

School of Communication and Cultural Studies

For the Term of Its National Life:

The Australian (Imagi)Nation

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Synopsis of thesis

This thesis is divided into two sections; a theoretical section which looks at the analytic construction of collective identities, and a section which applies the theory to two Australian novels. The first four chapters use the theories of Roy Wagner, Benedict Anderson, Jacques Lacan and Homi Bhabha to look at the often unconscious construction of culture and nation, and at the processes of hybridity to which those constructions are continually subject.

The next three chapters examine Glenda Adams's Games of the Strong and Nicholas Hasluck's The Bellarmine Jug showing how an unconscious development of Australian themes runs through the novels, regardless of a lack of Australian characters and setting. The novels show the complex, unique and frequently misunderstood position Australia holds between the cultures, nations and civilisations of the East and the West.

The conclusion draws together the principal arguments of the thesis and highlights some concerns which they imply for Australia and its national imagination.

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Introduction

An immediate concern facing Australia is how to build a positive understanding with its Asian neighbours. The challenge is for Australia to improve its relationship with Asia well beyond the areas of trade and economic interest. The need for meaningful dialogue has been highlighted through recent human rights issues in Indonesia and China, and through the refugee problems of Vietnam and Cambodia. Not only must Australia learn to communicate with its neighbours as nation to nation, but it must learn to communicate internally with those migrants, political refugees and boat people who have come from Asian countries and who are now resident in Australia. In the past, white Australia has had an isolationist mentality. Alan Hodge, in Australian Identity in a Multicultural Society, asserts that Australian nationalism, as portrayed in Russel Ward's The Australian Legend,

created in the national psyche an image of Australia as a lifeboat: afloat in troubled seas, taking on board those who were prepared to shed their old ways and be like the rest of us. Those who would not change were marginalised and excluded. . . . There has thus been historically a strong conformist element in our attitudes to difference, which continued long after our imagined homogeneity had clearly ended. (7-8)

Australia, as an "isolated" European-style nation on the margins of Asia, faces difficulties and possibilities, in cross-cultural and international relationships, which are possibly unique in the world. Barry Hill, in "Travelling Towards the Other," sums up the situation inherent in cross-cultural dialogue when he poetically states:

Sharing. Silences. Allegories. Knowledge is like love: its exchange is no

simple matter, and on so many borders distinctions blur. Constantly you find yourself neither here, nor there, but somewhere in-between. (13)

The concerns of this thesis are how national identities are constructed and how communication can best take place between national identities from seemingly disparate cultural backgrounds. In order to examine the "in-between" this thesis will develop its argument through an examination of a number of theoretical concepts.

The first concept to be considered will be the construction of culture. Roy Wagner's work, The Invention of Culture, provides a basis for an analysis of the way the culture of the West constructs itself through inventing itself. The West's inventing of itself becomes an unconscious project through a process of continual re-invention. It is through this unconscious process that the West then constructs its ideas of other cultures, inventing them in comparison with itself.

Wagner's work explores the construction of Western and Tribal culture. Wagner's concept of the Tribal is that of small, culturally independent groups, such as the Daribi whom he studied in Papua New Guinea. Wagner links these small, diverse groups into a collective Tribal culture, which, unlike the West, requires all their members participate in ceremonies which function performatively in aiding them to continually reconstruct their culture. Both Tribal and Western cultures, argues Wagner, are sophisticated, invented constructs, so neither of them is progressively, intellectually or historically better than the other. Therefore, in this thesis "tribal" will be capitalised in the same manner as "Western" to give equal recognition to the status and validity of the invention of both cultural constructs. Nevertheless, the concepts of Tribal and Western culture are deployed in a dichotomous relationship, and it must be acknowledged that this is highly problematic. Such a strategy, however, enables the exploration and exposure of Western culture's construction of itself, and will not be

used as a means for judging Tribal cultures. The dichotomy of Tribal and Western culture, then, is a tool to emphasise and dissect the process of the West's invention of itself, and, therefore, it is a device to read better the unconscious processes at work within the hegemonic discourses of the West in the construction of itself and others.

The majority of the people in the nations to Australia's north are not Tribal, nor Western, but lay claim to ancient civilisations and histories which have Eastern roots. Like Tribal culture, the East has a far greater emphasis than the West on performative cultural ceremonies. Again, the dichotomy of the East and the West can also be problematic. Edward Said, in his work on Orientalism, exposes the hegemonic project of the West in its construction of the Orient, or the East. While acknowledging the importance of Said's work, this thesis seeks to examine the often unconscious inconsistencies in the West's construction of itself, rather than to explore the West's construction of the East. In the context of this thesis the East will mainly stand for a generalisation of the thoughts, cultures and politics of South-East Asia, with an emphasis at times upon Indonesia. However, in reference to The Bellarmine Jug, the East will sometimes refer to the communist bloc. The West will mainly stand for Western European thoughts, cultures and politics, and will be used, at times, as a term to typify Australia's cultural stance. All collective constructs, whether they relate to nations, regions, cultures or civilisations, can be troublesome, but they also provide the basis for useful generalisations about different collective imaginations.

The thesis then will examine the cultural construct of national identity, or the national imagination. In this process the work of Benedict Anderson, in Imagined Communities, will form the basis of examining the way Western culture has invented the modern construct of the nation, and how this has been re-invented into many different contexts, forms and imaginations. It needs to be stressed that the concept of

the nation which Benedict Anderson describes is a modern story covering the last two hundred and fifty years, and as such it is only one of many different narrations of the process of nation-building. Anderson's narration views the concepts of nation and nationalism as invented creations in much the same way as Wagner views the concept of culture as an invented product. Furthermore, Anderson, in the 1991 edition of his work, examines in considerable detail the process of nation-building in South-East Asia, the region of Australia's northern neighbours.

The theoretical stage which follows looks at Jacques Lacan's theory on the construction of identity. While Lacan himself wrote mostly about the development of the individual's identity, this thesis will use Juliet Flower MacCannell's work, Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious, to relate what Lacan has written about the individual to culture. Although sexuality and the pleasure principle are fundamental components in Lacanian theory, and although the interface between race and sex is significant in terms of nation-building, it is outside the scope of this thesis to look at the construction of national identity in the light of these factors. The main Lacanian concepts employed in this thesis are those of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, the Real and the Other, as well as the concepts of the objet petit a and Desire. It should be noted that Lacan's Imaginary, which is developed from his concept of the mirror stage, is different from the "imagination" Anderson refers to in relation to collective, fictitious, national identities. Moreover, Lacan's objet petit a is a surplus that exposes identity as an invented construct which gives an individual a sense of wholeness and completeness. Thus the objet petit a is a useful tool that can be adapted from Lacan to explore the processes at work in the building of a national identity, which Anderson refers to as an imagined community. Lacan's theory shows not only how identities are invented, but why their fictitiousness takes on an aura of stable truth. Lacan also helps to explain

why differing identities are often threatened, and, therefore, aggressive towards one another.

Following the consideration of the construction of a culture, this thesis explores the process of hybridity. In this regard Homi Bhabha's work provides a theoretical framework for the process of interaction between differing cultural and national identities. Of particular concern is an appreciation of those elements in the construction of identity which will form the best avenue for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. The acceptance of hybridity in cross-cultural relations should lead to an informed choice on the process of interaction rather than to head-strong confrontation with or blatant denial of the processes of change.

A danger in conflating the terms of different theorists is acknowledged, and for this reason the terms of Wagner, Lacan and Bhabha are synthesised at a macro rather than a micro level. The aim is to generalise, constructing a helpful model for examining cross-cultural relations. This thesis will establish some commonality between the different concepts of the theorists in order to explore various representations of possible ways for Australia to examine itself and its association with its near neighbours.

The penultimate concern of this thesis is the examination of two texts written by Australian authors, Games of the Strong by Glenda Adams, and The Bellarmine Jug by Nicholas Hasluck. The value of analysing literary texts in the light of cultural and national constructions of identity is elaborated on by Annette Hamilton, in "Fear and Desire." She states that through post-structuralism

a new 'sociology of knowledge' . . . has brought attention to bear on the products of human culture, rather than on the behaviour or conscious beliefs of humans themselves. Thus instead of interrogating individuals regarding their attitudes to something, this approach takes cultural

products (novels, films, poems, advertisements, speeches, newspaper reports) and interrogates these. This interrogation proceeds on the assumption that systematised cultural meanings are embedded in such 'texts,' whether or not the individuals using and producing them know it.

(15)

At first glance neither of the texts chosen appear to have anything to say about Australia. Neither of them is set in Australia, and none of the individuals in these stories is Australian, except a relatively secondary character in The Bellarmine Jug. But, by using the Lacanian model of the construction of identity, this thesis will show that these two novels do have important things to say about Australia in relation to its unconscious cultural and national identity and in relation to its near neighbours. Both novels expose the play within the imaginary construction of the nation and of concepts such as truth, justice, and international law. Key elements which are articulated in these novels include the place of the East in the West, the role of the writer as a critic of politics, the struggle between orthodoxy and heresy, and the play between fictional literature and history.

The final section of the thesis draws together the main points raised through the assembling of the theoretical model to look at national identity, and draws together the results of the application of that theory to the literary texts.

Chapter 1: The Construction of Culture

Crocodile Dundee II opens with a tranquil scene of Crocodile Dundee, the quintessential Australian from the outback, quietly fishing from a small dinghy. The setting appears to be some secluded, remote corner of northern Australia. As the fish are not biting, Dundee takes a circumspect look around, lights a stick of dynamite, and throws it casually into the still water. An explosion rocks the small craft, and stunned fish float to the surface. But, as the camera pans out the New York skyline comes into view, and a police helicopter and a high-speed patrol boat abruptly converge on the dinghy. The Aussie bushman, far from being in tranquil outback Australia, is out of his depth in New York. In the film, the laconic M. J. Crocodile Dundee is characterised as a romantic tribesman in a modern urban setting, for, as Wally of Walkabout Creek tells his overseas visitors, Crocodile Dundee has been raised by the Aborigines. He is a hybrid man, living on the edge of the Tribal and the Western worlds.

The Tribal and the Western worlds collide too for Kai, the Kalahari bushman in The Gods Must Be Crazy. A Coke bottle thrown from a passing plane is thought, by Kai and his tribe, to have come from the gods. Its presence disrupts the tribe, causing capitalistic jealousy and fights to erupt over the ownership and use of the single bottle. Kai, distraught at this intrusion of emotions which Westerners have long taken for granted, determines to return the bottle to the gods. So his adventures begin, and amazingly he succeeds in returning the bottle to the gods by tossing it off the edge of the earth, or at least into the clouds assembled below the precipice of a high plateau many days' walk from the Kalahari.

The clash of cultures, played on in these films, is the focus of Roy Wagner's book, The Invention of Culture. Wagner does not discuss cultures per se, but rather

looks at the construction and interaction of Western and Tribal culture. His aim is to reveal the distinction between Western and Tribal culture, to expose the West's representations of Tribal culture, and to show how Western culture represents itself through the processes of its own inventions. Through his argument he undermines the privileged position taken by the West, both in its assumed superiority and in its claimed objectivity, in analysing and constructing a paradigm for Tribal cultures. His project is to call into question Western rationale and science, particularly anthropology, with its undefendable claims to neutrality and objectivity. His thesis is that all cultures are the inventions of their own societies, and as such none of them can make any claim to supremacy, or to being progressively better than another.

Defining Culture

What then is culture? It is a powerful unifying, and yet strongly disruptive concept. The ethnographer,¹ James Clifford, writes in The Predicament of Culture, that culture "is a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without" (10). In his work Clifford defines culture as "a collective fiction" which "is the grounds for individual identity and freedom" (106). He goes on to state, however, that this "construction of self is both artificial and deadly serious" (107). The Macquarie Dictionary defines culture as "the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another." In this sense culture includes both our

¹ The ethnographer tends to study particular groups of people, whereas the anthropologist studies humankind in broader racial and cultural categories.

ways of making meaning, and our ways of differentiating ourselves from, and relating ourselves to, other people.

But culture is more than a creation of distinctive people groups, or of common ways of thinking about the world and living within it. Culture, in fact, constructs the world. Freud, for example, set out to prove, through probing the unconscious mind, that human sexuality is an all-compassing culturally, not biologically, determined construct. Just as Freud believed that phallogentric society constructs us as sexual beings, so too, deterministic theories, whether historical like Marxism, or linguistic like structuralism, see culture and cultural history as constructing individuals and society. Thus, as surely as we create and invent culture, so culture invents us.

Wagner argues additionally that invention is culture and that culture is invention. Culture, he claims, is a tautology which invents itself, and then, through continual and increasingly complex re-invention, substantiates itself in an unconscious logic which takes on an appearance of innateness. Wagner asserts that culture is never static but exists in a ceaseless self-perpetuating dialectic, where the "tendency of culture is to sustain itself, by inventing itself" (60).

The continual invention within culture, however, brings instability, so the dialectic seeks stability in what Wagner terms "conventions." These are the widely practiced forms of the culture, which can incorporate into the culture new or foreign meanings, so that they can be easily understood and expressed. They are the culture's collective objectifications or instructional aspects, such as ceremonies, traditions and customs. The processes through which the conventions of culture are re-invented, and perhaps some of the conventions themselves, form the deep unconscious at work in a culture. Wagner names this cultural unconscious "masking."

Cultural Masking

Masking is a constant problem within ethnography, where the attempt to present a culture objectively is always compromised by the masked, subjective reality of the ethnographer's own culture. James Clifford argues, in his "Introduction" to Writing Culture, that these problems are

the historical predicament of ethnography, the fact that it is always caught up in invention, not representation of culture. . . . [and that ethnography] while focusing on textual practices, reach[es] beyond texts to contexts of power, resistance, institutional constraint, and innovation. (2)

Maskings participate in a continuum of invention and re-invention within every culture, and in the relations between them. Wagner's own work as an ethnographer, and his growing awareness of the problems of masking and of the clash between Western scientific aims and Tribal world views, lead to his penetrating analysis of culture. Wagner's ethnographic work re-invents the Daribi people of New Guinea through a Western anthropological imagination.²

The process of continually re-inventing the culture tends both to re-establish its legitimacy, and at the same time to subvert it. "Invention and culture," writes Wagner, "stand in a dialectical relationship to one another, a relationship of simultaneous interdependence and contradiction" (52). Realising, then, the masking of continual re-invention, Wagner maintains that the apparent innateness of culture is "a cultural

² Wagner's work includes The Curse of Souw: Principles of Daribi Clan Definition and Alliance (1967), Habu: The Innovation of Meaning in Daribi Religion (1972), and Lethal Speech: Daribi Myth as Symbolic Obviation (1978).

illusion," though at the same time is "a necessary illusion" (41). It is necessary, for through it we are constructed, and simultaneously we construct our identity, our sense of place in the world, and our understanding of meaning and value in life. So strong is the bonding between who we are (as constructed by culture) and what we do (how we construct culture) that we could never cast ourselves off into the limbo of totally remaking our culture, but rather, we invent it, change it, little by little from the known to the unknown - an unknown which is really more of the known. The importance of masking in the process of re-invention appears, later in this thesis, through the consideration of Jacques Lacan's work in which he develops theories of the unconscious, and in Benedict Anderson's work in which he advances his concept of the nation as an imagined community.

The need and desire to examine culture, to criticise it, to be at home with it, and to change it, is also subject to a subversive element in the tautology of inventing from invention. In a world of counter-culture, counter-revolution, post-colonial politics and academic deconstruction, we live in the "continual tension of 'wanting to do something about' things," yet at the same time knowing "that 'doing' something about 'it' [is] bound to fail in certain respects" (Wagner 60). In other words, we constantly live in the tension of knowing, and sensing, the illusion of our world and its meanings, yet at the same time we cling to its security and know our attempts to remake our meanings will have an element of continual frustration.

