers, she is able to diffuse the situation by cleverly amusing the men with the mechanics of a pair of scissors she has in her pocket. (Doudy 1924: 175) After encouraging them to sit down Elsie proceeds to cut their hair, hoping to distract them. After cutting a few of the men's hair she persuades them to remain seated while she and Julie slowly back away and once a safe distance are able to run back to the safety of the camp. The rather sensationally written episode, altered slightly from Davies' own account, was never reported in official records because of its supposed

adverse affects on attracting capitalists to South Australia.⁴ No doubt it was included by Doudy to enhance the boldness and courage of Elsie's character and to again reinforce the childlike intelligence of her Aboriginal characters.⁵ By additionally focusing Elsie's gaze on the naked male bodies and their greasy war-painted features, Doudy also illustrates the alien nature of these men and their culture. The reference to 'thick-lipped and gleaming teeth' again suggests animalistic features and further enhances the barbarous and inhuman qualities of Aboriginality, constructing them, as Michele Grossman would say, as mere objects of imperial rhetoric. (Grossman 2006)

At this point I would like to again reflect upon the opening passages from Morrison quoted at the beginning of the chapter and consider her claim that Africans were never really '*there*' in American literature – that they were 'decorative- displays of the agile writer's technical expertise'. I would

⁴ Doudy writes that Julie Gawler is adamantly against telling her father about the incident believing that it 'would do a lot of harm to the colony, for people in England would not buy land if they knew. The leading men in Adelaide agreed with my father that if women could travel in safety capitalists would be more likely to invest their money in South Australia'. (Doudy 1924: 178)

⁵ In Davies' account of the episode, for example, she writes that Aboriginal people 'belong to the lowest types of humanity. They have no idea of an overruling Providence'. (Davies 1881: 142). Indeed, earlier in the chapter Davies made a footnote about Aboriginal people practicing cannibalism, stating that although 'some authors say that the Australian blacks are not cannibals, I believe they were...not from actual observation but from reading and hearing so much of the practice of cannibalism. (Davies 188: 134)

similarly argue that the construction of Aboriginal people within Douidy's literary works were also 'decorative displays' that signals an authorial intent to define the white self through the dehumanising scripting of 'others'. Her fabrication of the Aboriginal persona through stereotyping, binarisms, distancing language and deliberate omission, as discussed, thus offers a powerful insight into her whiteness and her anglocentric desire to legitimate one's presence and belonging to the land. By subsuming the Aboriginal persona under such collective labels as 'lazy blackboys' and subservient 'black woman' she effectively posits Aboriginal people against the 'ideal' settler subject, locating them outside the 'homely' place she creates for her white inhabitants. Consequently, although not surprisingly, Indigenous space becomes defined within the collective marginal, a categorisation which homogenises the Aboriginal peoples of South Australia and perpetuates the myth that they were 'one big mob roaming around'. (Watson 2002: 21) It is a colonising myth which effectively ignores the heterogeneity of the Aboriginal race and its 'hundreds of distinct laws, cultures and peoples'. (Watson 2002: 21)

Thus, in the early 1920s when writing *The Magic of Dawn: A Story of Sturt's Exploration*, Douidy participates within a discursive regime that rendered Aboriginal people as abnormal and undesirable and therefore in need of exclusion. Four years after the publication of this novel, and just before her death, Douidy published a series of autobiographical articles in the *Register*. As previously mentioned, they were written under the pseudonym Yakunga and included quite detailed information about individual Aboriginal people Douidy

met while living in the township of Kingston, South Australia. Indeed three of the five articles directly address her experiences with various Aboriginal people from the Kingston area. However, while these articles indicate a shift in her writing in that some of her beliefs and notions about Aboriginal people alter, her positioning as a white middle class colonial woman never permits her to transgress the boundaries of white 'mistress'. She continues to be directed by discourses of domination, subjugation and exclusion. Consequently, any signs of friendship or more companionable moments between her and the Aboriginal people in the article, particularly Aboriginal women, are seldom egalitarian.

The first mention of Aboriginal people within the Yakunga articles occurs in the second article titled 'Brownweed'.⁶ The majority of the article is dedicated to recalling the traumas of Doudy's move to Kingston from Koomooloo and her subsequent success at transforming her space into a 'homely' place. To complete this account Doudy includes a paragraph detailing her first experience with a number of Aboriginal people from the Kingston area. She writes:

There was another infliction. Brownweed Station was a depot for the Aborigines and when we first came, they haunted the house morning, noon and night. If we went out for a walk, we would find on our return a party of

⁶ All five articles appeared as a series, published at different times during December 1927, and January and February 1928.

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black friends sitting under our bedroom window, smoking their short black pipes, while groups of half-starved, mangy looking dogs, snarled and fought beside them. Busy over some household work; I would hear a drawing voice. 'Missis, we want some sooger please,' and turning around would behold a black head thrust inside the front door...Jack soon altered all that by telling them that they must come once a week, on Saturday mornings, for their rations, and they quickly fell in with the new arrangement. When we came to know what honest, faithful creatures many of these were I lost my fear of them, and in fact became quite attached to two or three. (Yakunga 1928: 13)

Here Doudy describes the local Aboriginal people as an 'infliction', a pest and unwelcome 'haunting' annoyance who initially disrupt the running of the household. Indeed, the allusion of the hard-working white mistress and master as opposed to the harassing interloper who begs for 'sooger' dominates the passage. Order is brought to the station when Jack, Doudy's husband, starts to regulate the allotment of rations, suggesting that rationality and law is only attained with the coming of a white official and the adoption of white settler values. The Aboriginal people, as suggested, need to be taught respect for the white notion of privacy and restraint. While the last line indicates Doudy's growing awareness and increased understanding of the local Kingston Aboriginal peoples, it is nevertheless framed within a sentiment of patronising racial superiority. They are still referred to as 'creatures' and likened to faithful dogs. The reference made to the 'black friends sitting under the bedroom window', however, provides, I believe, a revealing insight into Doudy's anxious desire to legitimate settler's right to the land when challenged by notions of Aboriginal ownership. When the Kingston Aboriginals are seen

'loitering' on the station's porch they seem to have presented for Douady a very disturbing realisation that these local Aboriginal people were *there* first and that it is her and her husband who are the intruders. The Aboriginal presence is 'ratcheting up tension', as Denis Byrne would say, deliberately flouting a denial of the racial divide and unsettling the settler, so to speak. (Byrne 2003a, 2003b) Thus, what is perceived by Douady to be 'hers' is also potentially, and in reality, 'theirs'; the home has become at once familiar and yet unfamiliar. (Gelder & Jacobs 1998)⁷ However, by depicting these people as 'loafers' who are incapable of being self-sufficient or showing restraint, they become strategically located as unworthy owners of the land, thereby allowing Douady to contest the notion that she and her husband are the intruders. Thus, once this Aboriginal presence is removed, Douady's anxiety over belonging could be alleviated.

The fourth article in the series, 'Among the Aborigines: "Queen Catherine"', is assigned wholly to Queen Catherine Gibson, a well-known local Indigenous identity within the region, or 'principal personage' as Douady perhaps

⁷ For more information on this notion of the 'uncanny' in relation to postcolonialism in Australia, see Ken Gelder and Jane Jacobs' book *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation*. (1998) The chapter titled, 'The Postcolonial Uncanny: On Reconciliation, (Dispossession and Ghost Stories)' is particularly useful for understanding how Freud's concept of uncanny can help to position white Australian people's simultaneous feelings of belonging to a home that is at once familiar and yet unfamiliar and strange, particularly since the Mabo decision.

mockingly referred to her.⁸ Although Queen Catherine's appearance is seen by Doudy as 'not very possessing' and 'ugly' she is also paradoxically described at one point as having a 'warmer heart and a better nature than many a dame of high degree'. (Yakunga 1928: 14) Doudy describes the initial meeting between Catherine and Doudy as a rather unfriendly encounter. According to what is written in the article, Doudy's ignorance and rejection of Catherine's royal position at this first meeting offends Catherine, who then consequently refuses to come to the police station for rations for several months. The situation changes, however, when Catherine and her husband, Jimmy, rescue Doudy's husband and son from a boating mishap. It is a turning point in the relationship between Doudy and Catherine:

That broke the ice, for the next Saturday they put in an appearance and thenceforth were among the most regular of our visitors. (Yakunga 1928: 14)

Catherine is to become a good 'acquaintance' to Doudy after this incident. So too is Jimmy, a thin, pleasant old man, as described by Doudy, who is ruled and 'kept in place' by Catherine, an interesting contradiction to earlier representations of Aboriginal men in her novels as domineering 'brutes'. Unfortunately, despite the title of the article little is said about Catherine's

⁸ Catherine Gibson was legal academic and author of *Looking at you, looking at me*, Irene Watson's grandmother. Catherine lived in the Coorong and the South East region of South Australia, the land of the Tanganekald, Meintang, Potaruwutj and Bunganditj peoples. Kittie Russell, another Aboriginal identity Doudy describes in her article 'Pointing the Bone' was also Watson's grandmother. Doudy portrays Kittie as a 'lithe, old woman, with only the grey hairs on her chin, and a crop of grandchildren to indicate her age'. ('Other Black Friends: Pointing the Bone' 1928: 11)

royal position, suggesting that there was perhaps no real endeavour made by Doudy to understand Catherine's standing within her culture. Rather it is Catherine's 'questionable' past that is remarked upon instead, the entry of which provides a 'dramatic' insert for the reader:

It was said she was present when the crew of the *Maria* were murdered, and that on one occasion, after the whites came, she killed and ate a child belonging to her own tribe, carrying it off into the bush herself. (Yakunga 1928: 14)⁹

If we consider that cannibalism was seen during this time as 'the capital sin of otherness' than it is little wonder that it was often used as a literary tactic to denote Aboriginal inferiority. (Schaffer 1995) Kay Schaffer argues, for example that:

Within a colonial mentality, cannibalism represented the ultimate denial of a common humanity, the ultimate sign of depravity, the ultimate mark of savagery and, above all, a guarantee of European superiority. (Schaffer 1995: 108)

⁹ The 'Maria Incident' occurred in 1840 when between 24-26 settlers, after surviving the shipwreck of their ship, the 'Maria', off the southern coast of South Australia, endeavoured to walk back to Adelaide but were killed by members of the Milmenruru clan, a group of the Ngarrindjeri peoples. The incident incensed settlers but because there were no European eyewitnesses to give evidence and, as Aboriginal evidence was ruled inadmissible in court, the Milmenruru were not brought to trial. To appease settler outrage Governor Gawler ordered the hanging of two Milmenruru men, their bodies to be hung over the gravesite of the murdered European survivors. The incident created immense debate for many months, continuing well into 1841. It was brought back into focus with the publishing of commemorative pioneering accounts in the 1870s. For more information on the incident and the subsequent public debate

The suggestion and imagery of cannibalism used by Doudy reinforces the popular myth of Aboriginal savagery before the coming of the white people. It also indicates the perceived binarisms existing between white domestic genteel women and barbarous Aboriginal women. Such imagery was not only employed to help justify invasion and Aboriginal dispossession but was used to further enhance the benefits of white cultural domination over Indigenous lives. The fact that Doudy's described account of cannibalism was allegedly committed by an Aboriginal woman is meant to shock the reader and contradicts Doudy's earlier description of Catherine as someone to rival any 'dame of high degree'. Indeed, it emphasises the shallowness of Catherine's title 'Queen Catherine', effectively dispelling any real notion of nobility. Again Doudy is caught up within the rhetoric of the white colonial observer, while Catherine becomes the knowable object, constituting Grossman's idea of 'colonial gossip' where the other is talked about 'outside their presence or participation in the conversation'. (Grossman 2006)

When she further writes about Catherine's habit of using 'dreadful language' the distance between herself, a respectable British woman who would not use such language and Catherine, an Aboriginal woman who does, is again increased:

Catherine...commenced hurling the most awful adjectives. In dismay, I departed pretty quickly, saying as I went, 'You must not say words like that

see the chapter 'Reconstructing the Maria Incident' in Foster, Nettlebeck and Hosking's *Fatal Collisions*. (Foster, Nettlebeck & Hosking 2001: 13- 28)

Catherine.’ It was then that I heard she was in the habit of using dreadful language, but she never afterwards indulged in my hearing. (Yakunga 1928: 14)

This polarisation becomes even more pronounced when Douady draws attention to Catherine’s private space, in particular her living conditions. Whereas Catherine’s daughter Pamela lives in a clean and comfortable hut, Catherine ‘squats and sleeps on the ground’ in her mia-mia, occupying what is perceived to be an ‘unheimlich’, or ‘uncanny’ space. While Douady makes a point of describing her own abilities to create a warm and pleasant home in Kingston, she emphasises Catherine’s inability to do the same. Catherine’s ‘backward’ living arrangements are perceived as an offence against Douady’s own gentility and womanhood, exemplifying the relationship between Douady’s self-representation and the representation of Catherine. Considering that Douady was anxious to project white colonial society as ordered, respectable and refined, Catherine’s ‘unhomely’ living arrangements provided a useful foil to mark the progress of Douady’s own ‘superior’ culture. Indeed, Catherine’s ‘unhygienic’ existence is seen as the reason that many Aboriginal people fell victim to consumption. As she states:

When we consider that the blacks have absolutely no idea of sanitary law, the marvel is not that so many are slain by infectious disease, but that any escape. (Yakunga 1928: 14)

Catherine’s two daughters, Pamela and Bessie, were among those who did die from consumption. Irene Watson, who uses this particular article in her book

Looking at You, Looking at Me, makes an interesting point about Douady's observations. Quoting the above passage in her own work Watson sees some puzzling contradictions in Douady's comments. For example, Watson asks why both Catherine's daughters, who had been earlier praised for their cleanliness fell victim to consumption while Catherine, who continued to live 'the old ways', survived both daughters. (Watson 2002: 181) It is a valid point and one which illustrates the importance of 'de-colonising' such narratives. It emphasises the ethnocentricity of the writer or the 'dreamer', as Morrison would say, who is unable to see beyond the narrow boundaries of her white positioning. Her colonial gaze fails to see Aboriginal culture as anything other than 'primitive' and unhygienic, the very traits she believes precipitated their demise. By 'relegating responsibility' for the demise of Aboriginal people to 'nature', this 'female vision of ...expansion', as Georgi-Findlay would say, 'reveals itself as another, more sentimental version of the anti-conquest'. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 43)

Interestingly, towards the end of the article Douady reflects upon Catherine's anguish at losing her two daughters to consumption and makes a point of Catherine's maternal love:

The hot tears rushed to my eyes, as I left her sitting there, old and desolate, ugly of face, ungainly of form; and yet the immortal mother love, clothing her with a beauty not of earth. (Yakunga 1928: 14)

Here Douady is indicating a common ground that she, a white woman, could share with an Aboriginal woman, the ground of motherhood. Whilst, by white

standards Catherine is considered ugly, it is her maternal love which makes her beautiful, something which appears to come as a shock to Doudy, who, as has been shown, had been deeply influenced by the 'dehumanisation' and 'naturalising' process which scientifically pronounced the inferiority of the Aboriginal people as beings incapable of experiencing the 'higher faculty' emotions of love and motherhood. Catherine, as Doudy writes, did experience this 'higher faculty' and thus surprised Doudy's sense of nature. However, while this concession may tempt some white feminists to believe that Doudy was offering a vision of egalitarian and respectful relations between herself and the Aboriginal women around her it cannot overlook the way Doudy's language within the article ultimately served to increase the distance between the Anglo-Australian race and the Aboriginal peoples. As Moreton-Robinson has argued when discussing relations between Aboriginal women and the 'white missus':

White women participated in gendered racial oppression by deploying the subject position middle-class white woman both unconsciously and consciously, informed by an ideology of true white womanhood, which positioned Indigenous women as less feminine, less human and less spiritual than themselves. (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 24)

Despite her displays of maternal love Catherine is still represented by Doudy, to coin Moreton-Robinson, as 'less feminine', ugly in appearance, unhygienic and less domesticated than the 'true white woman'. Thus, as Susan Sheridan has argued, despite invoking 'the ideologically sacred category of motherhood as a principle of unity', white women writers nevertheless continued to

participate within an evolutionary discourse on race. (Sheridan 1995: 125)

Indeed, Sheridan calls this the 'classic ambivalence of colonial discourse, the simultaneous affirmation and disavowal of likeness, the construction of racial difference as absolute'. (Sheridan 1995: 125-126) ¹⁰

The fifth article in the Yakunga series includes an account of Doudy's 'Other Black Friends'. Amongst these are Johnny Dunn and his wife Emily, two Kingston Aboriginal people whom, according to Doudy, deny their Aboriginality. While perhaps not intending it, Doudy's brief description of the Dunn family is quite poignant and highlights the disruptiveness and destructiveness of colonisation to Aboriginal culture. Both Johnny, whom Doudy portrays as a rather comical but androcentric male who 'considered it derogatory to his dignity' to take orders from females and Emily, a dedicated member of the Salvation Army, decide to 'live like white people' rather than the ways of their 'fellow countrymen'. (Yakunga 1928: 11) Their children are also encouraged to do likewise; however, it is when Doudy describes their daughter Gertie that the impact of this decision is seen:

Gertie was most timid and shrinking, never playing with other children, even at school. I have often, when passing the school grounds during recess, seen

¹⁰ See also Margaret Allen's chapter 'To put on record as faithfully as possible: Catherine Martin', in *Uncommon Ground*, Anna Cole, Victoria Haskins, and Fiona Paisley (eds.), Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, pp. 243.

her sitting by herself in a corner of the wall, while all the rest of the children, both black and white, were hard at play. (Yakunga 1928: 11)

Doudy commends the Dunns on their attempt to assimilate but fails to see that Gertie's 'timid' and 'shrinking' behaviour may be a by-product of this forced conformity. It is interesting to note that it was during the 1880s that the Kingston Council ordered all Aboriginal camps moved out of town to a reserve. It was a move intended to make the township 'more attractive to tourists'. (Dunn 1969: 85) For those Aboriginal people who had a steady job and who had built or rented cottages, in other words were conforming to 'white ways', assistance was granted.¹¹ No doubt Johnny and his wife fitted within this category, their efforts to assimilate seen as something positive rather than negative. But in Doudy's view, even when the family assimilated they still remain part of an 'in-between' world, never really being accepted as equals. Again there exists, in Doudy's writing, an assumption of insurmountable cultural differences. Although the Dunn's decision to forsake their Aboriginality can be seen as a form of agency and perhaps necessary for their survival, it must also be understood as yet another outcome of colonisation, although it is not presented as such by Doudy. When read between the lines, or with a 'de-colonising lens', however, these articles become important sites for

¹¹ See Marie Dunn's *A Man's Reach: The Story of Kingston in the South East of South Australia*, South Eastern Times, Millicent, published in 1969, p 85, for more information

discerning South Australia's 'silent' colonial past. They illustrate how white women writers often chose not to investigate the destruction of Aboriginal traditional hunting grounds by white farming practices, chose not to discuss Aboriginal forced removal to a reserve, nor to realise the impact of forced assimilation within their literary works. Rather they merely accepted the status quo and indeed, exploited it as a means to justify Aboriginal dispossession.

