

**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE OTHER  
IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA**

**Volume 2**

**Rudrakumar Soman**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Discipline of English  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
University of Adelaide**

**June 2007**

## VOLUME 2 – CONTENTS

Exegesis	
Introduction	1
One – Rape, Race and Moral Panic	8
Two – Conflict, tension, ambiguity	17
Three – Texts and Contexts	39
Four – I hear voices: Bakhtin and the Dialogic	60
Conclusion	79
Bibliography	84

## Representations of the Other in Contemporary Australia – Exegesis

### Introduction

The aim of this exegesis is to elucidate the narrative research that is contained and expressed in my novel, *Brother Nation*. My interpretation of what constitutes narrative research is implicitly connected with a ‘bowerbirding’ approach. That is, a method of research which requires understanding in a range of areas and disciplines, and which interacts with a variety of texts, methodologies and findings, in an ‘open ended manner’.<sup>1</sup>

The framing of my exegesis in this regard is not an arbitrary approach, a ready hook on which to hang my discussions, but rather something which to me is self-evident. This *is* how and why I (consciously) researched and wrote *Brother Nation* and therefore the most honest and inclusive way for me to accomplish the mission of an exegesis.

*Brother Nation* is a novel based on a series of rapes that occurred in Sydney in August 2000. Though the novel is ‘self-contained’ in its own right, a brief outline of the ‘real’ events will be useful for the purposes of this exegesis.

The rapes, which were perpetrated by groups of young men, occurred in the suburbs of Greenacre, Punchbowl and Bankstown in southwest Sydney. In September 2000 police made several arrests relating to the assaults. Police alerted the news media at that time but because of the Sydney Olympic Games the coverage of the rapes was minimal. However, about ten months later the issue was sensationally brought back to life in the media. This was mainly due to a (misleading) headline in the *Sun Herald* newspaper, which reported that up to

---

<sup>1</sup> See: Tess Brady, ‘A Question of Genre: de-mystifying the exegesis,’ *TEXT* Vol 4 No 1. April 2000, 23 March 2003 <[www.gu.edu.au/text/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm](http://www.gu.edu.au/text/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm)>.

'seventy' women had been attacked by the 'gang' in the Bankstown area in a short period. It was later shown that 'seventy' attacks were actually offences committed by a lone individual, and were not in any way linked to the case in question.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the group perpetrators supposedly responsible for these 'seventy' attacks were identified as young Lebanese men and the race angle was further intensified by reports that they had been targeting young white women. The leader of this gang was eventually named as Bilal Skaf. His younger brother, Mohammed Skaf, who was a minor at the time, was also involved in the attacks but his identity was not revealed until after the brothers were convicted and sentenced in 2002.

In 2002, another series of rapes occurred in Sydney, this time involving perpetrators identified as young Pakistani men who had become Australian residents. In both this and the previous case there was much media commentary regarding the Muslim background of the offenders and strong suggestions that the religious and cultural background of the youths was a contributing cause for the crimes. Both incidents have been repeatedly brought up in relation to other events, and in the context of Australian race relations domestically and globally, including the September 11 2001 attacks on New York City, the Bali bombings, the political crisis involving the MV Tampa, and the December 2005 Cronulla riots.

Throughout this exegesis, I refer to the August 2000 assaults involving the Lebanese youth as the 'Sydney Gang Rapes' due to their chronological precedence and the greater notoriety gained by the Skaf brothers. When necessary, I refer specifically to the assaults committed by the Pakistani 'K' brothers. In the interests

---

<sup>2</sup> New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 'Media Release: The facts on sexual assault in Bankstown,' 22 August 2001, 15 April 2005  
<[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll\\_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/mr\\_bcsr\\_2.pdf/\\$file/mr\\_bcsr\\_2.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/mr_bcsr_2.pdf/$file/mr_bcsr_2.pdf)>.

of brevity I also use the American term ‘9/11’ when referring to the September 11 2001 attacks on New York City.

These details of real events, though not essential in a reading of *Brother Nation*, are nevertheless pertinent here in that I initially conceived the work as a non-fiction novel, a point on which I will elaborate later.

Having discussed some details of form and background, I will now provide a structural outline.

In a general sense, this exegesis maps the research and creation of my novel from an autopoietic mode to an allopoietic mode. In referring to autopoiesis I mean that which is subjective and relating to self-discovery; that which has to do with my life experiences and self-creation.<sup>3</sup> In short, I begin the exegesis by describing my inspiration for this novel. What follows is an explication of the process whereby that inspiration is realised *in* the creative work but also, via this creative process, the corollary production of understanding and knowledge *external* to the creative work—the allopoiesis. In charting this process, I have divided the exegesis into segments to ease the traversal for the reader:

In Part One, I discuss my initial interest in news reports on the Sydney Gang Rapes and the way this fascination became heightened as the story was sensationalised and racial and religious elements became integral to it. I discuss my intuitive perception of the *racialisation* that was apparent, and consider the academic meaning of this term. I also briefly discuss a personal interest in the story due to my own immigrant background—how I understand the term, Other, from first-hand experience. I relate how after following the case for some time I was

---

<sup>3</sup> Claire Woods, ‘Making strange with bold moves - what next for student, supervisor and examiner? Or, No Blueprint: Assessing the (creative) exegesis,’ *TEXT* Vol. 11 No 1. April 2007, 13 May 2007. <<http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/april07/woods.htm>>.

inspired by a segment of ABC TV's *Media Watch* to base a novel and PhD on the story—the seed of the idea that manifests and culminates in this thesis.

I then discuss some of the doubts that began to surface regarding the project, due to the contradictions and internal conflicts that it seemed to provoke. I wanted to fictionally represent these racialised, Othered characters, yet they had committed terrible crimes. How was I to elicit a reader's sympathy for them (or at least one of them) in the first place, let alone maintain it as the novel progressed? I describe how I vainly attempted to assuage the conflict by doing further research into the story, before realising that a novel was precisely the form with which to convey such divergent feelings. I describe the recognition that Bakhtinian theories of dialogism and heteroglossia could provide a theoretical underpinning to such an enterprise and how, reassured, I continued with my research.

In Part Two, I discuss my progress into formal research and how non-fiction novels by Truman Capote and Don DeLillo provided me with initial generic models for my writing. I examine how the primary sources that I read provided a basic structural understanding of the 'real story' together with some rare and valuable nuggets of detail that aided characterisation and credibility. I then discuss my belief that the cultural and religious background of the perpetrators was largely irrelevant to their commission of the crimes. I posit the supposition that instead, a perverse masculine energy was at work—an energy that does not differentiate along lines of ethnicity or class. I detail my research into news reports of other gang rapes that have occurred in Australia, past and present, which seem to confirm this belief—a conviction that acts as a strong thematic thread in *Brother Nation*.

From there I take the discussion to secondary sources, looking at commercial non-fiction books by Paul Sheehan and Peter Manning. I examine their

polemical arguments and conclude that in their representations of Others both are limited by the generic constraints of non-fiction. Following this I detail my reading of ethnographic studies that investigate ideas of protest masculinities and subcultural capital—studies which provided constructive information towards, and confirmation of, characterisation in my novel. This section also deals with my discomfort at the representation of graphic sexual violence in *Brother Nation* and my reason for this material's inclusion.

In Part Three, I begin to contextualise my novel in comparison to other fiction of a similar genre. I also discuss at which point I recognised the unintended extent to which I was dramatising the book—it had metamorphosed from a non-fiction novel to a *roman à clef*. I briefly discuss John Banville's *The Untouchable* as an example of the *roman à clef* genre. Then I move to a detailed discussion of contemporary fictional works that feature representations of Othered characters in a similar vein to *Brother Nation*. Here, I place my work in the context of contemporary fictions by the Australian authors, Eva Sallis and Linda Jaivin, and the British authors, Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal and Gautam Malkani.

In Part Four, I outline my understanding of Bakhtin's theories of dialogism and heteroglossia in the novel, and make a brief digression into the dialogic nature of the news media. I then examine how discursive elements of fiction can be posited within Bakhtinian theories of dialogism and heteroglossia. I discuss the earlier Othered fictional examples, demonstrating how the voices of the characters combine in each to give that book its particular discursive effect. I make another digression, this time concerning Pierre Macherey's theories on the multiplicity of textual meanings. Next, I consider whether the discussed fictional works also contain examples of Bakhtinian carnival in the way Othered characters may or may

not invert power relations. Before concluding, I examine dialogism in reference to my own speaking position and the representation of Othered characters.

A short word on the title of my novel: The two main characters, Sam and Omar, are, of course, brothers. *Brother Nation* is peopled with predominantly male characters. Many of these characters engage in disturbing misogynistic behaviour. However, beyond this, the title is also a reflection of the peculiarly male milieu where the story takes place:

Not only is most crime committed by men, but the institutions that are responsible for controlling crime—the police, the legal system, the legislature—have highly masculinised structures. This is not to exclude women from the equation [...] nor is it to operate with a singular, all-encompassing conceptualisation of ‘masculinity’ [...].<sup>4</sup>

To reiterate a line in the quotation, I have not *sought* to exclude women from this story, or have them only as victims or mothers. This specific story had its own particular strictures and I was reluctant to disturb these for the sake of symmetry or to make a self-conscious ‘correction’. In this respect the story is what it is—hence its title.

Parts One and Two of this exegesis deal with the process of discovery and research relating to the writing of *Brother Nation*—the autopoietic referred to earlier. Parts Three and Four attempt to contextualise, and posit my novel within a critical framework so that I can demonstrate the production of external knowledge—the allopoietic—in addition to what I have consciously, and

---

<sup>4</sup> Jock Collins, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, and Paul Tabar, *Kebabs, Cops, Kids and Crime: Youth Ethnicity and Crime in Sydney* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000) 247.



unconsciously (say, via Bakhtinian refraction) created. In combination, I hope to elicit a deeper recognition of how narrative fiction might reveal discursive truths through the voices of characters.

## **One – Rape, Race and Moral Panic**

An appropriate way to begin is to discuss why I chose to write this novel, and in particular, a novel dealing with such contentious subject matter. After all, as a first novel, *Brother Nation* is not autobiographical—thankfully—in the manner that first novels are purportedly wont to be.

I had been interested in the so-called Sydney Gang Rapes from July 2001, the time when they were first widely reported by the media. The story, as represented by the majority of commercial news media, oozed lasciviousness and screeched with hysteria. The crimes themselves were unambiguously dreadful and seemed to verge on the worst conceivable of their type. Race was a central issue but in an inversion that was unique to me at the time, there were accusations that the ‘ethnic’ perpetrators were guilty of racism against the Australian victims of the rapes. Repeatedly the reports highlighted that the rapists had asked some of their victims if they were ‘Australian,’ and one victim had allegedly been told that she would be ‘fucked Leb style.’ Media reports repeatedly reinforced that the victims had been singled out because of their status as young, white Australian females, though later I discovered that amongst the group there were girls of Italian, Greek and Aboriginal heritage.<sup>5</sup> Numerous media reports concurrently asserted that the perpetrators were Lebanese Muslims. However, my research consistently revealed they were predominantly Australian residents and, if not born here, were brought up in Australia. Additionally, in my view, it was highly unlikely that they were devout or practicing Muslims though by virtue of cultural association they might at times arbitrarily identify with that particular religion. I illustrate this point in *Brother Nation*. Omar has no real belief in God but, for example, when filling out a form

---

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Crichton and Andrew Stevenson, ‘Crime and prejudice,’ *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002, 10 May 2004 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326534.html>>.

that asked his religion, would always write ‘Muslim’.<sup>6</sup> The singling out of the perpetrators’ ethnicity and Islamic religious affiliation was in the climate of the times enough to imply these factors were blameworthy in themselves. The news reports and talkback discussions also encouraged the widely held, but then unproven belief, that the perpetrators operated as a well-organised gang, using mobile phones as their principal strategic tool. This, it appeared to me, seemed to negate any sense of opportunism in their crimes, further escalating the disproportionate sense of menace and threat arising from the story.

After 9/11, the arrival of the *Tampa* and the children overboard incident, (events that were arguably exploited by the Federal Government to influence the outcome of the November 2001 Federal election<sup>7</sup>) the issue of the Sydney Gang Rapes became even more culturally and racially loaded. In August 2002, I was still following the story of the gang rapes with interest. It remained a hot topic on the television news, talkback radio and in newspapers. Two of the main perpetrators, Bilal and Mohammed Skaf, had just been given record sentences. I knew that a moral panic had been created and that 9/11, the *Tampa*, and children overboard were interwoven with the Sydney Gang Rapes in a way that was directly linked to a distinct shift to the right that was occurring in Australian politics and society. With the benefit of research and hindsight, I can now identify that shift, in part, as manifesting in a wider incidence of *racialisation* in policing, politics and the media that was happening on an unprecedented scale in my lifetime.

A major process of racialisation is, ‘the creation of a racialised “other”’: a “them” against whose “difference” a dominant national “us” is defined [...].’<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Rudi Soman, *Brother Nation*, Ms. (2007) 331.

<sup>7</sup> David Marr and Marian Wilkinson, *Dark Victory* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Collins et al. 18.

At the time, I did not need to read an academic treatise or to know anything of Edward Said and Orientalism to understand that this type of racialisation was taking place. I knew that these Australian Lebanese youths in Sydney, whoever they were, had very probably been responsible for the terrible sexual assaults but I hated what was being said and what was being done in response to their ethnicity in ways that seemed to me to extend absurdly beyond the parameters of the crimes. In the post 9/11 climate of the nonsensically named 'War on Terror', it was apparent that an upsurge of fear had been created and that it was growing to extremes far beyond the kinds of 'us and them' differentiation that had targeted previous waves of immigrants to Australia.

This palpable fear in society was more than just an outward observation. It was affecting me personally. I have dark skin and, some might say, a swarthy complexion. I am not Middle Eastern but have Indian heritage. However, increasingly since late 2001, I have understood on occasions what it is like, for example, to have people—young and old—cross to the other side of the street on seeing me approach. I have seen suspicious and even reproachful glances when I board a bus or train, or walk into a shop, pub or restaurant. I have at times noticed furtive glances thrown my way in check-in queues at airports and when boarding flights. I know the paranoia and uncertainty of wondering if I have been racially profiled when my luggage was 'accidentally' not loaded on to my flight and then couriered to me later on the same day after having been located by the airline with what seemed like uncommon ease. Was it just a mistake by the baggage handlers or had my suitcase been deliberately removed to be specially X-rayed, the lock expertly unpicked? It is largely immaterial whether this is a paranoid conspiracy theory or an individual's legitimate response to discrimination. The end-result is

that I have a first-hand idea of what it is like to be Othered. Literally and figuratively I walk in an immigrant's skin, regardless of how Australian I inevitably am. I suspect this is one of the reasons why I found the wider story surrounding the Sydney Gang Rapes so fascinating.

Subsequently, on September 9 2002, I happened to view an edition of the ABC's *Media Watch* that concentrated on the issue of the Sydney Gang Rapes. It detailed how in the past year certain media commentators had irresponsibly and carelessly exploited the recently publicised story of the assaults. According to *Media Watch*, Alan Jones, Miranda Devine and Piers Akerman had been loudly making the dual claim that Lebanese Muslim gangs had been targeting white Australian women and that New South Wales police had done little or nothing to warn the public of the danger.<sup>9</sup>

However, *Media Watch* revealed that these commentators and other journalists had simply missed several timely police press releases issued soon after the victims had reported the crimes to police. The rapes had taken place in August 2000 and the first police press release was issued on September 12 2000. It detailed the alleged offences and, in fact, clearly warned the public to exercise caution in certain areas of Sydney.<sup>10</sup> The next day the *Daily Telegraph* ran a brief story on the crimes but this was effectively buried on page fourteen due to the coverage of the Sydney Olympics. The story went unnoticed for another ten months or so before being sensationally 're-broken' by the *Sun Herald* in late July 2001. Shortly

---

<sup>9</sup> 'Criminal Gangs or Islamic Gangs?' *Media Watch*, ABC TV, Sydney, 9 September 2002, transcript 30 May 2004 <[http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902\\_s2.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902_s2.htm)>.

<sup>10</sup> 'Criminal Gangs or Islamic Gangs?'

thereafter, the tirades against Muslims and the police from journalists such as Jones, Devine and Akerman began to appear.<sup>11</sup>

It is unnecessary to go further into *Media Watch*'s treatment of the story. However, it was while watching the program that I first consciously realised that this narrative contained many disparate, even conflicting elements that would be remarkable material for a novel and indeed, for a PhD. I had been following the story for over one year but it was only then that I decided that I genuinely wanted to write about it.

I jotted down the idea on a small yellow post-it note, which I still have, stuck inside my 2002 diary:

*Bilal Skaf PhD idea*

*Media Watch. Police press release ignored by Alan Jones to create moral panic.*

The post-it note stayed inside the diary for several months, while I completed my Honours year and following that, a six-month job with SBS. In the meantime, I applied for and was accepted into a creative writing PhD program at The University of Adelaide. I had to decide what my project would be. Nearly one year later, the idea on the post-it note was still in my thoughts, and the potential of the story still inspired passion and commitment. This would be my PhD and first novel.

So, what was it about this typically strident *Media Watch* expose of, at best sloppy journalism and at worst rampant demagoguery, that inspired me to commit

---

<sup>11</sup> 'Criminal Gangs or Islamic Gangs?'

to over three years of determined, focused research and writing to complete *Brother Nation*?