The Construct of Western Culture

To Wagner all cultures are not the same in their internal emphasis. The great distinction he alludes to is between Western culture and Tribal culture. He asserts that

the greatest illusion, or invention, on which Western culture is based is that of "nature." He contends that we "create nature and tell ourselves stories about how nature creates us!" (140). "Without nature," he argues, "there would be no 'science'," and, moreover, what the West cherishes most is its illusions, for, he asserts, "'progress,' 'democracy,' and 'scientific certainty' are the masks worn by our collective invention of nature" (146). All Western culture, then, including its technology and economics, is set in the context of controlling, manipulating and re-interpreting the invented construct of nature. This invention with its emphasis on accumulation, collection, classification, evaluation, exchange, value and theorisation, as well as on evolutionary, historical, linear progress, is also the context through which Westerners look at, and define, other cultures. Thus they insatiably collect, store, restore and display cultural products, cataloguing and valuing them, setting up economic and historical evolutionary theories to explain and systematise all cultures in relation to their own Western culture. But they fail to see, Wagner states, that the "synthetic world of science is a world of patched together consistency" (155).

The authors of The Empire Writes Back, in delineating the argument of Wilson Harris in The Womb of Space, see Harris as reacting to the hegemony of the West with its emphasis on linear and historic causality. Harris, they claim, calls for the replacement of the "pure" with the hybrid, or "composite," supplanting "a temporal lineality with a spacial plurality" (Ashcroft et al. 36). Harris's hybridity, then, challenges Western culture's view of itself as authentic. The authenticity which the West assumes implies that other cultures are inauthentic, for, as Clifford states, "every authenticity presupposes, and is produced by, a present circumstance of felt inauthenticity" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 114). Attitudes and practices in Western theoretical thought must also come under a similar criticism of the authentic versus the

inauthentic, for all theoretical thought, such as deconstructive theory and post-colonial theory, is invented, not innate. Thus, claims Wagner, Westerners are usually blind to the fact that what they deride as illusionary in other cultures, such as the "magical," the mythical and the imaginary, are cultural constructs used in their invention of their own societies.

The Play in Western Culture

One such use of the "magical" is in advertising which seeks to popularise products by associating them with culturally invented lifestyles, thus offering to re-invent that lifestyle for the consumer. These creations, through which Western people seek to live, are a fantasy, a technological "magic" in which wonders, cures and ideals of precision and effectiveness are promised, believed in, and lived out in much the same way as Tribal people living out the "magic" of their various annual ceremonies. So one buys Coca Cola because it is the "cool" thing to do. One would not like to be seen drinking a cheaper, though just as effective, thirst quencher, such as Kola cordial, because "you can't beat the real thing." It is not the quality of the product, or its ability to meet a physical need, that the Coke advertisements target, but rather a promise of a lifestyle which cannot, for some unstated reason, be promised by similar products with a different brand name.

The reason Westerners fail to see the illusion of their own culture is due to the masking, or what Wagner also calls "naturalisation," of the culture. Again, this is due to the loss of distinction between cultural invention and cultural convention, where what we do (what we invent) is linked to what we are (our conventions), and visa versa. Thus the cultural basis of culture is used to re-invent, and authenticate, the culture in its

own image.

To Wagner the important necessity in culture is the "play," the "magic," the movement in the re-invention of illusion, rather than in any stability or innateness in cultural "realities." In this sense Western science, as it believes the ordered illusion it creates and calls nature, is at play when it seeks to sustain that order by re-inventing its relationship to the construct of nature in fabrications such as "sustainable conservation," "biological ethics," "environmentally friendly products," "recyclable wastes" and "energy conservation." All these inventions allow science still to maintain its dialectic of man versus nature, and allows the continued classification and collection of data, the economic exploitation of resources and the hegemony of historical evolutions to remain largely intact.

Science is not above historical, linguistic and textual processes. The individual scientist is totally dependent on the Western cultural framework, both in order to become literate in science, and in order to be a part of the necessary history and matrix of knowledge to make specialised work possible. So through Western society and Western education in Western thought a person emerges into a like-minded community to become an "objective" scientist. How much masking occurs in the process is impossible for a Westerner to detail, but the myth of supposed Western objectivity is exploded by scientists such as Michael Polanyi in his book Personal Knowledge. Polanyi argues that personal knowledge in science is a fusion of the objective and the personal, where tools and skills make doing and knowing a form of art with unknown, and unacknowledged, rules and parameters. "Personal knowledge is an intellectual commitment" (viii), states Polanyi, for all "personal knowing appraises what it knows by a standard set to itself" (63). Personal knowledge requires "the personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding" (vii), Polanyi maintains, and as

such it cannot be objectively verified.³ The unconsciousness of personal knowing and doing in science helps produce, and is complicit with, the maskings of Western culture and its conventions.

But science, because of the threat to the wholeness of its invention of itself, reacts to scientists who call its validity, its rules, or its findings into question. Such a reaction occurred against Michel Leiris's contribution to Documents, and his subsequent book, L'Afrique fantome, which criticised the famous French, scientific mission that collected data from Dakar to Djibouti in North Africa in the 1920s.

Clifford states, in The Predicament of Culture, that, in the social sciences at least, the consolidation of a paradigm depends on the exclusion or regulation to the status of 'art' those elements of the changing discipline that call the credentials of the discipline itself into question, those research practices that, like Documents, work at the edges of disorder. (135)

Western science often uses the mask called "art" to isolate the threatening aspects of Western culture, as well as those in Tribal culture, from re-inventing it, so disrupting its wholeness and its stabilising conventions.

³ Polanyi states that

personal knowledge in science is not made but discovered, and as such it claims to establish contact with reality beyond the clues on which it relies. It commits us, passionately and far beyond our comprehension, to a vision of reality. Of this responsibility we cannot divest ourselves by setting up objective criteria of verifiability - of falsifiability, or testability, or what you will. For we live in it as in the garment of our own skin. (64)

The Construct of Tribal Culture

Wager maintains that in Tribal culture the relationship of invention to convention is very different from that in Western culture. In Western culture the main emphasis is on collectivised convention, such as the setting up of museums, courts of law, and scientific guidelines, all within a linear causal framework. These Western conventions, he maintains, are mediated by individual, differentiated invention. Tribal cultures, however, according to Wagner, are not accumulative, product-orientated, nor conceived of as linear or evolutionary in causality or history. Instead they have a "dialectical logic," with their main emphasis on the collective invention of culture, mediated through differentiating conventions. Thus Tribal societies do not look, as Western anthropologists do, at artefacts and their value in a classificatory or economic sense. Instead they value producers rather than products. This emphasis on production, states Wagner, means that

products themselves, or money with which to buy products are not in demand, producers are; since all major aspects of sustenance are vested in the family, the paramount concern becomes that of forming and sustaining a family. So it is that the exchange systems of tribal and peasant societies are geared to the human lifecycle and the substitution of 'wealth' for people. . . . Thus tribal cultures embody an inversion of our tendency to place productive technique in the central focus, and relegate family life to a supporting (and supported) role. This inversion, moreover, is not trivial; it pervades both styles of creativity in all their aspects. (25, 26)

With no desire to accumulate products or money, the emphasis in Tribal culture is on invention and performance which produces meaning, values and lifestyle. These

adaptations take place in the culture's conventions: the ceremonies, customs and traditions of the people. Through this model Wagner explains the origins of the cargo cults in Papua New Guinea, as a ceremonial adaptation to make the Western product-orientated culture understandable, and "magically" accessible, to the people.

Clifford maintains the same split in cultural dynamics is revealed in ethnography when he states, in The Predicament of Culture, that there are "two metanarratives: one of homogenisation, the other of emergence; one of loss, the other of invention" (17). To Clifford, the dialectic of homogenisation (which is characterised by conservation and redemption of the lost), is juxtaposed to that of an ever-present inventiveness. It is the former which the West has emphasised through its institutions, while the more adaptable, oral, Tribal societies have emphasised the latter. But while their emphases may be different, the process of cultural change is the same for all societies. In rhetoric reminiscent of Raymond Williams's "emergent culture," and Mikhail Bakhtin's "heteroglossia," Wagner states that languages

literally 'talk themselves' into other languages, and societies live themselves into new social forms. . . .

People literally invent themselves out of their conventional orientation and the way in which this tendency is counteracted and dealt with is the key to their social and historical self-manipulation, to their invention of society. (105-106)

In Tribal society where conventions facilitate the continual process of the invention of culture, the society, while adaptable, is less stable than in the culture where invention is submissive to stable, regulated, collectivising conventions. Inventive Tribal cultures

are, therefore, most vulnerable to the more static, hegemonically powerful cultures of the West.⁴

Australian Aboriginal Culture

In Australia, the history of Aboriginal interaction with modern white society has shown an emphasis on relationships and invention, rather than on accumulation and conventions. A number of articles in Being Black speak of Aboriginal cultural adaptation and continuity in the face of the onslaught of white Australian culture and their subsequent engulfment by European culture. For example, Barry Morris, writing about the Aborigines on stations in the Macleay valley in NSW, states in his article "Dhan-gadi Resistance to Assimilation," that

a culture of resistance emerged in some cases as a conjunction between

⁴ The Cree Indians of North America, for example, have shown an amazing emphasis on cultural invention and adaptability. Niels Braroe explains, in Indian and White, that the Canadian Woodlands Cree, seeking hides to trade, expanded into the Plains for the seasonal hunting of buffalo around 1730. Gradually some chose to stay on the Plains, and there

developed a marked sociopolitical division between Plains and Woodland Cree. By about 1825 there was a true Plains Cree culture, fully committed to the horse-gun-buffalo complex, which had discarded much of the cultural inventory based on a woodland environment. (68)

Speaking of a later time period, John Tobias, in his article "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," writes,

that the usual story told of the Indian treaties distorts the roles of both the Cree and the Canadian government, for the Cree were both flexible and active in promoting their own interests, and willing to accommodate themselves to a new way of life, while the Canadian government was neither as far-sighted nor as just as tradition maintains. (190)

Thus with declining buffalo herds, and with successfully negotiated assistance from the government, "some Cree bands began to turn to agriculture" (192). This amazing adaptability, in which cultural invention had precedence over and was interpreted through cultural convention, shows how the popular image of Indian culture of the horse-gun-buffalo complex only developed in the advent of the white invasion, and was subsequently left behind a century or so later.

earlier cultural practices (and their perpetration) and an opposition to the prevailing hegemony, or simply in oppositional claims expressed by denial, distancing and evasion of European authority. (60)

In the urban and settled areas, in spite of two hundred years of pressure to assimilate, Aboriginal people have adapted and so survived tremendous cultural changes. The continuity they have achieved has meant that they still remain a distinct people, resisting total integration into white society. Chris Birdsall, in discussing the Nyungar people of south western Western Australia in her article "All One Family," states that while

little remains of their original language, the Nyungar people retain knowledge of the names and locations of some of the original tribes, some myth cycles, naming practices, and aspects of the spirit world. As well, they remain a distinctive socio-cultural category, maintaining a particular system of kinship organisation. . . . Within their southwest territory many Nyungar people have maintained an attachment to and residence within particular regions for many generations. (137)

This tremendous resilience and adaptation of Tribal societies, which has allowed some of them to survive despite enormous odds, is due to their emphasis on cultural invention and change, rather than cultural convention and inflexibility. Tribal societies' actions, asserts Wagner, contradict the Western cultural orientation by being a "continual adventure in 'unpredicting' the world" (88). Their societies are not planned, but are precipitated through performance (91). This difference in the dialectic at work in Western culture and Tribal culture is important to our understanding of both the repression of Tribal culture by Western culture, and of the way in which positive change can be incorporated, or invented, into each of these societies.

To Wagner, Western societies have become more highly conventional and stable through the processes of urbanisation and the establishment of the class system. The institutionalisation of the class system changes the emphasis of the cultural dialectic from that of continual re-invention of meaning to a historical motivation which collectivises and stabilises. Societies become segmented, hierarchical and "static." The emphasis shifts to where the historical "given" becomes naturalised, or masked, and human activity (what one does and not what one is) becomes the collective centre of life. Culture democratises, secularises, and systematises all its aspects, inventing society as the rational and scientific relation of man to nature. Thus the rise of economics, of materialism, of the bourgeoisie, of the sciences, of Marxism and so on, are all ways of re-inventing Western culture through its masked cultural conventions. Included in this list is the rise of the modern nation-state which seeks to continually re-institutionalise itself into a stable political construct.

During the period in which modern nation-states evolved, Australia underwent white colonisation. In the continual construction of itself as a nation, European Australia is disturbed by both the existence of Tribal, Aboriginal Australia, and, as emphasised later in the thesis, by its geographical location and its relationship to Asia. Not only are these disturbances influential on the construction of a national identity, but both Aboriginal Australia and Asia continue to be unresolved tensions in the Australian national psyche. In order to address these issues, the next chapter, then, looks at the processes through which modern nation-states construct themselves.

Chapter 2: The Construction of the Nation

Modern Nation-Building

In the same way that cultures are invented, so nations are invented in a seemingly unselfconscious manner. Benedict Anderson, in Imagined Communities, contends that the modern constructs of "nationality, or . . . nation-ness, as well as nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (4). They are a Western collectivising cultural artefact because of their origin in European thought, politics and history. Anderson argues that the notion of the modern nation and the concept of modern nationalism have only emerged in the last two and a half centuries, since the independence revolutions in the Americas. The recent phenomena of nation and nationalism have grown out of, or been invented from, previous political and cultural constructs. Consequently, Anderson asserts, the imagining of a nation is a fiction, and he quotes Ernest Gellner as stating that "Nationalism . . . invents nations where they do not exist" (6).⁵ Furthermore, each independent formation of a nation has provided a flexible module for other national movements, and so a process of change has continued to shape an ever-widening variety of national constructs.

The complexity of analysing inter-continental political, cultural and economic forces can be hazardous even for Anderson to argue, but one must realise that his overall aim appears to be to interrogate the unquestioned timelessness and assumed truth of present day constructs of nations and nationalisms. He is querying the narration

⁵ Anderson adds his own emphasis and is quoting from Gellner's Thought and Change (1964): 169.

of nationhood, and seeks, in bold and large historical and geographical strokes, to paint a more perceptive and challenging notion of nation and nationality.

Anderson's Story of the Modern Nation

To challenge such narrations of nation, Anderson must narrate his own story of the history of nation. He begins his story in Europe where the ideas behind the modern nation were conceived, then shifts to the Americas to show its first birth as an identity, returns again to Europe for its rebirth, and finally moves on to analyse its birth in the Third World, especially in the colonies of Europe in Asia.

The initial component in Anderson's story is a search for the origins of the concept of the modern nation itself. Anderson asserts that such beginnings can be found in polyglot Europe, where the primary elements in the originary process were the undermining of the dynastic and religious imagined communities, and the rise to prominence of vernacular languages and print-capitalism. The religious community, claims Anderson, united intellectual, political and religious Europe through the use of Latin as a sacred language in church, school and court. The religious community interlocked with the dynastic community through the religious community sanctioning the right of the dynasts to rule.