This is again evident when Douidy shows only slight consternation over the exploitation of Pot Belt, a visiting Aboriginal man, who does occasional work for the local storekeeper, and receives minimal retribution for his efforts:

Williams, the storekeeper, used to employ [Pot Belt] sometimes in cutting wood and doing odd jobs about the place and, like many others of the superior race, often paid him a pittance such as he would not have dared to offer a white man; sometimes he forgot to pay anything at all. (Yakunga 1928: 11)

Unfortunately Douidy's sense of justice here is only brief, and no elaboration on the exploitation of 'Pot Belt' is forthcoming. For as Nina Baym has pointed out:

White women's criticism, if any...always emanated from the privileged place their culture had allotted them; they were not about to bite the hand that fed them. (Baym 1995: 103)

While small in length, however, the story of Pot Belt challenges Australia's popular image of its past by illuminating how Aboriginal workers were

‘enmeshed in a highly exploitative system of labour relations’. (McGrath & Saunders 1995: ix) Not only does it help to show that Aboriginal people were ‘essential workers in early colonial Australia’ but it also shines a light, however dim, on the darker side of the pioneer story where incidents of exploitation, as Ann McGrath and Kay Saunders point out, rarely rate a mention. (McGrath & Saunders 1995)

Interestingly, Doudy only writes of her experiences with Aboriginal people while living at Kingston. There is no mention of her life at Farina, nor at Port Lincoln, two towns where Aboriginal people were highly visible, perhaps suggesting that her association with Aboriginal people at Kingston had been a forced association and one she did not replicate when her husband gave up policing to become an Inspector of Stock. As her position changed perhaps so too did her need to associate with Aboriginal people.

I conclude this chapter by again asking the questions: how does Doudy’s literary utterance arrange itself when it tries to imagine an Aboriginal other? What are the signs, the codes, the literary strategies designed to accommodate this encounter? In answer, it is clear that Doudy’s representation of Aboriginal peoples in her writing is underpinned by a cultural system of classification and hierarchical structure. It is a system which depends upon the creation of the ‘other’, the colonised subject who is to be weighed, measured, but always found wanting in appearance, intellect and social custom, deliberately used as a ‘foil and a tool’ for Doudy’s expansionist agenda. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 65)

As a writer Doudy assumes the role of the knowing observer who constructs,

shapes and orders her narratives through a 'white supremacist' lens. She thus fixes her Aboriginal subjects within the category of 'they' as opposed to 'us'. Although her later articles address her experiences with local Aboriginal people during her time in Kingston; it did little to change her position as a white 'missus'. She continues to represent Aboriginal people within terms of savagery, cruelty, dirtiness, diseases and cannibalism, terms designed to emphasise Aboriginal inferiority whilst reaffirming the West's superior view of itself. Indeed, despite claiming friendly acquaintance with some of the Aboriginal people, it is a relationship, 'not based on mutual understanding, and reciprocal recognition.'(Moreton-Robinson 2000: 21) White women and Aboriginal women were always kept at a distance, a relationship of unequal power between them steadfastly upheld.

Having said this, it is also important that we acknowledge the importance of such works. Although representational of popular beliefs and notions about Aboriginality, they nevertheless provide valuable alternative sites of interpretation. They unintentionally disrupt notions of colonial power by presenting Aboriginal people as agents. By defying the cadastral system, be it simply by sitting on a porch and smoking, or refusing to come to the station for rations as Queen Catherine did, these Aboriginal people were asserting a certain degree of power over Douady and her husband.

There is thus little doubt that Douady was an opinionated writer who felt a strong desire to influence the direction of colonial society. The lines written in *Growing Towards the Light* which describe the ecstatic:

sense of power that comes to a writer who is able to reach out a finger here and there and influence events, (Doudy 1928: 304)

say much about her desires; dreams and aspirations as a white colonial woman who wrote to define her own whiteness. Her literary works were clearly directed towards the social and the cultural, endeavouring to construct definite ideals about appropriate colonial masculinity, femininity, domesticity and patriotism. They were also political works that functioned within a system of 'defensive exclusive'; always striving to exclude that which challenged white belonging. Her discursive regime sanctioned racial difference and colonial power and privilege, imposing social and political control over people deemed 'undesirable' and thus considered unfit to belong.

‘More than just a born raconteur’: The story of Myrtle Rose White.

Shortly after her death in 1961 a newspaper article stated that Myrtle Rose White had won ‘her way to success with stories of her own and her family’s life in the outback’. (*Advertiser* 1961: n.p) It further claimed she had been a ‘cheerful writer’, ‘a born raconteur’ and a ‘typical Australian’. (*Advertiser* 1961: n.p) Forty-six years later I would like to suggest that more be added to these statements. A cheerful writer she may have been, a born raconteur, perhaps, but more than anything Myrtle Rose White wrote to create a space for herself and her family within the landscape of a national story. While she coveted a high degree of financial and personal success from her writing, both of which she claimed eluded her; she ultimately strove to mythologise the ‘authentic Australian experience’ and the ideal ‘national hero’. (Turner 1986: 37) Her autobiographical and fictional narratives were consequently filled with tributes to the pioneering ‘sons and daughters’ of the outback, resilient and resourceful stalwarts, as she described them, all learned in bush lore and capable of performing incredible feats of bravery. Within this rather linear storyline lay a preoccupation with images of the desert lands and its appropriation and transformation. It was an abstraction that resulted in a collection of recorded memories, non-fiction history telling and desired imaginings that ultimately reinforced foundations of white settler belonging and frontier expansion and progress. It was an engagement, however, that never once recognised Aboriginal ownership.

The following chapter, while largely biographical in content, will look at White’s desire to forge a narrative of Australia through the employment of a

feminised frontier myth, or more specifically, to use Kate McCullough's words, through the 'figure of "woman" as a site for the recasting of both regions and the nation as a whole'. (McCullough 1999: 5) The second part of this chapter will therefore show that, like both Liston and Douly before her, White's narratives similarly presented women pioneers as pivotal and central players in the building of the nation, that they too tamed the wilderness and asserted cultural power within their families and communities. The naturalisation of White's own identity and that of her family's within this national narrative will also be introduced as will the notion that such positioning relied on assumptions of innocence and denial.

Myrtle Rose White was born on the 30th August 1888, the third of eleven children born to Mark Albert Kennewell and his wife Dinah Ann (Adams), both second generation Australians. Mark, like his father before him, had been a miner, later becoming a green grocer. He and his wife lived most of their lives in rural areas in and around the Barossa and Gawler districts of South Australia. Both Myrtle's maternal and paternal ancestors had migrated from England and had been among the first settlers to come to South Australia.

The story of Myrtle's arrival into the world was according to many, including Myrtle herself, one befitting the life that she was to lead. She was born in a tent on the road between Silverton and Broken Hill, whilst her father was getting lost searching for a midwife. As Myrtle wrote:

On the day I came into the world myself, one of the worst dust-storms known in the history of the Barrier was blowing. But the fact did not endow me with the love for dust, which, in view of the many pecks I found I was to swallow in later life, was something of a pity. (White 1949: 101)

White's childhood was spent between living at Williamstown and Gawler, rural agricultural towns not far from Adelaide. She completed her education at a small private school in Williamstown and at sixteen went to stay with her Aunt Elizabeth's place 'in the bush'. It was while here that White first met her future husband, Con who was then manager of a nearby station. According to White, Con had worked 'the width and breadth' of outback New South Wales since the age of fourteen, a true example, she believed 'of the small army of those who do their unassuming bit by managing large properties on the Never-Never.' (White 1949: 12) Myrtle returned to her family in South Australia and when illness drove Con to Adelaide in 1910 they were married. Myrtle was 22 years of age at the time. A daughter, Doris was born shortly after.

The family stayed in Adelaide for five years until Con was approached by an old friend and offered a job as manager of Noonameena Station, an area consisting of 8,000 square mile of sandhill country between Lake Frome and the New South Wales border. Con accepted the position, answering, as White described it, 'the siren call of the bush, the lure of the unknown'. (White 1949: 12) For seven years the family lived at Noonameena station. It was a time Myrtle was to look back at with contradictory feelings of regret and fondness. The greatest hardship she endured, according to her autobiographical writings, was extended periods of loneliness and isolation. Living miles from her nearest

neighbour she often struggled to overcome periods of utter desolation, as the following passage demonstrates:

The happy years of companionship which had been ours in the first five years of our married life were gone for the Boss and me. Two and three weeks at a time he had to be away from home. I could not believe the change we had made was for the better. (White 1949: 42)

On another occasion she writes:

It was not altogether the distance from civilisation that appalled and pulled my spirits down. It was so inaccessible, so cut off from the rest of the world. (White 1949: 46-47)

During this time at Noonameena, Myrtle gave birth to two sons, Alan and Garry. Both children suffered serious illnesses during their early years, some life threatening, forcing Myrtle to retreat to Adelaide at regular intervals to help improve not only their health, but also her own as well. Living such a great distance from any medical help, and with two delicate sons, placed emotional, physical and financial strain on Myrtle as the passage below highlights:

Children are an expensive investment in the bush. In a town, in one's own home, a few pounds will cover all expenses. But to go down from the bush it sometimes means a few hundred; trips away with delicate children are such a heavy drug on reserves...now after seven years the little place of our own, the hope of which had been our chief inducement to stick it through

years of hardship, is no nearer realisation than it was when we first came together to the bush. The years, too, had taken toll; abundant black hair was streaked with grey; crow's-feet were scored heavily around keen, far-sighted grey eyes. These were the outward signs of stress; but I knew there were others not visible to the eye. The years had not been easy for the man, any more than for me. (White 1949: 207)

These feelings of isolation, despair and frustration were expressed in the first book of her autobiographical series; *No Roads Go By* published in 1932. The autobiographical narrative, based upon Myrtle's time at Noonameena and written ten years after she had left the station, received favourable reviews with promotional copies given to Princess Margaret, Lady Gowrie, Lady Wakehurst, Lady Norrie and many other notable women at the time. The book was labelled by many a 'classic', an outback story, according to Mary Gilmore, that had been written by a woman 'who has lived it, suffered it, and loved it.' (White 1949: viii) It was reprinted until 1936, revived in the 1950s and 1960s and again in the 1970s. According to a review in the *Sunday Mail* in 1963, almost thirty years after its first publication, *No Roads Go By* deserved 'its permanency'. The reviewer stating:

It is a valuable record of life on a really outback station in the days before progress made conditions quite tolerable, especially for women. The author met and overcame everyday difficulties or hazards which now seem incredible, and those she couldn't overcome she apparently had the grace and the patience to live with. Yet this, her book is far removed from a doleful recital of how tough the life was. On the contrary, it remains full of womanly spirit and humour. (C. B. deB 1963: 45)

Although containing a ‘woman’s story’, *No Roads Go By* was also viewed as ‘a man’s book’ since it described the challenges of the outback and the courage of the bushmen. It was therefore, not surprisingly, deemed a worthy and patriotic narrative, credited for drawing public attention to, and support for, the white pioneers of the outback.

Perhaps one of the most rewarding reviews of this book for Myrtle was the acclaim she received from the Presbyterian minister, John Flynn.¹ He praised Myrtle for highlighting the isolation of the outback, particularly the conditions that he himself was trying to improve through his Flying Doctors Scheme. The timing of the book, according to Myrtle, was crucial to the eventual success of the scheme. In 1932 the Federal Government had told Flynn that it was withdrawing its subsidy to the Flying Doctors’ Scheme. However, due to the publicity raised by Myrtle’s book, the federal government reconsidered its position and agreed to continue its assistance. Myrtle makes reference to this in her third autobiographical narrative when she writes:

I remember that when we met in ‘32 John Flynn said to me, ‘The wife and I were presented with your book “No Roads Go By” when leaving Sydney. We read it together in the train coming over. We have lived every page with you. I

¹ John Flynn lived and worked throughout central Australia from 1912 until after World War Two. Flynn’s dream of establishing a radio network between outlying stations and inland settlements became reality when Alf Traeger, an engineer, developed a small pedal radio which was relatively simple to build and cost effective. Traeger’s pedal radio therein enabled all outlying stations to be linked and helped pave the way for the establishment of the Flying Doctor Scheme. For more information on Flynn’s life see Ivan Rudolp’s 1996 book *John Flynn: of flying doctors and frontier faith*, Dove, North Blackburn.

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could not ask for better propaganda to launch my Flying Doctor scheme than your book. We must do something to prevent the women of the outback going through such experiences as those you describe'. (White 1961: 39)

Although reprinted several times, it appears Myrtle was disheartened by the lack of financial reward received from *No Roads Go By*. Myrtle had hoped that the funds raised from the book, particularly from overseas sales, would bolster the family's income, enough to assist with her son's education, however, the book failed to reap the rewards she was seeking. As Myrtle reflected in her third autobiographical narrative:

My book...was sent out into the world with the secret hope that it might find favour somewhere abroad and so help swell the necessary funds to round off the boy's education. Hope ran high when a reputable writer in the *New York Times Book Review* placed it at the head of a list of twenty Australian publications he had just read. My publisher thought this was a good augury and confidently predicted an offer from America. None came. (White 1961: 169-170)

A year after her first publication, Myrtle published *For Those That Love It*, a little known romance novel which centred around the early pioneering years. It told a story of an orphaned young woman, Helen, who discovered that she and her brother had inherited a large property on the Western Darling. Inflected with similar threads to those of her first autobiographical work, the narration paid tribute to the white bushmen and women of the outback - 'pioneers and good Australians in the making' as White referred to them in the book.

Although reviewed 'a vivid and moving yarn of station life', it received little public attention. (*Bulletin* 1933: 5)

In 1922 the White family left Noonameena and moved to Morden Station, situated in the north west district of New South Wales, which together with Nundora, Packsaddle, Box Hole, Cabham Lake, Mt. Arrowsmith and Wonnaminta made up the Morden group. Myrtle remarked that the move was like a 'homecoming' for Con who was destined to return to the 'vicinity no matter where he roamed'. (White 1955: 18). Now managing seven stations for wealthy pastoralist Sir Sydney Kidman, an area covering one and a quarter million acres, Con spent a lot of his time away from the Morden station, leaving Myrtle, as reported in her narratives, to run the day-to-day running of the homestead.² Although she described her days as exhausting, it appears that she did gain some satisfaction and happiness from the move. No longer surrounded by desolate sandhills she found some inner peace and delight from her new surroundings. As she writes:

I grew to love [the high blue range] too...it was to be an everyday sight from our new home. I was to find that by lifting 'mine eyes unto the hills' I drew something of their strength and beauty into my life. (White 1955: 18)

² Sir Sydney Kidman, referred to as Australia's 'Cattle King' it said to have owned a combined area of cattle and horse properties that was greater than the size of England.

After three years, however, Myrtle's frustration began to climb when signs that the financial rewards expected from the move were not forthcoming. Promised wage rises had not eventuated and both Con and Myrtle were 'both very tired of it all'. (White 1955: 159) Their dreams of making enough money to buy land for themselves had failed to come true: 'One thing we were forced to realise as the years rolled onwards was that our own savings would never materially help towards the fulfilment of this dream'. (White 1955: 159) Plans were made to leave and start afresh, the aim being to acquire a Western Lands Lease but this never came to fruition. In the end Con accepted a new deal from his employer as a travelling manager of several stations in the hope that it would improve the family's finances. The new position, however, only increased his workload even further, without the promised remuneration.

They decided to buy a house in Adelaide for Myrtle and the children while Con continued his work. The move was intended to provide schooling for the children and save money. Without the long expensive trips to the city when illness struck, Con and Myrtle hoped to buy 'that piece of land that was [their] Mecca'. (White 1955: 163) Myrtle described the move as a distressing experience; however, 'the most difficult of our married life' she was to later describe it. (White 1955: 159) She experienced isolation and loneliness on a new level, later reflecting: 'Whatever the hardships of the past, we had at least been able to share them – more or less- together...[now] I was living in the city, alone and friendless'. (White 1955: 163) Compounding these insecurities was added financial pressure created by the economic depression of the 1930s. After struggling to make ends meet, Myrtle and the children left their house in

Adelaide and returned to Morden station during the mid 1930s. Their return coincided with the decision to move from Morden station to the central management station at Wonnaminta, situated 200 kilometres south-west of Morden.