I might map the equation in this way: After I had followed the story for some time, the provocative edition of *Media Watch* caused a bubbling and then fermentation of the accumulation of thoughts and feelings on the topic that had been incubating in my mind. I believe the stern, almost condescending tone of the presenter, David Marr, reinforced a position I had already consciously taken about the moral panic surrounding the rapes. The rapes had been awful, yes, but much of the sensationalism that had been created around them was inciting racial hatred and penalising a whole community for the crimes of a few individuals. This was unacceptable to me.

But, while perched at this superior liberal height I also felt a disturbing sense of unease about the appalling nature of the crimes that had been committed, and for which the Skaf brothers and their accused cohorts appeared to have been fairly and reasonably convicted. Then again, to complicate matters, I suspected they had not been fairly and reasonably *sentenced*—the 55-year prison term that Bilal Skaf received was one of the most severe sentences ever delivered in NSW. This was another one of the many interesting aspects relating to the moral panic and law and order politics surrounding the case.

Nevertheless, it was becoming increasingly difficult for me to reconcile the contradiction between the horrendous crimes that had been committed and the repugnant racial discrimination that was occurring in response. The rapes were cowardly, brutal and callous. On the other hand, the racialisation coming from some sections of the media and certain politicians seemed to be pernicious, opportunistic, and punitive and held the whole Australian Lebanese Muslim community

responsible rather than just the convicted individuals. The outrage and moral panic seemed artificially constructed and beyond any meaningful concern for the victims of the rapes.

The harder I tried to rationalise these contending positions the more uncomfortable I became. My discomfort grew, as I felt increasingly hemmed in by these contradictions. In defiance, as I officially commenced my PhD and novel, I began to assemble more information and tried to increase my understanding of the story. The more I understood, the more I wrestled with choices on how to portray events in the narrative. Should I take the morally ambiguous stance, and try and tell the story from both sides, or should I take the moral high ground? What was the moral high ground? Ostensibly, this surely lay in siding with the victims of these terrible crimes. The perpetrators had, beyond reasonable doubt, acted monstrously. However, regardless of the crimes committed by these individuals, was it justifiable for their families and communities to suffer blame also? This was, after all, the net result of the sensational reporting by the majority of commercial media, the law and order opportunism of the politicians, and the arguably politicised reactions of the police and judiciary. Should I not also take a moral stand on behalf of, if not the perpetrators themselves, their community?

The tentative duality of this inner conflict soon gave way to a grey morass of conflicting thoughts and feelings. Surely, some characters in this story were more culpable than others. Perhaps some of the families of some of the youths had inculcated their sons with antisocial and misogynistic tendencies and had to accept some of the blame, but perhaps not other families. There must have been good journalists who wrote irresponsible stories and irresponsible journalists who wrote good ones, at different times in different combinations in perhaps an endless series



of variables. Was it possible for a District Court Judge in Australia to be swayed by the media and politics in his sentencing, or even worse, to be swayed by his own personal bias?<sup>12</sup> Conversely, was it not the judge's responsibility to provide a deterrent and reassure the community these outrages could not be tolerated in a decent society? Should a politician be entitled to publicly name the racial and cultural background of the perpetrators, claiming that this information helps to 'make an arrest'?<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, did the use of ethnic descriptors pander to the demagogues and the existing prejudices of the majority of their audience? The contradictions and counter questions did not seem to have an end.

This conflict became the tension that wound the springs of the project. As I researched, I was reassured by the sudden comprehension that a novel was the ideal medium for expressing such divergent, tumultuous feelings on a topic. A novel could readily accommodate a cast of diverse characters and a range of their accordant and discordant actions. There did not have to be a single argument in my novel; there was no need for a dissertation with a logical, one-way flow of argument. The characters need not agree. The voices of the characters could tell the story with all its jarring, paradoxical elements *intact*.

This intuitive understanding conformed to an idea of dialogism and heteroglossia in the novel, which I had become aware of by having read the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. These theories further assisted in reconciling what appeared to be the irreconcilable. Bakhtin's writings presented to me a theoretical underpinning on which conscientious doubts could be rested before embarking on the writing of a creative PhD based on this disturbing, conflicted story. With this intellectual

---

<sup>12</sup> These are purely hypothetical questions. I make no comment on the probity of the Judge.

<sup>13</sup> 'NSW Premier defends ethnic descriptions,' *PM*, ABC Radio, Sydney, 21 August 2001, transcript 7 July 2004 <<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/stories/s350207.htm>>.

reinforcement, I could rid myself of some anxiety and get on with the job of researching the material for the novel. Having signalled this influence in relation to the genesis of my work, I will return to Bakhtin in due course, after a discussion of other contemporary dialogic texts.

## **Two – Conflict, tension, ambiguity**

From the outset, I decided to base as much of the novel as possible on the factual events. This gave me courage and, so it seemed, an ideal structural framework.

After all, the story of the Sydney Gang Rapes seemed to contain everything a novel might need. It would just be a question of meticulous research and putting the necessary information together in the right way. I looked to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* as the model of what this type of non-fiction or 'faction' novel could be.<sup>14</sup> Of course, in subject matter my novel would be very different to *In Cold Blood*. The protagonists of my book belonged to a demonised, Muslim/Arab Other while the antiheroes of Capote's book were poor, white trash Americans. However, both sets of characters still belonged to a marginalised underclass and there appeared to be some correlation in the possibility that, like Capote, I might be drawn to feel at least some sympathy towards my criminal characters, in spite of their evident guilt.

To a lesser extent, I also saw Don DeLillo's *Libra* as a good example of how a novel might be created around real events. As DeLillo says in the Author's Note to *Libra*:

This is a work of imagination. While drawing from the historical record, I've made no attempt to furnish factual answers to any questions raised by the assassination.

Any novel about a major unresolved event would aspire to fill some of the blank spaces in the known record. To do this, I've

---

<sup>14</sup> Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood* (London: Penguin, 1966).

altered and embellished reality, extended real people into imagined space and time, invented incidents, dialogues and characters.<sup>15</sup>

Delillo freely admits embellishing the events in *Libra*, which is based on Lee Harvey Oswald's role in the John F Kennedy assassination. In contrast, Capote's *In Cold Blood*, subtitled, 'A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences', is widely touted as a great work of high journalism, a true 'non fiction novel'—the culmination of scrupulous research, exhaustive interviews and reams of correspondence. However, it has been argued that Capote's work was also embellished in unlikely places. For example, Capote's letters apparently reveal that he substituted lines from his own conversations into purportedly factual dialogue between one of the murderers and an old army friend.<sup>16</sup>

The knowledge that these stalwarts of the 'faction' novel were inclined to let their imaginations fill in necessary gaps, gave me confidence in spite of the enormous task ahead. With thorough research, I would be able to piece together the story and with imagination could invent the attendant traits and personalities to round out the characters and make them real. I already knew, for example, that Bilal Skaf must have a domineering, forceful personality. All the media reports emphasised his status as leader of the gang and his record sentence, rightly or wrongly, reinforced his position as the person with the greatest culpability in the story. In contrast, Bilal's younger brother Mohammed, on whom there was less written due to his status as a minor at the time of the crimes, seemed a follower;

---

<sup>15</sup> Don Delillo, *Libra* (New York: Penguin, 1991) 458.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Mallon, 'Golden Boy: The Life and Letters of Truman Capote,' *The New Yorker*, Books, 13 September, 2004, 10 December 2004  
<[http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/09/13/040913crbo\\_books](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/09/13/040913crbo_books)>.

possibly more sensitive, and someone who might have been led into his terrible deeds. Here already were the makings of dramatic possibility.

Unlike Truman Capote, I felt no need to travel to the prisons where these criminals were held to speak with them personally. Given their notoriety (and my obscurity), I doubted I would gain access to them or win their cooperation. Even if access and cooperation were granted, I had concerns about the ethical implications of interviewing them for what was after all PhD research. I did not want to have to argue my case in front of what I feared would be an interfering ethics committee. I did not want to do social science oriented 'human research' as such. Overall, I had a strong conviction that interviewing Bilal and Mohammed Skaf was unnecessary for the purposes of my story. Despite using the model of a non-fiction novel, at that early stage I knew their characters would be dramatised to some degree.

Before commencing the PhD I had been following the story in an ad hoc fashion, paying close attention to the news reports that I chanced upon. As an avid consumer of the news media, I had been very fortunate in catching most of the major pieces and benefiting greatly from some of them. The particularly inspiring edition of *Media Watch* is a case in point. However, as a PhD student I was now committed to some rigorous narrative research. I decided the best way to locate primary sources was via Internet searches and by utilising library web tools such as Factiva. Finding stories on the Sydney Gang Rapes was not difficult but the process was laborious. There were hundreds, probably thousands of stories produced on the subject of the Sydney Gang Rapes. These primary sources included newspaper articles, television news and current affairs programmes, and radio news and commercial talkback. However, the most useful source of basic structural information for my purposes was the newspaper articles. Most of the information on

the case came from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph*, followed by the *Australian*. There was a great deal of national coverage in capital city and even regional papers in the other states, but many of these articles were syndicated from the original pieces in the Sydney papers. Consequently, in doing this research I read and re-read the same articles a multitude of times. This was not necessarily a bad thing as the rudimentary outline of the story soon became entrenched in my mind. Whenever there was any new information or a minor deviation from the ‘accepted’ version of events, I was able to pounce on it, process it into my timeline of the story, and then ascertain its potential worth to the novel.

A good example of this was a small article from the *Australian* with the headline, ‘Judge reveals face of gang-rape evil’.<sup>17</sup>

This particular article revealed to the public Bilal Skaf’s identity for the first time. Though it was published in September 2002, I had only managed to locate it, via Factiva, in mid 2004. I had read much of the information in it many times before. However, it also contained excerpts of an interview with three girls who claimed to have been socially acquainted with the Skaf brothers in the twelve months prior to the rapes. After reading hundreds of articles, I had yet to come across any testimony concerning what the social lives of the boys might have been like, though I had already formed an intuitive picture in my head. The interview with the girls exposed the sordid nature of the recreational activities of the perpetrators of the rapes:

---

<sup>17</sup> Martin Chulov and Iain Payten, ‘Judge reveals face of gang-rape evil,’ *Australian* 7 September 2002. 4.

But they also offer a disturbing insight into the lifestyle of the gang that Skaff [sic] was a part of: one of orgiastic parties and routine degradation of women.

One girl, no longer a group member, told of two parties she went to in Greenacre, near where two of the rapes occurred, between February and July that year, where a pair of youths turned up with two girls who lived nearby.

"They were Asian girls," she said. "And they just walked in the room and started (performing sex acts) on the 20 or so blokes who were there.

"They were all playing cards around a table and they were sweating and laughing. It was like they expected it to happen and so did she."<sup>18</sup>

In terms of narrative research, this was a small but pure nugget of gold. The information gave me a concrete insight into an entrenched objectification of women in the youths' lives. None of the other newspaper or television reports had thus far conveyed so much information in so few words. This was how the characters in my novel calibrated their expectations of and experience with women. This was how the characters in my novel *socialised* (though perhaps not all the time). It was as if I had been given a key into the mindset of these boys. The girl's anecdote confirmed the types of things that I had already imagined about the milieu of these characters. After absorbing this information it seemed reasonable to confirm my assumption that the boys must also be heavy users of pornography. Also, they acted as if they

---

<sup>18</sup> Chulov and Peyton.

came from a macho patriarchal culture, though my conversations with Lebanese friends and other anecdotal evidence suggested that Lebanese mothers were ‘far more influential on their sons than fathers.’<sup>19</sup>

How did all of this reconcile with the identity of the perpetrators as Lebanese Muslims, a fact the newspaper articles seemed to be screaming out each day? I did not see evidence of a meaningful connection between their racial and religious identity and the crimes committed. There was nothing to suggest that these boys were practicing Muslims. They did not belong to any Islamic youth organizations. When approached by an SBS television crew the day after Bilal Skaf’s 55-year sentence was handed down, an angry worshipper at the Imam Ali bin Abi Talib Mosque in Sydney’s Lakemba responded:

Of all the people—listen, of all the people that have raped girls in the past, did you tell that they were Christians or Catholics or Jews? You say they're Muslims! OK? We did not go rape anybody.<sup>20</sup>

It seemed quite clear that this particular Muslim man did not want to have any association with a convicted rapist like Skaf and was aggrieved that his religion was being targeted as a result. I agreed with the man. I did not believe anyone who was remotely pious could commit crimes as vicious as the Sydney Gang Rapes.

If I am asserting that the cultural and religious identity of the perpetrators was largely irrelevant as a cause of the crimes, why then did these rapes occur?

---

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Toutounji, personal interviews, 15 April 2004 and 7 October 2004. Ali Toutounji, personal interview, 7 October 2004. See also: Edmund Tadros, ‘Lock up your sons, Lebanese mothers told,’ *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 December 2005, 14 December 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/lock-up-your-sons-lebanese-mothers-told/2005/12/13/1134236032237.html>>.

<sup>20</sup> ‘For Being Lebanese,’ *Four Corners*, ABC TV, Sydney, 16 September 2002, transcript 13 August 2004 <[http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/archives/2002b\\_Monday16September2002.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/archives/2002b_Monday16September2002.htm)>.



What I was actually seeing in my research, which by then included wider reading on other incidents of gang rape and the psychology of rape, seemed to be a distorted, perverse masculinity at work—a version of masculinity that I did not believe was held in monopoly by Lebanese Muslims. After all, in the years since the Sydney Gang Rapes there have been numerous other reports of the same crime involving men from all racial backgrounds and levels of society. There was the heavily publicised allegation of gang rape involving the Canterbury Bulldogs rugby team at Coffs Harbour in February 2004, where police were criticised for being inexplicably slow to investigate, and no charges were eventually laid.<sup>21</sup> In regards to the male dominated culture of rugby league football, a culture that must surely permeate into some wider sections of Australian society, one player was quoted as saying:

"Don't think she [the alleged victim] was an innocent player in all this. After the Wednesday night she gave her number to one of the boys and said, 'Come around and bring the whole team around.' "

One player said it was just a typical night for some of the Canterbury players.

"Some of the boys love a 'bun'," one said. "Gang banging is nothing new for our club or the rugby league."

In late 2005 the Australian Football League was prompted to issue an official policy on sexual assault after repeated scandals involving contracted

---

<sup>21</sup> Danny Weidler, 'Team is confident that no charges will be laid,' *Sun-Herald* 29 February 2004, 10 April 2004 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/02/28/1077677016584.html>>.

players.<sup>22</sup> In one more football related case in 2005, three young men, who appeared to be middle-class white Australians, stood trial on the charge of sexual assault in company.<sup>23</sup> They were accused of gang raping a girl in the North Shore house of the Wallabies' (Australian Rugby Union team) team doctor, who was the father of one of the boys. The trio had met the girl earlier in the evening at the Northies rugby league club at Cronulla. At the house, the girl had allegedly agreed to consensual sex with the three of them. The sex became too rough and she asked them to stop. According to her, they had then held her down and taken turns in raping her. The reports alleged a bottle had been inserted into her anus. After being released, she had immediately rung the police and had then been examined by a doctor. After a trial that was reported widely yet comparatively dispassionately by the press, the young men were acquitted.<sup>24</sup>

In another *Sydney Morning Herald* article, headlined, 'What was different then?' and written in the context of the current Sydney Gang Rapes, I found a reference to a gang rape in 1967. The journalist, Andrew Stevenson, described news reports from the sixties that ranted about:

---

<sup>22</sup> Caroline Wilson, 'AFL's tough stand on sexual assault,' *Age* 9 November 2005, 25 November 2005 <<http://www.theage.com.au/realfooty/news/afl/afls-tough-stand-on-sex-assault/2005/11/08/1131407639696.html>>.

<sup>23</sup> Frank Walker and Eamonn Duff, 'Three men, a girl, a rape allegation while Mum and Dad were home,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 2005, 10 November 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/three-men-a-girl-a-rape-allegation/2005/10/08/1128563037813.html>>.

<sup>24</sup> 'Three men acquitted of teen's rape,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 October 2005, 10 November 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/three-men-acquitted-of-teens-rape/2005/10/13/1128796638657.html>>.

A new breed of youth which tricks, cajoles, betrays and ravishes innocent girls. Could there be such monsters in YOUR neighbourhood?<sup>25</sup>

In a parallel with the 2002 Sydney Gang Rapes, many of these 1967 rapes had occurred in the Bankstown area. According to Stevenson the main difference between the reporting of the rapes then, compared to the present time, was that '35 years ago the boys were blonde, blue-eyed and definitely Anglo-Celtic.'<sup>26</sup>

In yet another recent, more controversial case involving the offspring of a doctor, several (resident Australian) Pakistani brothers (known as the 'K brothers') were convicted of gang rape and sentenced in 2005.<sup>27</sup> The boys' father, a general practitioner, was later prosecuted on perjury charges over evidence he had given in his sons' trials. Perhaps this set of crimes was more abhorrent or the cases more clear-cut. But, as with the Skaf rapes, politicians, commercial media and other commentators deliberately and sensationally brought race and Islam to the forefront of debate.

There are other alleged incidents of gang rape in Australia, some currently before the courts, where media reports conspicuously decline to mention race, culture or religion as contributing causes for the crimes. In October 2006, in Werribee, Victoria, a group of teenage boys allegedly sexually assaulted a developmentally disabled fourteen-year-old girl, also setting alight her hair and urinating on her. This case was sensationalised because the boys made and

---

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Stevenson, 'What was different then?' *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002, 20 July 2004 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326537.html>>.