The demise of the powerful imaginings of the elite and the stirrings of new imaginations in the masses was begun, Anderson claims, through the challenge brought to imaginings by scholarship and exploration, by the death of Latin as a sacred language, by the disruption of the Reformation and by the rise of print-capitalism. The divine right of the dynasts to rule dissolved, and the adoption of vernacular languages as languages of the courts led, as a literate bureaucratic and bourgeois class grew, to

more distinct groupings of people within kingdoms. Furthermore, Anderson claims, the development and popularity of the novel and the newspaper allowed for a sense of horizontal simultaneous time and space to develop, where people, as a mass entity, began to imagine themselves as belonging together through the sharing of some common characteristics in terms of language, life experiences and common events in history, news and opinions. Thus the notion of nation was conceived and its possibilities began to stir in imaginations across the whole structure of society, challenging the imaginations of the communities of the elite, the powerful, and the religious.

The next phase in Anderson's story is the first wave in which modern nations were born. It began with some of the stirrings in Europe being transferred to the New World in the Americas. These stirrings, however, were largely confined to the Creole population. The educated and affluent Creoles, through the processes of colonisation, were linked by major print-languages which united them across geographic areas far greater than those of the polyglot European metropolises. Anderson states that in the Americas the print-journalist, writing in the major print-languages, was instrumental in the development of an imagined community (61-62).

Similarly, the journeys of the Creole functionaries throughout the colonies, together with their exclusion from the positions of power in the European metropolises, developed within them a sense of belonging to a geographical and social country constituted by the colonial administration's reach. Anderson argues that the seemingly incompatible factors of tightening imperial control in the colonies, juxtaposed with the liberal ideas introduced by the Enlightenment in the European metropolises, drove the two-hundred-year-old Creole classes to revolt against their European kin. Anderson observes that these were not wars to defeat the metropolises in Europe, but rather were

wars to liberate the colonies so they could share equal status with the metropolises. Anderson puzzles over the inconsistency that in the independence wars of the New World many Creoles "were financially ruined. . . . And just as many willingly gave up their lives for the cause. This willingness to sacrifice on the part of comfortable classes is food for thought" (51). The wars were conducted by a relatively privileged, affluent class against blood relations who spoke the same language.

The second wave of nationalism, as Anderson narrates, began with the French Revolution and the birth of the modern nation in Europe. Anderson sees the French Revolution as having been modelled on American Independence. In turn, the model of the French Revolution was taken up by other people groups who sought to re-figure imagined communities into nation states. The European nations, however, were not like those in the Americas, for in Europe the influence of the dynasts and of language played a major role. Initially, many marginalised and threatened dynasts used the unifying notion of a common vernacular in their administrative, political and educational systems to bolster their diminishing right to rule over their territories. To legitimise this shift in imaginings, Anderson claims, histories were rewritten, and chairs of comparative history were set up in universities. The process which Anderson calls "Russification" was embarked upon, by which dynasts imposed monoglot hegemonies on polyglot kingdoms. The conflicting rights of other language groups caused division within the kingdoms, leading eventually to the disintegration of the dynastic era in the conflagration of the First World War. The dynasts, in using the new imaginings to shore up their ability to control the masses, had through that same process provided the means for the populace to develop their own imaginings, which in turn would eventually overthrow the dynasts. Thus the access to wealth created by capitalism, the access to literacy created by education, the access to cheap publishing

and reading material created by print-capitalism, and the access to new imagined horizons created by the liberalisation of ideas and society, won momentary respite for the dynasts, but then generated powerful new imaginings with different interests to the archaic dynasties.

But revolutions and the rewriting of European histories did not produce uniform and stable nations. Divisions, tensions and disputes regarding people groups, languages and histories still rage in Europe today, for example, with the Irish in Northern Ireland and the Basques in Spain. Thus, in the second wave, ancient dynastic imaginations slid into new national imaginings, which in turn destroyed those ancient dynasties, leaving many conflicting imaginations in their place.

The third wave of nationalism, according to Anderson, grew out of the second wave. Even while the European dynasts were transforming their kingdoms into nations (in the nineteenth century), they were expanding abroad, creating empires in Asia, Africa and Oceania. An atmosphere conducive for the creation of national imaginations was produced through the "Russification" of the colonies which created large bureaucratic armies of educated, bilingual clerks; through a modern-style education system which taught the glories of European nation-building; through the increased ease of colonial functionary pilgrimages using modern means of transport; and through the ability of the radio to communicate with large illiterate populations. Some colonial powers, such as France in Indochina, used a lingua franca which united polyglot communities and produced major print-languages. Small, literate groups of young nationals were educated in the same few schools, which helped a unified sense of nation to emerge. As with the dynasts in Europe, so a division occurred in the imaginings in the colonies. The very dynamics which sought to propagate and maintain an imagination for European colonial control spawned the revolutionary imaginations

which developed forms of nationalism that would ultimately defeat the colonial masters.

Throughout the two hundred and fifty years of the three waves of nation-building, Anderson asserts, the retelling of the histories of the nations was a process of remembering and forgetting. While the New World saw itself as creating new and unprecedented history, the European imaginings told the story of how their ancient histories as nations were being reawakened. The third wave, following the lead of the second, also retold their histories in the light of an ancient past. So the nation was conceived of as originating in antiquity, being an inheritor of unquestionable and inalienable sovereign rights, and being linked to a major language whose roots were inevitably lost in the mists of time. Nation-states sanctified the heroes of pre-national time as nationalists, forgetting the atrocities committed against people groups now included in the nation as co-patriots, and silenced the stories of dispossessed minority groups as an integral part of retelling the national narrative. The assumed eternal existence of nations, extending into a romantic past and disappearing into a vigorous future, and the acceptance of the inherent rights of nations as presuppositions to national stories, are some of the invented concepts which Anderson so astutely challenges. The story of the nation, claims Anderson, is a recent story of modern times, which has been, and still is, politically evolving out of past cultural structures which are now being changed through the democratisation of society with the revolutions in communications, capitalism and education.

Sacrifice for the Nation

While intent upon explaining the phenomena of the imagined communities, Anderson is unable to answer why people are willing to die for the fiction of a nation,

or imagined community. In the first wave, Anderson notes, the Creoles were willing to face ruin and death in spite of their comfortable existence as a relatively privileged class in their society. But, neither the need for independent autonomy in the New World, nor the concept of sacrifice for the great and noble ideals of Truth, Justice, Equality and Freedom-for-all seem adequate to explain the waging of long and vicious wars against blood relations who shared a similar language. Anderson explains, that the ideals of Liberty and Justice for all, including serfs and slaves, and the notion of the "horizonless past" of nations, were only more fully developed in the second, European phase of nation-building. Moreover, in Europe, the second wave of nation-building led to the horrifying and senseless deaths of millions of people in disputing blocs of nations in the two World Wars. Similarly, untold numbers of patriots sacrificed their lives in the third wave of nation-building to liberate, and preserve, their new imagined communities from colonial rule.

Anderson seems to indicate that the "horizonless past" of the nation gives it a quasi-religious aura. Anderson couples the "horizonless past" of the nation with its apparent disinterestedness; its purity, essentialness and selflessness. This in itself, asserts Anderson, asks for sacrifice. The construction of imaginations through the inspiration of the anthem, the flag, and the nation's symbols, inspires one to die for what appears to be a totally unassailable heritage, so pure and devoid of self-interest.

So, ceaseless and myriad wars to define nations continue to the present day, as language, culture and religion divide one national imagining from another. Concepts such as citizenship by naturalisation both open the nation up to any person, while at the same time they set concise and closed limits. Racism has become ingrained into nationalism, even though Anderson maintains it originates from imperialism rather than from national distinctions. These divisions fuel aggression and demand sacrifice,

creating conflicting imaginations both within and without nations.

Creating a fiction, trying to keep together a whole argument, a coherent story and concept of the nation, may form the most fundamental tenet behind the idea of nation. The fiction is primarily one of identity, of constructing an imagination to which one can belong, and in which one can find meaning. To examine this construction of national identity it may prove helpful to consider Lacan's concept of the subject - a subject always constituted as a fiction.

Chapter 3: The Construction of Identity

Foucault, in his article, "What is an Author?," asserts that a few nineteenth-century authors are not only "trans discursive" in their writings, but they are "founders of discursivity" in that their writings "have established an endless possibility of discourse" (154). One example Foucault gives of a founder of discursivity is Freud. The Freudian notion of the mind, particularly the construction of the unconscious and its repressed, has been applied to many academic disciplines, and has been instrumental in creating a discourse on the unconscious which has implications far beyond those of psychoanalysis itself.

Ethnography and Psychoanalysis

One area of study which has been affected by Freud's hypothesis of the unconscious is anthropology, or the study of culture. Levi-Strauss, for example, maintains that the notion of the unconscious in linguistics and in psychoanalysis is important to the understanding of the "other" for the ethnographer.⁶ He argues, in Introduction to the Works of Marcel Mauss, that the attempt to objectively grasp the subjective unconscious "is the same type of operation which in psycho-analysis allows us to win back our most estranged self, and in ethnological inquiry gives us access to the most foreign other as to another self" (35-36). In this statement Levi-Strauss echoes the work of Jacques Lacan, who in re-reading Freud through Saussure's theory of linguistics, also finds in the unconscious a "most foreign other" which is, as it were,

⁶ See footnote 1, page 8, for the distinction between anthropology and ethnography.

"another self." The application of the notion of the unconscious to the concept of culture is important to Lacan, for the relationship of the individual to culture is of primary concern to him. Juliet Flower MacCannell, in Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious, states that through "maintaining his double register, speaking of individuals and trans individual in the same breath, and with the same words, Lacan brings the relationship of self to culture to a critical point, a crisis . . ." (88). The crisis raises the question of modern humankind's existence as cultural beings, for with the demystification of culture's ultimate promises of Goodness and Happiness, what current promise continues to maintain humanity's commitment to culture and its drives? This is the same question posed by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities, for, with the debunking of divine sanction in both Church and State, Anderson wonders what drives people to sacrifice themselves for a national imagination. To put it in a slightly different way, what promises maintain the hegemony of communal life, and the continued dominance of the civilising drive?⁷ These questions can be asked not only of culture itself but of the powerful and modern cultural constructs of nation and nationalism, for it is an important task to enquire into the current promises which sustain the hegemony of the fictions of nation and nationalism.

To examine these questions more closely it will be helpful to examine Lacan's theory of the construction of the subject. Then it will be appropriate to explore various literary texts by using Lacan's ideas, for, according to MacCannell, literature and Lacan's psychoanalysis form a close bond. She states the bond clearly when she writes

⁷ Civilisation in this thesis denotes a morally weighted term which implies an "advanced" or "enlightened" culture, as opposed to those who are perceived to be different and so to be primitive and unenlightened.

that it is "literature and not language or linguistics that is the proper model for figuring Lacan" (14). The approach of using literature to explore Lacan's work in relation to cultural concepts is relevant because Lacan is concerned more about the formation of social ties than in the structure of linguistics. Lacan must be read as a commentator on social processes rather than on structured social outcomes. Malcolm Bowie, in Freud, Proust and Lacan, asserts that

Lacan is a builder of loosely moored conceptual mobiles, faced with which the question 'What does it mean?' is better asked of a given term in the form 'What does it do?' or 'What path does it travel?' (105)

Similarly, Jane Gallop, in her book Reading Lacan, claims that Lacan's work resembles poetry because he is interested in the processes of psychoanalysis rather than in its finalised models. She adds that

poetry does not easily make sense but it is written within reach of the professional reader. Lacan's writings appear to be poetry . . . but they are a decoy; they do not yield; they cannot be read. . . .

One option then for the serious reader, a most exciting one, is to follow the text elsewhere. (33, 34)

Gallop's concept of using Lacan's work to explore an "elsewhere" is a helpful approach. Analysis of Lacan's work, in this thesis, will be employed in conjunction with Wagner's ideas of invention and Anderson's concept of the imagined community, to "follow" various literary texts and their dialogue with the construct of Australian nationhood.

Lacan's poetic work is difficult to grasp, not only because of his emphasis on social ties and on processes rather than products, but also because of his style of writing and the nuances created by his constant shifts in redefining his major concepts.

the subject is shown, according to Rose, in Lacan's assertion that "the subject is constituted through language" (31). These symbols of language are also located as an order outside of the subject, and, because the subject relates to this exterior order to gain a sense of identity, then, Rose asserts, that identity is a "fiction," or a "misrecognition" (30). Thus, according to Lacan, the subject is a split subject, both desiring to be unified, and yet only having a fiction with which to identify.

Lacan felt that Freud had been misinterpreted by psychoanalysts who believed Freud taught that wholeness of the subject was possible. Thus Rose writes that part of Lacan's project is concerned with the fact that in reading Freud, many psychoanalysts have lost sight of the dual unifying and alienating characteristic of a subject's identity. So, she says, in his re-reading of Freud, Lacan strongly emphasises the point that "the unconscious never ceases to challenge our apparent identity as subjects" (30). This never-ending contestation happens between the orders of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, and between a third order which Lacan called the Real. Rose summarises this never-ending contest and the relationship of the three orders by stating that

Lacan termed the order of language the symbolic, that of the ego and its identifications the imaginary (the stress, therefore, is quite deliberately on symbol and image, the idea of something which 'stands in'). The real was then his term for the moment of impossibility into which both are grafted, the point of that moment's endless return. (31)

The "moment's endless return" illuminates the different emphasis between Lacan and Freud. Freud is interested in the object, the signified, the dreams, the fantasies, the hidden symbols. But Lacan is interested in the process, the relations between the signifiers, the play within the tensions of the subject.

The other/Other and Desire

The fiction in which the subject recognises itself, yet is split apart from itself, is termed the other, and/or the Other.⁸ This other/Other promises maturation, wholeness, fulfilment and unity. But it can never fulfil those promises. The other/Other, therefore, is constituted in a Lack, both because it is a fiction which is outside of the subject and because it promises more than it can give. The subject, however, seeks to overcome this Lack by demanding love. Love, or eros (as in sexual love), is built around the fiction of two becoming one, and it is this demand for love, to be united with another or the other/Other, which is the foundation of Lacan's concept of Desire.

But Desire is endless because the subject can never be satisfied. This means that the quest for fulfilment is endless, always returning, always shifting and displacing the subject due to the Lack which is always encountered. It is a pursuit for the Real; a real which is not an object but a feeling, an elation of satisfaction or *Jouissance*. But the Real can never be achieved within the registers of the Imaginary or the Symbolic, for there is always a surplus or a remainder which is beyond them - beyond language. The subject, then, is constituted in the Symbolic, or language, and it is always in a process of subjectivity through which it seeks an autonomous, coherent identity which can never be anything but a fiction which is split and alienates that subject from the other/Other which it pursues. This process of subjectivity-in-language is a play within the chain of signifiers, as the subject pursues the Real through the vehicle of language.

In the process of achieving subjectivity-in-language, however, it must be

⁸ Lacan defines two others; "the other" of the individual in the mirror stage, or the Imaginary, and "the Other" of the Symbolic Order.

remembered that to Lacan all language is social. For example, he defines discourse, in "A Love Letter," as "being that which determines a social tie" (153). So, for Lacan, his project is as much an analysis of culture, of social ties, as it is of the individual subject. Crucial to his exploration of culture is the power of the Symbolic Order. In this context the other of the mirror stage, of the individual and the ego, is pushed aside by the Other of the Symbolic Order. The relationship of the subject to culture, to the Other, is vital to an understanding of how a subject within a culture, or within a nation, is constituted, and, therefore, how constructs such as nationalism and multiculturalism can be expected to interact and influence both the individual and the society.

Culture, and its civilising drive, exist unchallenged and unquestioned because of the functioning of the unconscious. The unconscious is within language, because, for Lacan, the subject is constituted in language. Not only is it within language, but the unconscious mimics language, for as Elizabeth Grosz states in Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, the unconscious itself "is structured 'like a language,' for it is governed by the two poles of linguistic functioning, metaphor/condensation and metonymy/displacement" (4). It is in the context of this dual functioning that MacCannell attributes two unconsciouses to Lacan's theorising of the subject.