The next few years at Wonnaminta were described as ‘quiet years’ for Myrtle. (White 1955: 180) The boys’ health steadily improved, Con and Myrtle continued to work hard but finances were still a problem. Throughout the depression years Con’s wage had been cut by fifty percent. When the depression abated, however, his wage was never restored. By 1937, the situation had not improved but there was little that Con and Myrtle could do, they felt that the time to start afresh had passed. Their daughter Doris, then aged twenty-five years, decided to leave Wonnaminta and establish an employment agency in Adelaide, set-up primarily to cater for the needs of country people. Myrtle was saddened and frustrated by the circumstances forcing her daughter’s departure, she later reflected:

Her knowledge of stock and station work surpassed that of many a man living a like number of years on the land, and her regret and disappointment were as great as her father’s that we had not acquired a piece of country of our own. That hope frustrated, there was nothing for it but to turn to something else. (White 1955: 221)

It was during this time that Con was called in to be an adjudicator for the Western Lands Court. Whilst attending the hearing, and for many days after, Con suffered complications from a virulent strain of the flu. He was diagnosed

with bronchial pneumonia and ordered to rest for three weeks. Shortly after this Con received a letter from his employers stating ‘Owing to ill health and advancing years we would like your resignation’. (White 1955: 224)³ The sacking infuriated Myrtle, who indignantly pointed out that after twenty-two years of service, he had not ‘lost six weeks with illness’ and had maintained an ‘A-one health certificate’. (White 1955: 224) Without any recourse, Con was forced to retire. For Myrtle, the situation was somewhat tempered by the reaction of the people around her. As she reflected:

As the news of our departure spread people whom I had thought of as little more than acquaintances came from near and far to express indignation and regrets. It surely must have been healing balm to [Con’s] wounded spirit to find how many sincere friends he had gathered round him. After all, they largely are his judges. They knew something of his responsibilities and of his faithful stewardship in the face of many odds, with little more reward than the knowledge of a task well done. (White 1955: 225)

Myrtle and Con retired to Adelaide, opening up ‘Cricklewood’, a guesthouse in Aldgate. Con died three years later. Myrtle never forgave those who ended her husband’s time in the bush and no doubt motivated her to write of his ordeal in her second autobiographical work, *Beyond the Western Rivers*, first published

³ There was some speculation that his forced resignation was due to evidence he gave at the Land Court Session, although Con refused to believe this. According to Myrtle the question: ‘Was it a fact that Con White, one of the best-known and most respected station managers of the West Darling, been victimised because of evidence he had given at the Land Court Session?’ was actually raised in Parliament House. (White 1955: 226)

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in 1955 and reprinted in 1956. It continued the story of the White family while they lived at Morden and Woonaminta and was reviewed as another 'classic' of the outback, providing readers, according to its abstract, with 'an entertaining picture of family life' in a region where stations were 'still little worlds of their own'.⁴

With the forced retirement of Con and the move to Adelaide, the 'family circle' as Myrtle called it, had irrevocably been broken. Rather than travel to Adelaide with the family, Alan stayed in the bush, working as a bookkeeper at Mutooroo Station in South Australia. It was there that he enlisted into the Royal Australian Air Force. He served as a pilot for four years during the war and was twice decorated. He married Josie Crossing, daughter of Wilcannia station owner, Harry Crossing, and moved to Western Australia where they purchased 'Lalla Rookh' Station.

Garry also enlisted in the R.A.A.F as a wireless air-gunner. He was listed as missing in action when the Japanese entered the Kelantan River below Kota Bharu, Malaysia.⁵ Myrtle never gave up hope that Garry would return some day. She faithfully believed that he was still alive, perhaps suffering from

⁴ This description was written on the dust jacket of *From That Day To This*.

⁵ Myrtle provides these details in 'Beyond the Western Rivers', (1955: 229)

amnesia 'and that when his memory returned he would come home again'.

(White 1961: 33) He never returned.

Doris married James Chambers, the great-grandson of James Chambers, an early South Australian pioneer who had largely financed John McDouall Stuart's expedition into Central Australia. According to Myrtle he was also the nephew of Katherine Barber, after whom the Katherine River was named. James, or Jim, as Myrtle was to refer to him in her books and letters, had worked as a jackaroo on Morden Station for a few years when Con had managed it. In 1948, twelve years after the family had left, Doris, Jim and Alan (before his marriage to Josie) returned to Woonaminta as owners. The leases of all the big holdings had expired by the late 1940s allowing the Western Lands Commission to allocate smaller stations. Woonaminta was one of the stations available for purchase. The move, although hinged with some sadness, elated Myrtle:

The Woonaminta homestead had fallen back into the lot of the family, and Jim, Doris and Alan were now back at the old place. Poetic justice! Yes, we felt that, but the pity of it was that the Boss did not live to see it. (White 1961: 1)

Myrtle was to visit her children at Woonaminta many times over the next 13 years before her death. Indeed, she felt that her return to Woonaminta was to be her 'destiny', describing her first visit back as a 'homecoming', wherein a 'great peace' washed over her. (White 1961)

During the last few years of her life, Myrtle often travelled overseas with Doris and Jim and assisted several orphanages in India. On July 1961, whilst visiting her son Alan in Western Australia, Myrtle died in her sleep aged seventy-three. She had willed that her body be cremated with half the ashes to be interred in her husband's grave in Adelaide and the other half returned to Woonaminta station. Her wish created seventy-hours of havoc for her son Alan who was forced to drive over a thousand kilometres to Perth where the nearest crematorium was. To make matters worse, an ancient Act required that Alan get a coroner's certificate and an autopsy performed before the body could be taken south of the 26th parallel.⁶ The coroner at the time was on circuit somewhere between Wittenoom Gorge and Onslow. After having a casket made by a local carpenter, Alan drove it to Perth in the back of a Combi van during extreme heat. He obtained the coroner's signature and to add further drama to the whole episode, the casket split and needed repairing on the way. Alan later remarked that her mother would have enjoyed the drama and was 'typical of the way she'd have wanted to go'. (*Western Australian* 1961: 10)

Myrtle died shortly after her last publication, *From That Day To This*, the final narrative in her autobiographical trilogy. Written in a small writing room, built on top of an underground tank at Woonaminta, during the thirteen years she visited her daughter and son in-law, this novel combined many of Myrtle's older memories with the more recent ones from her time at Woonaminta. It was

⁶ According to the article from which much of this information was obtained, this was due to fear of leprosy at the time. (*Western Australian* 1961: 10)

dedicated to her family, who were still 'on the land, following in their father's footsteps'. (White 1961) It appears that the publication process of this particular book caused Myrtle some concern. She was often unhappy with many of the editorial changes made to the original manuscript, voicing some of her anxiety not only to her daughter but also to the head of Rigby Publishers himself.⁷

Myrtle received little financial reward from all her novels. In 1959 she unsuccessfully applied for a Commonwealth Literary grant to help finance her writing. The application was endorsed by Mary Gilmore, who believed that Myrtle's knowledge of Australian conditions should be preserved through writing.⁸ Evidence suggests that Mary Gilmore was a long-standing friend of Myrtle's. In one particular letter, dated the nineteenth of October, 1946, Mary advised Myrtle to send her books to London, claiming that she should 'get in the market early' now that 'London is taking notice of Australia. *No Roads Go By* will open the doors'.⁹ These doors, however, were never opened. While *No*

⁷ Several of Myrtle's letters to her daughter Doris indicate Myrtle's distress about the editing of her manuscript. She was particularly unhappy with the editor-in-chief, Mr Ian Mudie, whom she believed was unnecessarily making changes to her original work. Mudie himself was a keen poet and author and was winner of several literary awards, including the W.J.Miles prize for his book *The Australian Dream*. He was editor-in-chief of Rigby Publishers from 1960-1965. (Butterss 2000: 437)

⁸ These details come from Mary Gilmore's letter held among Myrtle's collection. (Myrtle Rose White Papers MS 6454)

⁹ Taken from Gilmore's letter.

Roads Go By was given some acknowledgment overseas, the rest of Myrtle's books failed to attract the attention Myrtle hoped they would.

In addition to her published works, Myrtle also wrote three unpublished manuscripts at various stages of her life. Shortly before her death she had been working on 'Come With Me', a novel about her overseas adventures with Doris and Jim. 'Naranghi Boss', a fictional romance story based upon the adventures of a young stockwoman, was another narrative which remained unpublished. According to Doris, Myrtle thought the book 'not good enough, after the trilogy of *No Roads Go By* and therefore never attempted to have it published.¹⁰ She did, however, hope to publish 'Led By New Stars', a novel based on her pioneering ancestors. In a letter sent to a prospective publisher Myrtle expressed the belief that the manuscript would appeal to migrants intending to travel to Australia. As she wrote:

The story I wish to place in England, if possible, is fiction largely based on fact. It contains many incidents that would be deemed improbable today, but they did happen-indeed were common occurrence in the 1830s when my people migrated from England to settle in South Australia...I thought as so many migrants were coming out from England to settle in Australia at the present time that the story of this state's beginning might have appeal...I feel if it could be published in England it would be some small tribute to the folk

¹⁰ Doris writes this on the cover page to the manuscript. (Myrtle Rose White Papers MS 6454)

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who set out with so much courage to pioneer this unknown country nearly a century and half ago. If accepted I feel sure it would make a striking film.¹¹

She died while the manuscript was still under consideration. From all accounts Myrtle Rose White had led an interesting life. She had striven hard to be accepted as a writer by the literary world and cherished the little acclaim that she received. In her early years, after publishing *No Roads Go By* and *For Those That Love It*, she admits that living on the station had prevented her from enjoying ‘all the fun and flattery the publication of a book brings in its train’. (White 1961: 167) In later years she was frustrated that she was not financial enough to support herself with her writing and sometimes resented running the guesthouse when all she wanted to do was write.

Despite her many grumblings about financial hardships, however, she was never poor. Indeed, she was often in the position of mistress and, as many passages in her autobiographies show, was quite forceful in maintaining a certain position of power over others, particularly the domestic help. But perhaps one of the most telling aspects of her autobiographical trilogy was the obvious celebration of Australia’s bushmen and women. In these narratives she adopts the role as a ‘preserver of myth’, reconstructing the experience of hard-working and resourceful bushmen and women through either eyewitness accounts or from stories related to her and her family. It presents a form of

¹¹ Letter written by Myrtle and held in her private collection. (Myrtle Rose White Papers MS 6454)

story telling that idealises the heroic pioneers of the Outback. Not surprisingly therefore, there are countless passages dedicated to the bush heroes and heroines, the 'firsts', the great Australian poets and the brave explorers, all meshed together to foster an image of a particular breed of people and a regional legend of foundation. It is a cultural identity, however, that nourishes and authenticates a non-Indigenous view of the land and its people, admitting only those considered 'worthy' of belonging.

In *No Roads Go By*, for example, White's husband is depicted as one of these worthies. He is romantically positioned as an adventurer with a roving spirit who would forever feel the pull of the Outback. His thirst for adventure as a lad of fourteen, as White describes, compelled him to leave home to 'search the world's highways for himself': 'With a swag on his back and a billycan of precious water in his hand he walked hundreds of miles before settling to a job, it being his aim to see all he could of the land he loved' (White 1961: 6). He ends up travelling the 'breadth and depth of that great state, Queensland', experiencing what White depicts as the poetic dream of bushlife - 'the yellow flowing rivers', 'the saltbush sparkling brightly' and the wild dogs singing nightly:

Camping on the wide starlit downs at night, swimming the cattle over the great rivers, following the dust of the moving herd through the long, hot days, his blue eyes were on the blue distance, and on the far hills that propped up the sky on the edge of the world; while his brain conjured up visions of the enchanted land that is always just beyond. (White 1949:11)

With poetic prose, White romanticises her husband's connection to the outback land, positioning him as the 'quintessential' pioneering bushman. He is as one with the bush, born and bred into it, and forever captivated by its seductive lure. He is a man, according to his wife, who possesses an indomitable spirit, high intelligence and ingenuity, 'one of the hardest worked men in Australia', as demonstrated in the following passage:

As for the Boss [Con], the Little'un's [Doris'] summary was this: 'Don't you think Daddy works forty-eight hours a day?' And I surely did...He is called upon to fill all the roles at one time or another, book and storekeeper, engineer, blacksmith, and carpenter. And his inventions when necessity's the mother! Words fail me there. (White 1949: 42-43)

On another occasion she writes:

The Boss had his bump of location fully developed, and could strike across country for fifty miles, and come out within a quarter of a mile of his destination. It was amazing to me how it could be done, for the country was a monotonous sameness, with no tracks and no landmarks whereby to take one's bearings...Something of the same instinct that takes an animal to unseen and unknown waters, must guide a bushman with this gift; a sort of sixth sense as it were. (White 1949: 191)

As the passages indicate, White locates Con as a 'true' native of the outback, as one who understands and belongs to the land. Interestingly, however, while White portrays him as the authentic pioneer, resourceful, hard working and resilient there is also a slight faultline which appears just beneath the surface of

her celebratory homage. At the same time that Con is presented the authentic bushman legend and hero there is also a suggestion that he is, in some ways, a failure, although this is never openly stated. Nevertheless, by referring to his many failed attempts to be a landowner and his somewhat continued meek acceptance of low wages and working conditions, she is in some ways subconsciously highlighting his vulnerability, paradoxically positioning this against his capabilities and courage as a bushman. It is a curious occurrence and one which was perhaps intended to draw attention to the employers who exploited Con, rather than to his own failings as a provider and husband. Thus, by characterising Con as the battling ‘underdog’ and his employer as the driven capitalist, Myrtle could overcome the contradictions within her husband’s representation perhaps believing that the ‘little Aussie battler’ story would better appeal to the ‘average’ Australian reader. Indeed towards the end of *Beyond the Western Rivers* she writes:

To know that [Con] had measured up to all a bushman’s and a bushwoman’s standards, never anything but the highest. His name will endure in the annals of the West Darling with the honour beside it, ‘He was a white man’, for long years after that of many another who thinks he has greater claims to fame if forgotten. (White 1955: 225)

Before continuing it is worth mentioning that in all three autobiographical narratives White gave her family and other characters rather unique and sometimes comical names on occasion, almost in the same vein as giving someone a nickname. Con is affectionately referred to as ‘The Boss’, Doris as ‘Little’un’, her two sons as ‘Boy’ and ‘Little Brother’ and herself as ‘Missus’.

Such a technique suggests it was done to further enhance the Australianness of her books and increase their appeal to readers rather than as a way of distancing her family from her stories, as she openly admitted to enjoying any attention she gained from her writing.

What is clear, however, is that White's portrayal of her husband shows a deliberate intent to partake in a pioneering reminiscence which highlights the uniqueness of this outback pioneer man. It is also important to note that like both Liston's and Doudy's cultural construction of masculinity, White's construction is similarly dependent upon notions of conservatism, sobriety and loyalty to family. The drunken larrikin persona is thus far removed from White's ideal bushman and is only included to provide a foil against her husband and other 'worthy' bushmen.

Interestingly, however, and in a similar vein to Liston and Doudy, White's characterisation of her pioneering bushwomen, often serves to overshadow the accomplishment and resilience of her male personalities. These women are used by White to personify endurance, versatility and wisdom. Together they represent a bush sisterhood, providing a network of understanding and sympathy in times of need. While the camaraderie between outback bushmen is something, which inspired many Australian writers, and indeed is an element Russell Ward highlighted in his definition of the Australian Legend, it is the camaraderie between bush women that White wants readers to understand and appreciate. As she writes on one occasion in *No Roads Go By* when visiting with 'the Mother of Nine', a friend from another station:

Midnight came and went, and still we talked on in muted tones; voicing at last the pent-up thought of years – thoughts that women can voice only one to the other, and then only they know where waits understanding and sympathy, and love. (White 1949: 75)

White is appropriating and feminising ideas of camaraderie here, reversing notions of ‘mateship’ which were traditionally reserved for bushmen. Linzi Murrie has described mateship as something which originated in the 1800s and came to represent ‘the mark of a man’s membership in a male homosocial order.’ (Murrie 2000: 89-90)¹² Used as a political and social measure, as Murrie explains, the term functioned within an exclusionist framework, often omitting women. In White’s works, however, it is the women of the outback who express their solidarity and mark their membership in a female homosocial order. Bush fellowship thus takes on a feminised image.

Indeed, White strengthens this feminised imagery when she represents her female characters as the backbone of their families, as clearly demonstrated in the following passage:

¹² Murrie points out that ideas of mateship became prevalent during the depression years and the advent of unionism in Australia. Mateship, according to Murrie came ‘to express both solidarity and egalitarianism’. (Murrie 2000: 89-90)

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It seems she was the half of the married couple. In light of the subsequent events I won't say she was the better half; to my way of thinking she was the whole; her small insignificant husband did not count at all. And she was certainly capable of putting mere man where she wanted him, and furthermore how to keep him there. (White 1949: 18)

And when describing a fellow bushwoman whom White helped to nurse back to health she writes:

Such a small slight woman she looked, with her chalk-white face and her dark glossy hair clinging in wet rings to her brow. But what an indomitable spirit her frail body housed. Of just such stuff are made our women pioneers... As housekeeper she was verily the provider for her family. She had to make her own bread, cook every particle of food that went into the hungry mouths. She had to milk and on occasion chop wood and even kill and dress a goat for meat when her husband was away on long trips...Such was the life of this brave little woman, battling by her husband's side to make them a home and fortune. And such still is the life of the pioneers, of the first settlers in the Great Outback... Whenever I needed moral stimulus I would get it from the mere thought of that thin, lonely, white-faced woman who could always smile, who lived such a long way in the Never-Never land, who faced her lot so cheerfully, and with hope always on the horizon for the future of her dreams. (White 1949: 31-36)

The portrayal of this 'brave little woman' is aimed at consolidating White's image of the 'authentic' outback pioneer woman. She is thus constructed as a 'paragon' of endurance and adaptability, as an indomitable spirit who

successfully fulfils her role as mother, wife and occasional provider whilst still maintaining her femininity. Clearly the credit traditionally given to the bushmen in more patriarchal outback stories is given to bush women here instead. It is they who are seen as having agency, control and the means to survive. They provide a warm hearth and comfortable environment for the family in otherwise inhospitable surroundings, representing the resourcefulness and dependability of womanhood in the bush. Their presence in the story symbolises a link between the outside bush and the inside home, a notion which challenged the more masculine nationalist literary tradition which often constructed a binary between the two. The pioneer women of the Never-Never land are thus an inspiration to White and are therefore located as central players and nation builders.