<sup>26</sup> Stevenson.

<sup>27</sup> Geesche Jacobsen, 'Brothers' violent gang rapes revealed,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 2005, 1 May 2007 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/brothers-gang-rape-rampage-revealed/2005/07/21/1121539074631.html>>.

distributed a DVD recording of the assaults.<sup>28</sup> Photographic stills from the DVD that have been published on the Internet show that the perpetrators uniformly were of white Anglo Australian appearance.<sup>29</sup>

In April 2007 there were scandalous headlines regarding the alleged gang rape of a teenage girl in the western suburbs of Sydney. She had allegedly been given intoxicants and then while in a state of semi-consciousness filmed (using a mobile phone) having sex with of a group of teenage boys. The video also allegedly showed one of the boys deliberately breaking wind near her face and other abusive acts. The recording was later distributed at two Sydney high schools leading to its discovery by authorities, and police arrests.<sup>30</sup> Though their faces were never shown in news reports it was apparent that the boys who were allegedly involved came from white Anglo Australian families. Several family members including parents and grandparents were either interviewed or filmed by news and current affairs crews. Though there was substantial outrage from all quarters, at no time was any consideration given to the alleged perpetrators' culture or religion in any of the mainstream reporting that surrounded the case. Of course, this is what one might expect of responsible reporting. An interesting aspect of the reporting of this case, however, was that in online newspaper forums many people were expressing their belief that if the boys had been Middle Eastern or of some other immigrant

---

<sup>28</sup> Daniella Miletic and AAP, 'Rape squad rounds up DVD gang,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 October, 2006, 26 October 2006 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2006/10/25/1161699377947.html?from=top5>>.

<sup>29</sup> Cheryl Lindsay Seelhoff, 'Up to 14 High School Boys Rape, Torture Developmentally Disabled Girl, Then Make and Sell DVD of the Rapes,' [Weblog entry] *The Women's Space/The Margins*, 5 November 2006 <<http://womensspace.wordpress.com/2006/10/28/up-to-14-high-school-boys-rape-torture-developmentally-disabled-girl-then-make-and-sell-dvd-of-the-rapes/>>.

<sup>30</sup> David Braithwaite and Ben Cubby, 'Gang rape filmed on mobile phone,' *Sydney Morning Herald* 5 April 2007, 5 April 2007 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2007/04/04/1175366325678.html>>.

background, then the story would have been treated differently.<sup>31</sup> In Australia, the subject of rape and gang rape in particular, now seemed to be inextricably tied up with race and culture.

So, in my research of Australian news media reports that referred to gang rape I was not only finding out much more about the Skaf brothers' case, I was discovering that race and religion were newsworthy if the perpetrators were identified as being of Middle Eastern background—a demonised Arab and/or Muslim Other. In the face of this it seemed clear to me that the occurrence of gang rape, as loathsome as it was, was nothing new and that it seemed to happen relatively frequently across a broad range of socio-economic and cultural strata.

Writing about gang rape has not been confined to newspapers. One prominent *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist, Paul Sheehan, felt sufficiently moved about the Pakistani K brothers' case to write a non-fiction book about it. In *Girls Like You*, he understandably condemns the brothers for their seemingly disingenuous attempts to cite their Muslim religion and cultural upbringing as a defence in court.<sup>32</sup> The barrister of one of the brothers unsuccessfully argued that his client's cultural conditioning in Pakistan, his abuse of alcohol and a claimed mental condition, had all been mitigating factors in the commissioning of the offences of which he was accused. The barrister suggested that in this context his client was 'a cultural time bomb.'<sup>33</sup> However, Sheehan, conveniently misappropriating the lawyer's appellation, goes on to argue that the K brothers and

---

<sup>31</sup> See online forum following: Kara Lawrence, 'Teen films gang rape ordeal,' *Daily Telegraph* 4 April 2007, 4 April 2007 <<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,21503440-5001021,00.html>>.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Sheehan, *Girls Like You: Four Young Girls, Six Brothers and a Cultural Timebomb* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Sheehan 291.

other male Muslims were a 'cultural time bomb' ticking away in Australian society.<sup>34</sup> He concludes the particular chapter by saying that:

Within a year, hundreds of young Muslim men would gather to form violent attacking raids on eastern beach suburbs, when this cultural time bomb would finally go off.<sup>35</sup>

Sheehan is of course referring to the revenge attacks that followed the Cronulla riots in December 2005. It is widely known that police have only arrested a handful of the young men who allegedly took part in these revenge attacks. It is curious how Sheehan concludes that these were hundreds of *Muslim* men who were rampaging through the eastern beach suburbs. From eyewitness accounts it might have been fair to say that a large proportion of those involved were of Middle Eastern or even Lebanese appearance. But identifying them as being proponents of and connecting their actions to a particular religion is a prime example of the process of racialisation discussed earlier.

*Girls Like You* is also an attack on a glacially slow judicial system that acts as a disincentive for victims to report rape and, in those instances that are reported and do go to trial, allows many perpetrators to be found not guilty. Sheehan is a staunch critic of the gruelling court process that rape victims must endure to see their attackers punished. He convincingly substantiates these arguments using the trials of the K brothers to illustrate the rigours that the victims must undergo during the legal process. However, without a similar degree of substantiation, he is vocal throughout the book in condemning a particular section of the immigrant

---

<sup>34</sup> Sheehan 294-295.

<sup>35</sup> Sheehan 295.

community for its contribution to sexual assault and societal disorder. The book contains multiple racialised references to Lebanese and Muslim people, effectively representing these groups as an anxiety inspiring Other. In light of his status as a senior columnist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, he acts to further legitimise the moral panics created by other news media and politicians.

In 2006, another prominent Australian journalist published a book dealing with Arabs as a demonised Other. Peter Manning's *Us and Them: A Journalist's Investigation of Media, Muslims and the Middle East*, examines political manipulation and media bias in the Australian public's perception of Arab culture, via a framework of Orientalism.<sup>36</sup> Manning is a former television and newspaper reporter who is now Adjunct Professor of Journalism at the University of Technology in Sydney. *Us and Them* appears to be a passionate extension of Manning's 2004 academic study, *'Dog whistle politics' and Journalism*.<sup>37</sup> In this treatise, Manning analyses some 12,000 articles from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* taken over a two-year period—twelve months before and twelve months after September 11 2001. The articles were retrieved from the 'worldwide newspaper database system, LexisNexis,' using various keywords including 'Middle East, Arab, Muslim, Iraq, asylum seekers, illegals, refugees, gang, rape, Lakemba and Osama bin Laden.'<sup>38</sup> The time-frame covers the period during which the Tampa crisis, 9/11 and the Sydney Gang Rapes were being widely reported in the two newspapers.

---

<sup>36</sup> Peter Manning, *Us and Them: A Journalist's Investigation of Media, Muslims and the Middle East* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Peter Manning, *'Dog whistle politics' and Journalism: Reporting Arab and Muslim People in Sydney Newspapers 2000–2002* (Sydney: Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, University of Technology Sydney, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Manning *'Dog whistle politics'* 3.

In relation to the Sydney Gang Rapes in particular, Manning concludes from his survey of the articles:

The overwhelming concentration on Lebanese Muslims and the intensity of the coverage makes clear a set of assumptions that are mandated by both newspapers: rape is typical of men of Middle Eastern extraction; it's the fault not just of the rapists but of the Muslim community that nurtures them; "our" white girls are in danger; "we" have reason to fear them (Middle Eastern Muslims); and "they" (Middle Eastern Muslims) should accept the guilt and shame.

After considering his survey's qualitative data analysis and textual analysis Manning is reported as saying:

'Having been a journalist for over 30 years, I did not expect an examination of media stereotyping to reveal such uniformity, such inaccuracy and such generalisation of culture and race. I did not expect that it would tie in so neatly with the government agendas of the state and federal leaders, especially Bob Carr and John Howard.'<sup>39</sup>

*'Dog whistle politics' and Journalism* is written in a sober, even-handed tone, and provides clear descriptions of the research methodology used, a section on

---

<sup>39</sup> Mike Steketee, 'Let's not go down that road.' *Australian* 16 September 2006, 4 May 2007 <<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20418578-28737,00.html>>.



qualitative data analysis featuring charts and tables, and a section on textual analysis, which attempts to tease out the qualitative layers of meaning from the research. It is, as it claims to be, a typical academic study in every respect.

However, in *Us and Them*, Manning deliberately jettisons notions of journalistic and academic objectivity in favour of polemic. Like Sheehan, he takes a position and argues it passionately, calling on anecdotal evidence and personal experience as much as factual data, whenever possible. In an attempt to better understand Arab culture, Manning traveled to the Middle East with his wife and in reporting their experiences succeeds in humanising Arabs and their culture in a way not possible in a purely academic work. Accordingly he opens himself up for accusations of bias—for example, of being unfairly pro-Palestinian in his interpretation of events in the West Bank and Gaza strip by not providing enough balancing material on Israel's experience with suicide terrorism.

Still, in his investigation of events in Australia, with particular reference to the Sydney Gang Rapes, I found a voice that was echoing many of my own thoughts and feelings on what I wanted to fictionally portray. To me, Manning was clearly illustrating this set of character representations albeit via the comparatively rigid expression of non-fiction. *Us and Them* remains a polemic and in my view, subject to the limitations of its genre, but reading it was valuable in terms of my project. In what felt like a very solitary pursuit, it was proof that I was not alone and that others were also feeling a sense of indignation and injustice.

Sheehan and Manning's books are germane, yet contrasting examples of commercial non-fiction depictions of the types of characters I was interested in. As my research progressed I discovered that a small group of Sydney academics had also been writing on this subject, with the publication of two books, *Kebabs, Kids*,

*Cops & Crime: Youth, Ethnicity & Crime*<sup>40</sup> and *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other*.<sup>41</sup>

Both books, which rely on (amongst others) the work of Edward Said, and also Sydney anthropologist, Ghassan Hage, argue that a demonised Arab Other has been created in Australia; a racialised ‘them’ emanating particularly from the southwest of Sydney where the majority of Lebanese immigrants live. *Kebabs, Kids, Cops & Crime* was published before the Sydney Gang Rapes and 9/11 and deals mainly with a media and government fuelled moral panic catalysed by the stabbing of a 14-year-old schoolboy, Edward Lee, in the suburb of Punchbowl, and a few weeks later, a drive by shooting aimed at the Lakemba police station. The authors discuss various topics relating to race and crime in Australia that parallel the subject matter of the books by Sheehan and Manning, but go into much more detail and with academic levels of research. *Kids, Kebabs, Cops & Crime* differs in one marked respect in that it contains substantial material on what the authors call ‘protest masculinities.’ This is a term relating to how groups of young men in marginalised communities will often respond to their life situation by engaging in hyper-masculine identity affirming behaviour. This can be:

The assertion of a form of symbolic power or aggression which compensates for the experience of marginalisation, powerlessness and the ‘hidden injuries’ of class.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Collins et al.

<sup>41</sup> Scott Poynting, Greg Noble, Paul Tabar, and Jock Collins, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> RW Connell, *Masculinities* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995) cited in Collins et al. 166.

During my numerous visits to Bankstown, Greenacre and Punchbowl, I recognised that many young men in the Sydney Lebanese community were expressing this kind of protest masculinity. An example of this is the adoption of elements of black urban American culture like the wearing of tracksuit pants, baggy jeans, and sportswear (prominently featuring brands such as *Adidas* or *Kappa*), and listening to music by rap artists such as Tupac Shakur. Tied in with this is the preoccupation with heavily modified or ‘hot’ cars and a predisposition to be *seen* as having criminal links or to be engaged in criminal activities themselves. A physically aggressive stance or outlook might often complement this projected image. This kind of posturing is not particular to young Lebanese men in southwest Sydney. Similar kinds of behaviours might be seen, for example, amongst Vietnamese youth in Cabramatta or young Anglo Australian men in Macquarie Fields, two other areas with high concentrations of non-English speaking background immigration, and high levels of youth unemployment.

In the way that they dress, their tastes in music, their choice or idealisation of vehicles and so on, young men from each of these groups might project their own way of being perceived by wider society in a way that enhances their ‘subcultural capital.’<sup>43</sup> That is, ‘their “internal” systems of values, style, and so on.’<sup>44</sup> A feature of this group behaviour is the flaunting of their difference to the rest of the community as a way of amplifying their ‘exclusiveness’.<sup>45</sup> They *want* to look different, to be noticed and sometimes to even shock and scare the mainstream community.

---

<sup>43</sup> S Thornton, *Club Cultures* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995) cited in Collins et al. 166.

<sup>44</sup> Collins et al. 166.

<sup>45</sup> Thornton cited in Collins et al. 167.

In this way, moral panics discussed in this exegesis can be viewed as something more than a 'top down' process imposed on marginal groups by tabloid newspapers, devious politicians and shock jocks. It might also be that, in this case, some young Lebanese men assist in perpetuating a sense of exclusion or difference as a way of building respect for themselves. To look tough, to possibly have criminal associations, to be seen as dangerous, is a way to gain respect. A gun fetish is sometimes an expression of this, hence in *Brother Nation*, Dabir's threat to 'shoot a cap' into his friend Taysir, in response to being teased about his sexual status.<sup>46</sup>

One much discussed feature of the Sydney Gang Rapes is the alleged comment by one of the rapists to his victim: 'I'm going to fuck you Leb style.'<sup>47</sup> This was seen as evidence of racism or at least racial targeting on the part of the perpetrators. Commentators often seized on this to further their racialised views that the Lebanese community ought to take the blame for the rapes. In *Brother Nation I* portray the character, Farid (who has left school at fifteen and is largely unemployed), as making this type of comment not so much as to humiliate his victim (though he does this in other ways) but to pump himself up, to inflate his ego and—however perversely—to assert some kind of respect for himself.<sup>48</sup> Farid, in trying to enhance his subcultural capital, inadvertently assists the forces of moral panic that have been brought down on him, his friends and his community. Also on this point, it has been argued that the outrage brought about by this 'Leb style' comment was largely to do with the rapes being construed as an attack on 'white women' rather than on women as 'victims of sexual violence' or women in

---

<sup>46</sup> Soman 198.

<sup>47</sup> Miranda Devine, 'Racist rapes: Finally the truth comes out,' *Sun-Herald* 14 July 2002, 10 May 2003 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/07/13/1026185124700.html?oneclick=true>>.

<sup>48</sup> Soman 181.

general.<sup>49</sup> The elevation of an attack on *whiteness* over an attack on women is a further manifestation of the racialisation inherent in the story.

After reading *Kids, Kebabs, Cops & Crime* I felt a sense of reinforcement. My intuitive rendering of the *Brother Nation* characters was being backed up. Initially, at least, the boys were a friendship group acting the only way they knew how, given their situation. They were not very nice young men but at the same time were not a gang in the organised crime sense of the word. Of course, after the commission of their heinous crimes it is not possible to sympathise with them by categorising them as merely a group of young men expressing a strong sense of protest masculinity. Their actions obviously go beyond that. However, it was clear to me that the milieu presented in the ethnographic studies of *Kids, Kebabs, Cops & Crime* was the same milieu that I was writing about fictionally and that I could portray the world of these characters with a measure of authority and credibility. I found further evidence of this as I read *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*, which dealt with the subject of the Sydney Gang Rapes in light of the Tampa crisis, 9/11, and the 2002 Bali bombings. Though *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* contains much more detail pertaining to the Sydney Gang Rapes, in actuality I did not find much new material that was helpful in the form of advancing the narrative.

As the authors of *Kids, Kebabs, Cops & Crime* and *Bin Laden in the Suburbs* would attest, the work of Edward Said, in shaping a wider context, and Ghassan Hage, on the local level, is pertinent to the theoretical and socioeconomic perspectives of the story of the Sydney Gang Rapes. However, for the purposes of my narrative research, the reading I had already done was sufficient to confirm my

---

<sup>49</sup> Tanya Serisier, 'Racism and the Rights of Raped Women: The Challenge of the Bankstown Gang Rapes for Feminism,' forthcoming, *Australian Feminist Studies*, cited in Barbara Baird, 'Law, Morality and Forgetting: Whiteness in three stories of gang rape in Australia,' unpublished paper, 2007.

intuition that the Sydney Gang Rapes were more to do with education, social status and masculinity, than simply race and religion. I did not want to get mired in the jargon of specialist academic research in trying to construct my story in case it should impart a didactic quality to the tone of my novel. After giving the idea a few years of gestation and four or five months of initial formal research, I needed to begin writing. As Kate Grenville says in her exegetical work, *Searching for the Secret River*, 'my job was as it had been in the beginning: not primarily to understand what I was doing, but to travel forward into it.'<sup>50</sup>

With a storyline already in place, I decided to start the novel with what I thought would be the most difficult scenes to write, namely, those involving the assaults themselves. I found the idea harrowing and the practice worse. As it turned out, as soon as I began to write in earnest, I realised more research was necessary. This took the form of reading selected court transcripts that I had obtained, which summarised in detail the agreed facts of the cases including a step-by-step description of the assaults. One particular transcript outlined information on three assaults in particular that I chose to concentrate on.<sup>51</sup> I found the dispassionate tone of the transcripts a useful exemplar in my rendering of the scenes. It was my intention that the scenes possess an unreal, dreamlike quality and that the reader feels the passive sensibility of the main character, Omar, as, for the most part, he remains a witness rather than an active participant in the crimes he is nevertheless complicit in.