The Imaginary Unconscious

Lacan's first unconscious is that of the Imaginary which is suppressed by the Symbolic Order. The Imaginary unconscious, which is related to the individual ego, seeks mutual recognition of desire and mutual pleasure with other human beings and is dominated by a combinatory or associative mode, so it is therefore characterised by metonymy. In language, the Imaginary Order seeks to make meaning by closely

associating words and concepts with related words and concepts, and it is not closed and ordered but multiple and open-ended, and is the basis of myth and illusion. Most importantly, the Imaginary is characterised by the play within the chain of signifiers, and therefore the play within meaning.⁹ Because of this the Imaginary is different from the Symbolic, and so, as MacCannell states, we "find it coded differently, with a different accent, tone, and gender form" (158). The Imaginary is repressed by the Symbolic which is negative and limiting with its collectively shared codes or laws of culture. As a repressed, the Imaginary unconscious order is found in dreams, in pleasure, in fantasy, and in nostalgia, and it is characterised, and ordered, by the Symbolic, or metaphoric mode, as dangerous, negative, savage, and primitive. The Imaginary unconscious, in culture, then, is characterised as the source of myths, taboos, and forbidden relationships. MacCannell states, that the Symbolic, or metaphoric mode,

unfailingly relegates the metonymic mode to the mode of myth, and to a savage myth at that, displacing it into a murderous mythic scene, where 'touching the other' is always negatively evaluated, seen in its worst light. Incest, incorporation, savage murder. The myth of the 'savage' condition into which we would fall were it not for the restraints of a metaphorically organised civilisation adds fuel to the drive. (114)

⁹ There is also play in the Symbolic, but that play is at the level of the significance of words and concepts, the chain of signifieds, rather than purely at the level of the meaning of words, the chain of signifiers, as in the Imaginary. Language is characterised by a chain of signifieds which is separated by a bar from the chain of signifiers. When the signifier slips below the bar, it becomes a signified which no longer relates to the chain of signifiers. The signifieds become metaphors in language where words have significance beyond their most literal meanings, so standing in for undefinable concepts.

In Australia, as elsewhere, the Imaginary, or the metonymic, is found in all areas of life. The Imaginary is not so much a permanent label fixed to anti-nationalist features, but rather is a site of resistance to what we have seen Wagner term the conventions of culture. It is a site which shifts so that what may once have been metonymic can become a part of the Symbolic. An example of such a shift is the Anzac tradition, which began initially in the Gallipoli campaign as a distinctive rewriting of the image of "colonial" Australians, but later became a dominant and sometimes controversial convention in Australian literature and national life. Then, too, the Symbolic can become the metonymic when it is used to interrogate the dominance of other aspects of the Symbolic Order, such as the use of the conventional symbol of Aboriginal dance to place a curse on the venerated institution of the Collingwood Football Club. Currently, the metonymic can be seen at work in a great variety of influences within Australian life, such as in multicultural festivals which displace the dominance of "the Australian way of life;" in the folklore of subcultures, as in the prolific and often disturbing messages of graffiti; in political movements, for example, those for Aboriginal land rights and environmental protection; and in literature and the media when culturally and politically accepted "truths" are questioned, as in the ever-present phenomenon of the immigration debate.

The Symbolic Unconscious

Lacan's second unconscious is the Symbolic, for the foundation of culture itself is an unconscious. The Symbolic, although it calls for order and wholeness, is not, as a suppressed entity, a source of moderation, but rather a source of "deepening alienation and dispossession" (MacCannell 156). As an unconscious it becomes the moral law,

and as such the Final Arbiter, or the Other, to which the individual submits itself. The Symbolic unconscious, in which one term is made to stand in for another, is dominated by the metaphoric mode, which splits and disconnects thoughts, ideas and concepts, while covering up the disharmony with an illusion of wholeness and unity. Australian examples of the Symbolic include the illusion of the voice of the people being represented under the Westminster style of democratic government, the fiction of a fair go for all, the misconception of a free society under common law, the delusion of justice through trial by jury, and the myths of Aussie mateship.

The fixed signifieds of the Symbolic seek to limit and order the play of meaning, and they become metaphors in language where words stand in for undefinable concepts, such as "freedom," "truth" and "liberty," symbolised in national institutions such as the High Court, the House of Parliament, and the Shrine of Remembrance. This ordered Symbolic is the law. It is where words are no longer used simply for meaning but for significance, where they are made to signify something useful. As MacCannell states, for Lacan "all uses of the word are metaphoric: from the minute language begins to do work on behalf of culture rather than meaning" (93). Metaphors make two meanings into one which is more valued and prestigious. Ultimately this unconscious becomes "the site of truth" and "the basis of civilisation" (MacCannell 157). The Symbolic unconscious, then, becomes the means by which the West evaluates itself and judges all other cultures.

It is this which leads MacCannell to state that metaphor is for Lacan, "the mode in which culture makes its 'promises'" (99). The promises are made, not in terms of a concrete reality, but in terms of a "higher aim," something more valuable and prestigious (99). Lacan writes, "One word for another: that is the formula for the metaphor," and, he asserts, the "metaphor occurs at the precise point at which sense

emerges from non-sense, [and] it is at this frontier that we realise that man defies his very destiny when he derides the signifier" ("Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" 157-158). What is important is the significance of the metaphorical expression rather than its literal meaning. So in Australia it is the significance of the flag, the national anthem and the oath of allegiance, rather than the literal meaning of red, white and blue symbols on a piece of cloth, or words and notes on a piece of paper. If the promise that the metaphor gives could ever be directly named and analysed, then it would lose its magic and its play, for it would become debatable, dismissible and would be in danger of no longer providing the foundation of a shared desire.

The Hegemony of the Symbolic in the Nation

These two unconsciouss decentre and devalue each other; the Imaginary, or metonymic, being desire as mutuality, the Symbolic, or metaphoric, being desire as alienation. The metonymic is valued, though to a lesser extent than the metaphoric, as a site for overcoming alienation and rediscovering and affirming connections, such as in the role of outspoken individuals who call attention to social injustices, or as in the function of inter-cultural exchanges in sport and the arts. The metaphoric, on the other hand, is greatly valued because of its relationship to the civilising drive, through which the individual is sacrificed to the "greater Individual - the collective Other" (MacCannell 159). The metaphoric, or the Symbolic, calls a nation to distinctiveness, to greatness, to defend itself against aggression, and to assert its own values and greatness in active nation-building either through military or economic prowess. In Australia, monuments such as Sydney's Opera House and Harbour Bridge, Uluru and the Great Barrier reef, as well as Australia's European-style institutions and the

Australian way of life, proclaim its difference from Asia, New Zealand and the rest of the world. The aggressive marketing of many of these features overseas adds to that distinctiveness, and to the sense of self-worth Australians have of themselves. The civilising drive, as Grosz states, is not an instinct, for the drive is subject to "fluctuations and transformations in aims and the renunciation of (some) of its objects (which is strictly impossible in the case of an instinct)" (74). Thus she contends, there "can be satisfaction . . . at giving up satisfaction" (75), or to put it another way, there can be satisfaction in dissatisfaction. This means then that the hegemony of the Symbolic cannot fail to satisfy whether it fulfils its aims or not. A prime example of this is the explorer traditions in Australia, where death, loss, hardship and final failure are eulogised in a Burke and Wills. Who lauds, celebrates or writes popular histories of those who first succeeded in discovering the vast, rich pastoral lands of Australia? Similarly, some people are willing to forgo all the benefits of civilisation to fight wars which cannot be won. Even when their nation is destroyed as an entity they still cling to a fictional, national imagining far removed from the actual lived circumstances of their lives.

The hegemony of the Symbolic is so complete that the metaphoric of the Symbolic and the metonymy of the Imaginary are conflated to produce a single product: an identity, a culture. In this metaphoric conflation, the individual is sacrificed to the Other in a narcissistic relationship. The Symbolic, for Lacan, organises both the Imaginary and the Real. The Symbolic, states MacCannell, "gains energy for civilisation at the expense of the relation of self and other; it is this relation that must be sacrificed" (131). The sacrifice to the hegemonic Symbolic Order is possible because of its promise of total satisfaction, order, fulfilment and wholeness, and because it is for these that the civilising drive aims. This to Lacan is the power of the metaphor, the

Symbolic unconscious, and it is the civilising principle. The principle seeks to set everything in order, to universalise itself, demanding that its goals and values be accepted by people with dissimilar cultures, so that they too are subdued to the same sense of "civilised" order. So great is the largeness of shared desire, and of the powerful acceleration towards fulfilling needs, that, MacCannell maintains, people will sacrifice the promise of their ego other, and the promise contained within their filial, or family, identity, for "an ethic of reproduction, not of self but of culture" (91). What the individual gains is a promise of shared and meaningful oneness, of largeness, and, significantly, the ability of culture to deliver its promises. For culture's promise, relatives take up arms against each other in civil wars, competing for the promises of different national imaginations. A culture's ability, to deliver on the promises to the individual, cannot be tested, because of the fictional, intangible, eternal nature of culture. For this reason there can be no ultimate right or wrong in a civil war, no ultimate vindication for the victor, for there is no test to legitimate the victor in the eyes of the vanquished. The re-emergence of nationalistic aspirations in Eastern Europe, and even the persistence of Confederate ideals in the southern United States, illustrate the permanent incompatibility of differing national and cultural imaginations. Differing Symbolics are not readily interchangeable, nor are they easily integrated.

The same unconscious is felt by the expatriate, who, in a society with different cultural values yearns for the recognition of his or her own compatriots, so that the Australian abroad yearns for the recognition of fellow Australians, rather than the recognition of the local people he or she may be working amongst. This unconscious may influence the work of expatriate writers such as Janette Turner Hospital, Randolph Stow, Peter Porter, and of particular relevance to this thesis, Glenda Adams. What is perceived to be important is to be recognised as worthwhile in the eyes of a group of

others who share similar values of culture and nationhood. What the individual has, then, is a sense of their culture's Symbolic Other affirming them as valuable, as belonging, as important in some way. The promise of affirmation and belonging is what the individual desires.

Desire and Sacrifice in the Nation

Desire, as elaborated above, demands sacrifice for the promise to be fulfilled. It demands a denial, or death, of self or the ego, which is in the register of the Imaginary or the other. It demands that the other is sacrificed to a greater promise. It can demand this because it promises reproduction through the death of the individual, and it promises personal value by demanding the giving up of conscious desire for unconscious desire. But it is not the desire of the individual which demands the sacrifice. It is the Other's desire which the individual desires. As Anthony Wilden puts it in System and Structure, "we desire what the other desires we desire. . . . We therefore desire to TAKE THE PLACE of the Other in desire. When all is said and done, then, we do not desire objects, we desire desire itself" (22-23). He then goes on to liken the impossibility of satisfying such a desire as "like trying to find a hole to fill up a hole" (23). In the impossibility of fulfilment Lacan sees culture as a system of the Other which promises far more satisfaction than do the systems of the other which use concepts such as "nature" or "mother." As MacCannell puts it, culture "can promise the satisfaction of all current and all future, all possible needs . . ." (8). The promise is particularly powerful because desire is shared. In Australia, the bushman myth, for example, can be perceived as a communal desire of Australian males to be independent, rugged and capable, like the wiry outback bushman, as represented by Crocodile

Dundee. But, as the vast majority of Australian males appear to be quite content to live in the relative luxury of coastal cities, and they show little inclination to actually live in the semi-desert interior of the continent, it can be argued that what the Australian male really desires is the sharing of the desire to be seen as the laconic bushman. The Australian male, then, can feel a sense of belonging and affirmation in sharing a Symbolic which unconsciously validates the bushman image as a valued image of themselves. The promise of being valued, however, is always doubly deferred, first by the communal verbalisation of desire in language, and secondly by the idealisation of desire into its collective, anticipated form. This then is the civilising principle, through which our entire civilised gaze is directed, and through which our lives, our society, our view of others, our dreams and our aspirations are ordered.

But a surplus, a "remainder" is left over, which Lacan calls the objet petit a. It is through this remainder that either the Other can reinforce its promise and so strengthen the belief in its "rightness," or the Other can be exposed as a fiction which promises much but delivers nothing. The remainder is both metaphoric and metonymic, being an abstract signifier and, although rejected, a connection with the Other. "It is," as MacCannell states, "literally a switchpoint, the turning-point . . . for the power culture has over us and our resistance to this power" (167). It is a sign of both the subject's link with the Other and the subject's alienation from the Other.

The duality within the nature of culture, the fiction of the metonymic and the metaphoric being one, means that there is a split within culture. The dominant mode is the Symbolic which creates a fictional sense of wholeness and of universality, but the wholeness is at the price of sacrificing difference. In Australia, for example, the individual and the particular within politics and the arts must fight against being subsumed into the homogeneous Australian culture, and the diversity within its

multicultural society must continue to struggle to have a voice in the dominant mainstream of Australian life. It is the dominating fiction of wholeness and universality which the objet petit a and the metonymic disrupt, for they reveal the Symbolic as a fiction, and culture as being particularly localised and open to subversion and change.

Wagner in Lacan

The main thrust within the work of Lacan is the construction of the individual through the Imaginary and the Symbolic other/Other. Lacan's concerns are ethnocentric in that his examination of the construction of the individual are always within Western culture, and in particular within a Freudian framework of psychoanalysis where the primary identity of the individual is sexual. Lacan, therefore, restricts himself to Western or European culture. Roy Wagner looks not so much at the construction of the individual as at the construction of culture itself. Wagner's concepts of convention and invention in culture relate, respectively, very closely to the Symbolic and the Imaginary in Lacan's terminology. In some respects the terms are interchangeable.

Within the dynamics of culture, the metaphoric, or Symbolic, part of culture is what Wagner calls cultural convention, for it agitates both for cultural universality and cultural purity. The coercion of the convention/Symbolic is seen, for example, in the civilising force of the West, which defines itself and other cultures by its own convention/Symbolic. This is an unconscious process within the convention/Symbolic of culture, and Wagner refers to it as masking.

The metonymic, or Imaginary, aspect of culture is what Wagner terms invention, for it works by associating and combining cultural forms into new patterns and meanings. Because the convention/Symbolic is the civilising drive in culture, then

in Wagner's model, the cultures which emphasise the inventive, have a weaker civilising drive than the West which emphasises cultural convention. Because the convention/Symbolic unconsciously asserts its universality, then Western, hegemonic culture can unknowingly advance its convention/Symbolic and its presumptions on more inventive/ Imaginary, or metonymic cultures. Hegemonic pretensions of this type are purely fictitious and erroneous. They are colonialistic universalisations, which include, for example, the well-known assertion that to be civilised is to be English.

The Necessity of the Symbolic in National Identity

The convention/Symbolic is a closed system, in that it promises a complete, whole and satisfactory reality to the people who submit to it. To lose the convention/Symbolic is to lose coherent identity and hope of fulfilment in life. Culture and identity are so closely intertwined that to take away culture is to lose identity. Thus the convention/Symbolic with which an individual identifies can never be totally supplanted without completely destroying that individual's identity. Therefore an individual can never fully take on the convention/Symbolic, or the Other, of another culture, nor, conversely, can he/she ever fully escape from their own convention/Symbolic, or Other, without suffering destructive, personal fragmentation and loss of identity. So the level on which cross-cultural interaction and change can occur most easily for the individual is in the particular, fragmented metonymic, or, as Wagner and Lacan implied, in the inventive/Imaginary part of culture. Such interaction does not change the system, but reorganises it. It is through the surplus, the magic, the play, the objet petit a of culture that differing cultures can come to understand each other better, and facilitate interaction and change.