Perhaps it is her unpublished manuscript 'The Naranghi Boss' that best demonstrates White's aim to celebrate the 'woman pioneer'. It is a story of a young woman, Lynette who is forced to take over the running of the family station when her father is murdered. From the start White positions the female protagonist as an incredibly accomplished and capable stockwoman. As she writes in the opening pages:

The 'Naranghi Boss' they called her. It was a name bestowed by the blacks when she was a tiny mite, and meant 'little fella boss'. But the name had long ceased to be a jest. Lynette was in truth the little boss...The position Lynette had come to occupy was curiously at variance with her years. Bushman who could double and treble those years deferred to her opinion; recognising the keen clever brain of the young girl. (White n.d: 4)

Not only is Lynette portrayed as a respected horsewoman, but is described as indomitable, fearless and self-sufficient as well. She detests the domestic conventions to which her sister Gay adheres, instead favouring the wide-open spaces beyond the homestead. After her father's death, she not only becomes responsible for her sister and nephew, but must save her family from a ruthless killer and avenge her father's death; all of which she successfully accomplishes. She also manages to find love and marries. The story finishes with the following closing paragraph from Lynette's husband:

‘I love it. It is a country worthwhile. Look at the men it has cradled. Men like my father – like my grandfather. There are no finer in all the world than they; indeed they are the salt of the earth’. ‘They are indeed – but they must play second fiddle to its women’, returned Lewis. (White n.d: 325)

Throughout the story Lynette is depicted as a strong young woman who successfully operates within the masculine domain of the outback station and is seen to be inextricably connected to the land. Indeed, the use of the Aboriginal name ‘Naranghi’ is used to strengthen her claim to be a true ‘native’ and highlights the emergence of a new generation of young Australian women who have successfully negotiated their own space within their surroundings, one of Louisa Lawson's ‘Australian Daughters’. Clearly White is proud of these women's transgression of traditional gender boundaries, wishing to etch a

place for them within the foundational myth of the pioneer legend.¹³ It is interesting to note that there are many similarities between this manuscript and White's own daughter Doris, suggesting that the Lynette was loosely based upon Doris. The characterisation of Doris, throughout White's autobiographical trilogy, for example, is closely linked to the character of Lynette. They are both described as sharing a natural affinity with the land and are viewed as accomplished horsewomen. As White reflects on one particular occasion when relating a story about a young Doris:

One does not look to a girl of seven or eight to take an active interest in stock work; yet when an extra 'hand' was needed - someone to take the culls or holds the 'fats' on the cutting-out ground - it was the Little'un who fell into line. 'I'd rather have her than some of the boys with three times her years!' the Boss would say - and mean it - to her great delight. (White 1949: 55)

The paralleled likeness between Doris and the character Lynette suggests White wrote 'Naranghi Boss' as a tribute to her daughter and as a celebration of the contribution made by many of the outback women.¹⁴ It again exemplifies how women writers constructed a more gendered foundational history of the

¹³ Although Lynette is married at the end of the story this does not suggest that she will be confined to the homestead. Rather there is the suggestion that she will continue to run the station – her husband by her side.

¹⁴ Doris apparently had much to do with the running of Woonaminta. She was responsible for many of the duties away from the homestead – mustering, branding etc. She and her husband were unable to have any children which more than likely allowed her more freedom to work alongside her husband. Personal communication.

outback and resonates with Nina Baym's point that 'in many ways, the subject' of women writer's work 'was always women, no matter what they wrote about.' (White 1995: 215)

Although White is hesitant to place herself within the 'legendary' category of pioneer woman, she continually undercuts this with tales of her own resilience. For example, when describing her first glimpse of her new life in *No Roads Go By* she writes:

I had barked my shins and torn my stockings on a thousand jagged sticks, I had wrenched both ankles by falling down rabbit-burrows, I had slipped on some mysterious substance and bumped my funny-bone... Things could be no worse, and being at their worst, I began to feel – well - something of that wonderful spirit that upheld the martyrs of old, giving them courage to smile at the stake. The flame began to mount; I forgot scratches and bruises, I forgot the strange terrible bush pressing in on all sides...and as I went I said to myself, with a self-righteous glow that was wonderfully sustaining, 'There must be pioneers'! (White 1949: 15)

Indeed, you gain a sense throughout her autobiographical narratives that while hesitant to label herself a 'pioneer', White nevertheless appropriates a space for herself as one. She feels a certain amount of satisfaction in adopting the role of bushwoman. She thus recounts various trials and tribulations of her years in the outback, often describing how she was forced to become one of the 'brave and resourceful'. For example, when describing her baby son's near fatal illness she writes:

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You mothers who have a doctor within call when your child is laid low by sickness, stop and think what it would mean to you if your nearest doctor were one hundred and fifty miles from you, and you with no means of even communicating with him... On me rested the whole responsibility of the case.

(White 1949: 138)

The passage highlights White's growth as a bush woman and an attempt to mark her own heroism. She is appealing to the reader for not just sympathy but admiration as well – wanting them to celebrate her adaptation to the pioneering role. Indeed, in her third and last autobiographical narrative, *From That Day to This* this is made even more obvious when she directly appropriates the label for herself, believing that she had earned the right to do so. In a conversation with her son she asks: 'Does she forget that I'm a pioneer'? (White 1961: 177)

There is thus little doubt that as an author White was developing an image of herself and her fellow pioneers as a means of explaining and legitimising their presence within the land. Another motive was to engage present and future generations in a rhetoric of patriotism by directing their attention to the accomplishments of the earlier pioneers. Indeed, White took great pride in the fact that both her maternal and paternal grandparents were among the first settlers to arrive in South Australia and build, what she considered to be, a 'lasting foundation' for following generations.¹⁵ Their status as 'first settlers' connected Myrtle to the making of South Australia. Such sentiments are clearly

¹⁵ This is mentioned in her unpublished manuscript, *Led By New Stars*.

expressed in her manuscript 'Led By New Stars', a narrative based upon memories told to her through her family and through research she conducted. It demonstrates White's efforts to create a foundational history of early South Australia, much like Douady's account of the Mount Bryan expedition.

The central character of the manuscript is again a woman, Diana, who migrates to the colony of South Australia in its first year of settlement. She is forced to look after her much younger brother when her parents die whilst on the voyage to the new colony. Although saddened by the death of her parents and unsure of her future Diana finds some solace in the fact that she will be part of a great colonising venture:

She was stirred with pride for these, her own people, for their courage and faith - faith in their God, and faith in themselves. After all, it was something to be born of British blood and help push the boundaries of Empire further out.
(White n.d: 59)

White significantly positions the description of Diana's ship journey to South Australia as it symbolises the birth of a new awareness within Diana. She is undertaking a transitional journey, leaving behind her life in England to start afresh in South Australia and discovering a new self-knowledge as a result of her emigration. When Diana reaches the colony she is penniless and with no other recourse available, accepts a rather hasty marriage proposal from Barry Bennett Baring, a total stranger, who asks only that she act as a companion to his aging mother. During the ensuing months Barry proves to be a trustworthy and compassionate husband and his mother, a resourceful and gracious woman.

Although at first finding it difficult to adapt to her new surroundings and circumstances, Diana gradually discovers the 'satisfaction' that comes with living in South Australia. Not surprisingly, White does this by employing the trope that delineates between the idleness and flippancy of English living and the more gratifying colonial existence at specific points within the story. At the manuscript's end, Diana has become the 'ideal' pioneer and together with her husband they lay 'a foundation' for future generations to build upon, ensuring, as Cheryl Taylor might say, 'the continuity of pioneering tradition'. (Taylor 2003: 7)

Underlined throughout this story of pioneer success is the desire to emphasise the righteousness of the colonial project. White, as both Liston and Douady had done before her, is careful to portray the act of settlement as something ordained by God and thus a worthy achievement. Barry, Diana's husband, for example claims: 'There are hardships in plenty- always a pioneer's lot...I thank God for having brought me to such a peaceful haven'. (White n.d: 236)

And on another occasion White writes:

God had brought them safely over thousands of miles of ocean to a land that looked as if it would fulfil the most sanguine expectations and in most of them abounded that simply faith that never doubted His care of them still. (White n.d: 121)

It is a dialogue of righteousness that not only sanctioned white settlement but celebrated the inevitability of colonial intervention as well.

Despite the years separating them and the difference in genres, White, like Liston and Douady, felt a need to accentuate the uniqueness of South Australia's founding moment. As she writes:

Diana was glad that her father had chosen to go to the new colony where convicts were taboo, rather than to New South Wales which had begun as a convict settlement. She liked the idea of a clean untainted land. (White n.d: 6)

And when describing the patriotism of the new settlers White emphasised the converging of the old country with newly forged ties:

They might live to a ripe old age in this new country, but England always would be first – always home to them. Their children and their children's children – with them would be different. They would know pride in being born of British blood, a deep-rooted loyalty to the Mother Country would be engraved on every heart, but for them, Australia would be home. (White n.d: 110)

Here White is illustrating the emergence of a new breed of 'Australians'- 'native' born Australians who share 'the most adventurous blood of old England' as she describes it, with a new patriotic and regional identity. (White n.d: 294) Although they retain links with England, they represent for White something different, something which leaves the elitism and idleness of England behind. They represent a newly forged community, unique and indigenous in its country cultural identity and with British whiteness at its core.

The need to highlight the progressive nature of colonisation thus pervades much of the storyline of this manuscript. The building of towns and agricultural industries, for example, are described with lines that depict the 'bounteous harvests' and 'great flocks of sheep' and signal the advent of a new and exciting dawning. History in South Australia is consequently envisioned as beginning with the advent of white settlement - the dawn of a 'new era', as she described. The language used is reminiscent of that used in much earlier hagiographic accounts recording the colony's history. Not surprisingly therefore, at no point is this new dawning in 'Led By New Stars', nor in her many other narratives for that matter, connected with the exploitation and destruction of the Indigenous inhabitants and the landscape. Rather, appropriation is normalised and legitimised as an inevitable conclusion. It is a particularly telling aspect of White's narratives, which now marks her complicity as a white woman writer.

In finishing this introductory chapter to Myrtle Rose White it is important to understand the popularity of her narratives within the context of the time that they were written. The 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were a time when many white Australians were beginning to reaffirm their place within the world, eager to create an identity which boasted uniqueness and versatility. (Curthoys & Docker 2006) They were therefore anxious to legitimate the illegitimate by authenticating the story of white pioneer success and belonging. There is little doubt that White's autobiographical novels did this. Although Vance Palmer criticised her abilities as a writer and argued she had received too high a praise, when reviewing White's work in 1955, he nevertheless acknowledged that the

Australian public were eager to read her outback stories. (Palmer 1955: 84-85)

And why not since they were adding fuel to an already popular national hymn of progress and romantic notion of the white Australian nation. Her works appealed to the wider public, particularly women, who were eager to consume tales of heroic pioneering women.

White's tale of the Australian pioneer experience, although offering an alternative feminised frontier myth nevertheless normalised the whiteness of both its writer and its settler subjects whilst marginalising, as the following chapters will discuss, the Indigenous peoples. Aboriginal people did not fit the legend she was trying to create, nor the foundational history she was penning. Indeed, although incensed that her family had been cheated out of owning their own land, she did not once recognise the land as being originally taken away from the Aboriginal people. Her view of the land was a Eurocentric one that never once recognised Aboriginal ownership or the destruction that accompanied colonial expansion.

Myrtle Rose White must thus be seen as a white middle-class woman writer who was influenced by racial and colonial rhetoric and preoccupied with legitimating her presence within the landscape. Her autobiographical stories and unpublished manuscripts were used to advance notions of female community and to superimpose a domestic and familial ethos onto the outback landscape and its Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, however, as the subsequent chapters will highlight, while participating in an ongoing project of progress

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and nation building these stories ignored the destruction and exploitation which followed.

‘Footprints in the sand’: Myrtle Rose White and the
Language of Landscape.

In these post-modernist times we recognise that the landscape we observe is a cultural construct based on our desire for either a mirror to reflect particular values or a dialectical complement to our deficiencies.... Even at the base level of selecting what natural features we consider to be worth observing and even editing out those that fail to interest us, we are continually creating the landscape that we ‘see’. (Haynes 1999: 2)

Our traditional and the Goonya ways of looking at land and its uses are diametrically opposed. Our traditional view of the land is spiritual. The Goonya view is commercial. To our people land is the life force to be revered, maintained with sacred rituals and held in trust from one generation to the next. The Goonyas land is a commodity to be brought and sold, to be exploited for profit by clearing. (Mattingley & Hampton 1988: 72)

In the manuscript ‘Led By New Stars’ White wrote:

It was a wild beautiful country. Amazing to think that it had been here through – how many centuries? Known only to the blackfellow...What would the white man make of it? What did his coming forecast? (White n.d: 173)

Although expressed by the female protagonist Diana, these thoughts reflect White’s own literary preoccupation with the Australian landscape and her desire to represent the successful appropriation and transformation of that landscape to her readers. While images of barren red sandhills, ‘silted creek-

beds', 'sun-scalded claypans' and 'silver tipped gum trees' are described at length by White to emphasise the hostile, sometimes romantic, environment settlers were forced to endure, it is the detailed accounts of beautiful gardens and fenced in wilderness that were used to showcase the successful transformation that occurred with the coming of white civilisation. It was a literary strategy, or to use a Georgi-Findlay's term, a 'trope of self-authentication' and 'empowerment', which revealed White's desire to claim a 'space' for herself within her surroundings, inscribing her own Anglo-Australian cultural symbols on what she often viewed as an unmarked landscape. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 84) Narrowly analysed, this cultural vision, which sought to create ordered beauty and familiarity, represented White's attempt to locate her identity within an alternative story of subjectivity. Broadly analysed it revealed an attempt to understand and define a 'homely' nation, more specifically a 'homely' outback region, as a place of domestication and western progress.

This chapter interrogates how White's trope of the desert and its domestication authoritatively situated her many narratives within a nationalist story of acquisition and possession. It will explore how her planting of rose gardens, fruit trees and lawns reflected the fantasies of a white woman attempting to transform an alien space into a known cultural geography on one level while legitimising the appropriation of Aboriginal land on another. No understanding of this cultural construction can be complete, therefore, without some inclusion of what this Anglicised rite of habitation may have meant for the Aboriginal people living in and around White's outback world. The last part of this

chapter will therefore discuss how White's tribute to an explorer's footprint left in the sand or a tall derrick on the horizon failed to see the impact these cultural symbols of advancement had on the Aboriginal people.¹

Laura Gruber argues that women writers 'filtered and re-created' geographical spaces throughout their writing as a strategy of political empowerment. (Gruber 2005) It was, according to Gruber, 'an act fraught with power relationships' wherein women could perceive, organise and depict specific perceptions of 'western' space as 'absolute givens' to the extent that the American national narrative became inextricably connected to images of frontier land and space. (Gruber 2005: 12) Another American scholar, Annette Kolodny, points out that white women often engaged, albeit in a different form, with the male myth of frontier through their desires to locate home and garden within the landscape. (Kolodny 1984) She claims that 'in the process of projecting resonant symbolic contents onto otherwise unknown terrains...women made those terrains their own'. (Kolodny 1984: xii) Katie Holmes likewise views women writer's cultural inscription of the landscape as an important political act that enabled women to partake in the 'civilising' project of colonisation. (Holmes 1999: 155) Women could affix their own cultural symbols of ownership on the land, according to Holmes, and participate in a national story of beautification and development whilst disguising notions of colonial destruction. Reading landscape, and in particular

¹ A derrick is a tall framework over a drilled bore erected to allow drill tubes to be raised and lowered.

gardens, as 'sites of meaning', as Holmes, Kolodny and Gruber all do, adds an interesting dimension for understanding the cultural visions and values held by Myrtle Rose White, particularly in terms of gender, nation and race.

In all three autobiographical novels, manuscripts and her published romance novel *For Those That Love It*, White includes extensive and detailed imagery of gardens, more so than Liston and Douady did in their literary works. It is an area one does not immediately associate with the outback yet is an important feature of White's outback's imagery. Indeed, it adds an interesting dimension to understanding how she sought to generate an image of a new outback identity and reinforce the nationalist notion of being Australian. In *No Roads Go By*, for example, she writes at length about her efforts to transform her arid and barren surroundings into some semblance of order and beauty, and to moderate the harshness of her immediate landscape:

The first year at Nooneameena saw us with great plans for beautifying the place. A vegetable plot was fenced in with fine-mesh netting, neat garden beds were turned over, manured, and planted with seed. Two large lawns were laid out and sown with couch grass; roses were hopefully imported from the District City.... Purple bougainvilleas, mauve wisteria, a beautiful creeper with white waxy bells, and scented yellow jasmine were planted over trellises... Tamarisks that were a dream of frail feathery foliage and plumey pink flowers were put in, with cedars that were to scent the world with their tiny mauve stars, and rattle their polished brown berries like castanets in the wind; and there were grape-vines and citrus-trees, with melons of all varieties...Ah, yes!

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We all worked and worked, expecting in due course to see the desert blossom
like the rose. (White 1949: 65-66)

White's little patch of order and beauty, however, only lasted two years. The 'garden of Empire' envisioned by White – the flowerbeds, vegetable garden, citrus trees and lawns - was ill equipped for surviving the desert conditions.² It withered and died within the first year. Her efforts to inscribe her immediate landscape and make it 'blossom like the rose' were unsuccessful apart from a lone surviving cedar tree and a few 'scraggy bamboos'. Although failing in her quest to tame the harsh landscape and shape it with her own envisioned controlled beauty, her endeavour nevertheless highlighted the desire to regulate the unpredictable and to soften what she saw as a monotonous landscape of endless red sand dunes, stunted box-trees and scraggy salt bushes. It was an obvious attempt to mark a space that could not only be fenced in and controlled, but where she could perhaps feel empowered as a woman. Holmes, for example, argues that gardens offered women:

a space of empowerment and great creativity, an area of land which provided women with the opportunity to plant particular visions on the landscape, and to instil their environment with their own value. (Holmes 1999: 6)

She further insists that

² The concept 'garden of Empire' refers to those gardens, which have been modelled on English gardens. Katie Holmes discusses this concept further in her 2003 article 'In spite of it all, the Garden still stands': Garden, Landscape and Cultural History'.