While many scenes in *Brother Nation* are fictionalised, sticking very closely to the accepted facts in this part of the story spared me having to invent such scenes

---

<sup>50</sup> Kate Grenville, *Searching for the Secret River* (Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2006) 217.

<sup>51</sup> Regina v. Bilal Skaf, Regina v. Mohammed Skaf, judgement, NSWCCA 37, Sydney, New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal, 2004.

myself. Notwithstanding that such invention would have been deeply unpleasant, its avoidance also, I hoped, would eliminate or at least pre-empt criticism that such scenes glorified rape or were gratuitous celebrations of misogyny. Knowing that some risk of this type of criticism would invariably remain, I nonetheless believed that the scenes needed to be graphic to represent clearly the horror that the perpetrators enacted on the victims. Leaving no doubt as to the main characters' actions means we cannot equivocate about the nature of their crimes. Ultimately the violence in the book ensures that both the author and the reader can never apologise for the actions of the perpetrators regardless of the racialised and politicised theatre the characters are later forced to enter. I also believed that if the reader does, as intended, feel some sympathy towards the main character, Omar, throughout the rest of book, the detailed and graphic knowledge of his complicity would more effectively serve to impart the moral ambiguity and contradictions central to the story, and ideally result in the reader's reaction (and moral stance) becoming all the more subverted.

During this stage of the creative process one of the biggest obstacles I had to face was the struggle to lose my fear of being wrong in my attitudes, of being labelled misguided, immoral and misogynistic, regardless of my best liberal intentions. As a writer, I knew I had to be prepared to take criticism but the risks involved with this subject matter were at times very worrying. Though I was modelling the most disturbing scenes in the novel on court transcripts I also had to deal with the internal demons that inevitably arose. I had to visit the dominant-forceful and libidinous recesses of a rapist's mind, running the gauntlet of imaginative temptations and titillating, lascivious hazards of fantasy, as I surrendered my conscious self into the hypnotic 'zone' of writing.

After the writing of these scenes, each session of which might have lasted for a couple of hours, I found that I soon returned to the realms of well-adjusted normality. Subsequently, during rereading and editing I was shocked by what I had written. The emotionless yet very disturbing quality of the court transcript was transformed into something even more horrifying by shifting the point of view to an adolescent boy. As the author, I had to ask myself if *I had momentarily become the character?* The answer unfortunately, was yes, but only to the extent that a novelist does this with all his or her rounded characters. Regardless of my initial discomfort, I did not feel sullied by the time I had completed the first draft of *Brother Nation*. It seemed to me that the ends justified the means. I felt as Hermann Melville might have after he completed *Moby Dick*: ‘I have written a wicked book and feel as spotless as a lamb.’<sup>52</sup>

I had to admit that I was happy with the scenes. The shock and surprise that the reader experiences through Omar’s eyes is a crucial component of reflecting the inner life of a rounded character.<sup>53</sup> Even in the most nightmarish of scenarios, I could in some way humanise a monster through fiction by taking the reader through events inside the character’s perception, sharing the character’s misgivings, fright, titillation and eventual, albeit ambivalent, submission to his brother’s malicious influence. In this way, I hoped to rebut the demonising work of authors such as Sheehan, and elaborate on and even reify the type of compassion shown by Manning. In doing so, I was again reminded of fiction’s capacity to explore complex moral situations without resorting to polemic and simplification.

---

<sup>52</sup> AS Byatt, ‘Oh lord, where are you?’ rev. of *Aiding and Abetting*, by Muriel Spark, *New Statesman* 11 September 2000, 15 May 2007 <<http://www.newstatesman.com/200009110040>>.

<sup>53</sup> EM Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, 1985) 77-78.



### Three – Texts and contexts

As I finished writing the assault scenes and then began to assemble the bulk of the rest of the story, I realised that the work was becoming less a non-fiction novel in the vein of *In Cold Blood* and more a fictional novel based on a true story. After all, I had changed the names of the real life protagonists and had (necessarily) resorted to including heavily dramatised elements to make the novel work structurally.

*Brother Nation* thus became more of a *roman à clef*, that is, a novel where real people and events are disguised within the realm of fiction. Well-known examples of the genre include John Banville's *The Untouchable*, Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Of these, I will discuss *The Untouchable*, which is based on the activities of the infamous Cambridge spies who operated in Great Britain from the 1930s to the 1960s.<sup>54</sup>

*The Untouchable*'s main character, Victor Maskell, a Marxist, art scholar, espionage agent, and closet homosexual, is based on Anthony Blunt, the fourth spy who was exposed in the Cambridge group. I read the book after having already finished several drafts of *Brother Nation* and was impressed by the author's powerful marshalling of detailed research and imaginative force to make the book seem entirely credible not only as a novel, but almost as a historical document. I was not closely familiar with the story of the Cambridge spies before reading *The Untouchable* but did some rudimentary research afterwards. I discovered that Banville's combined depiction of what could be accounted for as having happened, and what must have been fictionalised, was loosely proportionate with what I was attempting with *Brother Nation*. This is logical. It follows that in creating such a work an author can rely on the public record for basic details of plot, action, and

---

<sup>54</sup> John Banville, *The Untouchable* (London: Picador, 1998).

elements of surface character representation. However, the author must necessarily fictionalise the inner worlds of characters, also using available evidence, but mainly, I would argue, through the twin creative conduits of intuition and imagination. Banville's execution of Victor Maskell's inner world gives *The Untouchable* a vivid, energised life that transports the reader into the character's head, almost as an active participant in the story, rather than the passive observer one must be with a mere documentation of events. This effect is what I was trying to emulate with *Brother Nation*. I did not aim for *Brother Nation* to resemble a historical document but in subsequent rewriting was inspired by the aesthetic completeness of *The Untouchable* in the context of it being a *roman à clef*. It is an ideal generic model that demonstrates how detailed research into actual events can be transformed into something perhaps closer to truth than conventional historiography. Here, I acknowledge that debate over this issue continues in Australia, in the context of the so-called culture and history wars and that on the topic there are divergent arguments that warrant research and discussion too lengthy for and in any case exterior to the purposes of this exegesis.

*The Untouchable* was enjoyable to read and valuable as research. However, rather than search out other examples of *romans à clef*, I felt it more important to subsequently read fiction containing similar themes and subject matter to mine. There seemed to be no other Australian fiction being written about the Sydney Gang Rapes (or related issues) but a few notable books had recently appeared that contained interesting representations of the Arab Other in an Australian context. Two that affected me greatly and helped me to place my own writing in a thematic context are *Mahjar* by Eva Sallis and *The Infernal Optimist* by Linda Jaivin.

I first read *Mahjar* in 2003 and it greatly moved me. It is a novel comprised of linked stories dealing mainly with Arab characters who live in or have some connection to Australia, though some stories, or parts of them, are set in Palestine, Baghdad and even the seas between Indonesia and Australia. The characters are portrayed in varying environments and surroundings, as settled migrants, refugees and children of war. They face hardships and attempt to survive in the face of bureaucratic inhumanity, mindless savagery and with the constraints and tensions caused when their own cultural norms rub up against those of their adopted country. None of the stories directly involve the characters acting (or reacting) in a direct situation of being a demonised Other, in the same context as *Brother Nation*. However, *Mahjar* was published in 2003 after the arrival of the Tampa and November 2001 Federal election, when it could be assumed the novel's general readership was already aware, consciously or unconsciously, of the demonised nature of these types of characters. After all, the Federal Government had instructed its own agencies to ensure that no 'humanising' photos were taken of the Tampa refugees. The Government's strategy to make 'faceless' the refugees using these and other methods so that the electorate could be more readily manipulated into accepting opportunistic immigration policy has been well documented.<sup>55</sup>

Sallis depicts these characters as foreigners, as culturally different to 'us', for all intents and purposes acknowledging their status as Others, but invests them with unerring depth, giving them feelings, relationships, fragilities, strengths, humour, sadness, joy and all the other human facets that empathy embraces. This

---

<sup>55</sup> See, for example: Marr and Wilkinson, *Dark Victory* or Suvendrini Perera, 'A Line in the Sea,' *Australian Humanities Review*, Issue 27, September-December 2002, 15 May 2007 <<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-September-2002/perera.html>> or Julian Burnside, 'Refugees: The Tampa Case,' [Weblog entry] *Julian Burnside Weblog*, 15 May 2007 <[http://www.users.bigpond.com/burnside/tampa.htm -\\_ftnref2](http://www.users.bigpond.com/burnside/tampa.htm -_ftnref2)>.

serves an aesthetic, political and social purpose in personalising these people to the reader in the context of Australia's very recent social and political history.

One particular story, 'The Sea', conveys the misery and horror of the refugee experience within the circumstance of a married couple's relationship. 'The Sea' is the story of Abd al-Rahman, an Iraqi refugee who has been rescued by Indonesian authorities after the sinking of the boat that he, his wife, Zahra, and young child, Siham, have been passengers on. Zahra and Siham have drowned. The story, which alludes to the sinking of the SIEV-X in October 2001, describes in horrific and powerful detail how, after the sinking of the refugee boat, Abd al-Rahman clings desperately to wreckage and floating corpses and cries out vainly for his wife and child. He sees the floating corpses of another woman and her just-born child, still connected by the umbilical cord, and after witnessing them disappear below the surface feels 'a blissful nothing, as if his life had reached all horror and glory and could encompass no more.'<sup>56</sup> According to Sallis, the graphic detail in this story is based on an account of a SIEV-X survivor, who amidst the boat's wreckage had witnessed the floating corpses of a mother and just born child, still physically joined.<sup>57</sup>

The story is not told chronologically. It weaves in and out of scenes depicting the horror of the refugee boat sinking and other vignettes which delicately explore the strains and misunderstandings within Abd al-Rahman and Zahra's marriage. The sea becomes a metaphor for all that is unknown between them, physically, erotically and mentally, and it is the sea that tragically takes Abd al-Rahman's family away from him.

---

<sup>56</sup> Eva Sallis, *Mahjar* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003) 140.

<sup>57</sup> Eva Sallis, 'Writers and Their Worlds' Seminar, Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide, 15 May 2003.

‘The Sea’ is a story of great economy and impact—with its range, power and layered meanings it conveys multitudes in very few words. The story works on very moving personal and dynamic political levels, and without resorting to cliché or stereotype convincingly demystifies the human identities of these people, these Others whose faces were conveniently masked by the best efforts of our government. In her representation of the Other, Sallis emphasises the frailties and suffering of her characters to enable the reader to empathise with them in an entirely unambiguous way. The locus of comparison with my work in *Brother Nation* is that I ask the reader to consider a morally more fraught set of events involving characters with profoundly greater flaws than those in *Mahjar*. Sallis’s characters, notwithstanding their individual peccadilloes and minor negative traits, are innocent of any crime. They are entirely sympathetic. My characters are guilty of major crimes, yet I also assert their right to be treated with respect as individuals, and to not be reduced to the level of folk devils in serving the interests of various power groups in our society.

Linda Jaivin’s *The Infernal Optimist* also deals with subject matter pertaining to Australia’s recent social and political history, but uses comic writing as a humanising tool.<sup>58</sup> Her main character is a young Turkish Australian man who finds himself trapped in Australia’s refugee detention system, even though he has lived in Australia since he was a child. Born in Turkey, Zeki did not become naturalised when the rest of his family did—at the citizenship ceremony (by which time he is presumably a teenager or young man) he tells his parents he is going to the toilet but instead nips ‘off to the pub to put away a few coldies.’<sup>59</sup> At the pub, he

---

<sup>58</sup> Cameron Woodhead, ‘The Infernal Optimist,’ rev. of *The Infernal Optimist*, by Linda Jaivin, *Age* 6 May 2006, 17 May 2007 <<http://www.theage.com.au/news/book-reviews/the-infernal-optimist/2006/05/05/1146335910962.html?page=fullpage>>.

<sup>59</sup> Linda Jaivin, *The Infernal Optimist* (Sydney: Fourth Estate, 2006) 15.

bumps into some mates and one thing leads to another. Zeki does not return to the citizenship centre that day and neither does he get around to it later. He takes up a life of petty crime and over the years notches up a few convictions for burglary and theft. One month after being released from a short stretch in prison he is caught on a train without a ticket. This turns out to be his last strike. Under Section 501 of the *Migration Act 1958* where non-citizens who engage in criminal activity can be deported, Zeki is taken to Villawood Detention Centre to await his fate.<sup>60</sup>

There, he meets a cast of characters, some valid asylum seekers, others not, who are all awaiting their fates too, at the hands of Australia's Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. In the novel Jaivin transplants real life incidents that have occurred in Australia's detention centres such as 'hunger strikes, sewn-up lips, depression, madness, suicide'<sup>61</sup> and also weaves in a romance between Zeki and his girlfriend—a relationship which is in a state of permanent peril due to Zeki's (charmingly) roguish wandering eye. As one reviewer has noted, the comedy in the writing helps Jaivin get her political message across without sounding overly didactic:

Making *The Infernal Optimist* a comedy was a wonderful idea, because it allows Jaivin to get in the human side of the refugee equation through the back door. It's a sneaky ploy, and it works because the realities of life in detention are presented in an almost documentary style, without being preachy in the least.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Jaivin 13-14.

<sup>61</sup> Woodhead.

<sup>62</sup> Woodhead.

In general, I agree with this reviewer but I found that a major element of Jaivin's comedy, Zeki's incessant use of unlikely malapropisms, detracts from instead of adding to the humour, slightly weakening her attempt to humanise, and in this case, 'Australianise' him. For example, as the novel progresses Zeki uses terms such as: *in factuality* (for 'in actuality'), *pasteurised* (naturalised), *expectorating* (expecting), *humeliorated* (humiliated), *ethical* cleansing (ethnic cleansing), and in the epilogue, *gestated* (instead of gestured). The problem with these malapropisms is that they incorporate a substitute term that is more complex and therefore rather more unlikely to be in Zeki's vocabulary (given his low education and background) than the original term that he is misusing in the first place. Though clever, they are not credible in the context of the character. The effect is to impair Zeki's character in precisely the areas that might have been his strengths. He becomes less Australian and for that matter less Othered too.

But on the whole Jaivin plays it straight with the asylum seekers who are detained with Zeki. They are rendered without irony and their stories are all the more shocking for it. The dichotomy between their situations and Zeki's comic reactions to his own predicament allows the political messages of *The Infernal Optimist* to be heard clearly, bordering on the instructive. There is no attempt by Jaivin to represent the asylum seekers in any morally ambiguous way. For example, could it not be possible that within the hundreds of refugees detained within Australia's admittedly inhumane system, there were at least a few who were not genuine and were trying to gain a short cut to Australian residency? This may seem churlish given the well-documented suffering experienced by most detainees and the eminently worthy case in Jaivin's message. Still, the inclusion of, say, an asylum seeking detainee character who was not a genuine refugee might have

served to add a degree of moral and practical uncertainty to *The Infernal Optimist* in respect to Zeki's questioning of government policy, rather than it being stated as a given that the policies are draconian. Uncertainty could in some way add complexity and credibility. On the other hand, after undertaking her research, Jaivin, like me, is entitled to say the story 'is what it is.'

An interesting adjunct here is to place Zeki's characterisation in the tradition of the typical criminal Australian anti-hero. Despite Zeki's unlawful tendencies he always means well and in his own way is considerate of deserving people around him, that is, people who conform to a similar moral code, such as other detainees and their supporters on the outside. This camaraderie extends beyond simple distinctions of class and race. Anyone can be a worthy friend, even liberal lawyers, a friendly detention centre guard, and the largely middle-class bleeding hearts who regularly visit the detainees. Similarly, anyone can be an enemy, such as the sinister character, Hadeon, who Zeki has met on one of his previous prison stretches. Hadeon, who has been convicted of rape, assault and dealing in heroin—truly 'evil shit' in comparison to Zeki's simple petty thefts and burglaries—appears in Villawood because the authorities, utilising '501' laws, want to deport him back to the Ukraine where he was born.<sup>63</sup> He is no asylum seeker—in legal and social status he is Zeki's counterpart, though mean, ugly and capable of extreme violence. Zeki, in comparison, is a benign clown and though he ultimately loses his fight against the authorities—by being deported back to Turkey—he does find happiness after his long time girlfriend follows him to the 'old country' where they start a family.

This trope of the Australian criminal anti-hero is best epitomised in Ned Kelly and reoccurs in books, films and television to varying degrees in the guise of

---

<sup>63</sup> Jaivin 36, 245.



outlaw larrikins and loveable rogues. In the case of the Skaf brothers, it could be argued the boys achieve a degree of infamy that is as wide as Ned Kelly's. Bilal Skaf's lawyer seems to think so, saying in 2002, 'his name long lives in the annals of criminal offenders in this state. In fact, his name is probably as notorious as Ned Kelly.'<sup>64</sup>

Skaf's lawyer may have been right when he said his client was probably as notorious as Kelly but I think the similarity ends there. A fictional character like Jaivin's Zeki might be more appropriately compared to someone like Kelly in that he can be sympathised with, revered, even loved. Any moral contradictions related to criminality contained in Zeki's character are very easy to digest because like the mythologised Kelly, like the legendary Robin Hood, we can easily see his good points and his bad points. As with folkloric anti-heroes, there are no real ambiguities. In my fictional portrayal of the Skaf brothers as Sam and Omar Assaf, I am trying to present characters whose behaviour and demonised-pariah social status present very complex ambiguities.