The process of the metonymic being reworked through the convention/Symbolic, or reworking the convention/Symbolic itself, is illustrated by MacCannell when she talks about desire. She states that the

difference between the mythic Imaginary and the Symbolic Order is that the symbolic mediates the actual relationship of self and other, by forcing the desire between self and other to go through the circuit of the symbolic, where it is rearranged and reordered on a new basis. (132)

The Imaginary/metonymic and the Symbolic/metaphoric in Lacanian terms, or the convention and invention of culture in Wagner's terms, are barred from each other, and, therefore, do not merge together as a "compound" hybrid, but rather rearrange and reorder each other. The process of reordering and rearranging Western State Apparatuses, by temporal, fluid, inventive, "Tribal" configurations from within their own structure, is illustrated in the establishments of the Complex in Games of the Strong, and the Grotius Institute in The Bellarmine Jug. Both these institutions survive, and maintain a dominant Symbolic, through the appropriation of the Imaginary, or Tribal inventiveness. This process, which leaves a surplus, is in some sense disjunctive, and as such is similar to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which is taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: The Construction of the Hybrid

Bhabha on Hybridity

In his article, "Signs Taken for Wonders," Homi Bhabha argues that in the colonial context hybridity "is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures" (175), but rather it is a position, unrecognised by the convention/Symbolic of the colonial culture, which interrogates that culture through mimicry and mockery. This unpredictable presence Bhabha links to Freud's concept of the uncanny in which the familiar becomes unfamiliar. When the safe, familiar Symbolic of a nation is uncannily mimicked, it is displaced from its usual meaning, particularly when encountering the Symbolic of another culture, and so it becomes a manifest presence which is unfamiliar and alarming. Bhabha states that the "partialising process of hybridity is best described as a metonymy of presence" (176). This metonymy of presence, Bhabha asserts, is strange and disturbing. It raises questions of authority and representation in cultural contexts, and it is the inventive/Imaginary rearranging the convention/Symbolic, not through a harmonious integration but through changing it and displacing it. The hybrid displaces symbols, it questions desire, and it exposes power relations in cultural difference.

Bhabha's concept of hybridity evokes a point of resistance to the hegemony of cultural constructs, and reveals a component of change in the nature and function of Lacan's and Wagner's concepts of cultural identity. MacCannell states that to Lacan:

Power consists in the ability to restrict and limit meaning. It is the quashing of multiple meanings, not simply their elimination, that the hegemonic signifier operates. By imposing or implying 'significance' at

the expense of meaning, the word becomes the basis of the social life, the form of the social tie. (47)

Through the metonymy of presence the hybrid reasserts the multiple meanings of cultural positions, questioning the implied significance imposed by the Symbolic Order.¹⁰ Bhabha argues that in fact colonisation produces hybridisation rather than colonial domination and native repression.

In his articles, "DissemiNation" and "A Question of Survival," Bhabha further develops his theory of cultural hybridity, looking particularly at the constructs of nation and nationalism. He is especially critical of Anderson's development of the metaphors of "homogeneous empty time" (a concept of horizontal, shared time), "unisonance" (a harmony of patriotic people), and the "many as one." Bhabha argues that the holism of the imagined community is disrupted by cultural difference which re-articulates, in different ways, the meanings of the signs of the dominant discourse within a nation. Bhabha call this "the alterity of the sign" (DissemiNation 309). To Bhabha, the repetitive, performative aspects of culture, or a nation, are not synchronous with, but rather interrogate and are agonistic to, the metropolitan discourses and knowledges. The minority discourses are juxtaposed, supplementary, secondary and non-synchronic to the dominant discourses, and, therefore, they are not subsumed into, nor are they opposite to, the homogeneous whole of a national imagination. Instead, they are, as it

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Bhabha is writing in the context of India where the hegemonic English discourse has been a minority discourse in contact with some of the world's greatest civilisations. In Australia, the hegemonic English discourse could often completely ignore the Aboriginal discourse, because the Aboriginal discourse has always been both a marginal and a minority discourse. In a similar way, Australia's English discourse has tried to ignore the discourses of its northern neighbours, but it has failed to realise that while English may be hegemonic it is a minority discourse in the region, and, therefore, Bhabha's arguments are very pertinent to Australia's relations with its neighbours.

were, thorns in the paws of the lion, so that the lion can no longer perform as a lion.

"We," Bhabha states,

must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct but not necessarily accumulative, teleological, or dialectical. The 'difference' of cultural knowledge that 'adds to' but does not 'add up' is the enemy of the implicit generalisation of knowledge or the implicit homogenisation of experience (DissemiNation 313)

Bhabha maintains that the pedagogical (as opposed to the performative) aspect of the national imagination is the facet which perpetrates the myths of unisonance, of the homogeneous empty time of the nation, and of the many as one. According to Bhabha, the didactic telling of national histories, or, in the case of Anderson, the telling of the history of the modern nations, is based on Renan's concept of "the will to nationhood" (DissemiNation 310).¹¹ Bhabha calls this a "totalising pedagogy of the will" (DissemiNation 310). It is the pedagogy of the national will which dominates the national discourse and promotes the fiction of the imagined community.

A Synopsis of Bhabha, Lacan and Wagner

Bhabha's concepts of the performative and the pedagogical correlate, to some extent, to Wagner's concepts of the invention and convention of culture, and Lacan's

¹¹ Renan's concept can be found in a translation of his lecture, "What is a Nation?" in Nation and Narration (1984): 19-20.

constructs of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The performative, the inventive and the Imaginary aspects are all metonymic in character and interrogate the dominant positions of the pedagogical, the cultural convention and the Symbolic. Similarly, none of them are absorbed or integrated through the process of interaction. There is, therefore, a position of hybridity, in Bhabha's sense, within the dynamics of cultural and national identity, which is a place of continual displacement and resistance to the harmony of the fiction of a national imagination.

Bhabha, Lacan and Wagner all seem to argue that it is at the level of the metonymic, the performative, the Imaginary, and the inventive, and not at the level of the metaphoric, the pedagogical, the Symbolic, and of convention, that some understanding and growth towards harmony can be effected. The interaction is the position of hybridity which interrogates the metaphoric constantly. "Hybridity," says Bhabha, "is the perplexity of living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life" (DissemiNation 314). For Western society, claims Wagner, the

only real solution can come about through a growth of social consciousness to the point where the separate classes or segments of society are able to interact and create one another in a continual dialectic. This corresponds to a second 'inversion' of cultural orientation, in which the conventions of society as a whole are mediated by a dialectic between classes. (125)

Invention and re-invention needs, once again, to be prioritised and mediated through the conventions of Western society, so that society becomes more flexible and adaptable for the inclusion of others. But this, in turn, will lead to greater instability as the contradictory forces within cultural and national identity interact. As Wagner states, Western society

is challenged by its very creations. . . . All have the effect of differentiating and ultimately deconventionalising our collectivising controls. By attempting to 'integrate' and satisfy minorities, we create them; by trying to 'explain' and universalise facts and events we fragment our theories and categories; by applying universal theories naively to the study of cultures we invent those cultures as stubborn and inviolable individualities. Each failure motivates a greater collectivising effort.

(131)

The choice is, as Wagner suggests, that we "can learn to use invention or to be used by it" (158). He warns, however, that the process of invention "poses the same kind of trap for those who would consider it as 'real' as any other concept" (156). The major shift for Western cultures, and for the constructs of nation and nationalism, is to realise their undefendable hegemonic outlook, and to allow the re-invention of their cultural and national imaginations to happen, not just from within, but also from without, by the deliberate, equitable inclusion of others. The call, then, is for both an internal and external multiplicity and mixture of culture and nationhood, interacting in a continual changing blend of invention and of convention, which is responsive to criticism.¹²

¹² This call is not for singular types and constructions of cultures and national imaginations, but for multiplicity within the nation and national imaginations. See, for example, Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of heteroglossia and polyphony. Bakhtin, in his development of the theory of the novel, sees the polyphonic, as a multiplicity of languages and cultures, while heteroglossia is more the "sense of the difference between the various discursive strata within a national language" (Clark, Mikhail Bakhtin 290).

Hybridity and Australia

In Australia, because of the push towards fullness of national life, harmony and homogeneity, the metonymic and the hybrid can often be in danger of being repressed into the Imaginary unconscious. The repression of the metonymic is further complicated by what Lacan sees as the hiddenness of desire in Western culture, for, as MacCannell explains, "in modern life, we no longer represent the superego and the ego-ideal in public rituals, communally recognised events: we keep them offstage" (88).¹³ The dynamic of metonymic interaction in Australia needs to be given greater recognition as an ever-present characteristic of Australian culture and nationalism, because Australia is equally a Western nation, a multicultural nation, and a nation located at the junction of South-East Asia and the Pacific.

In today's world as cultures and nations interact, seeking more equitable rather than hierarchical relationships, so the process of re-invention is heightened, for change is accelerated and inventiveness is enlarged. Yet while the hegemony of such a process can still be destructive, it is also true that no culture or nation is ever able to be categorised as virginal. All cultures and nations are dynamic, interacting within themselves and between each other. All are in a process of hybridity. In the dialectic of culture, in the continuum of invention and re-invention, hybridity is the one common, equalising reality all nations and cultures share.

But the Symbolic unconscious is deeper in strongly hegemonic cultures, such as

¹³ MacCannell's argument comes from Lacan's article, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis," especially pages 26-27. Lacan writes of "the increasing absence" of rituals and festivals in Western society where they are known only "in their most obviously degraded aspects" (26).

white, Eurocentric, Western cultures, so, therefore, the process of exposing the fiction of the hegemonic Other, and the process of sensitive interaction and recognition of hybridisation must be raised to a more consciously critical level. Both because of the necessity of the Other/other for a coherent identity, and because of the fictional nature of the Other/other, the continual reordering of the Symbolic/metaphoric through interaction with the Imaginary/metonymic is important for the sensitive co-existence of cultures and for the lessening of hegemonic empire-building and of domination by colonisation in all its forms.

In order to examine the construction of Australian national imaginations, or national identity, within the context of Australia's Asian neighbourhood, and in order to examine the processes of hybridity, with their elements of displacement and resistance, it will prove helpful to analyse two very different novels written by Australian authors. These novels are Glenda Adams's Games of the Strong and Nicholas Hasluck's The Bellarmine Jug, the foci of the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Adams's Agenda in Games of the Strong

Writing, or printing, as Marshall Berman points out in his introduction to All That is Solid Melts into Air, is a primary factor in the process of modernisation and the development of modern Western society. One of the sources of the "maelstrom of modern life," states Berman, has been "systems of mass communication, dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse people and societies" (16). Wagner agrees, arguing that writing, printing and the media are important factors in the West's hegemony of collating, inscribing and narrating the stories of itself and others. Similarly Anderson refers to the development of print media as being an important component in the origin of nations and their national imaginations. In the West, the relationship between national imaginations and the writer has proved powerful. The relationship between the construction of a national imagining and the role of the writer is therefore a close one, and this relationship is a central concern in The Games of the Strong.

The hegemony of the West in its narration of itself and others, and the play within that narration, can be observed in Glenda Adams's novel, and in its reception by Australian critics. The book is set in a fictitious country, presumably located in South-East Asia, which is governed by an instrumental body known as the Complex. The novel is a political allegory, being concerned with the equivocation of authoritarian rule, the submissive allegiance of the exploited classes, the ambiguity of political resistance and the problematic of the complicity of silence. To explore the novel's fictional construction of a nation, this chapter will examine the novel, firstly, in the light of the author's own background and stated agenda, and, secondly, in the light of the different critical readings by Australian reviewers. A fundamental issue in the

reading of this novel is the problematic of the author presenting the work as an allegory of Western political constructs in the setting of an Eastern culture, and more particularly Indonesia.

Autobiographical: A Personal Agenda

Games of the Strong is Adams's first novel, and in it she appears to be driven by a personal agenda, perhaps symptomatic of the circumstance of the expatriate writer as discussed earlier. To the reader who knows Adam's life story, the similarities between the main protagonist, Neila, and Adams's life tend to indicate a pedagogical directiveness. The novel is divided into four sections, each characterised by a topographical feature - Mountain, Peninsular, Island and Valley - and these may be constructed as geographical points on a particular journey. Greg Manning in "Playing with Power" suggests these features "map the parabola of Neila's career, from language teacher to news writer, to acting Minister of Information, to outlaw refugee, ending where she began, among a small group of resisters, but now outside the walls of the Complex" (487). Adams, like Neila, began her career as a language teacher in Australia, then became a news writer and novelist in New York, spending some twenty-four years outside of Australia as a literary "refugee."

Early in her career, Adams spent two years in Indonesia as a student, and her novel grew out of that experience. In an interview with Candida Baker, in Yacker, Adams admits, that after her two years of study and living in Java, she desired to write as an interpreter of the East to the West (19). The desire to do something, to wake people up to "the truth" of the East may help explain why Adams still felt passionate about the book when she was interviewed by Cassandra Pybus, in "Fiddling with

Words," in 1991, even though she admits that her passion is not shared by many of the novel's readers (24). Adams explained to Pybus that her project was contemporary, not futuristic, and that the implications of the novel were wider than any single nation. The world she creates, she maintains, is a synthesis of New York, Sydney, Canberra, Malaysia and Indonesia (21). Margaret Smith, in her review "Brave Journey to an Alien Land," agrees with Adams, claiming that the book is more of a fable than a novel, and in her reading of it she is led to conclude that the fable "quality means the novel can not be located in any one country - there are greater or lesser attributes of the complex in all our cultures" (17). The book, then, it can be argued, has an international application, and is an allegory of Western political structures and nation-building.

Adams's development of the multicultural aspects of the novel is partly due to her own international experiences. Betty Birskys reveals in The Woman Writer that "Adams herself once wrote the news flashes in New York's Times square - thirteen phrases to 'explain' a chaotic world" (5). At one stage of the novel this is Neila's job in The Complex. The aspects of Adams's work which are applicable internationally are heavily laden with a political critique orientated to a Western perspective. The critique is Western because the concerns of the novel are primarily about Western cultural constructs, such as the nation with its dispersion of power through political structures, and the place of the media and the writer within the nation.

The Realm of the Writer

The critique of the writer is central to the book because, as mentioned above, Neila, like Adams, is a writer. Neila, as a journalist, rises to become the Acting Information Minister, the politician in charge of writers and government propaganda.

Her primary concern, which fluctuates throughout the story, is to fight against the subduing of the expression of "truth," or free speech. The desire to expose the Complex leads her to give a renegade paper to a conference of writers, and her hero, of whom she speaks at the conference, is the dissident writer, Barm.