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in gardening women could find ... a space where their identity might be framed, their authority exercised and their knowledge and skill given public display. (Holmes 1999: 6)

Such was the case for White. Her desire to establish a garden at Noonameena station signified her longing to manufacture something that refined her harsh surroundings. It was aimed at transforming what she saw as the endless, timeless landscape into something that indicated a pioneer's imprint on the land, specifically her imprint on the land. The flowers, vegetable plots and lawn were intended to make the unfamiliar, familiar, by stabilising her sometimes foreboding and unpredictable surroundings. They were to satisfy her cravings for a more civilised life and temper feelings of forced incarceration in a land that yielded little, as the following passage illustrates:

There is something soul-stifling in the monotony of one of two hundred days that have no distinction one from the other...There were times in the latter years, at Noonameena, when I would have considered a lamb chop above rubies, cabbage food for the gods, and a beautiful scented rose a fair exchange for my soul...Be a flower-lover and think what it would mean to go through years of drought when not even a wildflower blooms. Have a passionate love for greens, and be faced with unclothed red sandhills for months and years on end, with the reflected glare hitting on the tenderness of your eyes like a tangible thing. (Holmes 1949: 80)

White's seven years at Noonameena, as this quote indicates, was a period of yearning and despair, with days seemingly blurring into the next and the monotony of the desert sands mocking her cravings for all things green and

beautiful. It was also a time when she fought a physical and mental struggle against naturally occurring features of the outback – the heat, drought and dust, enemies that continually threatened to upheave her newly established sanctuary. In the end these very elements were the victors, preventing her from attaining the level of refinement and normality she desired. Her disappointment is clear from the last page of *No Roads Go By* when she writes:

The last I heard of the house of *No Roads Go By*, was from a travelling vermin inspector. He told me the sand was slowly and surely closing in and smothering the place. One could only enter the building now by climbing through the top half of the window. Soon there would be no sign of our intrusion there. The desert sand would reign supreme again, molested only by straying cattle, or perhaps a musterer's camp once in a while. And looking back at that isolation, at those terrible shifting storms which set hundreds of square miles of country on the move, I thought it was just as well if that were so. And yet- (White 1949: 208)

Although resigned to the inevitability that the 'desert sand would reign supreme again', and that her presence had been an intrusion of sorts, she is somewhat saddened by the thought that her family's mark on the landscape was slowly being erased as indicated by the last two words 'And yet'.

At Morden and Woonaminta, however, the two stations that the White family occupies in *Beyond the Western Rivers*, the story is slightly different. Her desire to create her 'garden of Empire' is finally realised. She is able to render her immediate surrounding landscape fertile and leave her desired imprint on

the land. The garden at Wonnaminta, for example, is given new life under White's instruction and becomes 'a picture to gladden tired eyes'. (White 1955: 172) As she writes:

The garden especially engaged our attention; it was no more than a barren patch...It entailed a tremendous amount of hard work, tintured, I must admit with quite a few disappointments, but the years ahead brought us a rich reward for our labours. (White 1955: 168)

The garden becomes a source of pride for White, as the land is rendered both productive and domesticated:

Many people are of the opinion that it is almost impossible to grow things outback. This is quite a mistaken idea. Certainly, planting is always more or less a gamble...But given sufficient water, and attention, most plants thrive. Roses do particularly well, vegetables, too, even asparagus, artichokes, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, celery, and other less-known grown types of stuff. Fruit-trees, particularly citrus-trees, flourish.... Peaches and nectarines and grapes leave little to be desired. (White 1955: 1)

The meaning of White's immediate landscape has been changed with the advent of the garden. She has fenced in and sculptured a piece of the unknown outside landscape into an inside one that could be contained and surveyed from within the homestead boundaries. The land has been successfully appropriated and transformed into something that signified her own set of cultural values and fantasies. Not only has the space been ascetically improved but it has also been rendered productive. While such a simple act may appear innocuous, it

needs to be understood within terms of progress, patriotism and nation building. White's act of cultivation and gardening not only observed an 'enlightened' belief that she was helping to 'uplift the human race' through her efforts to beautify, harmonise and civilise the nation, and promote 'a settled and productive citizenry', but it also helped to legitimise the perception that the previously neglected land was in need of European intervention. (Holmes, 1999) Thus, while on one level she is, as Holmes would argue, being a 'good citizen' and domesticating the nation through cultivation, on another level she is also claiming the right to white ownership of, and belonging to, the land, therefore marking her own successful adaptation to her environment, and registering her presence in the new anglicised outback landscape. (Holmes, 1999)

White's act of beautification and cultivation thus helped signify and solidify notions of settlement at a time when the young nation was striving to attain the appearance of civility and stability. Indeed, during the early twentieth century women were encouraged through magazines and newspaper articles to 'civilise the landscape' through gardening. (Holmes 1999) They were 'seen to possess the skills in the art that doth mend nature' and thus became 'embroiled in the colonising project' by ensuring the transformation of Indigenous land. (Holmes 1999: 158) White, like many other middle class white women of the time, as her writing demonstrates, took part in this civilising mission. By feminising her own piece of the outback and manufacturing a more conventional space, she too advanced the perception of the nation's progressiveness.

As with her garden at Noonameena, however, White's created patch of normality at Woonaminta was under constant threat from the elements. During one particular dust storm for example, White reflects:

By nightfall, after hours of the worst dust storm in many years – though each year has its nerve-shatterers- I looked on a blackened, blasted garden and felt the futility of it all. As an ironic reminder of the beauty that had blown away, a lovely bunch of roses, the ones picked that morning to show of my skill as a gardener – truly pride goeth before a fall! - stood up to their heads in a bucket of water waiting to be arranged...So much beauty to be destroyed in a few hours! A volcanic eruption with outpourings of pumice could not have done the job more effectually. The total destruction of all that beauty was the bitterest pill to swallow. (White 1955: 173-4)

For White the countless dust storms, endless heat and occasional floods reflected abnormality, and as her writing suggests, were at odds with her visions of what she was trying to create. They represented a land that Jay Arthur has referred to as a 'default country'. (Arthur 1999) Arthur argues, for example, that:

There is an invisible negative shape working within the language of the colonists, forming 'Australia' by discrepancies and absences. The shape is that of the Default Country – which may have once been England but which by the twentieth century is better understood as the kind of country implicitly present in the English language. The Default Country is revealed in the way Australia is described; the omissions and emphases shape the Default Country. It is the

non-default part of Australia which becomes 'Australia', so that 'Australia' emerges as non-standard. (Arthur 2003: 26)

Arthur additionally suggests that by placing the Australian landscape against visions of ordered, undulating green pastures and cool climate, it was seen as something that was abnormal and therefore needing to be changed. Attempts to alter the landscape, 'to imbue it with different meaning and bring it into the *naturalness* of another vision' could thus be justified by White. (Holmes 2003: 181) In short, by emphasising the defects of the existing environment White was vindicating the very act of settlement and its impact on the landscape. After all, how could colonial expansion and intervention be viewed as destructive if what had existed previously was considered deficient? It was an assumption that also helped confirm the pioneer's successful grafting onto the land. By portraying the outback landscape as both an enigmatic and oppressive world with 'strange gripping power', for example, White could further highlight the courage and resourcefulness of the pioneer bushmen and women. (White 1933: 69) Ross Gibson argues that:

If the land can be presented as grand yet 'unreasonable', the society which has been grafted on to it can also be accepted as flawed and marvellous. (Gibson 1992: 73)

He additionally contends that this society 'can portray itself as marvellous because it has subsisted, with all its flaws, in this grand, yet unreasonable habitat.' (Gibson 1992: 73) Thus, when White writes:

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it was not a seductive land. It did not lull one with a sense of security, nor inspire one with confidence. Its hardships weaned off the weaklings. Its loneliness had driven men to insanity. Its hot suns, its dry breast, had taken heavy toll of human life. It was not to be trusted or treated lightly. (White 1933: 69)

she was seeking to illuminate the worthiness and ‘grit’ of the pioneers who had successfully overcome the deprivations and hardships of the outback land, proving their mettle as it were. The pre-colonial country thus needed to be represented as deficient and hostile so that the society that endeavours to change it is ‘naturalised’ and seen to have taken root. It was the kind of myth that sanctioned, indeed made admirable, irrevocable change to the landscape and helped define that nation's personality.

Indeed, in her unpublished manuscript ‘Led By New Stars’, there is mention that the establishment of a ‘garden of Empire’ was a means of solace for British ‘exiles’ in an otherwise default and alien country. As White writes in one particular passage:

Up the garden path where all the dear familiar flowers that grew in the gardens at home were to find a place- wall flowers, hollyhocks, mignonettes, violets. Diana liked the thought. If the flowers of the old country would grow and thrive in this new land it would mean much to exiles. (White n.d: 215)

Although White is describing the earlier British settlers here as exiles, it is possible that she considered herself an exile within her own surroundings.

Growing up as a child in the Barossa Valley, Gawler and Williamstown, some of the more lush areas of South Australia, it is possible that she felt she had been exiled to a different land when she followed her husband to the outback. The need to transform her surroundings to something, which recalled the familiar landscape of her childhood, perhaps becomes even more paramount to this woman writer when she came to inhabit an outback space.

It is also important to note that the rolling green pastures and lush landscape depicted by White in 'Led By New Stars', although quite different to that described in her autobiographical narratives, nevertheless shares the perception of being, to again use one of Arthur's terms, 'an unland', a *terra nullius*, that yields little. (Arthur 1999: 67) It remains so until it is tamed and settled by industrious colonists. Barry, for example, is presented as one whom, after 'doing battle' against the 'stubborn forces', triumphantly 'awakens' the land to its fullest potential and is rewarded for 'his labour and intelligent care': (White n.d: 186)

'I am glad Barry chose the land...But it is hard work. He is at it morning, noon and half the night...His growing passion for the land amazes me...He seems to have some affinity with the soil. He puts much into it but it gives back a thousandfold'. (White n.d: 216)

The landscape thus moves from existing as an 'unland' to a place that becomes known and marked through Barry's cultivation. The countryside is successfully transformed into productive grazing and crop land, its precolonial deficiencies

'replaced by those of fertility'. (Arthur 1999: 68) Again the colonisation process has been justified.

White's attempts to represent the landscape to her readers also appeared to be aimed at marking time by historicising the outback and representing it as a 'moment of transcendence' or 'point of transfiguration' to draw upon Bird-Rose's theorising. (Rose 1999: 9) In effect, she becomes a 'time lord', one who marks the landscape with a eurocentric vision of time and history. A simple description of a tall derrick in *No Roads Go By*, for example, is included to signify the transition of the timeless and ageless pre-colonial countryside into one that has been marked both visually and symbolically by the settler's hand:

For long months the skeleton of the tall derrick threw its shadow across the copper-burr and hopbush flat; whilst the small engine chug-chugged away, breaking the silence of the ages. (White 1949: 191)

The imposing derrick comes to dominate the landscape, its noise, rather than be seen as a violation, is viewed as a sign that time has begun in the outback. Its presence signals an end to the 'silence of the ages' and beckons the initiation of a new modern and creative time in the nation's history of beginnings. Colonisation thus becomes 'a creative act'. (Arthur 1999: 67)

Indeed, White further reinforces this by frequently identifying a specific place with a particular event or person of importance. Her strategy of including 'heroic' tales of exploration, for example, not only acts to highlight the historical value of her narratives to readers but also serves to strengthen the

binds of white occupation. The passage quoted below from *Beyond the Western Rivers*, aims to capture this notion:

Burke and Wills have traversed this country in the early sixties. Named waterholes and marked trees told the tale of their advance...Sturt, too, had left his footprints on this part of the country. The family had once spent several days at Mount Poole, where Sturt had camped through a dreadful summer. A depression was still discernible where the underground room was excavated as a refuge from the heat. Time had not changed the quaint weather-sculptured Cathedral Rocks...but the marked tree, an old twisted beefwood above the grave of John Poole, the second in command, who sleeps his last sleep out there in the silence, is almost leafless above the sandstone pillar...During the days of our quiet visit the boss and the Little'un had pulled some wild flowers from the bank of the creek and together woven a wreath to crown the pillar.

(White 1955: 73- 74)

Here the explorer's footprints in the sand, their naming of waterholes and marking of trees, represent another notch along Australia's historical timeline. They provide signposts for the emerging nation, signalling the transition of 'space into place' and bringing 'time, knowledge, population, names [and] change' to the land and its white inhabitants. (Arthur 1999: 67) The 'colonial calendar' thus becomes marked with the accomplishments of these 'firsts', a 'continual reminder' Arthur suggests, 'of the colonial status of the non-indigenous population and a form of celebration of occupation'. (Arthur 2003: 41) Indeed, Arthur elaborates, claiming:

The colonial landscape is everywhere stuck with flags proclaiming a new landing of culture, and of discontinuity with the indigenous culture, which is (implicitly) proclaimed to be without that of which the colonists provide the 'first'. (Arthur 2003: 41)

Once marked by the colonial temporal signifiers of exploration and progress, places could thus be described and converted into text, or as Lynette Russell argues, once 'drawn, mapped and textually described' the frontier could be then understood. (Russell 2001: 5) The 'incomplete' geography could thus be 'completed' with the arrival of 'those daring men who sought in Australia's early days to unravel the mystery of the inland'. (White 1955: 75)

While the inclusion of such exploration tales allowed White to linearise and reconceptualise the wilderness around her, turning the unexplored and unnamed into the explored and named, it also served to reinforce the popular theme of the white hero's tragic struggle against nature. It was a strategy used by many to strengthen the belief that white settlers rightfully belonged. 'By focussing on the horrors of the desert', as Roslynn Haynes has argued, not only were 'national martyrs', such as lost explorers, mythologised but:

the expectation that White Australia 'deserved' the land and anything else that they could wrest from it, as minimal recompense for the sufferings and defeat of their heroic representatives (Haynes 1999: 33)

was sustained. The celebratory tribute to the explorers becomes fulfilled, further enhancing White's nationalist tale, while the acquisition of land is also shown to be a warranted outcome.

The representation of White's surrounding landscape, with its detailed descriptions of humming derricks, ordered rows of scented flowers and imprints of explorer's footsteps, therefore signifies a type of eurocentric blindness that celebrated the transformation and harnessing of the land with the advent of civilisation. It painted a picture of an 'unawakened' space becoming an 'awakened' place, made productive and pretty for following generations to appreciate and giving rise to the perception, to again quote Arthur, that Australia was 'not invaded, but rather unrolled before the colonists' feet, who then stepped upon the new land'. (Arthur 1999: 69) This celebration of transformation, however, in seeking to 'complete the incomplete' denied the destructive force which accompanied colonisation and failed to see that the land had already been discovered, named and occupied before the coming of white pioneers. Whereas gardens, bores and boundaries represent an affirmation of an emerging white cultural development in White's narration, they represent the destruction of culture, food source and livelihood for the many Aboriginal groups inhabiting the outback. Her many references to explorer's footprints in the sand as a symbolic sign that the land has been transformed from an empty land to one marked by civilisation ignored the fact that for thousands of years the land had already been walked over, known, signposted and named by Aboriginal peoples. Deborah Bird Rose has convincingly pointed out that this form of blindness afflicted many settler

Australians, preventing them from acknowledging prior ownership and knowledge of the land. (Rose 1996) As she argues:

many Australians have avoided accepting, or even attempting to understand that at the time of their arrival this continent already had been discovered. It was already travelled, known, and named; its places were inscribed in song, dance and design; its histories were told from generation to generation; its physical appearance was the product of specific land management practices; its fertility was the product of human labour which had been invested in the land. (Rose 1996: 18)

This land which had been inscribed in Aboriginal 'song, dance and design' was invisible to White's eye. It belonged to a pre-colonial timeless period that no longer existed in White's contemporary ideal of nationhood. As such, its pre-colonial physical appearance as a product of Aboriginal 'land management practices' was not apparent to White's sense of land management. Her vision, clouded by an egocentric desire to celebrate white pioneering success and colonial expansion, did not see the impact that white people were having on the outback's 'nourishing terrains'.³ She did not see that fences, flocks and agriculture, all of which marked the success of white intervention were destroying Aboriginal lives, disabling the traditional practice of food gathering and hunting and irrevocably disrupting sacred customs and rituals. While symbolising a sign of progress for White these agricultural practices, structures

³ Deborah Bird Rose describes the landscape of Australia as nourishing terrains - created by Aboriginal people through their knowledge of land management.

and beliefs were a cultural violation to the Aboriginal peoples, as the extract from Irene Watson's *Looking at you looking at me* highlights:

In western capitalist thought, ruwi is known as a form of property, that is a consumable which can be traded or sold. The indigenous relationship to ruwi is more complex...The land is an extension of self; to damage the land is to damage an aspect of self...The impact of invasion was felt as being more than a huge loss of life, and our violent dispossession of our traditional ruwi...Wherever the coloniser moved and settled the lands, the songs and ceremonies stopped. The rape of the land and its people violated their relationship with the land. Our ability to care for ourselves and our land was no longer within our power. The consequences of our dispossession and the violations of our law are now mirrored in the ruwi and its devastation. (Watson 2002: 20-21)

The appropriation and transformation of the land in White's narratives, however, was never represented as an assault on the spirit of the Aboriginal peoples, nor as an assault on the environment. It was instead portrayed as a necessary outcome, an act ordained by God. Any relationship between Aboriginal people and the land was effectively and conveniently extinguished with any disruption and dislocation felt by the Aboriginal people omitted. Indeed their very presence was depicted as something that existing only in the past, slowly covered up by the desert sands, doomed for extinction. The presence of the white pioneer, however, became fully illuminated - their mark symbolising new life for the land and signalling a new history of the outback.

It is thus clear, as this chapter has shown, that White's preoccupation with the outback landscape and its representation in her various narratives, carried significant meanings about white belonging and nationhood. A footstep in the sand, a carefully manicured flowerbed and a green lawn, as innocent as these may seem, nevertheless delineated a link with civilisation, with Empire and with the new emerging Australian nation. These cultural symbols also provided an avenue for White to transform her own unknown and alien space into a known and refined place, empowering her as both a woman and as a citizen. Indeed given the distinction of being the first white woman to live in the Noonameena region and her daughter the 'first white kiddie to leave footprints in the sand', White felt pride in knowing that she was part of the historicisation of the outback, a dot on the 'colonial calendar'. (White 1949: 46) Her vision, however, was clearly clouded by an egocentric assumption that viewed the precolonial landscape as a wasteland. Any notion of a 'nourishing' and pristine Aboriginal landscape that had existed for thousands of years prior to white invasion and had been carefully managed was thus effectively written out. Ultimately this served to offer security and generate a rationale that legitimised white occupation and a prevailing sense of ownership. As a writer of stories who mythologised the pioneers of the outback White was thus motivated to show a specific picture of the South Australia landscape that did not contradict the very mythology she was creating. Jay Arthur's statement that 'the occupation of Australia is an event in language as well as in space' clearly rings true when examining the literary works of Myrtle Rose White. (Arthur 1999: 66)

‘Faithful henchmen and devil’s imps’: Myrtle Rose White and the framing of Aboriginality.