At this point I wish to discuss two British novels that appeared in 2006, *Londonstani* by Gautam Malkani, and *Tourism* by Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal. These novels are of interest to me because their principal characters are British Asian and both books exemplify an idea of Otherness from different perspectives.

A disaffected young British Sikh, Bhupinder 'Puppy' Singh Jahal, is the narrator of *Tourism*. The novel is structured in a circular fashion beginning with Puppy on a beach in Italy. We do not know his name or anything of his background. He is watching a beautiful young girl in a bikini who is accompanied by an older,

---

<sup>64</sup> Chulov and Peyton.

wealthy looking man. On the second page, after some minor interaction with the girl and the man, Puppy quickly identifies himself an Othered narrator:

What does the old man disapprove of? My colour? The girl, caramelised in the sun is as brown me – there’s the occasional Italian who’s darker. Maybe he’s seen some trait I share with the Afghans who shuffle about the beach, hawking trinkets and shawls.<sup>65</sup>

This quotation gives an indication of Puppy’s attitude to race—an attitude that over the course of the novel is revealed as, at best, derisively politically incorrect and, at worst, bigoted. The reader soon learns that Puppy has spent the greater part of the last year wandering dissolutely around Europe and that he has something to confess, something that he wants to write in a novel.<sup>66</sup> And so, in the next chapter the story proper begins, twelve months earlier, with Puppy ambivalently engaging a prostitute in London. We learn that he is a cynical libertine who is beginning to experience the drawback of the spiritual and moral vacuum in which he exists.

Through a friend Puppy meets a white English girl, Sophie, who is from the privileged upper classes. Secretly, however, he lusts after Sophie’s friend, Sarupa, a British Asian like himself, but from an extremely wealthy family. Puppy is from a lower middle class family and grew up in Southall, an outer suburb in London’s west, also known as the ‘mini Punjab’ because of its high concentration of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. Though Puppy does not outwardly admit it, the reader learns that he is acutely disaffected by the differences he perceives in

---

<sup>65</sup> Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal, *Tourism* (London: Vintage, 2006) 4.

<sup>66</sup> Dhaliwal 8.

class and race around him. This helps explain, if not justify, his behaviour as he goes about taking everything he can get, using whomever necessary at the time.

Eventually, Puppy seduces Sarupa, who is engaged to an effete Anglo named Duncan. The liaison is a one-off and Sarupa proceeds to ignore Puppy who by this time has softened enough to reveal himself to be somewhat depressed and even heartbroken. In the meantime, a friend has entrusted him with some money to pay a bribe and after some perfunctory examination of his conscience and more self-justification, Puppy misappropriates the cash and leaves London for his directionless time in Europe. The novel culminates in Dahab (a small town on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt) where Puppy has found a modicum of self-knowledge through contemplation and, ironically, the Indian practice of yoga. Having recognised the importance of his family he is thinking about returning to London via India, when one day he receives a surprising email from Sarupa. She tells him they have a little daughter. It is here that the novel ends with Puppy waiting, heart thumping, for the pictures of his daughter to download.

*Tourism's* plot hurries to a somewhat contrived ending and Puppy's hardboiled attitude is rather manufactured at times. Commentators have said that *Tourism* is loosely autobiographical and that with some of Puppy's deliberately provocative statements Dhaliwal attempts to emulate the French author Michel Houellebecq.<sup>67</sup> However, what interests me about this novel is the range of insights the main character delivers in reference to his own situation as a second-generation immigrant Other, and his commentary on race relations in modern Britain in general. Puppy's observations often deviate from the predictable. For example, from a café balcony in Notting Hill he looks out onto the street and thinks to himself:

---

<sup>67</sup> Hermione Eyre, 'Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal: Me & Missus Jones.' *Independent* 2 April 2006, 19 May 2007 <<http://news.independent.co.uk/people/profiles/article355103.ece>>.

It was a miscegenist heaven: white women clung to well-wrought ethnic studs who pushed tricycle pushchairs laden with fat brown babies; demure white men guided Asian girlfriends through stalls selling hookahs, avant-garde sneakers and sun-dried tomatoes.<sup>68</sup>

But in the next paragraph Puppy swerves:

I hated the area; a vapid would-be bohemia, it was too fey for imagination and radicalism ... I preferred where Sophie lived, in Holland Park, in a Georgian town house converted into three flats, all owned by her step-father. There everything was pristine; almost everyone was white ... The gentillesse of Sophie's street – people sharing glances and smiles, stepping aside for one another on the pavement – came from a mutual assumption of wealth.<sup>69</sup>

Puppy sidesteps any prescribed notions of emulating black American culture, not wanting to be like other lower middle class or underclass Asian youth, such as the 'clownish' looking Bangladeshi students that he later describes.<sup>70</sup> Rather than going through the motions of connecting with and expressing 'pride' in his culture (via, say, creation of subcultural capital), he would happily settle for quickly and effortlessly joining the ranks of the wealthy establishment. In this manner, he adopts a very pragmatic, seemingly emotionless appraisal of race-relations.

---

<sup>68</sup> Dhaliwal 52.

<sup>69</sup> Dhaliwal.

<sup>70</sup> Dhaliwal 74.

In a conversation with his housemate Michael, who is black, the two young men discuss three girls they met in a bar the previous night. Puppy says that he did not try to chat up the girls because he was 'not on their agenda'. When asked by his friend what precisely was on the agenda, he replies, 'black cock'. Michael says that he hates it when 'that' happens and adds that he thought the girls, who happened to be French, disliked Puppy because they thought he was Middle Eastern:

'They hate Arabs.' He eyed me sceptically. 'I reckon you've got some Mogul blood in you. They could smell it. *L'odeur d'Islam*, that's what they called it.' He laughed. 'I love France,' he said. 'It's the only country I've been to where the lowest section of society isn't black. They hate niggers more than the English do, they just don't hate them most of all. [...] The French! That bunch of cunts!'<sup>71</sup>

*Tourism* is peppered with these types of observations delivered by Puppy and other, usually male, characters in a casual off-hand tone. In some places, I suspect that Dhaliwal is being satirical or aiming for shock value, but overall I believe he is trying to represent his main character as an Other who refuses to be victimised by his status. He seems to invest the character of Michael with this quality as well. At the same time Puppy finds it satisfying to try and invert his status whenever he can. He describes a pub full of South African and Australian backpackers as 'oppressive' not because of any racial discrimination directed towards him but because:

---

<sup>71</sup> Dhaliwal 60.

I didn't like them; they were shrill and full of berserk enthusiasm. Like a strange Galapagos finch, these honkies had evolved in isolation from the rest of their kind; they were now deeply unsure of themselves, deeply paranoid.<sup>72</sup>

In another, later, conversation with Michael, Puppy says:

Crackers aren't like us. Their culture is all about abstraction and rational inquiry. They get so lost in their heads, they only come into themselves when something's being stuck into their behinds.<sup>73</sup>

It is almost as if Dhaliwal, via Puppy, is taking mischievous delight in investing his character with this inverted racism—a kind of extremist post-colonialism. Of course, these characters do talk amongst themselves with a studied sense of weary, postmodern irony and though what they say is often unpalatable the reader does not construe they are card-carrying fascists. However, there are times when the reader might be forgiven for wondering whether Puppy is a misogynist. I suspect that this might be partly true when, under his breath he calls his girlfriend a 'fucking tramp' for having unwashed dishes in her kitchen sink.<sup>74</sup> There seems to be no trace of postmodern irony here, even if Puppy and his housemates are not exactly neat and tidy men themselves. I suspect he is an unreliable narrator when he

---

<sup>72</sup> Dhaliwal 24.

<sup>73</sup> Dhaliwal 219. NB. A 'Cracker' is a derogatory term for a white person.

<sup>74</sup> Dhaliwal 48.

declares at the beginning of the chapter that ‘I’ve always loved woman,’ albeit conceding he has done so in his own ‘utterly selfish way.’<sup>75</sup>

*Londonstani* deals with a different social milieu. In this novel, the characters are proudly part of an underclass who set about exploiting their available resources through perverse free market entrepreneurship. The novel is set in Hounslow, an outer suburb of London near Heathrow Airport. The main character is Jas, a young bookish ‘rudeboy’ who is struggling to fit in to the friendship group of his infinitely tougher and cooler peers – Ravi, Amit and their muscular leader Hardjit. The boys are all nineteen and retaking their A levels at the Hounslow College of Higher Education after failing at the local school the year before. Jas has just started hanging around with these boys and being rather nerdy has to constantly remind himself to stick to the script of the distinctive street patois employed by the group:

I swear I’ve watched as much MTV Base an Juggy D videos as they have, but I still can’t attain the right level a rudeboy finesse. If I could, I wouldn’t be using poncey words like attain an finesse, innit. I’d be sayin I couldn’t keep it real or someshit. [...] After all, it’s about what you say an how you say it. Your linguistic prowess an debating dexterity (though whatever you do don’t say it that way).<sup>76</sup>

Jas has been invited to hang out with the group but it is as if he is on self-imposed probation as he anxiously tries to avoid embarrassing himself. As I read *Londonstani* I could not help but be reminded of my own characterisation of Omar in *Brother Nation* (I had already completed several drafts of my novel before

---

<sup>75</sup> Dhaliwal 44.

<sup>76</sup> Gautam Malkani, *Londonstani* (London: Fourth Estate, 2006) 6.

reading Malkani's). Both of these sensitive youths are trying desperately to fit into a group dominated by machismo and aggressive behaviour and need to inhibit their intelligence and sensitivity in order to do so. Similarly, Malkani also invests the boys' group behaviour with all the external and internal attributes of subcultural capital. Outwardly they ape black American culture, wearing baggy designer clothes and listening to loud, bass infused rap music. They ride in sporty, heavily modified, 'hot' cars, though after a detailed description of the modified features of the M3 BMW driven by Ravi, it is comically revealed that it belongs to his mother. Inwardly, the boys' behaviour reflects a desire for respect and territorial ownership of their patch of turf via an exaggerated masculinity and aggression.

Of course, like Omar, Jas is leading a double life. He has reservations about the boys' behaviour and even the language they use but nevertheless feels powerless to change the order of things:

If I was the Proper Word Inventor I'd do two things differently. I wouldn't decide that the proper word for a dickless poncey sap is a gay batty boy or that the proper word for women is bitches. That shit in't right. I know what other poncey words like homophobic and misogynist mean and I know that shit in't right. But what am I s'posed to do bout it?<sup>77</sup>

Jas values acceptance by his peers more than his sense of morality. There is little need for wrestling with conscience because the practical gains or losses are so clearly delineated. To conform is to gain acceptance, manhood, respect, sexual

---

<sup>77</sup> Malkani 45-46.



opportunity and even material reward (through the proceeds of a stolen mobile phone racket run by the boys). To challenge the group is to risk physical violence, social alienation, sexual disenfranchisement and comparative poverty. Ultimately power dictates that one must move towards the cool immoral (or amoral) side, regardless of what one's conscience murmurs. Jas's moral universe, like Omar's, is necessarily an ambivalent one. From an authorial point of view this is, of course, necessary in maintaining the reader's sympathy for the character as their lives and others are complicated and damaged by their conflicted and immoral behaviours.

As in *Tourism* the main characters in *Londonstani* have contentious relationships with their white counterparts. But whereas Puppy attempts to make arch, incisive observations about the English and Europeans in an ironic postcolonial context, Jas and the boys engage in a type of meat-headed ultra-sub-nationalism ('sub' because they seem happy to be living within wider England). This takes the form of promoting Indian or 'desi' culture in whatever way that is convenient to them at the time, such as falsely accusing a white teenager of calling them a 'Paki' (the worst insult possible) and then beating him senseless. This cultural pride can also take the form of abusing and physically threatening other Indians who, in the boys' opinion, have become 'coconuts'—dark people who are brown on the outside and white on the inside. After the boys insult and menace an Indian motorist who had the temerity to have longish hair and drive a French car, Jas is unrepentant:

Coconuts like him deserved to have Hardjit an Amit lay into them. It in't as if he had to be such a gorafied bhanchod: God had given him brown skin an so he could be a proper desi if he wanted to. [...] In't

no desi needin to kiss the white man's butt these days an you  
definitely don't need to actually act like a gora.<sup>78</sup>

Jas is convinced these coconuts, these effete, 'good desi boys who din't ever  
cause no trouble' are doomed to stay in Hounslow. He thinks that joining Hardjit's  
boys is a way up and eventually out, and that it is the 'coconuts' who are doomed to  
a subservient life:

But how many of them'll still be here in Hounslow in ten years'  
time, working in Heathrow fuckin airport helpin goras catch planes  
to places so they can turn their own skin brown? No way was I going  
to be hangin round with them saps no more with those gimpy glasses  
I used to wear, my drainpipe trousers and my batty books.<sup>79</sup>

Jas sees no evidence that education will get him out of Hounslow and  
refuses to even consider it as an option. Instead he chooses the exciting life, the  
'respect' filled life. It seems he is on the right track after the boys meet Sanjay, a  
desi in his mid-twenties who introduces them to a bigger, far more lucrative stolen  
mobile phone scheme. The boys gladly join him, and Jas's social status is almost  
immediately elevated. The money starts rolling in and he begins dating Samira, a  
beautiful and previously unattainable Muslim girl. Jas's wooing of a Muslim goes  
against all of Hardjit's desi nationalist principles (and Samir's hardline Muslim

---

<sup>78</sup> Malkani 23. [NB. 'Gora' is Hindi patois for a white person. 'Bhanchod' is Hindi patois for a male who has sex with his sister.]

<sup>79</sup> Malkani.

brothers would also object) so Jas finds he has to conduct the romance in secret. Even so, the couple dine in fine restaurants and frequent exclusive nightclubs.

Jas's confidence grows and he becomes a big player in the scene. The greater rewards of the new scheme bring greater risks and eventually the boys come undone. To repay a debt to the now ruthless Sanjay, Jas has to betray his own father (his father conveniently has a mobile phone business) by breaking into his warehouse and stealing from him. During the theft he is badly beaten up by hooded gang members (it is not revealed if they are his own boys, Samira's brothers, or Sanjay's henchman) and is hospitalised. The police are called and Jas's parents are naturally horrified. It is in the hospital that the major plot twist, or more accurately, surprise ending, is revealed. Up to this point the reader has been led to believe Jas's name is short for a long Indian name, such as Jaswinder. From Jas's medical chart, we learn his name is short for Jason Bartholomew-Cliveden. Jas is white.

The secret is well concealed from the reader until the final pages of the novel. There is one very subtle clue where Mr Ashdown, a former teacher of the boys and somewhat of a mentor to Jas says to the boys, 'Your idea of diversity seems to be limited to recruiting Jas.'<sup>80</sup> Mr Ashdown says this during a discussion on racism. He is attempting to advise the boys not to throw their education away with their gang posturing and 'anti-integration, anti-assimilation ethic'.<sup>81</sup> The boys in turn accuse him of being racist. They concede that their parents had to 'suck British butt' to make their way as immigrants in that society but now it was 'our turn to teach them em some muthafuckin self-respect.'<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Malkani 124.

<sup>81</sup> Malkani 126.

<sup>82</sup> Malkani.

Like Dhaliwal in *Tourism*, Malkani seems to be trying to subvert comforting liberal ideas of racial harmony and multiculturalism, and instead, crafts representations of characters and their situations that more accurately reflect contemporary British society. Jas and his friends might ultimately be mistaken in thinking that their methods will acquire them any enduring respect or long term material success and clearly their sub-nationalistic posturing is foolish and ill conceived. However, the way they are *represented* is well-drawn and credible.

The surprise ending in the plot was exactly that to me, yet I felt dissatisfied and even irritated with it, as if a clever yet unethical salesman had sold me a product I really had no use for. What was Malkani trying to say by having us believe that Jas was white all along? Is this a further subversion of race-relation norms? Is it too literal an interpretation to say that Malkani is presenting desi subcultural capital to be just as attractive to white kids as black rap culture has proven to be in developed countries and beyond? Is he empowering British Asian youth by placing their subculture on a pedestal? Or was it just a clever plot twist? I tend to think that it is more the latter. In my general reading of popular culture in Britain I cannot see any trend towards white kids emulating British Indian street culture in any way that is not already derivative of black (American or Afro-Caribbean) street culture in the first place. I would not consider the currently fashionable (in Western countries) status of Bollywood cinema relevant. In any case, as with the other works I have discussed, the plotting of *Londonstani* is of less interest to me than the Othered characters within it. The lives of Jas (he is still seen as an Other irrespective of the surprise ending), Hardjit, Amit and Ravi resonate to me in the same way as the lives of Puppy, Zeki, Abd al-Rahman and his family. To varying degrees, they are all

representations of Othered characters, who uniquely, polyphonically, convey the humanity of immigrant lives without resorting to comfortable stereotypes or cliché.

#### **Four – I hear voices: Bakhtin and the Dialogic**

The *Infernal Optimist*, *Tourism* and *Londonstani* rely heavily on plotting to complete their stories, while the short stories contained in *Mahjar* have more traditionally open-ended literary structures. However, what I have found valuable in contextualising my own representations of character in *Brother Nation* is the discursive elements (simply put, their thematic quality as opposed to the machinations of plot) of all these works, disseminated via the varied voices of the diverse immigrant characters. I have already mentioned that Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on dialogism and heteroglossia provided a secure theoretical underpinning for my novel as I began to write it. At this point it would be useful to engage in a more detailed discussion of these ideas in drawing meaningful connections between the discussed works of fiction and my own novel. To do this it is necessary to briefly outline some of the key points of Bakhtin's writings on double-voiced discourse, dialogism, and heteroglossia.