Barm is the benign champion of free expression, and particularly of ethnicity and class in the face of the homogenising policy of the Complex. He becomes a powerful statement in the book when, as a political prisoner, he refuses to accept writing material to continue his writing. Instead he says to Neila (the resister, the Complex writer, and the Acting Information Minister), "You go home and sit down and write it all down. As for me, I've grown beyond paper and pens" (108). In her address about Barm, Neila states that the "elite say he is uneducated and simple-minded, because he does not know whether Petrarch or Dante had the greater influence on the Renaissance. In fact, he is our Petrarch and our Dante in our own Renaissance" (76). Such a breaking from "cultured Europe" is reminiscent of the writer's position in pioneering, and inscribing a national identity for a fledgling nation. Henry Lawson, like Barm, was an unadorned and unschooled writer, and in the 1890s he did a great deal to build the image of an Australian national identity. In a similar way, much of Australia's twentieth century literature has been dominated by the quest for an Australian identity, as is seen in the Jindyworobak writers and the "movement" related to Patrick White.¹⁴

Writing, the control it gives over information, and the influence it exerts over

¹⁴ Harry Heseltine, in "Australian Fiction Since 1920," refers to Patrick White, Randolph Stow and Christopher Koch as constituting something of a "movement" in Australian literature. Vincent Buckley, in "In the Shadow of Patrick White," links White, Stow and Koch together as writers whose "specific myth is that of search - a search, journey, pilgrimage only dimly apprehended by those who make it" (144). They are Australian authors who make "accessible to the Australian imagination . . . a world 'recognisably Australian'" (144).

the nation and the construction of the national imagination, is enlarged in a number of ways in Games of the Strong. For example, Dabra, the foreigner who has married a Complexer, continues her resistance from abroad by publishing information in a news letter. So complete is the suppression of information by the Complex that, even while working in the Information Ministry, Neila relates how "Dabra, all that distance away, has pieced together more about the Island than I have been able to do here in the Complex" (72). As Anderson suggests, the control of the newspapers, the news media, and news information is very important in the creation of a national imagination and its construct of homogeneous empty time. The flow of information through and to Neila, as well as the restriction and corruption of that information, are all explored by Adams in the novel. The ideas which construct an imaginary nation within certain geographical boundaries are reliant on the Western Symbolic register. Adams investigates these constructs by interrogating such notions as freedom of speech, the democratic right to popular rule by choice, and the right to oppose and resist those in power. Adams appears to be saying, on the one hand, that these concepts are not necessarily given the same Symbolic importance in Asia as they are in Australia, and, on the other hand, she may be indicating that their importance is really given little more than lip service in many Western nations.

The Ambiguity of Power and Resistance

Adams's probing of the difference in the national constructs of the East and the West is not a simplistic dichotomy. Instead, she exposes the way in which the Western concepts of nation and national imaginations are hybridised in the East, and the way in which that hybridisation exposes and critiques the construction of Western nations

themselves. Adams demonstrates through the text the subtle way in which oppositional voices are seduced into silence, not through direct confrontation, but through innuendo and unspoken inferences, and through the invisible, undefinable presence and power of the Complex. Her critique is thus of the ambiguous nature of power within the construction of the nation. As Rosemary Creswell, in her article "A State of Would-Be Traitors," states the "problem is that apparently working for the system is ultimately not very different from being a loyal component of it" (45). Furthermore, because of the confusing shifts, from apparent Complexer to apparent resister and vice versa, which happens within Neila and in those around her, the masks which people wear end up becoming their reality. Neila's position, for example, shifts from that of a person driven to resist, to a person resisting for no immediately apparent reason. She sets out initially on a quest to avenge her parents' deaths, which she believed were at the hands of the Complex, only to eventually find out that the Complex was not responsible for their deaths. Neila writes,

I desperately wanted to have died with them, to have been sitting there in that car, between them perhaps, as they smashed into that tree. . . . I had no reason, no personal reason, to be a resister at all. I had always believed that in joining a group and resisting I was avenging their deaths.
(112)

Neila continues resisting for no personal reason, except that she wants to find her lover, Lak. When she finds him, he turns out to be a Complexer who is informing on the resisters, so Neila murders him. The final words of the novel, as Neila contemplates giving Lak a proper funeral, are "I shall do what I have to do, and then start the struggle over again" (150). But for what reason? the reader may ask.

Creswell can take no comfort in Neila's final words, because of the complicity

and duplicity she sees in Neila's approach to the Complex and its political aims. She writes, the

'big brother is watching you' Complex is in fact the outcome of a revolution gone haywire, and given the strange attraction to power Neila achieves in her spy role, we can have little faith that any system erected by the Resisters will be better than the one usurped. (45)

The question Adams provides no answer for is why Neila must resist at all. The only "evil" of the big brother Complex is its crushing of the voice of resistance, and its apparent suppression of ethnicity. But the ethnic Fielders do not resist, and Neila's resistance on their behalf is not accepted by them. The Fielders, marginalised from the city, romanticise the Complex. The people, whether Fielders or Complexers, do not appear to be in any danger unless they resist. But resist what? And for what?

Unlike Creswell, Katherine England, in her review "Vivid and Unsettling," does find comfort in the final words of Neila. She writes that, for her, Neila "is left, neither winner nor loser, not strengthened or made weak, but simply prepared, with the power of the ultimate survivor, to start the struggle all over again" (27). England asserts,

lonely Neila is like a child peeling the skins off an onion - with each new skin the truth radically alters before her astounded and disbelieving eyes. . . .

The onion-peeler, unlike the cracker of nuts, is not left with a hard kernel, a solid core of acceptable reality. (27)

Neila confronts and conquers the problematic of locating the truth and its changeability. She conquers it by surviving, and by continuing her commitment to resistance. In a world of liquid truth, Adams seems to be saying, resistance (even resistance for its own sake) is the only way to maintain some honesty, some integrity and some personal

worth in the complex power struggles which determine the nation's imagination of itself.

Duplicity of Text and Author

Adams's approach to the flexibility and instability of truth in the national imagining is replicated in her style of writing. Smith writes that Adams has commented to her that "she wanted to write honest fiction that was exploratory and tackling new forms" (17). According to Greg Manning in "Playing with Power," this novelistic flexibility was new to Australian novels in 1982, and it leads him to read Games of the Strong as a postmodernist text. Manning writes that in "postmodernist writing, the window has clouded over, and written narratives need to be read as documents which take place in a labyrinth of possible contexts" (486). The text becomes the site of multiple interactions which struggle to exert some power, such as the conflict "fought between the voices in the story, or between the narrative and its implied provenances, or between the text and the reader" (487). The Games of the Strong's alienness and disturbing use of emblematic names, such as Lak, Serena and Dum, create an atmosphere of secrecy and distrust between the reader and the text. The underlying, disquieting discourse leads Manning to state that "the Complex is not a place, but a condition of speech; a condition less of ambiguity than of infinite suspicion" (487). This condition calls for constant interpretation of all events, words and relationships. Neila's interpretations, to which the reader is privy, are often wrong, or so it appears. The constant need to make politically correct statements, even through the clothes one wears, in order to please the unseen power of the Complex, suggests to Manning that "Neila's world is nothing but text" (488). In many ways the national imagination of any

nation is nothing but text, consisting of a controlled, shared narration which is a changeable, hybrid (in Bhabha's sense of always being in process) fiction. The ambivalence of Neila's position is that nothing subversive she says or does gets her into serious trouble with the Complex, so that the reader must query the real objective of the threat of the Complex's power. Only after Neila's arrest do her words become ineffectual, for she is not listened to as she tries to defend herself against the accusation of being the Chief Resister. What appears to be at stake is not the truth of words themselves but the way in which they affect the Complex's power. Similarly, the narration of the nation can be seen, not so much as interested in the "truth," as interested in the exercise of control through a fiction of great collective, imaginative power.

National and political conflict, then, is concerned with the power of differing, fictitious imaginations. What becomes important is the struggle, rather than the "truth." Manning cites two main structures of hope through the text: the resisters, and the story itself. But the resisters are also sometime Complexers, for in their struggle they do more to further the Complex's aims than to hinder them. As Manning states, "the genuine resister is a problematic figure, since survival as a resister depends on the effectiveness with which you can convince others that you are not one" (489). Being indistinguishable from the Complexers, the resisters have no alternative aims to those of the Complex, and so they are mere pretenders to the Complex, "contesting only the incumbency" (489). Thus, in a world of concealment and misinterpretation, Manning sees a growth in Neila to the point where she is simply able to start the struggle again.

The ambiguity and the struggle within the text correlate to the ambiguity and struggle that Adams has often been subjected to as an expatriate Australian author. Salman Rushdie, in "Imaginary Homelands," sums up the situation of the expatriate

writer when he states that "those of us who have been forced by cultural displacement to accept the provisional nature of all truths, all certainties, have perhaps had modernism forced upon us" (12).¹⁵ Like Neila, Adams, too, is a resister who has lived the life of a literary "refugee." Adams has been rejected by Australian literary critics because she was living overseas, and yet Australian concerns and settings have so obviously predominated in her writings. Her expatriate status appeared to be confirmed in 1987 when she won a NSW Premier's Award for Dancing on Coral but was refused the \$10,000 prize money. Richard Guilliat writes in his article in the Times on Sunday, "Recognition but No \$10,000 Booty for Expatriate Adams," that the

prize money would have been the only substantial money Adams has earned from her fiction in 20 years. Its withdrawal left her feeling defensive, as if her home State has given her a pat on the back for her writing and followed it with a rap across the knuckles for leaving Sydney in 1964.

In fact the reason she has returned to Australia so rarely these past 23 years is lack of money. (32)

The expatriate Australian has often found him or herself in Adams's situation: an Australian writer greatly influenced by his or her national background, but deemed unacceptable and "unAustralian" to the literati in Australia itself. Such a position of influence and unacceptability is the position, in Bhabha's terms, of the hybrid, "as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life" (DissemiNation 314).

¹⁵ While Salman Rushdie talks of "the provisional nature of all truths" as being a trait of modernism, Greg Manning describes it as a postmodern characteristic. The argument here is not so much interested in the theoretical tag given to "provisional truth" as it is in the fictional nature of truth in the narration of the nation.

The Unconscious Hegemony of an Australian Identity

The criteria of "Australianness," in the past, has often been linked to Australian content. The funding of films through the Australian Film Commission in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, required the use of trade marks such as the typical Australian outback landscape and the use of Australian slang in film scripts.¹⁶ Adams's Games of the Strong would certainly have failed to meet the Australian requirements if judged by such standards. Neither the setting, the characters, nor the language in the novel are Australian. These attitudes, coupled with a simple-minded belief that an Australian must live on Australian soil to be truly Australian, meant that the exciting variant of an Australian being displaced through other cultures, and so better placed to interrogate Australian's own perspectives and culture, has often been overlooked.

Adams, the expatriate, is an Australian who is viewing Asia from the point of view of an outsider, in much the same way as an ethnographer does. James Clifford, in The Predicament of Culture, quotes Segalen who travelled as a writer through China, as saying that the traveller expresses "not simply his vision, but through an instantaneous, constant transfer, the echo of his presence" (14). As Lacan's theory substantiates, the individual cannot escape his or her own cultural unconscious when interacting with another culture. This realisation should make it obvious that any writer raised in Australia will always remain, to some large extent, Australian. Adams's novel, as that of an Australian expatriate, reverberates with the echoes of an

¹⁶ Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka, in The Screening of Australia, both Volumes I and II, explain the level of Australian content and of Australian actors required in Australian films for them to be eligible for the much needed finance of the Australian Film Development Corporation (1970-1973) and its successor the Australian Film Commission. They coined the phrase "the AFC genre" to describe the films of this era (vol. 1: 91).

unconscious, Australian cultural Symbolic. Birskys relates how Adams has stated that in her work "she is always interested in going off on a trip leading into the unknown, what the rest of the world thinks is the centre - but for us (Australians) is the edge or the depth" (5). It is, perhaps, Adams's critique of the centre, her Australian, Western centre, and her exposure of the horror of its actual instability, teetering on the edge of a plummeting abyss, which is so hidden in Games of the Strong.

Another aspect of the Australian side of a reading of Adams is alluded to by Lansbury when she reflectively asks concerning Games of the Strong and Adams's first book of short stories, The Hottest Night of the Year:

Is this vision of emptiness derived from an Australian childhood? Other women writers have rebelled against the Crocodile Dundee masculinity of Australian life and gone on to become extraordinarily strong. . . . But somewhere Glenda Adams was crushed by experience and others, and her agony is the substance of her stories. Reading them is like touching a gaping wound. (9)

Adams's heritage as an Australian appears both to enliven her work and to dog her footsteps. Both the ambiguity of Australia's great forbidding deserts, together with the promise of its new utopias, are present in Adams's work.

In Games of the Strong, the unconscious "Australianness" of Adams is inescapable as she pursues her agenda through the development of Neila. For example, in a manner far more applicable to Australia than to many Asian countries, Neila incites a group of villagers to be more militant in a strike they have started in order to push for a greater measure of justice. Neila speaks to the reluctant strikers in a fashion more analogous of an Australian trade unionist than an Asian fugitive, telling them the

Complex contractors need you. . . . They need you so that a hospital

can be built and they can get rich. . . . Use the strength you have. Use the strike to get more money, and use it to topple the doctor.

Topple. It was odd to hear my voice using a word like that. A Complex propaganda word. I spent some time talking with them, suggesting how they might organise and present demands. Then I left and went on my way. I hope they succeeded, and I hope that doctor has had his accident. (137)

Again, Neila, more with an Australian ethic than an Asian outlook, desires to set free the political prisoners on the Island. Faced with Barm's hatred of her and yet his heroism amidst the Island's horrors, Neila decides to take three hundred prisoners back with her to freedom. After releasing the hesitant escapees into an uncertain future on the coast of the Complex, Neila states,

I kept the two leaders with me. I told them that they should hijack the ferry and its crew and go back to the Island for others and keep going back and forth, even hijacking more boats. I suggested a couple of other ports they might make for, and I only hope they did what I told them. (114)

The message, which so often resounds from Australia, of the need for human rights in Asia is clearly heard through Neila.

Beng-Huat Chua, in his article "Australian and Asian Perceptions of Human Rights," discusses human rights in Singapore, one of the most Western countries in Asia. He states that in Western nations the State must prove it has no malice in discriminating against individuals, but in Asia the privileging of "the collective turns the table, so to speak, on the individuals. The latter must defend their own actions, demonstrating the absence of malice against the collective" (92) . Chua claims

that what is termed "human rights abuses" in the West is termed "good government" by the majority of Asians. Neila's rush of blood, and her fiery speech to free the politically oppressed, emerges, then, as more Australian than Asian in character and desire.

Furthermore, the Australian aspect of the author is seen in the description of several incidents in the novel. They are written in a "tourist" style quite dissimilar from the surrounding text. Examples include a detailed observation of a flying kite (15-16), and a description of children playing with dragon flies tied with threads (22). They reveal an over-description of events which are common enough in South-East Asia, and they place a question in the reader's mind as to whether Neila, as narrator, is South-East Asian, or merely an extension of the Australian author's imagination.

Putting the lapses in narration aside, the novel's sense of truth and stability is probably best found, not in any autobiographical surmising concerning the author, but in the internal autobiographical authority of Neila's narration. The story, claims Manning, can be read as "part history, part expose and part confession" (489). The multiplicity of the textual voices gives Neila's narrative, as autobiography with personal candour, a relationship with the truth which is absent in the text's description of the Complex, so that the relationship of the narrator to the truth needs to be investigated separately from the circumstances of the constitution of truth within the Complex. But Neila resists investigation because she will never remain consistent enough to undergo examination. Neila's relationship to power is also compromised because of her pleasure in having power through words, power through her feminine body and power through her office as the Acting Information Minister. These are the games of the strong. Manning sums it up when he states that the

truth the journal claims is that of autobiography, a mode which would

subject the reader to the authority of the teller, the sole possessor of the whole truth of her own story. In a language devoid of truth, such a claim must be seen to be another play for power. (491)

In these contexts the novel plays with the borders of political, national and personal life. In a way reminiscent of Foucault's description of the dispersed nature of power, it shows the corruption of power, its lack of a coherent centre and its nebulous dissipation throughout society. All is not as it seems, or as one might like it to be, within the imagined national boundaries of the Complex. The Complex, the nation as Neila imagines it to be, constantly eludes her and changes before her startled eyes, making both her positive contribution and her resistance to it problematic for her.