Looking to practices of time that underlie the making of new worlds, I find a regime of violence, a neutralisation of moral action, and a bruising indifference towards pain... silence pervade and gird the whole project... We see that the new-world nation unmakes and remakes itself through a long and tortured failure to temporalise and spatialise its own moral presence. (Rose 1999: 6)

In literature attuned with ideals of national self-creation, as Myrtle Rose White’s autobiographical and fictional narratives certainly were, it is not surprising to find Aboriginal people represented as a ‘melancholy footnote’, included, but only as a comparable ‘other’. There is neither space given for the valued recognition of Aboriginal custom and culture nor any consideration of Aboriginal contribution to nation building. Consequently, their work as station hands, donkey drivers and domestic servants is obscured almost to the point of invisibility. Unlike the white bushmen and women who are seen as being part of the land, the Aboriginal people are presented as primitive interlopers and effectively disconnected from the Australian landscape. They come to symbolise an uncolonised, dislocated people representing, as Rod Macneil would argue, everything that is ‘antithetical to colonised Australia’. (Macneil 2001: 49) Georgi-Findlay argued that Indigenous peoples were often ‘perceived as victims of natural law’ and were ‘either absent as agents of history or held accountable for their own fate on the grounds of being non-agents of civilisation’. (Georgi-Findlay 1996: 56) It is a statement, I believe,

which applies to the framing of Aboriginality within White's autobiographical, fictional and unpublished narratives.

The following chapter will deal with this representation of Aboriginal people in White's texts. It will highlight the deculturation of Aboriginality within these literary works by investigating how she marked Aboriginal culture as both archaic and alien, effectively positioning Aboriginal people on the other side of the temporal frontier and signalling their dislocation from, and incongruity with, the national fantasy being created. The chapter will also examine the dehumanising language White used when depicting her Aboriginal characters, locating it within a force of white supremacy, to use bell hooks' terminology, that had the 'power to make black invisible'. (Cited in Watson 2002: 83)

While making space for her pioneering bushmen and women, for their perceived special relationship with the land in particular, White makes little, or no room for the Aboriginal people who also inhabited the outback landscape. What lies beneath this alternate story is not told. Rather their disappearance, or non-presence, is written as an inevitable colonial outcome and scarcely reflected upon. This is made obvious towards the end of *No Roads Go By* when White writes:

One thing that was puzzling about the open country, and yet could be understood, was the lack of practically all trace of early blacks. There were none of the little hummocks of hard-baked sand and stones which we call blackfellow' ovens in which the blacks cooked his food; there were very few

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nardoo-stones, stone axes, and no spears, boomerangs or nulla nulla sticks...Dick explained this one find as probably belonging to a black who had stolen a gin and in consequence had had to flee his tribe. I suspect Dick had been in a like predicament himself, and so knew what he was talking about. The complete absence of water would discourage the blacks both from entering the country and from going very far, for as far as one could see there had been a complete absence of water here until the bores were put down. The want of regular water would account for the absence of signs of occupation. (White 1949: 204-205)

In a matter of a half a page, White has effectively written the Aboriginal people out of the landscape and created the impression that the land had been uninhabited when white settlers arrived. The line: 'One thing that was puzzling about the open country, and yet could be understood, was the lack of practically all trace of early blacks' is particularly telling as it indicates a belief in the demise of the Aboriginal people and their culture. It locates them as a primitive people existing from another age, equating them, as Nancy Williams and Lesley Jolly would say, to 'curious living fossils akin to the marsupials, [and] doomed to extinction in the march of evolutionary progress'. (Williams & Jolly 1992: 10) Their discarded nardoo-stones and stone axes are described as ancient artefacts and are seen to mark Aboriginal primitiveness rather than signal any human industry. Indeed, these relics from the past now serve as 'perfect specimens' for paperweights and decorative household items for White, a reminder of the outback's prehistory and the ultimate demise of the

Aboriginal people.¹ It is a literary strategy designed to make space for the those who are seen to show human industry – the white settlers.

Indeed, the suggestion that Aboriginal culture is a relic belonging to the past is made even more obvious in White's third autobiographical narrative, *From That Day To This*, when she writes:

It is generally accepted that we have no ancient ruins, but we have, and they are to be found along every waterway- dry or otherwise- in the outback, the remains of aborigines' campfires and clay ovens. Sometimes a stone axe is found lying where it was dropped in the dim long ago, sometimes a nardoo stone or a nulla-nulla or some relic comes to light- those of wood being warped and falling apart from exposure to countless seasons and perhaps a century of suns...once when the Little'un was out riding she found a complete skeleton- presumably a black-fellow's. (White 1961: 132)

Here Aboriginal culture is presented as something that remains only as a ruin, as something that has been slowly covered up by drifting sands and countless floods, eroding over time until all that remains are 'stark piles of stones' and 'bleaching bones high and dry in the scorching sun'. Indeed, the language used – 'remains', 'past' and 'dark'- compels the reader to envision Aboriginal people and their culture as a dim, obsolete relic, as something that remained

¹ In her manuscript 'The Naranghi Boss', for example, White describes Lynette idly toying 'with a black-fellow's stone axe, a perfect specimen that served as a paper weight. There were many relics of the blacks in the office'. (White n.d: 130)

static through time and therefore destined to die out. By representing Aboriginal culture as a distant memory kept alive only through discarded artefacts and as something which belongs to neither the present or future progressive white Anglo-Australian culture, White ultimately reinforces the distinction between black prehistory and the beginning of a new white history, constructing, to quote Jay Arthur, 'occupation as a chronological fracture, on one side of which is time, and on the other non-time'. (Arthur 2003: 46) The perception of Australia as a timeless *terra nullius* is thus reaffirmed, quelling any commentary of the problematic notion of conquest and dispossession. Although White shows some amazement by the absence of Aboriginal people, it seems her puzzlement is briefly stated, suggesting she was content to believe that they were simply unable to exist in the open country, that their passing was 'inevitable once [they] were encountered by a...superior race of white supplanters'. (Dalziell 2004: 97) It was a trope which effectively 'decultured' Aboriginality, sanctioning it as part of the natural environment.

Indeed, the ethnocentric assumption that survival only became possible in the outback when white people came to sink bores and that only they have the technology, skill and resourcefulness to battle the elements and overcome the desert conditions is a theme present in all White's narratives. It is an assumption that implies that Aboriginal people had no knowledge of their environment. It dismisses their ability to live in dry areas by assuming that their knowledge of water sources did not extend beyond White's own narrow conjecture that water can only be present if seen by the eye. In actual fact, Aboriginal peoples in this region had intimate knowledge of where to find

water, often digging deep wells into dry riverbeds and enlarging natural rock hollows to increase their capacity which were then capped with stones to limit evaporation and contamination. (*Cultural Heritage Guidelines* 1999) White, however, shows her ignorance of such practices, believing instead that the land was only inhabitable when touched and transformed by white progress and technology.

This lack of awareness of Aboriginal peoples' bush skills and adaptability appears a common failing by White. Intent upon praising the white bushmen for their bush knowledge and gifted 'sixth sense', she effectively negates the possibility that Aboriginal people had also been masters of the desert lands. According to Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, such writing techniques were not only aimed at deculturating Aboriginality but designed to indigenise the white settler and signify their right to 'truly' belong. After all, if the 'new possessors' could 'claim to know the land as much', if not more, than 'those they dispossessed', then their presence could be legitimately affirmed. (Hodge & Mishra 1991: 144)

Clearly, therefore, White's own commemoration of the white bushman's skill is an attempt to 'emotionally and spiritually' take hold of the land through the indigenisation of the white outback bushman. (Griffiths 1996) By locating them as 'native Australians' mimicking, as Terry Goldie might argue, the Indigene, White is authenticated their relationship to the land and thereby justifying their right to belong and possess the land. (Goldie 1988) In doing so,

however, she is displacing any link, and indeed any right, that the Aboriginal inhabitants have to the land.

But had the open, 'virgin' country that White imagines and describes as an untouched landscape really been devoid of Aboriginal occupants as she claims? Research shows us that at the time of European contact, South Australian land supported approximately fifty culturally distinct Aboriginal groups. (*Cultural Heritage Guidelines* 1999: 11) According to the authors of *Survival in Our Own Land*, for example, each group had:

its own clearly defined territory recognised by all its members, held in sacred trust from generation to generation, and respected by outsiders. Our traditional occupiers of the land knew intimately its physical features, animal and plant life, and water resources. They maintained them ritually in accordance with age-old customs'. (Mattingley & Hampton 1999: 1)

The traditional owners of the territory, in which Noonameena was situated, were the Ngurunta people.² According to the ethnologist Norman Tindale, the 'tribal area' of the Ngurunta people covered six thousand, five hundred square miles, west from the Barrier and Coko ranges, east to the shores of Lake Frome; north to Boolka Lake and south to about midwaters of Eurinilla Creek. (Tindale 1963) The Aboriginal workers employed on Noonameena station may have been descendants from this group or possibly had come from

² The alternative names for this group are Runta and Runda.(Tindale 1963)

neighbouring descent groups which included the Adnyamathanha, the Jadliaura and the Dieri. Morden and Wonnaminta stations, the setting for her consecutive autobiographical works, were originally home to the Maljangapa and Wanjiwalku people; however, White makes no mention of this. Rather she subsumes all her Aboriginal characters under one umbrella, never once acknowledging any group name or cultural heterogeneity. Instead they remain as 'one mob'. Interestingly she does note that her husband 'had assisted A.W.Howitt of the relief party to collect a great deal of information on aboriginal life and legends', however, it appears a brief, almost throw-away comment, with no further elaboration made. (White 1955: 73) ³

Another particularly telling comment that highlights White's desire to remove Aboriginal people, in this instance the Ngurunta people, from the landscape and signal their demise comes via the claim in *No Roads Go By* that 'only one whurlie (sic) was found by the men in all their combing of that country'. (White 1949: 205) Although brief this line again implies the non-presence of Aboriginal people within the land. It also denotes White's ignorance of Aboriginal dwellings in desert areas. Semi-circular windbreaks made from branches were commonly built by Aboriginal peoples and often only used for one or two nights. (*Cultural Heritage Guidelines* 1999) The dwellings were

³ A. W. Howitt was an English born anthropologist, explorer and geologist who showed a keen interest in Indigenous culture in Australia. He published many works about the Aboriginal peoples of Victoria, New South Wales, South Austral and Queensland. For further discussion of his work see 'The A.W.Howitt Collection MS 69'. *AIATSIS* [On-line], available http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/finding_aids/MS69.htm

then abandoned when the group moved on. Environmental conditions quickly destroyed these structures, thus perhaps explaining why there was only one wurlie found by the station workers within the region. Such consideration, however, is absent from White's account. She is, to borrow Denis Byrne's terminology, 'blind and impartial' to the ways Aboriginal people had mentally and ritually mapped the 'social and spiritual particularity' of the land. (Byrne 2003: 175)

Indeed, any discussion of Aboriginality within White's autobiographical narratives, however brief, is often framed with the intent to appropriate Aboriginality rather than to celebrate it. The use of Aboriginal names for describing Aboriginal artefacts, for example, is done in such a way that suggests that White only includes them to add flavour to her outback story. In other words, they seem to be included only as 'exotic' outback signposts for her readers, using them not to acknowledge and explore Aboriginal culture but as a means to colour and authenticate her 'classic outback tale'. Irene Watson convincingly argues that Aboriginal culture is only ever displayed by white people in order to entertain. As she claims:

When a people have been colonised by European powers, all that previously existed, our culture and traditions, are considered 'primitive' and are replaced with a foreign way of life. Our ancient cultures are only 'allowed' to return as a means of entertaining those who seek to enjoy 'exotica'. (Watson 2002: 5)

White's brief inclusion of Aboriginal names suggests that she too followed such rationale. At no point is there any explanation or understanding of the

Aboriginal names she uses. Rather, Aboriginality is incorporated only as a form of primitive exotica, to be included for consumption by urban readers and thus given little serious consideration beyond its entertainment value.

It also needs to be noted that although all three autobiographical works by White were written during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, decades of increased awareness of Aboriginal affairs, her writing continues to be caught up, to quote Sue Kossew, 'in the discourse of Social Darwinism that engaged racist discourses that allowed institutional racist practices to go unchallenged'. (Kossew 2004: 73) For example, despite increased publicity in Aboriginal citizenship and rights during the inter-war years, White's writing retains the primitive imagery of Aboriginal peoples from an earlier less enlightened era. It failed to reflect issues that had arisen around the treatment of Indigenous peoples during the period she was writing. As mentioned briefly in the chapter 'Jolly Good Fellows', the 1930s was a time when a number of Anglo Australian women grasped the opportunity to show the world that as enfranchised women they were crucial participants in a 'new and sweeter world order'. Seeking to place political pressure on the state, these women actively campaigned for increased protection of the Australian woman citizen. (Holland 1995, 2005; Paisley 1993, 1995, 1998, 2005) An important component of this crusade was a distinct feminist campaign for Indigenous rights. As members of various Australian women's organisations connected with the British Commonwealth League and Pan Pacific Women's Association, these women envisioned a 'revitalised White Australia' which would become a progressive force in 'world race relations'. (Paisley 1993, 1998) Arguing for a

more humane national Aboriginal policy, they often questioned certain aspects of Australia's identity, sometimes casting aspersions on its stories of settlement, civilisation and progress and Australia's treatment of its Indigenous people. Mary Bennett, for example, controversially stated:

The majority of Australians are still poisoned with a strong anti-native bias... the criminal cannot forgive the victim he has wronged...But that I believe in God, I should despair, not of the Aborigines who respond magnificently, but of the white people who are certainly not fit to rule over them...Nobody can be more cruel, greedy, dishonourable and unjust in their dealings with the native races than the British Australian. (Cited in Lake 1999: 131)

Bennett also argued that Aboriginal culture deserved respect, proclaiming it to be 'more spiritually alive than contemporary white society and less competitive'. (Paisley 1997: 116) In addition she stated that Aboriginal people should not be viewed as 'a menace' and treated like 'vermin', but rather respected as 'magnificent potential citizens'. (Paisley 1997)⁴ Despite such claims, however, and like Doudy before her, White continued to represent

⁴ Australian women's actions in lobbying for Aboriginal reform during this time must be seen as 'provocative' and 'radical'. They were successful in exposing Australia's appalling policies towards Aboriginal people and raised the issue of race relations against a backlash of public opinion. Though it is commendable that these women endeavoured to achieve a more humane policy for Australian Aboriginal women, their achievements must not be overstated. Imperialist, nationalist and racist notions formed the framework for much of these women's agenda's and in many cases these notions severely limited individual campaigns for Aboriginal rights. Refer to Paisley and Holland for more discussion.

Aboriginal people and their culture as in deficit, choosing to concentrate upon the cruelty, primitivism and overall inferiority seen to be inherent within it rather than be critical of white society and the impact of colonisation. They were constructed, to use Edward Said's theorising, 'out of biological determinism and moral – political admonishment'. (Said 1994: 145)

Not surprisingly therefore, when representing the subordinate status of Aboriginality to her readers White uses racially debasing and stereotypical imagery and language. Terms such as 'blackboy', 'untidy gin', or 'devil's blackfellow', for example, are frequently applied when representing her Aboriginal characters. Aboriginal station hands, as an example, are labelled under the collective title of 'blackboys' and are highlighted for their lazy countenance and incompetence. White writes during one particular passage in *No Roads Go By*, for example:

The horses were brought in by the blackboys while the men were yet at their meal and the day only a promise. It was a picture true to what the poet sings:

The first streak of grey light, the herald of day-light
Is feebly outlining the musterers' camp;
While over the sleeping, the stealthily creeping
Dews of the morning, lie heavy and damp.
As blankets forsaking, 'twixt sleeping and waking
The blackboys turn out, to the manager's call,
Whose order, of course, is, 'Be after the horses,
And take all sorts of care you unhobble them all!'
Then each with a bridle (provokingly idle),
They saunter away his commands to fulfil. (White 1949: 52)

Here the Aboriginal workers are lumped together as inferior beings who must take orders from their superior white boss. They provide the menial role of bringing the horses to the white workers and are described as 'provokingly idle'. They are given no voice and no identity except that of the stereotypical 'lazy blackfellow', despite, paradoxically, being at work while the white workers are still eating their breakfast. Later on in the book when White does give one of the Aboriginal station hand a name and voice; the imagery employed again represents the 'savage collective' rather than the individual, perpetuating notions of Aboriginal people as little more than animals:

Dick Willow, a full-blooded black, was licking his shining chops after polishing off a large-sized carney, i.e., a lace lizard. Dick often collected tit-bits that he cooked *a` la* aboriginal and lapped up for dessert, for despite long absence from his tribe, and close association with the whites, he was still very primitive in his ideas; and he was a very superstitious old black. Bunyips still inhabited swamps for him, debbil-debbils were abroad, and a bone pointed by either black or white would, I think, have caused his death. But he had a sense of humour. (White 1949: 203)

White uses dehumanising imagery here to portray Dick. The reference to his 'shining chops' and 'lapping', for example, creates the impression of animalistic eating habits while her mocking allusion to his superstition, further enhances his 'primitivism'. The application of such language, as Spurr might say, establishes the terms of difference between civilisation and savagery, rhetorically symbolising the boundary between the 'solid ground of European civility' and the perceived debased world of Aboriginal life. (Spurr 1993:83)

It effectively insinuates that the Aboriginal body was incapable of transgressing the boundary which marked human from animal. Indeed, Dick's religious beliefs are seen as abnormal, while his inability to forsake his primitiveness despite his 'long absence from his tribe, and close association with the whites' further suggests the conviction that Aboriginal culture should naturally make way for the more superior white culture. The fact that Dick retains aspects of his own 'primitive' culture is hence viewed negatively and is seen as not only a sign of his regression but that he is fixed in the past. It is an ethnocentric conviction that undervalued Dick's successful adaptation to changes brought about by colonial intervention, failing to acknowledge Dick's accommodation of white culture whilst retaining links with his traditional lifestyle. White, however, maintains a white supremacist conception of Aboriginality that excludes rather than includes, continually constituting it within terms of the unfamiliar and foreign, or as Freud might say, the 'uncanny'.