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin uses the work of Dostoevsky to illustrate that writer's tendency to instil dialogism, or a double-voiced discourse in his characters and their situations. Bakhtin says of Dostoevsky:

In every voice he could hear two contending voices, in every expression a crack and the readiness to go over immediately to another contradictory expression; in every gesture he detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the

profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity, of every phenomenon.<sup>83</sup>

In effect, Bakhtin is saying that when we hear the words of a character we simultaneously hear the thoughts or inflections of the author but in a ‘refracted’ or altered way. That is, the characters convey their *own* thoughts via their own words, and those of the author’s ‘single voice’ but in a disrupted way.<sup>84</sup>

Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia refers to the complex diversity of language in day-to-day life, and the insertion of this language into fictional works.<sup>85</sup> In relation to heteroglossia, Bakhtin speaks about the novel as a fluid genre, ‘multiform in style and variform in speech and voice.’<sup>86</sup> That is, as a series of ‘counterpositionings not only of different voices in the narrative itself but also of anterior texts and the codified elements of language or culture in general.’<sup>87</sup> He states that heteroglossia, in whatever form it appears in a narrative, is a way of conveying the intentions of the author but in an altered or ‘refracted’ way, as discussed above. In this way a ‘double voiced discourse’ can occur, meaning that heteroglossia and dialogism are inevitably intertwined. Bakhtin says this phenomenon occurs in the language of the narrator, the language of a character, of a group, of a city and so on, eventually applying to the whole work itself.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 30, quoted in Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) 55.

<sup>84</sup> MH Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999) 63.

<sup>85</sup> Vice 18-19.

<sup>86</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel,’ *The Dialogic Imagination* ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) 262-263.

<sup>87</sup> S. Weisenberger, *Fables of Subversion: Satire and the American Novel 1930-1980* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995) 11.

<sup>88</sup> Bakhtin, ‘Discourse’ 324.

Having outlined an idea of dialogism in the novel, a relevant digression is the notion that the news media is also dialogic. While I absorbed the sensationalised and racialised reporting about the Sydney Gang Rapes, I had to be careful to avoid judging the media as a ‘single entity that promotes a single ideological version of the world.’<sup>89</sup> That is, it would be simplistic to assume the media as a collective identity has put forward one racist viewpoint about the rapes. Rather, the media provides ‘a variety of stories, often from conflicting perspectives.’<sup>90</sup> ‘Discourse frames’ often shape the meaning construed from this variety of media voices and these can define the parameters through which stories are understood. For example, there are ‘narratives of battlers and leaders, conflict and sensation’, which can influence the way news stories are related and received.<sup>91</sup> In this way, a journalist might report a story about the Sydney Gang Rapes with the best of intentions but along the lines of a certain discourse frame that, unbeknownst to the journalist, imparts or reinforces a racialised meaning to that story. The discourse frame might, for example, involve the ‘common sense’ attitude that Islam is a religion that is oppressive to women, and the rapists were Lebanese and appeared Islamic, so therefore the message that is imparted is that the local Lebanese Islamic community must share the blame for the rapes. The journalist’s meaning is refracted.

I should also briefly note that the phenomenon of ‘dog whistle’ politics is also dialogic in the way that a politician or demagogue can use speech or images to subliminally impart a message that is not literally apparent in the speech or images.<sup>92</sup> A well-known example of this dialogic ‘dog whistling’ being used to

---

<sup>89</sup> Poynting et al. 13-14.

<sup>90</sup> J. Hartley and A McKee, *The Indigenous Public Sphere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) cited in Poynting et al. 13.

<sup>91</sup> Poynting et al. 13.

<sup>92</sup> Manning, ‘Dog whistle politics.’



great effect is John Howard's October 2001 pre-election speech when he stated that 'we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.'<sup>93</sup> This successful positing of border protection as the main issue for the November 2001 election is widely seen as Howard exploiting a latent xenophobia in the electorate, harnessing former One Nation party voters for the Liberal Party, and winning the battler vote, all without having to utter a single word that could be deemed explicitly racist.

Notwithstanding this dialogic nature of the media, it would be constructive to add here that the writing of postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak might also be useful in contextualising what has been the primary source material for my novel and PhD. For example, it could be argued that the media representation of the Sydney Gang Rapes in its various forms has mirrored the action of colonial history by turning the Lebanese boys, irrespective of their guilt or innocence, into postcolonial subjects or subalterns. It might be said that the racialisation and Othering endemic in these commercial media reports is a manifestation of journalism produced through the prism of a master narrative of European superiority.<sup>94</sup>

Having acknowledged that I could have chosen to conceptualise my work using other models, such as postcolonial theory, it is ironic that Homi K Bhaba leads us back to a dialogic notion of culture, which the news media can be implicitly taken to be part of. In 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences,' he states:

---

<sup>93</sup> Marr and Wilkinson 245.

<sup>94</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995).

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ‘in itself’ be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation. ...<sup>95</sup>

This ‘ambivalence’, if applied to the workings of institutional expressions of culture such as the (diverse) news media, can thus be taken to suggest that refracted or ‘dialogic’ meanings are produced.

Returning to dialogism and heteroglossia in fiction: Bakhtin’s ideas are germane in relation to the contextual discussion of the novels I have provided so far. The different manner of representing the Other that each author has undertaken is to some degree indicative of the multitude of voices that the author portrays, and each voice in turn is a refracted version of the author’s particular viewpoint.

For example, we can assume Puppy in *Tourism* is an autonomous person speaking his own mind. By virtue of his agglomerating dialogue the reader forms a picture of his attitudes, motivations and preferences in relation to sex, society, food, friends and so on. A Bakhtinian reading of Puppy’s character might conclude that through Puppy we are hearing Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal’s voice but with an altered tone, refracted and bent to a different shape regardless of what he may have had in mind when he physically entered the relevant words into his manuscript. This in

---

<sup>95</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, ‘Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences,’ in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995) 156.

effect means that the author's meaning is manipulated via the very character he has created.

Bakhtin elaborates by saying:

Each character's speech possesses its own belief system, since each is the speech of another in another's language; thus it may also refract authorial intentions and consequently may to a certain degree constitute a second language for the author. Moreover, the character speech almost always influences authorial speech (and sometimes powerfully so), sprinkling it with another's words (that is, the speech of a character perceived as the concealed speech of another) and in this way introducing it into stratification and speech diversity.<sup>96</sup>

As mentioned earlier, *Tourism* is perhaps autobiographical in places but there can be no disputing that Puppy is a fictional character in his own right. That is, he exists separate from the author. Dhaliwal invests in Puppy statements that he, the author, may not necessarily believe in or would ever utter himself. The language used in Puppy's statements therefore resonates with a myriad of meanings and syntactical relationships extraneous to Dhaliwal's own personality. An example of this might be one of Puppy's misogynistic statements referred to earlier; an attitude that the reader (correctly or incorrectly) might assume is not shared by Dhaliwal. Once Puppy mutters the words, 'Fucking tramp,' in response to his girlfriend's messy kitchen, he not only conveys Dhaliwal's intention to transmit that 'meaning' about his character, he mutates it. It becomes refracted because we perceive Puppy

---

<sup>96</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 315.

has his own motivations, his own history, his own outlook, and his own behaviour. We know Dhaliwal wrote it but Puppy *says* it.

In the same way, the characters of Omar and Sam in *Brother Nation* refract my intentions beyond my immediate control. I intend that their dialogue be misogynistic in places but after they have uttered the words, they take moral responsibility for them (and their resultant actions). They convey something of their own histories and their own present. To take a Bakhtinian reading of this is not only to defend myself as author against accusations of misogyny. It also reaffirms the process of seeing the novel as a vehicle with which to illustrate complex societal dynamics in a more effective manner than by using the blunt instrument of polemic:

This double-voicedness makes its presence felt by the novelist in the living heteroglossia of language, and in the multi-languedness surrounding and nourishing his own consciousness; it is not invented in superficial, isolated rhetorical polemics with another person.<sup>97</sup>

In this regard, Bakhtin promotes the prose fiction author as someone who is immersed in a resonating web of language and meaning, a web that nurtures and informs his or her mind to the extent that in the writing of a novel this very process is replicated in the characters that are created. He goes on to elaborate on the belief systems of characters, which when well-wrought, invests a novel with its thematic power:

---

<sup>97</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 326-327.

The speaking person in the novel is always, to one degree or another, an ideologue, and his words are always ideologemes. A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance. It is precisely as ideologemes that discourse becomes the object of representation in the novel, and it is for the same reason that novels are never in danger of becoming a mere aimless verbal play.<sup>98</sup>

It should be noted that *ideologue* does not have the political connotation of its modern English usage. Here it refers to anyone who possesses an idea system, anyone with his or her own beliefs.<sup>99</sup> It is the potency, sophistication and range of the individual character's *ideologemes* that gives a novel its power to convey its themes—its discursive power. Bakhtin's assertion that 'discourse becomes the object of representation in the novel,' can algebraically align itself with an equation about representations of the Other in fiction. That is, the choices an author makes in executing a representation of the Other by means of characters' spoken words, and the resultant occurrence of dialogism and heteroglossia in that novel, all combine to give the novel its discursive effect. In the novels discussed here, I would conclude that this process has occurred to give each to its own degree a discursive effect.

For example, in *The Infernal Optimist*, the combination of Zeki's comical, highly mannered and individualised speech, together with the 'straight' renderings of his fellow detainees' disturbing testimonies of their detention centre experience, result in a novel where a reasonably empathetic reader would find it difficult not to be moved by the characters' plight. This would occur on emotional and political

---

<sup>98</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 333.

<sup>99</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 429.

levels. This is despite Zeki's unlikely malapropisms discussed earlier, the distracting effect of which is ameliorated to some extent by the overwhelming nature of the sum characters' voices. The range of characters conveys a myriad of worlds, cultures, and *languages* too, though the book is written almost entirely in English. Zeki's *ideology* is composed of part Australian larrikin, part immigrant Other—his worldview is enunciated clearly and directly through his mouth, a refracted and even mutated missive from the author. The reader receives a similar dialogic experience with the other characters and this is what combines to give the novel its discursive meaning, over and above the structural framework of the plot contrivances.

In *Londonstani* the use of local street patois, the naturalistic rendering of immigrant English spoken by the boys' parents, the more received English spoken by the book's 'coconut' and white characters, together with the individualisation of each character within these categories, merge to result in an even more vivid expression of heteroglossia. The patois, in particular, enriches the book by emphasizing the separateness of the boys, even as it satirises them. However, they are still speaking a version of English as they assert their subcultural capital via their highly layered language. To Bakhtin this type of diversification of language is an essential component of the novel:

The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical

purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, it's own emphasis)—this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.<sup>100</sup>

Here Bakhtin provides a list of linguistic categories that constitute his idea of heteroglossia—categories that are discoverable in *Brother Nation*. For example, Sam, Omar and the boys have a distinct style of enunciation, based on my observations and research, that I believe to be indicative of the way young men from Greenacre and Punchbowl speak English. Theirs is the language of 'characteristic group behaviour' and to a certain extent, of their 'age group'. They do not use patois, as such, but as a group are individuated by their word choices, rhythms and cadence. Take, for example:

The boys chatted agreeably, the subject soon returning to the WRX.

'Don't get me wrong, the REXY is a good car,' said Sam. 'No joke, probably the best bang for your buck. But it seems like these days every cunt and his dog has got one, eh? Me, I'm aiming for a Maserati. Or even a Lamborghini. Probably a Diablo GT. V12. Bright yellow.'

'As if you've got the money for that,' protested Farid.

'One day, mate, one day, you just watch.'<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Bakhtin, 'Discourse' 262-263.

<sup>101</sup> Soman 29.

It might be argued that using patois in a commensurate style to that featured in *Londonstani* would have provided an even greater sense of group individuation for the boys. However, I could see no evidence that young men from Greenacre and Punchbowl use (or have used) this type of hybrid language in any fashion analogous to their London counterparts. Aside from patois, *Londonstani* also relies on using phonetically spelt English to emphasise the specific accented language diversity of its main characters. At least one critic has argued this is superfluous. In her *Guardian* review of the book Kamila Shamsie makes the point that some writers *selectively* use phonetically spelt speech as if it is only ethnic immigrant Others who have pronounced accents and not, for example, BBC newsreaders.<sup>102</sup> She goes on to assert that ‘different vernaculars are best conveyed by the choice of diction rather than spelling the words phonetically’.<sup>103</sup> Though I found the use of patois and phonetically spelt English very effective in *Londonstani*, I do agree with Shamsie’s point about diction and, together with simulations of rhythm and cadence, had already employed these devices in the language of my own novel’s characters.

There are other examples of Bakhtinian stratification of speech in *Brother Nation* such as the ‘language of authorities’ in the officious speech of the police, and the verbose, power-infused language of the judiciary; the language of ‘passing fashions’ occurs, for example, when Belle and Omar discuss the current capabilities of their mobile phones and their hopes for future models; Trigger’s violent, Hansonist political activism in Kariong is an example of ‘tendentious’ language; and the language of the ‘specific sociopolitical purposes of the day’ is that expressed by the politicians and media demagogues as they exploit the rapes for

---

<sup>102</sup> Kamila Shamsie, ‘How many a us bredren b here?’ rev. of *Londonstani*, by Gautam Malkani, *Guardian Unlimited* 6 May 2006, 1 April 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1768663.00.html>>.

<sup>103</sup> Shamsie.



their own ends. The overall effect of this heteroglossia, ideally, is to advance the discursive substance of *Brother Nation*—that is, the contradictory, conflicting, morally ambiguous and morally resolute contentions pertaining to this subject matter that, through the speech of the characters, are imbued with meanings beyond the author’s conscious capabilities.

In one more brief digression, it is worth mentioning that elements of the work of the Marxist literary theorist, Pierre Macherey, echo these facets of Bakhtinian dialogism and heteroglossia. In *A Theory of Literary Production*, Macherey states that ‘the work that the author wrote is not precisely the work that is explicated by the critic.’<sup>104</sup> This could be interpreted to suggest that a work takes on many possible meanings regardless of the author’s intentions. Though not referring specifically to the voices of characters, Macherey says:

The work does not contain a meaning which it conceals by giving it its achieved form. The necessity of the work is founded on the multiplicity of its meanings; to explain the work is to recognise and *differentiate* the principle of this diversity.<sup>105</sup>

Here, the ‘achieved form’ of the work connotes (on one level) the actual words written by the author, and, we could suppose, the actual words given by the author to be uttered by the characters. According to Macherey, these and other words in the text have invested in them, beyond the purpose of the author, a ‘multiplicity’ of interpretations as they are *read* and absorbed by the critic, who

---

<sup>104</sup> Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* trans. Geoffrey Wall (London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) 7.

<sup>105</sup> Macherey 78.

must then discriminate between the various possibilities of meanings. In this way, Macherey's work indicates that 'reading is a form of production; it produces meanings.'<sup>106</sup>

So, Macherey's ideas can be construed to parallel the discussed notions of Bakhtinian dialogism and heteroglossia. However, Macherey writes from the perspective of the critic who by *receiving* is trying to ascertain and differentiate various meanings, whereas Bakhtin's theories, in the way they are delivered, give the impression of resonating more from the position of the writer and the act of *writing* itself. This is one possible reason why I have found Bakhtin's work so useful in contextualising my own.

Returning from the digression: another topic that warrants discussion here is Bakhtin's idea of Carnival. According to Bakhtin the folk carnival is an area where the common person has the chance to invert relationships with authority, to subvert the norms of official culture. Bakhtin sees the principle of heteroglossia embodied in the carnival in the number of different voices and styles within it, and in its opposition to rigid, authoritarian functions of culture.<sup>107</sup> Carnival can therefore be expressed in the language and actions of characters by emphasis on traditional opposition to the establishment and the official; this can occur in the way that carnival allowed the 'suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions.'<sup>108</sup>

What is of specific interest to me here is how Othered characters embody the ideas implicit in Carnival to reject authority via their particular use of language:

---

<sup>106</sup> Neil Badmington, 'Pierre Macherey,' *The Literary Encyclopedia* 4 April 2003, 15 June 2007 <<http://www.litencyc.com>>.

<sup>107</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

<sup>108</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10.

The “open” ethos of carnival fosters a heterogeneous flux of discourse types: for example, of underworld slang, cant, professional jargon, popular slang, standardized English, obscenities, versions of lyric, and ethnic expletives.<sup>109</sup>

We have already seen instances of this in the novels discussed. In *The Infernal Optimist*, Zeki’s intentional and unintentional use of humour temporarily helps to subvert the power dynamics of his situation. An example is his use of wisecracking retorts to a corrupt guard named Clarence who is in league with the criminal detainee Hadeon.<sup>110</sup> Zeki knows he will probably not win the big battle against Clarence, and the Department for that matter, but his peculiar brand of Othered-Aussie larrikinism is a way of preserving self-respect in the interim.