Then, too, the instability of the imagined nation also proves problematic to Adams as the author, especially in her stated aim of creating a cross-over between the East and the West. Adams's desire as a writer is not transmitted to the reader as a shared desire. The appreciation of the Asian setting and its history is missing for the Australian reader, and the stark isolated Symbolic of some political desire is left stranded in what becomes viewed as an alien, futuristic world. The magic and the play between Eastern and Western cultural constructs and nations, so alive to the author, is lost to the reader who feels no magic at all in the strangeness of the text.

Chapter 6: Beyond Adams's Agenda in Games of the Strong

As has been discussed, the emphasis in Games of the Strong on the play in the unpredictable illusions, and the shifts in the multiple levels of the novel, gives the text an ambience of indeterminacy. The novel can thus be read in a number of ways, such as Science Fiction, as an allegory of politics in general, or as an allegory of Asian, and, more particularly, Indonesian politics. The possibility of different readings of the novel is acknowledged in Adams's comments in Yacker, where she states that

a writer is much punier than her or his work. There is a larger life in a work that you as a writer have nothing to do with consciously. . . . It has its own life, and what other people see is just as valid as your own point of view. (23)

The difference in these various readings allows us to infer that a cultural unconscious is at work, not only in the author, but also in the Australian critic and reader, who either does not recognise the relevance of the novel to Western and Australian political life, or who fails to see its relevance as a treatise on the politics of Australia's northern neighbours.

A Futuristic Novel

Adams's creation, in Games of the Strong, of a fictional world through which to explore political ideas, is seen by many Australian reviewers as a futuristic world, and, therefore, the novel is read as science fiction. For example, Creswell's assessment of the novel compares it to Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. Kirkus Review unflatteringly calls Adams's book a "lacklustre futuristic novel" (394), while Coral Lansbury in an

article with the intriguing title, "The Life You Hide May Be Your Own," agrees that it is "a strange science fiction novel, reminiscent of Orwell" (9). Margaret Smith, in "Brave Journey to an Alien Land," not only likens Games of the Strong to Nineteen Eighty-Four, but also to Kafka's The Trial, and "to the brave journeys of women into alien lands chartered precariously by Doris Lessing and Ursula LeGuin" (17).

Undoubtedly, Games of the Strong invites a futuristic reading of a totalitarian regime, but while such a reading may satirise totalitarianism, it can be too easily dismissed by the reader as a critique which is irrelevant to their own nation and nationalism.

A Novel on Indonesia

Another reading of Games of the Strong is Elizabeth Riddell's "Life Under a Future Dictatorship." Riddell acknowledges that the novel has futuristic overtones for Western nations, but she maintains that it belongs to a more contemporary genre, for she asserts that Games of the Strong is set "in a South-East Asian country, possible Indonesia" (79). Robyn Fallick, in her article entitled "Strangers to the North," agrees with Riddell that the novel is set in Indonesia. Ironically, Adams adamantly declares, when interviewed by Pybus, that Games of the Strong "is not meant to be about Indonesia at all" (21). Fallick, like Adams, has worked in Java and has a degree in Indonesian and Malay studies. She refers to the similarities of the setting, the climate and the customs in Games of the Strong to those of Indonesia. Correspondingly, the topography of the Mountain, according to Fallick, is "that of the Bromom [sic] volcano in East Java," and the biographical details of the dissident, Barm, and the playboy poet, Altner, are parallel to well-known Indonesian counterparts.

To these similarities could be added other anecdotal evidence from the novel.

The politics of a recent Independence Revolution, followed by a change in government which resulted in the exile and imprisonment of some of the former revolutionary heroes, is common to both Indonesian history and to Games of the Strong.

Furthermore, the Special Area status of the Peninsular in the novel is similar to the status of Yogyakarta which was the revolutionary capital of the Indonesian resistance against the Dutch. Additionally, the unorganised vagueness of the resistance movement in the story relates to a corresponding situation in Indonesia in the aftermath of the coup attempt in 1965. Each of the characters in the novel does not have a surname, but rather uses a single name which correlates to the common practice in naming people in Indonesia. The propensity for acronyms, such as, GASTRO for Games of the Strong, and LOLICO for the greeting of Long Live the Complex, and Neila's own creation of acronyms, reflects a well-known Indonesian attribute. In "Letters from Jogja," Adams tells how "in Indonesian I even learned to joke and play word games. Those afternoons when we lounged on the enormous beds in Jogja, we played a kind of verbal tennis, coining new words as rapidly as possible" (8). The games Adams played in Java were an Indonesian form of what would normally be acronyms in English. The flexibility and freedom of language, so common in the newly-formed Indonesian language, is part of the play in Adams's novel.

The Island, in Games of the Strong, is comparable to the island of Buru in Indonesia. Buru has been reputed to house some 10,000 political prisoners. It was visited in 1969 by a group of journalists, including Brian May who wrote of the experience in his book The Indonesian Tragedy. The camps on the island were not unguarded, like those in Adam's novel, but they may as well have been, for May writes, the

watch-tower, made of crudely split logs, was perilously lop-sided; sentries

drooped listlessly on their benches in the small cabins at the top, overcome by boredom and steamy heat; there were no searchlights and no packs of savage dogs. And the night after our arrivals . . . the main gate fell from its hinges when a soldier tried to swing it open. (27)

All the prisoners at Buru Island were class B prisoners, which meant that they were alleged communists against whom there was insufficient evidence to have them convicted in court. A similar situation exists on the Island.

Furthermore, as Neila meets Barm on the Island, so May met his real life counter-part on Buru, the Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer. May comments that due to the work routine of eking out a living on the swampy island Pramoedya was too tired to write. Hart Cohen, who is associate producer of a film on the life and work of Pramoedya, states in "Decolonising Language" that

Pramoedya's survival at Buru Island prison camp is intimately tied to the survival of his story. Denied writing materials on Buru until the last six years of his imprisonment (Jean-Paul Sartre sent Pramoedya a typewriter which he never received) Pramoedya managed to keep both himself and the story alive by telling it, in ritual fashion, to fellow prisoners. (12)

In Games of the Strong, Barm, the dissident writer, taunts Neila by reciting his novel to her, "and it began, 'My story is in my head and if you want it you'll have to take my head to get it'" (108). Unlike Pramoedya, however, Barm refuses to write his story, to be a part of the media and information system which Neila represents, even to inform on the horrors of the Complex, and, as mentioned earlier, this action is, perhaps, the most dissident in the novel.

May claims that most Indonesians are unconcerned about the political prisoners, even though some sources in Indonesia estimated them to number about 100,000

persons nation-wide in 1976 (40). The reasons he gives include the fear caused by unsubstantiated rumours that the Communists possessed lists of people they intended to kill, and the belief in the Javanese quest for harmony which requires that good be balanced by evil. Within the novel, the Complex is pervaded by rumour, paranoia, and even the constant fear of being black-listed for death. Good fades into evil, and evil into good. Neila as a journalist, and as Acting Information Minister, lives in a world of constant suspicion.

May, furthermore, attributes the Communists' lack of resistance to their slaughter and imprisonment in the months and years following the attempted coup to a fatalistic acceptance. A similar sense of the inevitable grips the resisters in Games of the Strong.¹⁷

While the meanings of the novel may be multiple, yet in terms of cross-cultural readings it is difficult to miss the allegory in the story. James Clifford in his article, "On Ethnographic Allegory," explains that in reading another culture, while the free play of readings may in theory be infinite, there are, at any one historical moment, a limited number of canonical and emergent allegories available

Within this historical predicament, the critique of stories and patterns that persistently form cross-cultural accounts remains an important political as well as scientific task. (110)

As outlined above, there is much evidence to show that Games of the Strong can be

¹⁷ This echoes the Asian collectivist tradition set out by Chua in speaking on human rights, see pages 66-67 of this thesis.

read as a Westerner's allegory of Indonesia and its politics.

But it is understandable that Adams would not want to cast Games of the Strong as an allegory of Indonesian politics, or as an Indonesian parable. As such it would be very subversive in that it takes the analysis of politics beyond even that of the East-West stereotype of incompetence and corruption, which is seen, for example, in such Australian novels as Water from the Moon,¹⁸ and A Cry in the Jungle Bar.¹⁹ Katherine England reflects, "Games of the strong indeed, but what, in Glenda Adams's terms is strength?" England concludes that "Perhaps only in a comfortable WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant] world could such a novel be written or read - in Poland, Russia or El Salvador it could cut much too close to the bone" (27). Adams's concerns, however, as spoken of in various interviews, appear to be more gentle and intellectual rather than confrontational and political.²⁰ But Adams is not blind to the difficulties of interpreting her cross-cultural experiences. Writing, in 1990, of the notes she took in Indonesia and of the politics of language, Adams states, "those eclectic passages so carefully transcribed probably reveal more about the transcriber than about the world

¹⁸ Rory Barnes's and James Birrell's novel is about Australian business men trying to do business in Indonesia. The text is full of the problems of corruption, incompetence and deceit, so that in the end the Australians lose the contract for a transmigration project in Sumatra. They also lose the financial outlay they have already spent because they will not be morally compromised on their business and humanitarian ethics. The novel's saving critique is that it also portrays Australians who operate in a similar corrupt way as the Indonesians.

¹⁹ In Robert Drewe's novel, *Cullen*, the main protagonist, is a macho, ex-rugby playing Australian, who never gets to really know any people in the countries he visits. Studying buffaloes, Cullen goes to Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He is harassed by beggars, bothered by poor sanitation, strange customs, dead bodies and political manoeuvring. Furthermore he is persecuted by his guilt over the destitute. The story ends with Cullen staring down the barrel of a rebel MNLF's gun. Asia, to the Australian, is the exotic place of fantasy and fear.

²⁰ See interviews of Adams by Candida Baker, in "Glenda Adams;" Jan Hutchinson, in "Interview with Glenda Adams;" and Cassandra Pybus, in "Fiddling with Words."

around her" ("Letters form Jogja" 3). She ends the article by saying that "Mossman suggests that when we travel we learn more about ourselves than about others. But perhaps even this is not true, and all we do when we venture forth is reinforce beliefs already held as we continue to impose our own sensibilities on everything we encounter" (13). This may indeed be what Adams has done in Games of the Strong, for, as elaborated above, Adams appears to use Indonesia as a context, a backdrop, a cross-cultural setting in which to present a political critique dependent on a Western Symbolic. That critique, being a hybrid interaction between an Australian writer and Indonesian politics and culture, displaces and resist "the fullness of life" in both a representation of Indonesian national imagining and, more generally, in a representation of all Western national imaginings. It could be said that Games of the Strong is as much an allegory of Indonesia and of all Western national imaginations as Animal Farm is an allegory of Stalinist Russia and of all systems of political power. But Adams's work does not carry the fire, the unspoken passion and the clarity of message that resonates in Orwell's parabolical novel.

The Problematics of a Cross-Cultural Allegory

The devising of a totalitarian system called the Complex in a mythical country may be, for Adams, an insulation, a distancing from the pain and threat of naming the actual. But if Adams wanted to create a fiction to explore ideas and develop an allegory to explore political dimensions, then she has not succeeded as Orwell did in Animal Farm. Patrick Reilly, in George Orwell: The Age's Adversary, states that

Animal Farm succeeds to the degree that it disciplines its subject matter and subdues life to art, taming terror to the requirements of a beast fable.

It is humorous so long as we see animals and forget men, as the genre so obligingly enables us to do.

Nevertheless, it is no surprise to find the old, troublesome questions of mankind arising in field and barn: power and righteousness, freedom and order, and the difficulty, perhaps impossibility of harmonising them (236)

Adams, in her interview with Jan Hutchinson, explains that Games of the Strong is about ideas, about passivity and action, about politics and what power does to us. We are, she says, all "capable of moral cowardice, at the very least" (50). Yet the novel did not attract an audience, and, Adams admits, "people say they admire it but they don't love it" (50). Perhaps, because it is a novel of ideas, and not of action, that it attracted an indifferent response from its Australian audience.

But the indifferent response may also have been, for some readers, due to Adams's use of an Eastern setting to express the Symbolic of her own Western and Australian imagination. In attempting two projects in one, a critique of both Indonesia and the West, Adams may have not achieved either sufficiently well. The attempt to hybridise the Indonesian and the Australian perspectives in the one novel may have proved too difficult, so that the uncanny impact of the familiar being made strangely alarming has not been realised. When Orwell described Stalinist Russia he used the metaphor of the barnyard - pigs, sheep, hens, cows, horses and dogs. Not only were the scenes known to Orwell's English audience in the 1950s, but the animals themselves were familiar to them, both as stereotypes of personalities and as fairy-tale characters who could walk on two legs and talk in the English language. By choosing a fairy-tale context, Orwell ensured that the message on the Symbolic level would not be confused with the story unfolding on the level of the setting, or the metonymic context

with which the reader easily associates. On the one hand, the culture of the barnyard is a fairy-tale, and not one which replicates any place on earth. On the other hand, the symbolism of the animals is well known to the audience, and through the displacement of those symbols into real political events, he hybridises the Symbolic Order, displacing it, making it uncanny. What the reader focuses on, beyond the pleasure of the fairy-tale, is the Symbolic content anterior to the literal text and its readily understandable setting.

Adams's dilemma is that she has created a realistic, contemporary culture which is geographically near, but culturally opaque, to her Australian audience. While many Australians may detect the Indonesian parallels at a superficial level, they would do so only from a "tourist" knowledge of Indonesia. Adams's creation of the culture of the Complex, it can be argued, is quite deliberately of an Indonesian milieu, and in its creation she has succeeded only to fail. She has succeeded in that she has produced a recognisable and potent analysis of Indonesia from the perspective of an Australian familiar with Indonesian affairs, but she has failed because Indonesia's history and politics are largely unknown, and somewhat irrelevant, to much of the Australian audience. Because of the realism of the novel's representation of Asian culture, Australian readers can superficially identify the culture, and, therefore, choose to ignore, or fail to see, the relevance of Adams's critique of the Western Symbolic and the national imaginings of Australia.

If, conversely, Adams's critique is aimed at the Indonesians themselves, and she asserts that this is not the case, then the Indonesian readership would be afraid of the book and its obviously direct messages which are conveyed through personae who have contemporary counterparts in Indonesian society. Many Indonesians may also not agree with the Western individualistic imagination which is set forth in the novel. They would

tend to see issues such as human rights and individual worker's rights in a more traditionally Asian way. These fears and differences would be true of Indonesian readers whether they were ambivalent resisters or compliant Complexers.

On the surface, the text may appear to be a good cross-cultural novel. Adams has certainly captured something of the East-West cultural milieu. But the novel may only really work for the small group of people who understand the significance of the events and the politics of the text. It is a political statement which Adams fails to convey in a readily appreciable way to the target audience. No Western characters arise in the novel for the Western reader to identify with, so the alien realism of the Complex can easily mean that Westerners simply fail to comprehend what the text may be saying about their own Symbolic fictions. The reader can fail to see the novel's indictment of their own ambivalence to the structures of power, and they can fail to comprehend its challenge to their own spasmodic and token resistance to political domination. They may not see its revelation of the way in which changes in their own power, or economic status, compromises, or alters, them in their relationship to the authority of the State. It is a book about another world. It is not as familiar as the three little pigs, as Orwell's Animal Farm, or as Tolkien's medieval world of dread wizards and heinous wraiths, of shadowy gloom and delicate light.