A particularly revealing example of White's 'rhetoric of dehumanisation' comes via her characterisation of Dougal, a young Aboriginal servant in her fictional narrative, *For Those That Love It*. As described previously in White's biographical chapter, the story revolves around the building of 'good Australians'. The protagonist, Helen, and Munro, the man she later marries, epitomise 'good Australians in the making', in that they are constructed as ideal nation builders, progressive but conservative, moralistic, resourceful and faithful. Such depiction, however, is not similarly applied to Aboriginal station hands and workers in the novel. Rather they are located at the other end of the

spectrum and are represented as physically and mentally inferior, lazy and untrustworthy. This is particularly the case when White characterises Dougal, an Aboriginal 'blackboy', as he is referred to in the book, who becomes Helen's house servant. Dougal's character is represented in one dimension only, often being portrayed as child-like, disobedient and incompetent, incapable of grasping even the simplest instruction. When introducing Dougal to the reader for example, White writes

Dougal was a cheerful soul. One of the devil's very own imps. He was willing, well meaning, but always getting himself into trouble. (White 1933: 123)

She continues this portrayal throughout the narrative, each time reinforcing Dougal's bumbling ineptness, as the following passage highlights:

Dougal, utterly spoilt by his brief taste of the camp, and an attack of acute lovitis, added to rather than lessened, the troubles of life. He started the day by lighting the fire on the stove without first removing the ashes, with disastrous results to Helen's pastry. He forgot to light the brick oven for the bread ... Sent to burn the offal at the killing-pen, he spent ages making a crow trap... Running to rival Atalanta, Helen came to Dougal, and catching the culprit by the scruff of his neck, she shook him till his complexion turned a pale sickly grey. 'You little black devil! I'd like to pour kerosene over you and put a match to you,' she panted... Then remembering it was a blackfellow with limited intelligence she was dealing with, she calmed off, and read him a lecture she hoped would be effective for the whole of his natural life. (White 1933: 171-172)

Dougal's lack of intelligence within this passage is directly correlated to his Aboriginality. His visit to his 'tribe' is positioned negatively with the suggestion that a return to his camp threatened to drag him back to the 'dregs' of Aboriginal civilisation. Indeed, her reference to the 'setting on fire punishment' also suggests that this may have been a punishment for 'disobedient' Aboriginal people of the outback. Whether written 'tongue in cheek' or not, its inclusion signals White's belief that a white 'mistress' had both the right, and the power to threaten such punishment. Not only does this brief, seemingly 'throw-away' line locate white women 'quite specifically as a crucial contributory sector of the oppressive racial group' but its inclusion at all emphasises White's assumption of her own superior subject position as a white women writer. (Saunders & Evans 1992: 5)

White continues her derogatory representation of Dougal later in the novel when she draws attention to his lazy disposition:

and of course that black imp, filled to bursting with eggs, was asleep in the shade of the tree somewhere. No fire, no wood cut! (White 1933: 176)

Dougal's 'unnatural' behaviour is also explicitly referenced when White writes:

About noon they came in the waterhole where Dougal and some of his brethren were engaged in the unsavoury business of wool-plucking. Like huge black vultures they were squatting over the swollen, smelly carcasses, picking and plucking, pound after pound of dead wool, the only thing they could

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salvage from the wreck of thousands of dead sheep. From tank to tank they moved, following the trail of the dead. Crow and blacks, blacks and crows.
(White 1933: 209)

The two passages quoted show Whites adaptation of two noticeable stereotyped character traits that were commonly used to describe Aboriginal people. The first quote depicts Dougal as having little worries or responsibilities, living a carefree existence, and thus, unable to take that next step along the evolutionary timeline. He is shown to be confined by his mental and physical inferiority and represents the complete antithesis to White's hero and heroine. The description of the 'unsavoury business of wool plucking' is a continuation of this theme. Rather than understand the economic and cultural reasons for Dougal and his 'brethren' to be salvaging the wool, White likens the act to a pack of vultures scavenging the remains of the dead, again drawing links with animalistic habits. Their actions are thus presented as abnormal, and existing outside what is considered the civilised norm. Clearly therefore, Dougal's character represents everything that the white bushman is not. He is neither a valuable asset to the station nor a 'good Australian'. Rather he represents a hindering and troublesome presence, who, to quote Anne McGrath, 'needed to be kept under thumb with "colourful antics" to entertain readers'. (McGrath 1995: 38) In short, his caricature fits well with the popular Darwinism racial view that ranked Aboriginal peoples as 'atavisms', with limited intellectual capabilities and offered a comparable 'other' against which to measure worthy white settlers.

This very deliberate literary ploy of ‘othering’ is also particularly noticeable in *No Roads Go By* where White includes a very brief, but none-the-less measured, description of Maggie, an Aboriginal woman who visits Noonameena. White gives no reason for Maggie’s appearance in the storyline, giving the impression that she is included almost as a momentary afterthought. While White discusses in length the personalities, attributes and lives of many of her white characters, particularly the bush women, she sees no reason to do the same with Maggie. Not surprisingly, therefore, the depiction of Maggie is stereotypically framed, as the following passage demonstrates:

Ten full months once went by without the sight of another woman. At the end of that ten months, a gin broke the record of isolation. She was a full-blooded black with two little piccaninnies in the nude. Their tiny black bodies were a beautiful chocolate ebony; their smile like their mother’s, a mile wide. Maggie had the reputation of being a remarkably good cook, and of being wonderfully clean; at least she was believed to be the latter, until the station Boss, taking an early morning constitutional around the cowyards one frosty morning, found Maggie with her feet in the bucket, milking on them to keep her feet warm. (White 1949: 184)

As with her other portrayal of Aboriginal characters, Maggie is presented a voiceless entity. There is no discussion as to why she is there with her two children, nor where she comes from or is going to, she appears to wander aimlessly with little thought of responsibility, her nomadic existence seen as ‘the antithesis of...the home-based criteria for belonging’. (Allen 2003: 11) The reference to the nudity of her babies also implies that Maggie is unable to

provide adequate care to her children while her 'milking actions' are seen as a sign of inappropriate behaviour, suggestive of her perceived 'polluting presence'. Indeed, notions of pollution and dirt were often used by white middle class women to regulate and police social hierarchies within society and maintain their difference from the 'Other'. It provided the means to exclude those deemed as 'polluting' and thus in need of 'uplift'.⁵ As Aboriginal women were commonly viewed as inappropriately gendered and dirty, they were positioned outside the margins of social acceptability and often condemned, as Queen Catherine was in Douady's writing, as 'unfit' mothers, wives and domestic beings. (Moreton-Robinson 2000, 2004) Maggie is thus briefly assessed on her cleanliness and in the end found wanting, her femininity, to quote Hazel Carby, constructed 'as deviating from those qualities with which white women, as the prized objects of the western world, [were] endowed'. (Cited in Jebb & Haebich 1992: 30)

It is therefore clear that Maggie's inclusion served to strengthen the notion that Aboriginal peoples were a displaced race of people who could no longer function within the emerging modern society. Rod Macneil's argument that

⁵ Mary Douglas and Anne McClintock both highlight and explore the links between dirt and perceived social barriers, claiming that middle class women promulgated the importance of cleanliness as a means to mark social hierarchies. For further discussion see Mary Douglas' book *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, and Anne McClintock's book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*.

this type of colonial identification of its 'Other' homogenised Aboriginal peoples so that as a collective they remained 'consistent and unchanged, contained on the Other side of colonialism's frontier' clearly resonates here with White's literary characterisation of Aboriginal people. (Macneil 2001: 54) By placing her Aboriginal characters, such as Maggie, Dougal and Dick, within the perimeters of the past they became interlopers in the present – a collective identity that could be measured, marked and ultimately deemed inadequate and thus placed outside the homestead boundaries.

While formulating these literary strategies of exclusion, White also underscored relations of unequal power and control that existed on outback stations. Returning to *No Roads Go By*, for example, what is meant to illustrate a child's innocent curiosity and naiveté, needs also to be read for what it highlights about racial relationships and hierarchies existing and operating on frontier stations. When Doris, White's daughter, sees an Aboriginal man for the first time, White describes the incident to her readers thus:

'Oh! Look at that poor black man. Isn't he dirty! Didn't his mother wash him when he was little'? A humorous voice chanted above the laughter, God made little niggers, and he made them in the night, But he made them in a hurry, and forgot to make them white. It was a subject that provoked much thought and meditation, and not a little discussion on the part of the Little'un... 'I asked Daddy where the black man went to bed, and Daddy said where the bull feeds. Where does he feed, Mummie'? 'Out with the cows I suppose,' I answered absently... 'And Mummy, do you suppose God really made those poor black men, because I

don't Mummy! I think the devil had something to do with it!' [Emphasis in the original] (White 1949: 49)

Although the passage is meant to show the naiveté of a child's curiosity, it nevertheless demonstrates the existence of a structured racial hierarchy that existed on pastoral stations. Again there is a sense that the Aboriginal workers are 'put in their place', that they exist only as servile labourers who eat and sleep where 'the cows feed'. White's practice of referring to the Aboriginal workers as 'blackboys' indicates her adaptation of the paternalism that existed on many outback stations. Ann McGrath has observed how paternalism in the Northern Territory manifested itself as a means of controlling the workforce, particularly the Aboriginal workforce. (McGrath 1987) It helped to define the working and personal relationships by establishing a set of complex boundaries. Not only did paternalism help to maintain the subservient position of Aboriginal workers, but it also segregated the workforce into Indigenous and non-Indigenous sections. According to Henry Reynolds, this particular custom enabled employers to control Aboriginal workers and keep them as loyal servants, working in accordance to an 'idealised pattern' of subordination. (Reynolds 1990) White's inclusion of Aboriginal workers in this particular passage thus not only highlights the accepted, indeed the expected controlled exclusion of Aboriginal workers, but also the deliberate lack of acknowledgment that these workers received. Their contribution to the outback is considerably down played through their portrayal as minor players in the development of the outback, their assistance scarcely mentioned apart from the occasional remark about the 'blackboys' bringing in the horses. The valuable role Aboriginal workers had in the eventual success of the pastoral

industry is either trivialised by White or completely left out and is indicative of that rather broad category of writing that Stanner coined the ‘cult of forgetfulness’. (Stanner 1969) It effectively silences the contributions of the ‘other pioneers’ of the cattle industry, to use Dawn May’s label, ignoring the skills and expertise they brought to their work and reinforces the popular assumption that Aboriginal people were lazy and unable to ‘settle down to a steady job’. (Curthoys & Moore 1995: 2)⁶ Their adaptability and versatility which made them naturally good stockmen and their superior tracking skills, is overlooked while their work as trackers and musterers is neglected to the point of exclusion. They remain apart from the land, neither acknowledged for their abilities to adapt to a different lifestyle in order to survive, nor given credit for their significant contribution to station life. Instead they come to represent ‘faithful henchmen’, childlike in their intelligence and comic in their behaviour but never possessing the emotions nor the aptitude of the white bushmen around them.⁷ It is a caricature that allowed no room for alternative readings into Aboriginal humanness. Unlike other women writers, such as Rosa Praed,

⁶ Dawn May has pointed out in her study of Aboriginal labour and the cattle industry in Queensland that many Australians were silent on the work done by Aboriginal stockmen and women. There was no recognition of the other ‘pioneers’ – the Aboriginal people who not only gave up their land but also provided the labour to establish the cattle industry in the north. (May 1994: 41) Their presence helped to overcome some of the environmental disadvantages such as drought and distance - their knowledge of the land proving to be crucial factor for the survival of the cattle industry in Australia.

⁷ This label was given to an Aboriginal worker, ‘Young Alfie’, whom White described as a ‘faithful henchmen’, always ‘delighted to act as caddy’ for her sons when they played golf. Young Alfie was an Aboriginal worker on the station who, according to White, was the great-great grandson of the Barlow who accompanied Bourke and Wills. (1955: 211-212)

Mary Bundock and Katie Langloh Parker, who have been seen to have challenged 'accepted wisdom to affirm aspects of Aboriginal lives and cultures', White, like Liston and Douady before her, offers no such concession in her literary works. (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 79) Aboriginal people and culture remains stereotypically represented held in low regard and constituted as non-human animals. To present the alternative, however, would have disrupted the legendary tale of the pioneer and the mythology of colonialism itself.

Perhaps the narrative that presents the most distorted image of Aboriginal people, inevitably rendering their society morally and ethically unfit, is the unpublished manuscript 'Led By New Stars'. The difference with this particular text, as compared to her other works, is that the portrayal of Aboriginal people here is not only greater in length, but more detailed, suggesting the aim was foremost to educate. Diana's first encounter with Aboriginal people in the story, for example, is written to impart information about Aboriginal appearance, culture and custom to readers. The result does little but reinforce notions of Aboriginal culture as culturally insignificant and regressive. Words such as 'odorous', 'repulsive', 'shiftless' and 'simple' are repeatedly used throughout to emphasise Aboriginal inferiority and their lowly status as pitiful objects:

The trio were clad in a few rags betokening their touch with civilisation. But they were dirty and odorous, the old man's eyes in a disgusting state. 'Bacca'? asked one gin, extending a grubby hand with a wide toothed smile. Diana drew back from the filthy claw-like fingers. (White n.d: 268)

Later in the passage White describes Diana relating the incident to her mother-in-law, Janet:

‘What repulsive creatures!... Those gins! Breasts and abdomens exposed and the dirt! And the old man’s eyes’. ‘Some of them are quite likeable when you know them Diana...Taking them on the whole they are, of course, a shiftless people, simple as children in some ways. Nevertheless I have known the gins to be trained into quite good servants... They need patient handling. The men are very adaptable to stock work and make good horsemen. They have been ill used in New South Wales...They are sometimes very light fingered, of course, and that trait is always remembered.’ (White n.d: 268)

Here we see White constructing Aboriginal people as offensive, repulsive creatures, perpetuating the notion that they can only be trained as menial domestic servants and labourers, and indeed, that this was their only station in life. They are characterised as ‘light fingered’, ‘simple’ and ‘shiftless’, graced with few physical and mental attributes and therefore existing at the very bottom of the so-called ‘scale of human evolution’. Not only positioned as ‘invaders’, their appearance, particularly that of the Aboriginal women, is repugnant to Diana. Their state of undress, ‘odorous’ smell and pitiful begging for tobacco places them outside the realm of respectable femininity and thus apart from white civilisation. Irene Watson’s statement about Aboriginal people’s perceived ‘state of shamelessness’ comes to mind here when she argued that:

The state of nudity and the colonial construct of 'blackness, 'wildness', and 'backwardness', combined with nakedness fuelled ideas of white supremacy and through the force of white supremacy [Aboriginal people] became 'shamed', erased, and extinguished, or confined to the back-blocks of Australia'. (Watson 2002: 87)

White's stark framing of her Indigenous characters as filthy, backwards and unclothed, is, as Watson would argue, an intent to place shame on Indigenous culture and render it morally and socially depraved.

It is further condemned in consecutive passages with Janet continuing her explanation of Aboriginality to Diana:

'They take what they see and covet as if it were their natural right – as for instance our sheep. But then, what would you expect? Their mentality is not high'... 'I suppose they are to be pitied,' Diana mused. Mentally comparing her lot with theirs. 'Yes pitied and protected...Protected from the Whites who should be their protectors...They are often able to get strong drink and that is poison to them. It reduces them to a degree of unbelievable beastliness. Some blackfellows would sell their wives for a bottle of rum...Then there is the evil of black and white blood mixing. Some white men do far forget themselves.' 'Mother Janet! How revolting! How disgusting! What white man would sink so low'? Condemnation flared from the blue eyes...she saw the mean, and to her, scarce human figures of the only two gins she had seen, ugly, smelly, black, and the incredulous horror deepened in her eyes, it couldn't be possible. 'There are ugly things in this world Diana... ugly things arising from men's evil uncontrolled passion...The gins make little or no resistance against them.

Many a massacre has been started in that way... the gins, have frequently betrayed their loyalty to their own people for a white'. [Emphasis in the original] (White n.d: 269-270)

Again the implication is that Aboriginal people are thieves who 'covet as if it was their natural right'. Indeed, their thievery is written as an act of simple-mindedness, effectively silencing, as both Liston and Douady similarly did, any possibility that such an act was a result of their hunter and gatherer lifestyle being destroyed by white farming practices. The reference to the 'bestial' character of the Aboriginal man, particularly when inebriated, and the suggestion that their wives are treated as commodities to be traded is intended to highlight the uncultured state of Aboriginal civilisation, and specifically, to quote Patricia Grimshaw, 'Aboriginal male's viciousness and Aboriginal female's victimhood'. (Grimshaw & Evans 1996: 80) This is perhaps not surprising when we consider Jebb and Haebich's suggestion that settlers failed to fully understand the 'gender relationships of the frontier' because they were influenced by the 'construction of Aboriginal gender relations as...immoral'. (Jebb & Haebich 1992: 30) They argue, for example:

that issues as Aboriginal men's ownership of women, polygamy, child brides, women's profanity, male violence to Aboriginal women and, importantly, Aboriginal women's often mentioned promiscuity, have been taken as pervasive indicators of black 'culture'. (Jebb & Haebich 1992: 30)

Such indicators, as the previous passage showed, were likewise clearly used in White's own literary portrayal of Aboriginality.

The point about race mixing is also a particularly telling one as it highlights white anxieties at the time the manuscript was written. It reflects a discourse popular from the 1930s onwards whereby many white middle-class women advocated the need to curtail sexual relations between white men and Aboriginal women, to ‘safeguard the “purity of the blood” from the “halfcaste evil”’.⁸ (Huggins & Blake 1992: 49) Diana’s horror at the thought that white men could possibly sink so low as to have sexual relations with Aboriginal women highlights how partnerships between Aboriginal women and white men was socially condemned by white middle class women. It also demonstrates the popular construction of Aboriginal women as sexual ‘objects of lust’ with no power over their bodies. Rather than be acknowledged as agents who were able to negotiate their way through an onslaught of cultural destruction they are displayed as victims, oppressed by both white and black men alike. As Jebb and Haebich point out, Aboriginal women ‘did control their own sexual liaisons’ and were important sexual ambassadors, accommodating and placating ‘hostile strangers’. (Jebb & Haebich 1992: 31) This agency, however, is viewed as being a disruptive element. Indeed, not only are Aboriginal women accused of offering ‘little resistance’ to the white man but any sexual

⁸ Jackie Huggins and Thom Blake explain that ‘behind the rhetoric of “protection”...and “humanitarian concern” for Aboriginal people during the 1920s, lay the concern of race mixing. They suggest that one of the most ‘compelling reasons for the establishment of reserves was to separate black women from white men for eugenic, moral and hygienic reasons which largely protected whites’. The decision to separate Aboriginal people from white people was motivated by the fear that halfcaste numbers were increasing and that white blood was being ‘contaminated by blood from a supposedly inferior race’. (Huggins & Blake 1992: 49)

relationship that occurs is seen as a betrayal to their own people and catalyst for frontier violence. They are therefore devalued on several levels.