Similarly, in *Tourism and Londonstani*, Puppy, Jas and the boys use their facility with language to empower themselves in the face of their perceived positions at the lower end of society’s hierarchy. Puppy does this via articulate, cynical observation such as the earlier mentioned example where he subverts the idea of oppression in a pub full of South Africans and Australians. Jas and his friends are carnivalesque in the way they perceive themselves as flouting the established order of youthful immigrant life in Hounslow—they have the respect, money, cars and girls and their knowledge of this is symbolised most potently through the self-conscious exclusivity of their patois. When Hardjit mocks the speaking voice of the longhaired, Indian Peugeot driver who has had the misfortune to stop alongside them at the traffic lights, we realise that it is the boys’ language,

---

<sup>109</sup> Weisenberger 25-26.

<sup>110</sup> Jaivin 77.

first and foremost, that differentiates them and elevates them above the 'coconuts'.<sup>111</sup>

In *Brother Nation*, a Bakhtinian idea of carnival is exemplified when Sam, Omar, Farid and Emad are walking along Victoria Street in Potts Point at the beginning of a Saturday night out:

'Hey, check out this fat cunt!' said Sam. On the other side of Victoria Street a policeman was getting out of a squad car. He crossed the road and walked in front of them, notebook in hand, towards a backpackers hostel. Sam and Farid smirked.

*Kiss imuk! I fucken fuck your mother, fucken pig!* said Farid in Lebanese, a smile on his face.

The policeman looked at them. 'G'day, boys,' he said after a moment, and proceeded through the doorway of the hostel.<sup>112</sup>

Farid's abuse of the policeman using Lebanese expletives is a vulgar and even obscene method of inverting authority by using the limited means he has at his disposal. In this way, the theoretical notion of carnival in the novel is aligned with the socio-economic studies of protest masculinity and subcultural capital examined earlier. It is that which *differentiates* Farid, expressed in his own particular use of language, which lifts him above his station.

Of the discussed texts featuring Othered characters, possibly only *Mahjar* does not contain an element of Bakhtinian carnival. Its stories feature often desperate characters who do not possess the necessary emotional or geographical

---

<sup>111</sup> Malkani 21.

<sup>112</sup> Soman 140-141.

stability to yet consider such a subversion of authority. In the story I have discussed in detail, 'The Sea', Abd al-Rahman is crushed by his loss, and his circumstances will not allow him to recover for some time.

He appears in another story, 'The Hafli', which is set chronologically after 'The Sea' though it appears before it in the novel. He attends a party in Australia with his lawyer and the reader assumes he has been granted a bridging visa or even permanent residence after having been picked up as a refugee following the tragic sinking of the boat. There are other Arabic speaking people at this party and their voices, together with music and poetry, fill the air with happiness. However, Abd al-Rahman understandably cannot relax. He asks himself, 'Why was there no word, like *orphan*, like *widower*, for what he was?'<sup>113</sup> Later in the evening, his legs weaken and he collapses but is caught by some youths before he can fall to the ground. Around him voices speaking in Arabic and English constitute a hubbub of activity as he is carried from the verandah back into the house. It is amidst this range of comforting voices, enveloped in this liberating heteroglossia, that he smiles and gives in to his circumstances, hoping 'they would never let him go.'<sup>114</sup>

Before concluding this exegesis, I would like to briefly discuss the concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia in relation to factors associated with my speaking position. I find that these Bakhtinian ideas resonate when I think of the relatively unfixed nature of my own cultural identity and my desire to exceed these indistinct boundaries in my creative work. To reiterate, when I am creating characters, this might be read as Bakhtinian heteroglossia in the way that:

---

<sup>113</sup> Sallis, *Mahjar* 57.

<sup>114</sup> Sallis, *Mahjar* 62.

Two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. [...] A potential dialogue is embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages.<sup>115</sup>

As I mentioned earlier in this exegesis, I have an Indian background. I was born in Singapore and immigrated to Australia when I was six. My parents, like many immigrants, were very keen to preserve traditional customs and habits while doing what they could to adapt to their new country. This exposure to a cultural ambivalence that I have carried from my youth has developed into a sense of having a speaking position that is multifaceted and, even multi-voiced. In many ways I feel completely ‘Australian’ but can see the peculiar oddity and incongruity of having two strong cultural perspectives. I have long abandoned the youthful device of adopting a certain cultural persona according to the needs of the immediate environment, such as behaving in more of an Indian way when amongst Indians and accordingly Aussie when with my Australian friends. However, I believe the same processes are at work though in a more subtle and internal way. The outward pretence that I used to employ has given way to an internal dialogue that operates on ever-changing volumes and with differing degrees of clarity—sometimes I hear it clearly, sometimes it barely registers. But I know the dialogue is perpetually running and that somehow I am always comparing and contrasting, enacting an

---

<sup>115</sup> Bakhtin, ‘Discourse’ 324-325.

interior process of translation between the different cultural identities that have always existed within me.

Penny van Toorn and David English sum up this kind of experience when they discuss the fluid nature of notions of contemporary social identity. They say:

The idea of fixed unitary speaking positions has been challenged on the grounds that it fails to accommodate the differences between individuals occupying any given 'position,' and because it underestimates the degree to which interests can be shared across category boundaries. [...] In cases where it is evident that social identity is shifting and plural rather than singular and essential, and that different hierarchisations of self are produced and articulated in different contexts, positionality has come to be conceived more in terms of movement rather than fixity.<sup>116</sup>

This suggests that when talking about a person's speaking position (for example mine as a writer) it is not necessarily assumed that an 'essentialist' identity of that person exists. Rather, this person, because of his or her individual experience may feel a diverse set of varied, possibly shared associations, which do or do not come into play depending on the context which they are in at a given time.<sup>117</sup> It is this particular notion of 'shared associations', an expression of Bakhtinian dialogism in its own way, that has made me feel warranted in writing about Othered

---

<sup>116</sup> Penny van Toorn and David English, eds. *Speaking Positions: Aboriginality, Gender and Ethnicity in Australian Cultural Studies* (Melbourne: Department of Humanities, Victoria University of Technology, 1995) 3.

<sup>117</sup> van Toorn, introduction.

characters, such as Sam, Omar and the boys, whose direct, exact cultural experiences are not necessarily my own.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> Wenche Ommundsen, 'Writing as Migration: Brian Castro, Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity,' cited in Van Toorn 163.



## **Conclusion**

In this exegesis, I have tried to elucidate the creation of *Brother Nation* on personal, cultural, political, literary and theoretical levels. As I worked through a range of texts from news media to non-fiction, from academic writing to comparable fiction, the mode in which I operated changed from a gaze inwards, to a gaze outwards, to a gaze that could scan both ways.

In Part One, I discussed my motivations for writing this novel and what it was about this particular news story that caused my initial interest to give way to fascination (bordering on obsession), culminating in the research and writing of this work. I know now that I was hooked as soon as a racial element entered the story of the rapes. I have considered whether my own status as an immigrant was crucial for this attraction to occur. I must conclude that the answer is in part yes, but that many more factors conspire to make the issues surrounding this case so worthy of analysis and comment. As I began to research in earnest, it soon became evident that many people who were not immigrants or Lebanese or Muslim were interested in this story, mainly because the racist implications contained in it were symptomatic of a wider occurrence here in Australian society and globally.

In Part Two, I discussed how I began to transform the idea of writing a PhD on the Sydney Gang Rapes from a few words scrawled on a small yellow post-it note into many thousands of words worth of research and prose. Of course, this process was not without its problems and there was a struggle in whether to take the position of moral relativism or moral superiority, which gave way to a mire of shady conflict. I found myself in a position of angst-ridden, almost existential crisis. Thankfully, I realised as a novelist I did not necessarily have to take a firm position

in the execution of my work. In hindsight I agree with Sophie Cunningham when she writes,

The Right wants control over the message art puts out there, and the Left wants everyone to be clear about their position. Neither side likes ambiguity, the territory the novel inhabits with such enthusiasm.<sup>119</sup>

With enthusiasm, I myself decided to inhabit that territory of ambiguity, of declining to commit to a position, and it gave me the freedom to write with gusto. What resulted was that the characters in their *own ways* adopted positions for me. Having achieved some ease with this moral dilemma, difficulties in the writing nevertheless remained. In this section I also detailed my trepidation and even horror at the mental and emotional places I had to visit in rendering certain graphic scenes that I had researched onto the page.

In Part Three, I took the discussion towards fiction relevant to *Brother Nation*, which by then had evolved from a non-fiction novel to a *roman à clef*. I then moved towards an examination of fiction that contained more similarities in terms of Othered characters and which would provide a more interesting and fruitful degree of contextualisation than by simply sharing a common generic narrative mode. It was practical to compare the differences in the way, for example, Sallis and Jaivin represent their Othered Arabic characters with such different methods and style—almost a situation of pathos versus bathos, though this is probably unfair to Jaivin. In discussing the novels of Dhaliwal and Malkani the contrasts in

---

<sup>119</sup> Sophie Cunningham, 'Fiction vs Non-fiction,' *Age* 13 February 2003, 22 March 2007 <[http://www.sophiecunningham.com/features/fiction\\_vs\\_nonf/](http://www.sophiecunningham.com/features/fiction_vs_nonf/)>.

character were again notable, one author employing a lucid though unreliable cynic and the other giving voice to a colourful and vernacular mob of miscreants. It is significant that because of recent socio-political events in Australia both Sallis and Jaivin represent demonised Arab Others whereas Dhaliwal and Malkani represent characters who have South Asian immigrant background (notwithstanding *Londonstani's* surprise ending), though from differing perspectives of class and education. In these British novels, the characters feel a sense of difference and oppression in relation to mainstream society but they do not necessarily feel the pressure of being a 'folk devil', the context that many of the discussed Australian novels' characters are seen in.

In Part Four, the discussion turned towards the relationship between characterisation and the discursive elements of the novels being discussed, via a framework of Bakhtinian theory. I had already signalled that Bakhtin had provided some initial grounding in helping me to come to terms with the moral complexities contained in a novel. In elaborating on this it became clear that the meaning in the discussed novels is transmitted not so much by what the author intends but in the voices of the characters as individuals and in the overall range of their voices. The author's intention is refracted by the character into double meanings (dialogism) and the chorus of diverse characters' voices and their attendant refractions (heteroglossia) result in a series of 'counterpositionings' in the text—embracing the very ambiguities that I had sought refuge for near the beginning of this creative process.

In this section I also made two slight digressions, one involving the dialogic nature of the media and the possibility of added contextualisation using postcolonial theories; and the second, a brief foray into the work of Pierre Macherey and his

ideas on the multiplicity of meanings in texts, which side with much of the discussion on dialogism and heteroglossia.

I then returned to Bakhtin and discussed how his theory of carnival was useful in analysing how characters invert their power relations, in the work of Jaivin, Dhaliwal and Malkani, as well as in my own. It was notable that this occurrence did not seem apparent in the work of Sallis, though *Mahjar* contains an abundant sense of heteroglossia.

Finally, Bakhtinian theories were also valuable in analysing my own speaking position in relation to *Brother Nation*. It is possible that this is a relatively moot point in terms of debate about Australian fiction these days, unless one happens to be writing about Indigenous characters. However, I thought it was still worth addressing in its relation to Bakhtinian theory and because I *do* consider myself an Other in this society, regardless of my accent, my appreciation of cricket and football, or shared values that are supposedly unique to Australians such as mateship and the fair go.

I have tried to demonstrate the knowledge that, from the outset, even when it was an inchoate idea, this creative work would be a feat of accommodation—the accommodation of conflict, tension and paradox, as well as Othered people through the voices of Othered characters. Throughout this exegesis, I have tried to illustrate the integration of personal fascinations and diverse veins of narrative research, in order to coalesce conflicting ideas and information into an aesthetic whole—a novel. As a result, I would hope that this exegesis, though necessarily selective in its considerations,<sup>120</sup> is in itself a creative whole—not only a by-product of my novel, a

---

<sup>120</sup> Brady.

mere map of a creative journey from autopoiesis to allopoiesis—but at its end a destination in its own right.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London, New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Bakhtin, M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. trs. and ed. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Bakhtin, M. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Banville, John. *The Untouchable*. London: Picador, 1998.
- Brownmiller, S. *Against our will: men, women and rape*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.
- Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. London: Penguin, 1966.
- Collins, Jock, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, and Paul Tabar. *Kebabs, Cops, Kids and Crime: Youth Ethnicity and Crime in Sydney*. Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000.
- Connell, RW. *Masculinities*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995.
- DeLillo, D. *Libra*. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Dhaliwal, Nirpal Singh. *Tourism*. London: Vintage, 2006.
- Feild, H. S. and L. B. Bienen. *Jurors and rape: a study in psychology and law*. Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980.
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. New York: Harcourt, 1985.
- Grenville, Kate. *Searching for the Secret River*. Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2006.
- Groth, A.N. and H.J. Birnbaum. *Men who rape: the psychology of the offender*. New York: Plenum Press, 1979.
- Jain, Linda. *The Infernal Optimist*. Sydney: Fourth Estate, 2006.
- Jervis, J. *Transgressing the modern: explorations in the western experience of otherness*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Khoury, Danny. *Tabouli Or Not Tabouli: what it means to be a Lebanese Wog in Sydney*. Sydney: Danny Khoury, 2004.
- Levine, S. and J. Koenig. *Why men rape: interviews with convicted rapists*. London: Star, 1983.
- Lygo, I. *News Overboard: The Tabloid Media, Race Politics and Islam*. Melbourne: Southerly Change Publications, 2004.

- Macherey, Pierre. *A Theory of Literary Production*. trans. Geoffrey Wall. London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Malkani, Gautam. *Londonstani*. London: Fourth Estate, 2006.
- Manning, Peter. *'Dog whistle politics' and Journalism: Reporting Arab and Muslim People in Sydney Newspapers 2000-2002*. Sydney: Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, University of Technology Sydney, 2004.
- Manning, Peter. *Us and Them: A Journalist's Investigation of Media, Muslims and the Middle East*. Sydney: Random House Australia, 2006.
- Marr, David and Marian Wilkinson. *Dark Victory*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003.
- Poynting, Scott, Greg Noble, Paul Tabar. 'Protest masculinity and Lebanese youth in western Sydney: an ethnographic study.' *Male Trouble: Looking At Australian Masculinities*. Ed. Stephen Tomsen and Mike Donadson. Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2003.
- Poynting, Scott, Greg Noble, Paul Tabar, and Jock Collins. *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other*. Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology, 2004.
- Rivkin, J. and Ryan, M. eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001.
- Sallis, Eva. *Mahjar*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003.
- Sheehan, Paul. *Girls Like You: Four Young Girls, Six Brothers and a Cultural Timebomb*. Sydney: Macmillan, 2006.
- Thornton, S. *Club Cultures*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
- van de Zandt, Pia. *Women and Violence: What you can do if you experience sexual assault*. Sydney: Women's Legal Resources Centre, Government of New South Wales, 2002.
- van Toorn, Penny and David English. eds. *Speaking Positions: Aboriginality, Gender and Ethnicity in Australian Cultural Studies*. Melbourne: Department of Humanities, Victoria University of Technology, 1995.
- Vice, Sue. *Introducing Bakhtin*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.
- Weisenberger, S. *Fables of Subversion: Satire and the American Novel 1930-1980*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

**Newspaper, Magazine, Journal, Online articles and Media releases (selected)**

- 'A season of terror: rape in the suburbs.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002. April 7 2003 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326579.html>>.
- Ackland, R. 'New rape trial is on a slim premise.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 5 March 2004. April 15 2004. <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/04/1078378906956.html>>.
- Albrechtsen, J. 'Talking race not racism.' *Australian* 17 July 2002. 18 July 2002 <<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,4718201-21207,00.html>>.

- Bagnall, D. 'The other Australians.' *Bulletin* 18 July 2001. 15 July 2004  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/site/articleIDs/C07A23ABED89FE36CA256A880002AE5D>>.
- Bagnall, D. 'Call of Islam.' *Bulletin* 30 October 2002. 15 July 2004  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/site/articleIDs/407A813C857DDFFFCFA256C55002EE913>>.
- Bagnall, D. 'Wild Boys.' *Bulletin* 20 March 2002. 15 July 2004  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/site/articleIDs/7C3F31E2AE206968CA256AF40018B022>>.
- Baird, Barbara. 'Law, Morality and Forgetting: Whiteness in three stories of gang rape in Australia.' Unpublished paper. 2007.
- Brady, Tess. 'A Question of Genre: de-mystifying the exegesis,' *TEXT* Vol 4 No 1. April 2000. 23 March 2003 <[www.gu.edu.au/text/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm](http://www.gu.edu.au/text/school/art/text/april00/brady.htm)>.
- Braithwaite, David and Ben Cubby. 'Gang rape filmed on mobile phone.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 5 April 2007. 5 April 2007  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2007/04/04/1175366325678.html>>.
- Byatt, AS. 'Oh lord, where are you?'" rev. of *Aiding and Abetting*, by Muriel Spark, *New Statesman* 11 September 2000. 15 May 2007  
<<http://www.newstatesman.com/200009110040>>.
- Chulov, Martin and Iain Payten. 'Judge reveals face of gang-rape evil.' *Australian* 7 September 2002. 4.
- Crichton, Sarah. 'Puny brother a cowardly bully.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 October 2002. 5 June 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/10/10/1034222543718.html>>.
- Crichton, Sarah. 'Shattered fiancée stands by her 55-year man.' *Sydney Morning Herald* September 14 2002. 10 May 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608327001.html>>.
- Crichton, Sarah and Andrew Stevenson. 'Crime and prejudice.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002. 10 May 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326534.html>>.
- Crichton, Sarah and Andrew Stevenson. 'Rapist nameless no longer.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 September 2002. 10 May 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/06/1031115937330.html>>.
- Cunningham, Sophie. 'Fiction vs Non-fiction.' *Age* 13 February 2003. 22 March 2007  
<[http://www.sophiecunningham.com/features/fiction\\_vs\\_nonf/](http://www.sophiecunningham.com/features/fiction_vs_nonf/)>.
- Davies, Julie-Ann and Patrick Carlyon. 'The Shame Game.' *Bulletin* 24 March 2004. 15 July 2004  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/site/articleIDs/706DA7E06F602E15CA256E5E0076DD88>>.
- Davies, Mary D. 'The Five-Star Asylum Journo Comes Around.' *ProjectSafeCom Inc.* 25 November 2003. 10 July 2004 <<http://www.safecom.org.au/daily-telegraph.htm>>.



- Devine, Miranda. 'A crime fighter to woo the west.' *Sun-Herald* 19 September 2004. 20 February 2005  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/09/18/1095394059223.html?from=storylhs&oneclick=true>>.
- Devine, Miranda. 'Racist rapes: Finally the truth comes out.' *Sun-Herald* 14 July 2002. 10 May 2003  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/07/13/1026185124700.html?oneclick=true>>.
- Doherty, L and Kelly Burke. 'School that drove out punchbag image.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 October 2003. 1 April 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/02/1064988346846.html?from=storyrhs&oneclick=true>>.
- Eyre, Hermione. 'Nirpal Singh Dhaliwal: Me & Missus Jones.' *Independent* 2 April 2006. 19 May 2007 <<http://news.independent.co.uk/people/profiles/article355103.ece>>.
- Fickling, David. 'Racially motivated crime and punishment.' *Guardian Unlimited* 23 September 2002. 12 March 2007  
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/australia/story/0,12070,797464,00.html>>.
- Fray, P. 'The Outsiders.' *Age* 19 April 2004. 15 June 2004  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/04/18/1082226631753.html>>.
- 'Gang rapist's father denied prison visits.' *Age* 23 September 2002. April 7 2003  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/09/22/1032055035092.html>>.
- Gibbs, Stephen. 'Fear, loathing and politics.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 July 2003. 5 May 2004 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/25/1059084205347.html>>.
- Gibbs, Stephen. 'Skaf stories part of a freak show: Libs.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 July 2003. 5 May 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/25/1059084204009.html?oneclick=true>>.
- Glendinning, L. (2003) 'Brotherhood.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 November 2003, Insight sec.14.
- Glendinning, L. 'Doctors' sons who became rapists.' *Sydney Morning Herald* November 28 2003. 10 May 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/11/27/1069825922999.html?from=storyrhs>>.
- Jacobsen, Geesche. 'Brothers' violent gang rapes revealed.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 2005. 1 May 2007 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/brothers-gang-rape-rampage-revealed/2005/07/21/1121539074631.html>>.
- Lawrence, Kara. 'Teen films gang rape ordeal.' *Daily Telegraph* 4 April 2007. 4 April 2007  
<<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,21503440-5001021,00.html>>.
- Mallon, Thomas. 'Golden Boy: The Life and Letters of Truman Capote.' *New Yorker* 13 September 2004. 10 December 2004  
<[http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/?040913crbo\\_books](http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/?040913crbo_books)>.

- McKew, M. 'McKew: Ien Ang.' *Bulletin* 13 March 2002. July 18 2004  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/site/articleIDs/149871C71A65A4D7CA256B74007B4963>>.
- McNamara, Denise. 'Gang rapist gets 32 years.' *Age* 11 October 2002. 10 December 2003  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/10/10/1034222543516.html>>.
- Miletic, Daniella and AAP. 'Rape squad rounds up DVD gang.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 October 2006. 26 October 2006  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2006/10/25/1161699377947.html?from=top5>>.
- 'Miscarriage of justice in rape case; lawyer.' *Age* 31 March 2004. 15 April 2004  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/03/31/1080544536663.html?from=storyrhs>>.
- Mitchell, A. 'Rape leader's mum banned from prison.' *Sun-Herald* 15 September 2002. 10 December 2002  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/14/1031608343098.html>>.
- New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. 'Media Release: The facts on sexual assault in Bankstown.' 22 August 2001. 15 April 2005  
<[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll\\_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/mr\\_bcsr\\_2.pdf/\\$file/mr\\_bcsr\\_2.pdf](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/bocsar/ll_bocsar.nsf/vwFiles/mr_bcsr_2.pdf/$file/mr_bcsr_2.pdf)>.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 'Body of the Nation: Why women were mutilated in Gujarat.' *Boston Review* 29 July 2004. 30 July 2004 <<http://bostonreview.net/BR29.3/contents.html>>.
- Pelly, Michael. 'Brothers face tough task in final appeal.' *Sydney Morning Herald* January 8 2005. 17 June 2004  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2005/01/07/1104832304177.html?oneclick=true>>.
- Pelly, Michael. 'Tears as rape retrial ordered.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 5 March 2004. 11 April 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/04/1078378912404.html?from=storyrhs>>.
- Perera, Suwendrini. 'A Line in the Sea.' *Australian Humanities Review*. Issue 27. September-December 2002. 15 May 2007  
<<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-September-2002/perera.html>>.
- Phillips, Richard. 'Australia: 20-year-old jailed for 55 years on gang rape charges.' *World Socialist Web Site* 6 September 2002. 14 June 2004  
<[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/sep2002/rape-s06\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/sep2002/rape-s06_prn.shtml)>.
- Phillips, Richard. 'Australia: Families face collective punishment after gang rape sentences.' *World Socialist Web Site* 3 October 2002. 14 June 2004  
<[http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/skaf-o03\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/skaf-o03_prn.shtml)>.
- Raban, Jonathan. 'Truly, madly, devout.' *Guardian Unlimited* 2 March 2002. 3 April 2004  
<[http://www.guardian.co.uk/saturday\\_review/story/0,,660284,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/saturday_review/story/0,,660284,00.html)>.
- Sciolino, E. (2003) 'France takes on plague of sexual "rite".' *New York Times* 23 October 2003. 10 May 2004  
<<http://www.iht.com/cgibin/generic.cgi?template=articleprint.tmplh&ArticleId=114798>>.

- Serisier, Tanya. 'Racism and the Rights of Raped Women: The Challenge of the Bankstown Gang Rapes for Feminism.' Forthcoming. *Australian Feminist Studies*.
- Shand, Adam. 'The Outsiders.' *Bulletin* 7 November 2006. 10 November 2006  
<<http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=159781>>.
- Shamsie, Kamila. 'How many a us bredren b here?' rev. of *Londonstani* by Gautam Malkani. *Guardian Unlimited* 6 May 2006. 1 April 2007  
<<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1768663,00.html>>.
- Shatz, Adam. 'In Search of Hezbollah.' *New York Review of Books* 29 April 2004. 9 July 2004 <[http://www.nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article\\_id=17060](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article_id=17060)>.
- Sheehan, Paul. 'Cold-blooded law heats up cultural war.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 February 2005. 7 February 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Paul-Sheehan/Coldblooded-law-heats-up-cultural-war/2005/02/06/1107625061470.html>>.
- 'Skaf's busy 12 months.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 July 2003. 30 July 2003  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/25/1059084205203.html>>.
- 'Skaf, Ghanem and Hajeid judgment.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 April 2004. 15 April 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/04/07/1081222511566.html>>.
- Steketee, Mike. 'Let's not go down that road.' *Australian*. 16 September 2006. 4 May 2007  
<<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20418578-28737,00.html>>.
- Stephen, Sarah. 'The Myth of Ethnic Crime.' *Green Left Weekly* 4 February 2004. 19 July 2004 <<http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2004/569/569p10.htm>>.
- Stevenson, Andrew. 'What was different then?' *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002. 20 July 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326537.html>>.
- Tadros, Edmund. 'Lock up your sons, Lebanese mothers told.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 December 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/lock-up-your-sons-lebanese-mothers-told/2005/12/13/1134236032237.html>>.
- 'Three men acquitted of teen's rape.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 15 October 2005. 10 November 2005 <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/three-men-acquitted-of-teens-rape/2005/10/13/1128796638657.html>>.
- Topsfield, J. 'Love affair leads to a violent feud.' *Age* 29 May 2004. 29 May 2004  
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/05/28/1085641709091.html?from=storyrhs>>.
- Wallace, Natasha. 'Gang rapists told age, culture no defence.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 March 2004. 1 April 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/03/01/1078117369680.html?from=top5&oneclick=true>>.
- Walker, Frank. 'Islamic pendant 'taken off for rape.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 October 2002. 19 June 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/10/12/1034222635735.html>>.

- Walker, Frank and Eamonn Duff. 'Three men, a girl, a rape allegation while Mum and Dad were home.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 9 October 2005. 10 November 2005.  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/three-men-a-girl-a-rape-allegation/2005/10/08/1128563037813.html>>.
- Weidler, Danny. 'Team is confident that no charges will be laid.' *Sun-Herald* 29 February 2004. 10 April 2004  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/02/28/1077677016584.html>>.
- 'What they got.' *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 September 2002. 7 April 2003  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/09/13/1031608326582.html>>.
- Wilson, Caroline. 'AFL's tough stand on sexual assault.' *Age* 9 November 2005. 25 November 2005 <<http://www.theage.com.au/realfooty/news/afl/afls-tough-stand-on-sex-assault/2005/11/08/1131407639696.html>>.
- Woodhead, Cameron. 'The Infernal Optimist.' rev. of *The Infernal Optimist*, by Linda Jaivin. *Age* 6 May 2006. 17 May 2007 <<http://www.theage.com.au/news/book-reviews/the-infernal-optimist/2006/05/05/1146335910962.html?page=fullpage>>.
- Woods, Claire. 'Making strange with bold moves - what next for student, supervisor and examiner? Or, No Blueprint: Assessing the (creative) exegesis.' *TEXT* Vol 11 No 1. April 2007. 13 May 2007  
<<http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/april07/woods.htm>>.

### **Film, Television and Radio Programs**

- '5 Star Beat Up.' *Media Watch*. ABC TV, Sydney. 17 February 2003. Transcript. 5 June 2004 <<http://abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s785747.htm>>.
- 'After the Riots.' *Sixty Minutes*. Channel Nine, Sydney. 19 February 2006.
- 'Criminal Gangs or Islamic Gangs?' *Media Watch*. ABC TV, Sydney. 9 September 2002. Transcript. 30 May 2004  
<[http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902\\_s2.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902_s2.htm)>.
- 'Drowning in Hate.' *Media Watch*. ABC TV, Sydney. 9 September 2002. Transcript. 18 June 2004 <[http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902\\_s4.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902_s4.htm)>.
- 'The football sex scandal that won't go away.' *Stateline South Australia*. ABC TV, Adelaide. 19 March 2004.
- 'For Being Lebanese.' *Four Corners*. ABC TV, Sydney. 16 September 2002. Transcript. 13 August 2004  
<[http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/archives/2002b\\_Monday16September2002.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/archives/2002b_Monday16September2002.htm)>.
- 'Islamic cleric won't be investigated: AFP.' *The 7.30 Report*. ABC TV, Sydney. 8 March 2004. Transcript. 11 August 2004  
<<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2004/s1061556.htm>>.
- 'Jammin' in the Middle E.' *Stateline New South Wales*. ABC TV, Sydney. 10 February 2006. Transcript. 3 May 2006  
<<http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/nsw/content/2006/s1567785.htm>>.

- 'Janet's French Cut.' *Media Watch*. ABC TV, Sydney. 16 September 2002. Transcript. 18 June 2004 <[http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/160902\\_s5.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/160902_s5.htm)>.
- 'Janet Albrechtsen's View.' *Media Watch*. ABC TV, Sydney. 9 September 2002. Transcript. 18 June 2004 <[http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902\\_s3.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/090902_s3.htm)>.
- 'Legal reforms proposed to enable retrial of Skaf brothers.' *The World Today*. ABC Radio, Sydney. 4 February 2005. Transcript. 7 February 2005 <<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1296084.htm>>.
- 'Moves to change evidence laws after Skaf brothers evade retrial.' *AM*. ABC Radio, Sydney. 4 February 2005. Transcript. 10 February 2005 <<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1295665.htm>>.
- 'NSW Premier defends ethnic descriptions.' *PM*. ABC Radio, Sydney. 21 August 2001. Transcript. 7 July 2004 <<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/stories/s350207.htm>>.
- 'NSW Premier proposes tougher rape laws.' *The World Today*. ABC Radio, Sydney. 27 August 2001. Transcript. July 19 2004 <<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/stories/s353077.htm>>.
- 'Police powers will restore Sydney order: Maroney.' *The 7.30 Report*. ABC TV, Sydney. 13 December 2005. Transcript. 15 December 2005. <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2005/s1530304.htm>>.
- 'Race riots erupt in Sydney.' *The 7.30 Report*. ABC TV, Sydney. 12 December 2005. Transcript. 14 December 2005 <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2005/s1529509.htm>>.
- 'Re-Trial Row.' *Stateline New South Wales*. ABC TV, Sydney. 14 May 2004. Transcript. 10 June 2004 <<http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/nsw/content/2003/s1108937.htm>>.
- 'Riot and Revenge.' *Four Corners*. ABC TV, Sydney. 13 March 2006.
- 'Sydney riots "disgusting cowardly" says Iemma.' *The 7.30 Report*. ABC TV, Sydney. 12 December 2005. Transcript. 14 December 2005 <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2005/s1529511.htm>>.
- The Castle*. dir. Rob Sitch, perf. Michael Caton, Anne Tenney, Stephen Curry, Tiriel Mora and Bud Tingwell, Village Roadshow, 1998.

### **Court Documents, Briefing Paper**

- Johns, Rowena, Gareth Griffith and Rachel Simpson. 'Sentencing "Gang Rapists": The Crimes Amendment (Aggravated Sexual Assault in Company) Bill 2001.' Briefing Paper. Parliament of New South Wales. December 2001. Transcript. 15 March 2005 <<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/0/F95E42F6AD029689CA256ECF000867EB>>.
- Regina v. Bilal Skaf, Regina v. Mohammed Skaf. Judgement. NSWCCA 37, Sydney. New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal. 2004.

Regina v Bilal Skaf; Regina v Mohammed Skaf. Judgement. NSWSC 394, Sydney. New South Wales Supreme Court. 2006.

Regina v H. Judgement. NSWCCA 282, Sydney. New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal. 2005.

Regina v MAK; Regina v MSK. Judgement. NSWCCA 98, Sydney. New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal. 2005.

Regina v Mahmoud Chami, Mohammed Skaf, Bilal Skaf, and MG. Judgement. NSWCCA 36, Sydney. New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal. 2004.

### Websites and Weblogs

'Adib Marabani.' *Canterbury's People*. 1 November 2003. Migration Heritage Centre NSW. 15 May 2004  
<<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/e107/content.php?article.70>>.

Burnside, Julian. 'Refugees: The Tampa Case.' *Julian Burnside Weblog*. 15 May 2007  
<[http://www.users.bigpond.com/burnside/tampa.htm - \\_ftnref2](http://www.users.bigpond.com/burnside/tampa.htm - _ftnref2)>.

Ghazi, Ayman. Home page. 'Lebanon's Culture: Society.' April 30 1997. 4 April 2004  
<<http://www.ghazi.de/society.html>>.

Hari, Johann. Home page. 'Outcast heroes: the story of gay Muslims.' 20 May 2004. June 18 2004 <<http://www.johannhari.com/archive/article.php?id=395>>.

'Khalid Rashid Sager.' *Canterbury's People*. 1 November 2003. Migration Heritage Centre New South Wales. 15 May 2004  
<<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/e107/content.php?article.73>>.

Medlej, Joumana. Home page. 'Old Mercedes Retire in Beirut.' 16 August 2004  
<<http://www.cedarseed.com/water/mercedes.html>>.

Seelhoff, Cheryl Lindsay. 'Up to 14 High School Boys Rape, Torture Developmentally Disabled Girl, Then Make and Sell DVD of the Rapes.' *The Women's Space/The Margins*. 5 November 2006 <<http://womensspace.wordpress.com/2006/10/28/up-to-14-high-school-boys-rape-torture-developmentally-disabled-girl-then-make-and-sell-dvd-of-the-rapes/>>.

'Souad Daizli.' *Canterbury's People*. 1 November 2003. Migration Heritage Centre New South Wales. 15 May 2004  
<<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/e107/content.php?article.60>>.

### Theses

Field, J. 'The 'accidental' rapist: mistake as to consent, subjectivity and the reasons for punishment in the Australian criminal law.' Diss. (LLB (Hons)) University of Adelaide, 2000.

Goodwin, S. L. 'The relationship between moral development and attitudes toward rape in criminal and non-criminal populations.' Diss (BA (Hons)) University of Adelaide, 1994.

**Seminar, Personal Interviews**

Bakaar, Mayada. South Australian Muslim Women's Association. Personal interview. 17 February 2003.

Ibrahim, Nadia and Afdal. Personal interview. 28 February 2003 and 6 March 2003.

Sallis, Eva. 'Writers and Their Worlds' Seminar. Flinders University of South Australia. Adelaide. 15 May 2003.

Toutounji, Ahmed. Personal interview. 15 April 2004 and 7 October 2004.

Toutounji, Ali. Personal interview. 7 October 2004.

**Personal Communication**

Cilauro, Santo. Email. 18 April 2007.