It is also important to note that White's mention of massacres and race mixing in the previously quoted passage was only in reference to New South Wales. South Australia was not implicated. Instead it was portrayed as a model state which implemented policies to safe guard the rights of the Aboriginal peoples. The reality was far from this, as White would have known when writing the manuscript one hundred and twenty plus years after South Australia had been proclaimed. Nevertheless, White upholds the perception of South Australia as being a progressive and humanitarian colony.

White's devaluing of Aboriginal culture is even more evident when she concludes with a discussion on cannibalism. As she writes:

'You will tell me next Mother Janet, that they eat each other or their dead'. 'I would not like to say that – not their own dead anyway. Their enemies – or so I have heard. But remember they know no better Diana. They have never had any teachers. They have no traditions that I know of, no high standards to live up to. They have never heard of the existence of God. What can you expect! Animals, insects, reptiles, prey on each other to live. These people in some ways are not far above the animals'. (White n.d, 271)

Here the Aboriginal people are again reduced to being little better than animals. Their society is disregarded as having no tradition or appropriate religion. The conversation implies that without white civilisation, Aboriginal

peoples live like beasts, capable of one of the most horrific crimes known to western civilisation – cannibalism. They are portrayed as base creatures, with little moral and mental aptitude, existing only on the fringes of civilisation and outside what was considered the cultural norm. Any right they may have to the land is thus successfully negated, as is any sympathy the reader may have had for them.⁹

White's classic Australian outback stories, as they were recognised, were thus selective and coloured by white supremacist assumptions that affirmed and perpetuated notions of Aboriginal inferiority. As a writer she never once sought to establish a common humanity between Aboriginal people and white settlers but rather consigned Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal experiences to the margins, to be viewed as a collection of bones and ancient tools. In doing so, she made sweeping generalisations which were often one-dimensional,

⁹ It is also worth noting that White's desire to preserve racial distinctions extended beyond the white and Aboriginal binary. It also included the Chinese gardener employed at Morden and Woonaminta stations. Like her many Aboriginal characters, he too suffers the fate of being represented as essentially comic and stereotypically lazy in her last two autobiographical narratives. He is given no voice, no identity in *Beyond the Western Rivers* beyond the sole description of 'little old chinaman'. In *From That Day To This*, he is finally given a name, Jock Wah, and a voice; however, the space he occupies in the book nevertheless renders him an essentially comic character whom the children enjoy teasing and whom is ruled by White as the mistress of the homestead. While he lives inside the homestead boundaries he appears not really to be part of it, his characterisation serving to show his position, like the position occupied by Maggie and Dick, as belonging, 'not just outside the European status system, but beneath it'. (Moore 1992: 59)

derogatory and clearly influenced by her own position as a white woman living in the contact zone. Given no voice, rarely a name and lumped together under a collective unity which obscured their identity, Aboriginal people were thus placed in a 'no-man's land' and portrayed as a fixed essence incapable of change. Their adaptability and versatility as trackers, station workers and bushmen was overlooked, replaced with descriptions of heroic white pioneers. Despite an increase in Aboriginal awareness and civil rights during the decades she wrote, her writing remained embedded within a colonial discourse that dehumanised and classified, thereby excluding those deemed undesirable national object.

White was thus much more than just a 'cheerful writer' and 'born raconteur'. She was a writer who sought to justify the presence of the white Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian pioneer within the land through a system of control and exclusion. In so doing she adopted representational practices that distorted images of Aboriginal people and their culture, placing them on the very bottom rung of human civilisation and influencing how following generations of Australians were to view Aboriginal people. After all, and as Marcia Langton argues, 'Australians do not know and relate to Aboriginal people, they relate to stories told by former colonists'. (Langton 1993, 33) A sobering notion when we consider the foundational tales told by Myrtle Rose White.

'Relocating the Voice which Speaks': The Conclusion.

Since the proclamation of the South Australian colony in 1836 the desire to seek affirmation of a triumphant settlement has preoccupied the thoughts of many in South Australian society. Writers, politicians, artists and historians alike have striven to establish notions of uniqueness through the celebration of a nostalgic pioneering past. This has come through the telling and reading of foundational histories. These stories of origin have offered a sense of security and legitimacy for many white South Australians and have helped to alleviate anxieties over questions of ownership and belonging. These tales have also served to perpetuate assumptions about what constitutes a 'homely nation' and who belongs to this nation once it has been imagined. Such assumptions have relied on images of control and exclusion, notions of innocence and detachment, and have worked from positions of power and privilege. This thesis has argued that white middle class women writers were at the forefront of this creative cultural sculpting.

Ellen Liston, Jane Sarah Douly and Myrtle Rose White, as has been shown here, were not just passive women writing sentimental trivia. They were creators of historical memory, moulding and shaping their literary narratives to construct a regional fantasy that would inspire ideals of patriotism and belonging. Their narratives were framed within a network of colonial tropes and rhetorical strategies that validated the presence and action of the white 'heroic' settler, positioning it as non-exploitative and natural, whilst marginalising the 'primitive' Aboriginal 'other' within stereotypical representations that were aligned with notions of pollution, contamination and

sexual and moral degradation. Omissions, silences and mis-representations coloured much of their writing, giving their literary works deep political meaning.

By theorising how Liston, Douady and White promoted and celebrated the colonial endeavour, this thesis has identified significant relational links between gender, landscape, Indigeneity and white settler identity in colonial women's writing. It has given new substance to these literary women from South Australia's past and highlighted the importance of their foundational narratives. Ellen Liston, for example, is a much more complex individual than just being remembered as the 'first lady' of Elliston who was 'an accomplished bushwoman and an expert rider'. (Elliston Centenary Book Committee 1978: 1) Her writing, as has been highlighted, reveals a woman who showed no compunction about describing horrific and brutal atrocities committed against Aboriginal people within terms of justifiable retaliation in one breath, whilst describing scenes of ideal domesticity in another. Whether based on fact or fiction, her tales reflect a desire to dehumanise Aboriginal people and locate them on the very fringe of civilisation as trespassers in a land to which they no longer belonged to. Her writing paved the way for a celebration of colonial expansion that, as argued in this thesis, justified Aboriginal dispossession and legitimised the foundational moment.

It has likewise been shown that as an activist, educationalist and writer Jane Sarah Douady was an 'unsettling' settler woman who worked within 'complicated axes of power and position'. (Kossew 2004:10) She had a lot to

say about the direction of colonial society. Writing to preserve the Anglo-Australian social and cultural heritage of South Australia and to centralise the woman pioneer as an influential and historical figure, she was inspired by the belief that through her writing she could 'reach out a finger here and there and influence events'. (Doudy 1928: 304) Her work, whether in the form of historical or autobiographical narrative, was absolute in its exclusion and inclusion of who belonged to the nation. It asserted an ethnocentric gaze over Aboriginal people and positioned them as essentialised beings devoid of appropriate civility, intelligence and culture. It too employed a trope aimed at legitimising colonial control and naturalising the white settler subject.

Myrtle Rose White similarly framed her literary works within a powerful trope that invented while it destroyed. She manufactured a triumphant story of white beginning and progress whilst relocating Aboriginal culture to another time and place – a place outside contemporary Australian society. It was a discursive regime that inscribed Anglo-Australian cultural symbols on the Australian landscape. A footprint in the sand, a lone derrick on the horizon and a rose garden came to symbolise the outback's transition from a wild and untamed *terra nullius* to a tamed and productive land, again justifying the presence of the white pioneer.

This thesis has thus shown why the literary works of these three little known women have now become principal sites of historical investigation. Their reinstatement as writers, however, has involved more than just merely a recuperative act in literary history. It has required re-visiting the private and

public lives of these white middle class settler women and re-locating their literary texts, not just within the context of the time they were written, but also within the context of a cultural and political ideology. This thesis has thus sought to situate the concepts of colonial discourse, identity formation and whiteness, as crucial to the study of these women writers. Their whiteness in particular, and as evidenced throughout this study, was an important marker of their identity, affording them the power and privilege as writers, as women, and as Anglo-British and Anglo-Australian settlers. It now signals their desire to identify as white women who engaged in colonial and racial politics at a very visible level. Liston, Doudy and White were not innocent bystanders impassively observing, they were *there*, shaping and directing. Their vision was never innocent; it was coloured by their desire to manufacture a 'homely' regional fantasy and to show that white middle class women were equal to the task of building a new nation.

While there can be no question that all three women need to be located within terms of complicity and agency, however disquieting this may be, their foundational narratives also need to be viewed for the alternate, and sometimes challenging, view they present of the South Australian story. Their aim to show the birth of the female 'settler subject', a subject seen not as a chattel to their husband, but as a heroic, self-contained and very patriotic individual, offered a valuable 'woman's perspective', subverting the then popular masculinist nationalism of the time and highlighting white women as central historical figures and nation builders. Without this voice the story of South Australia and its people would look quite different.

However, in listening to this voice, we need to heed the advice of Irene Watson and Aileen Moreton-Robinson when they emphasise the importance of looking at narratives, such as those written by Liston, Doudy and White, through a de-colonising lens, so that we may locate the white colonial voice and the white colonial gaze of the author, not to re-centre this voice, but to re-locate it. This is the challenge feminist historians currently face and a challenge this thesis has sought to confront.

‘Looking Forward in Reverse’: Visible scars and the reminders of whiteness that mark my body and my memories.

This last chapter may seem like a strange finale for some - a piece of writing strangely out of place, but for me it is a fitting conclusion which signals the journey taken throughout the writing of this thesis. I need to emphasise, however, that this is not the end of my journey, despite it being included at the end of the thesis, but rather the start of something I feel will take a very long time to travel. This epilogue is just a snippet of the thoughts, questions and challenging beliefs I encountered during my research. It represents a collage of never-ending self-reflective thinking, which I believed helped extend my understanding of the very theories I was trying to apply to my research. The most powerful self-analysis came via the recognition that whiteness surrounds and absorbs me in almost every aspect of my life and always has. It is embedded in everything I do, the things I see, in what I read and write and in some of my earliest childhood memories, as the following will attest.

My first footsteps were taken on land that had been in my family for five generations. For over one hundred and twenty years my father and mother, and before them, their parents, grandparents and great grandparents had farmed land on the West Coast of South Australia. Today this area has become renowned for its rugged beauty and picturesque landscape. Indeed, numerous photographs of austere coastlines, waves of rolling sand dunes and fields of ripening wheat overflow my family album. Stuck between yellow plastic pages now brittle with age, these landscape pictures have conferred a type of

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ownership for my family, a sense of belonging to a particular land and a particular way of life - life on the land.

When I was two my family moved from our farm on the West Coast to another farm located in the Adelaide Plains area, just outside the small rural township of Mallala. No rugged outcrop of rocks here, just flat, endless rolls of grasslands and small rivers meandering through eroded beds of smooth pebbles and choking river reeds. A few years on and I found myself living on the outer boundaries of Hamley Bridge, another small rural town populated by only a few hundred people. Foreign sounds of town life start to penetrate my senses - sounds of next-door neighbour kids laughing over the back fence, muffled blasts from grain trains loading the spoils of a good harvest and the roar of car engines as teenage boys try to prove their masculinity along dusty dirt roads. My landscape had changed again, and yet in essence, it had stayed the same. Whiteness was still all around me.

Life on the land for me meant hot choking northerly dust storms, stifling stinging heat and endless water mirages that mocked an innocent child's mind. It meant chasing baby emus in soft clinging red sand or devising new ways of trapping feral mice. It meant catching thorny devils and watching them miraculously change colour as they tried to conceal their identity. It meant tracking rabbit prints for hours in the hot soft sand, only metres away from the ramshackle cubbyhouse that my brother and I had built out of rusted pieces of galvanised iron, roughly sewn planks of discarded wood and various oddments of boxes and fencing materials. It meant craning my neck as I stood at the

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bottom of stark white silos stretching into the blue sky – foreign unyielding structures with haphazard networks of grey cracks discolouring their surface. This is what I remember as a kid growing up in the country. Each vision haphazardly seeps from my mind as I reminisce, an occasional smile accompanying each one.

I feel that my body will be forever marked by this landscape. Every time I look down at my right leg I will be reminded of the day I misjudged the height of the besser brick wall and cut my leg, requiring stitches to pull jagged skin back together. The scar remains, some twenty-six years later, as a stark white imprint located just below my knee. I see the smaller scars that etch my body, scars marking the time I fell over a small sharp stone concealed in stringy grassland or the time I attempted to outdo my brother at football and take that ‘specky’ mark, only to fail dismally, with legs hanging either side of the front fence. No I wasn’t a clumsy child - I was a child of the land, forever exploring new cliffs to climb, building bigger and better cubbyhouses in giant pine trees, or inventing new ways to catch invading hordes of locates as they feasted on the back lawn.

It is only now that I realise that it was through the gaze of white eyes that I did and saw all this as a child. I didn’t see how the pine tree that I had appropriated for my cubbyhouse was foreign to the landscape, brought in and planted by early settlers attempting to transplant a little bit of the English countryside in a foreign land. I didn’t see how that golden wheat crop planted next to the house was there in place of dense beautiful scrubland, which had been destroyed by

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ideals of progress and modernity. I didn't see how the better brick front fence defined borders of ownership to a land, which had been stolen from the Kaurna people. I didn't know it then but I do now – this mosaic of memories represents the very essence of what is predominantly British whiteness in rural South Australia.

Whiteness in a small country town is the fire siren that sounds every Monday evening at seven o'clock. It's the smooth concrete kerbing and paved footpaths. It's the carefully manicured lawns and better brick front fences. It's the imposing white silos and the ugly crisscross of steel grey train tracks. It's the patiently groomed gardens and galvanised sheds in the backyards. It's the clean clothes hanging on the Hills Hoist on the back lawn. It's the beaming white streetlights and row of antiquated shops lining the main street. It's the beckoning faded Kesab tidy town sign at the town's entrance and the smooth green lines of the bowling green. It's order. It's neatness. It's the very essence of power and privilege.

Unlike the thorny devil I caught as a child, I haven't needed camouflage tactics. I am white. I am a protected species. I'm the species that's allowed to stare at difference and give it a name - the race that's allowed to judge right from wrong, virtue from vice. In a small country town this means judging the family that lives on the other side of the railway track or the single mum who has never been married but already has four kids. It's about saying that the only Aboriginal family living in the town is as clean as a white family and applauding them for trying to assimilate but never allowing them to belong in

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that inner sanction of respectability. It's all about keeping difference on the outer and fencing sameness in the centre - a tight little bubble of Anglo-Australian whiteness, or as Jackie Huggins might say, a bubble of angloality.

Mallala, Hamley Bridge, Balaklakla, (the town I now live in) are all rural towns situated within pastoral and cropping districts of South Australia. They are white towns, with white linear histories, populated predominantly by white people. They represent that tight little bubble of whiteness I speak of. Within this bubble exists a story of modernity, a trial of white struggle and achievement. Keeping this story alive, albeit by artificial means, are the brass plaques, the large monuments, the murals and local history books, each representing a story of 'discovery', a story of 'firsts' and predicably, a story of the 'pioneers'. Whenever an anniversary is celebrated or some milestone reached, these stories are regurgitated over and over, given new life for a new generation to appreciate and remember.

Within this story of imagined linearity of rural history, however, lies a silence. No individual Aboriginal name is ever mentioned within its pages, apart from the stereotypical reference of a primitive people who are now no longer. What happened to these peoples is a story that remains hidden in whiteness, covered up by decades of heroic pioneering narratives. It's kept outside that little bubble of whiteness because it means chaos and threatens the foundational story of origin. It threatens white belonging.

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It's ironic really that the word 'foundation' is used by western civilisation whenever it wants to achieve a triumphant sense of belonging and achievement when the very word also conjures up images of destruction. After all, whenever something new needs to be built, it inevitably needs to be built upon something which already exists. Little wonder then that our foundational histories have often been premised on cover-ups and silences, built upon strategies of misremembering and omissions.

My memories are shrouded in whiteness, mind-forged manacles which distort and discolour. When I wrote this autobiographical fragment it was never meant to be included in my thesis, but now I feel I need to include it as a summative chapter. I know many Indigenous writers will see it as yet another attempt by a white scholar to re-centre their own whiteness and that nothing much will really change. But if what I write may make one person start questioning their own identity and race positioning, and the positioning of past Australians, than I will be happy with the result. Indeed, as Anne Brewster suggests:

If it is patently impossible to divest ourselves of whiteness, I'd suggest, perhaps the best we (as white subjects) can hope for is persistently to interrupt our narrativisation of it. (Brewster 2005)

Which brings me to those family stories I was told as a child and which inspired my research. Was my great, great, Grandfather involved in the Elliston massacre? While I believe that a massacre did indeed occur, I am unable to confirm either way, to his involvement. Records show that he didn't arrive at

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Elliston until a few years after the massacre had allegedly occurred but this still does not ease my curiosity. As we know, many massacres occurred around Australia, which were never recorded - he may have well been referring to another one when he recounted his shocking story to his children.

So I guess Anna Haebich was right. Some of the horrors of our history have been told, but it's what's been done with these stories that has altered how they are remembered. Some have chosen to keep them quiet to safeguard family interests, while others have decided to disclose only parts of the story. It is a process which reminds me of a Chinese whisper in a sense, the story always changes with each telling; only the forgetting in this instance is often deliberate. So I guess we are all agents in some way or another, shaping stories to suit our own purposes and agendas. This thesis is no different.

I end, ironically, with a quote from Keith Windschuttle when he claimed:

The great majority of Australians are not racist and have long shared much the same attitude to people of Aboriginal descent: they regard them as equals, admire their talents and wish them well. These values have existed amongst informed and intelligent opinion since the very foundation of this society in 1788. (Windschuttle 2003)

In the narratives just reviewed, and in the life I remember to date, this claim does not [quite] ring true.

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