So passionate is Adams to convey the East to the West, while at the same time providing a universal political allegory, that she misses perhaps the greatest means of communication within the Eastern world, mysticism. Although it is alluded to throughout the book, it never breaks powerfully into the political allegory. All is clean, clear, Western political logic. In the novel's setting, the Mountain people may have their beliefs about the Mountain, but the magic in this alien land does not touch the Western imaginary of power or politics. Where, one might ask, is the power and colour

of a Sukarno, or the passion and magic of One Hundred Years of Solitude? Without the magic and the play the book is clever, but not passionate; communicative, but not memorable. For Adams, the play is in the writing of the text, in not knowing where it will lead. In her article on the writing process, titled "Calling Up the Spirits," Adams writes of the need for stretch, or tension, to exist between the reader and the text. She writes, "it is that stretch that is the mystery, the surmounting of the encumbrances of the puny, everyday, logical self which rules us most of the time, reproducing in our daily discourse received opinions and propaganda" (28). But the stretch must not be simply in the process of writing, or in the "voice," as Adams suggests. Nor is Adams's love of the play with words sufficient to stretch the reader, but it must also be in the play of the imaginary, the Symbolic and the epistemologies which drive the novel. It is the play of the Eastern metonymic challenging the Western Symbolic with its notions of nation, of power, of reason, of right, and justice which is absent from Games of the Strong. The interactive, interrogative play of the mystical in the political rationality of the Western Symbolic would, perhaps, have ignited the "realistic" setting and the consequential ideas within the play of the text. To have done so may have provoked a greater response and provided a more challenging mirror, not of the East to the West, but of the West through the East.

Chapter 7: Challenging Orthodoxy: Australia in The Bellarmine Jug

A novel which does challenge the West through the East is Nicholas Hasluck's The Bellarmine Jug. The play, or stretch, between the East and the West exposes, as Wagner theorises, the invented-ness of culture and civilisation. The play, or stretch, within the themes and ideas of the novel also reveals, as Anderson argues, the fictional nature of the construction of nations and their collectively accepted histories. The discourses of the West are shown to be dominant over, though often threatened by, the discourses of the East. The East is shown to be versatile in using the West's discourses to its own advantage, so menacing the institutions at the very heart of the West. In Lacanian terms, the stability of the West's Symbolic is threatened in the interaction between the East and the West, and the hegemonic tendencies of the West's Symbolic are exposed as it seeks to reassert the fiction of its unity, stability and eminence. Surpluses and gaps are opened up in the struggle to maintain a coherent identity. The Bellarmine Jug especially calls into question the notions which lie behind the construction of Western nation-states and the notions which justify their cross-cultural empire-building. In Michael Denning's words, as quoted by Kieran Dolin in Westerly, The Bellarmine Jug is a "tale of the boundary between nations and cultures" (50). Hasluck exposes this boundary through using the unique position of Australia as a site for the exchange and interaction between the Symbolics of the East and the West.

The process of continual play between national and cultural imaginations, and East/West Symbolics, is similar to Bhabha's process of hybridity. In The Bellarmine Jug this process of interaction is shown taking place over a number of centuries; from the Nestorians of the seventh century, to the seventeenth century mutiny on the Batavia, to the recent history of the Cold War in the late 1970s. These time scales which interact

on a number of levels give the novel an involved and intricate plot.

A Complex Novel

The Bellarmine Jug is described by the author, in an interview in 1986, as "the most ambitious work I'd ever embarked on" (Yacker 164). Hasluck's struggle with the work is hinted at in Island Magazine where he states that it took him "nearly a decade" to write the book (83). The novel, born through such prolonged endeavour, is not easy to read, and although it was awarded The Age Book of the Year Award it did not receive many favourable reviews in Australia. "Bouquets abroad; brickbats at home," writes Hasluck in Island Magazine (76). Part of the reason for the unfashionable character of The Bellarmine Jug is alluded to by Geoffrey Dutton, in The Bulletin, where he highlights the work's density:

Apart from hanging on to the thread through a plot of extreme complexity and ambiguity you have to know something about Pelsaert, Grotius (a 17th-century father of international law), Rosicrucianism and the struggle for independence in Indonesia. (67)

In the complexity of its structure, its themes and its cross-cultural imaginings, the novel is a multifarious and masterful narration. "Hasluck is the first to admit that his books are not fashionable," states Robert Hepner in The Canberra Times, "but he would be the last to admit that they're not relevant" (18). Gabrielle Lord, in The National Times, contends that the novel can be read either "as an academic thriller or as an examination of civilisation and culture" (30). Hasluck has deliberately chosen the mystery/thriller

genre to develop this satire of the West,²¹ but it is those aspects of the novel which examine civilisation and culture which are of relevance to the concerns of this chapter.

In his examination of civilisation, Hasluck places Australia, the illegitimate European nation on the periphery of Asia, in the gap between the East and the West, making it a site for the hybrid and a catalyst for heresy. In the past, the word heresy, as linked to Christianity, has implied independent thinking as opposed to the Catholic, or universal, teachings of the Church. The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought states that in modern usage the implications of heresy have changed, for to "a large extent modern thought rests on independent thinking, so that in modern times the term is seldom used pejoratively" (Edwards 380). Hasluck explores the realm of heresy, exposing both the fiction of modern independent thought and the fiction of cherished orthodoxies in the West.

The Play of Memory - 1948

The Bellarmine Jug is a novel about memory, for it is through the reconstruction of remembered events, both individual and collective, that the cherished orthodoxies of the West are exposed. Salman Rushdie, in "Imaginary Homelands," sees memories of

²¹ Hasluck states, in "A Writer's Story," that the detective acts like a reader of special competence, selecting only the significant signs and shaping them into a narrative. In this respect the mystery/thriller is not unlike satire - as the surface action proceeds the satirical protagonist, like the detective, moves according to the whim of the bizarre (or mysterious) circumstances in which he has become involved while in the background we see emerging a picture, at times a poignant picture, of what there was before, of what has been lost; the milieu in which the victim moved in the case of the mystery/thriller; the society which once existed in the case of the satire, but which now is crumbling into absurdity and ruin. (52)

the past as a broken mirror in which some fragments are irrevocably lost. He claims that "the past is a country from which we have all emigrated," and so, therefore, "its loss is part of our common humanity" (12). Rushdie expounds his thesis by stating that the looking to a nostalgic past becomes "a subject of universal significance and appeal" (12). The commonality of the broken mirror of nostalgic memory is also true for nations, for, as Anderson asserts, it is from a combination of fragments created through selective forgetting that nations construct their collective identity. It is the selective forgetting and the positive remembering, in order to construct narrations of nationalisms and collective identities, which develop the categories of the orthodox and the heretical.

In The Bellarmine Jug, the broken mirror of memory, with various groupings of the orthodox and the heretical, is largely constructed around the year 1948. While the events and depravities of 1629 were long-forgotten by the Dutch, there were others in Australia and Indonesia who remembered them. These people, in 1948, were drawn together at the Grotius Institute where the record of the atrocities was kept. That year is also when the Indonesian struggle against the Dutch was at its height in the Indonesian war for independence. Furthermore, the novel also plays on the memory of the successful and devastating spy ring which recruited Cambridge-trained intellectuals as Russian spies prior to, and in the wake of, the Second World War. Grantham, who is with the British Secret Service, is trying to find the identity of a mole who was at the Grotius Institute in 1948, supposedly seeking information on the plans for the first British nuclear tests to be conducted on the Monte Bello Islands off the Western Australian coast in 1952. A clue to the identity of the mole was given by Petrov to the Australian authorities after Petrov's defection from the Russian intelligence in Australia.

The deadly, imaginary construction of the Russians versus Western Europe and her Allies overshadows and controls the worlds of the narrator, Leon Davies, and the Australian student, Harry Aveling, without them even being aware of it. As Leon exclaims to Grantham, "I thought we were being haunted by the past. How could I know we were being haunted by the future?" (175). Throughout the novel, national imaginations overlap, contest and adapt to each other, while behind the action it appears that they are subject to the greater global imaginations of the Cold War. But the Cold War, with its narrations and imaginings, does not dominate the main story of the novel. Instead it is revealed through the detective work of Grantham as a meta-narration, or a meta-imagining, which is behind, and uses to its own advantage, all other multiple narrations and imaginings of nations and their histories at the Grotius Institute. The sense of subterfuge and deceit which the power struggle between imaginations creates pervades the whole of the mystery/thriller narrative. The Cold War imaginations of the Allies and the Russians are constructed as opposing orthodoxies, with no possibility of interaction and hybridity between them. The views and actions of Leon are despised by Grantham as dissident and heretical, for they call into question the validity of the Cold War imagination as an important meta-narration. Leon's views are marginalised and considered incidental by Grantham.

Similarly, in the novel, the events, imaginations and concerns of the Cold War make Australia's national imagination appear incidental. Dennis Phillips, in Cold War Two and Australia, quotes Noam Chomsky as saying that the Cold War is not simply a confrontation, but "a highly functional system by which the superpowers control their own domains" (45). Australia, like Aveling whose name is expunged from the roll at the Grotius Institute, is resigned to being a victim, a scape-goat, removed from the main stage of the world. Aveling maintains that even in Australia's early European

history it was a passive victim, for there was a conspiracy to conceal its existence. He writes that "the Portuguese, anxious to preserve their dominion over that portion of the world assigned to them by Papal Donation, took steps to disguise their exploration of the Southland, also known as Terra Australis" (103). They distorted and falsified maps. In the novel, Australia is submissive and vulnerable to being exploited by European politics, even being used as an atomic testing site for European imaginings of the Cold War. Just as Aveling held tenaciously to his ideas to the end,²² so Hasluck may be criticising Australia's naivety in refusing to see its marginality to the mainstream of East/West interchange. It is the inability of Australia to see accurately its unique but insignificant position to both the East and the West which leads Alan Renouf to claim, in The Frightened Country, that behind Australia's intrusion into the confrontation between the Netherlands and Indonesia "lay delusions of grandeur" (431).²³ Like Aveling, Australia sometimes speaks out and struts the world stage in areas beyond its capacity to exercise influence.

The smaller national imaginations in The Bellarmine Jug which surround the year 1948 are also important to the play of memories in the novel. The year was a critical time for national imaginations because post-war Europe was trying to forge a new identity, with new imaginings, in the wake of the Second World War, and in the emergence of the Cold War. It was also a time in which many new nations were

²² Aveling attends the Royal Commission on the Monte Bello tests, but never discovers the truth about Hugo Grotius, or the Grotius Institute. In contrast, Leon, the British student, discovers the truth from Grantham.

²³ From an Indonesian perspective Renouf claims that Indonesia fails to comprehend that "Australians are attached to principle in international conduct" (448). Thus Renouf's Australia has a "principled" symbolic similar to Leon and the British.

developing their own new national imaginings as they broke their ties with their colonial oppressors. At the Institute itself, there is a clash of different imaginations, different constructs of identity, and different desires for which people would willingly sacrifice themselves. In Lacanian terms, those imaginations are constituted through the construction of a satisfying Symbolic Other, considered by the individual to be an orthodox view of the world. The clash of imaginations is the clash of different narrations of the same events, and so it is a collision of alleged orthodoxies with alleged heresies.

The Orthodox Symbolic Other of National Imagination

One prominent national imagination, which seeks to construct itself as an orthodox, satisfying, Symbolic Other, is seen in the character of Leon. He is British and has a strong sense of fair play. The naive national imagination of Leon, which emphasises the need for truth, justice and equity, in many ways parallels the traditional idealism and principles of the Australian imagination which have been instituted through a British colonial past. In this sense, Leon is the archetype of an Anglo-Australian, Western imagination.²⁴ Leon seeks to discover the truth behind the situation at the Grotius Institute in 1948, and although the truth proves to be most elusive, he persists, determined that the truth will win out in the end. Leon's desire is to uncover the forces behind the Pelsaert documents, which seem to be linked to the expulsion of Harry Aveling, and to the deaths of the Indonesians, Abu Sjur and Dr Sanwar. Leon's

²⁴ Leon admires and defends these same ideals in Harry Aveling, the Australian.

frustration and anger begins to show when he is unable to create a whole and satisfying account of the events, and his anger is directed at the Warden of the academy, Van Riebeck, and at the Grotius Institute which he sees as evil, hypocritical and knowingly involved in a cover-up. While other students give up the demand for truth, Leon refuses to accept the Institute's explanation of events.

Leon's expectations are founded in an orthodox Western Symbolic, so when he arrives at the Institute, which is an international school devoted to postgraduate study in international law, he has high ideals and expectations for it as a prestigious establishment. Helen Daniel, in "Moral Thrillers," contends that "Leon yearns for a simple moral code with which to confront a simple reality, where the moral signposts are clearly emblazoned" (12). Instead, he finds an institution which appears willing to compromise itself, to entertain the heretical at the expense of the purity of the orthodox. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Leon hears a former tutor at the academy being quoted as saying "that war leaves behind a minefield of dangerous rules and senseless order" (21). The Warden of the Institute, in his long discussions with Leon, states that "previous generations were taught to read. This generation must learn to read between the lines. . . . human affairs are too complicated to be governed by a single set of principles" (127). This shatters Leon's traditional view of the law of the Symbolic Other upholding the principles of truth at all costs.

The librarian, Niesmann, further shatters Leon's ideals when he poses the question: "What is truth when you have a melting pot of cross purposes?" (141). Niesmann, perhaps on behalf of the author who is a lawyer, states that, "truth will always be conditioned by the context. There is the lawyer's truth. . . . [for example] bound by their technical rules, the questions they congratulate themselves on never asking" (141). Thus, as Daniel states, to Hasluck "truth is insurrectionary. . . .

undisciplined and disorderly" (12). Truth itself, Hasluck appears to be saying, is hybrid and heretical. Leon rages against his inability to extract the justice he feels must be met to satisfy his concept of the duty of the law. He turns to Walter Chapman, another Englishman at the Institute, sensing that his co-patriot will understand and support him in the rights and the wrongs of the situation. But, ironically, Walter is the Russian mole. When Leon accuses Van Riebeck of being worse than Jeronimus and the mutineers on the Batavia, Van Riebeck responds by saying that "there will never be justice, no matter how you fix things up" (176). Leon's tenacity, which keeps him pursuing the case long after the interest of others has waned, is driven by his belief that if one party, such as Aveling, is right, then the other party, such as Van Riebeck, must be wrong. Moreover, if the party who is wrong refuses to acknowledge their error, then they are evil and totally corrupt. Leon's Symbolic Other, positioned in the legalistic mind-set of justice and truth, cannot entertain the possibility of multiple, shifting narratives of truth and justice.

Opposed to Leon's and Aveling's Western imaginations are the desires of Van Riebeck and Niesmann. The two men, as long-time employees of the Institute, and as old friends and comrades in arms, are most concerned about their reputations. Their reputations are the Grotius Institute's reputation, and the Grotius Institute is to them what Western civilisation is all about. Because of their belief in the importance of the symbolism of the academy as an icon of international law and of the civilised relations between nations, they are willing to sacrifice their friendship, their jobs and even the truth to preserve the outward integrity of the Institute. Much rests on the honour of Grotius himself, for he is considered the father of international law. His eminent reputation, as well as that of international law, is put in jeopardy by the events at the Grotius Institute in 1948. The reputation of this Symbolic is what Van Riebeck and

Niesmann seek to maintain, and they appear to succeed in their efforts, for Aveling is expelled, and, in spite of the anarchy of the students of 1948, Van Riebeck remains the Warden. The Sub-Warden, Toblen, is made to resign in order to shoulder the blame for the fracas. Van Riebeck admits to the compromised nature of the law, but uses that admission to show the need for strong decision-making and the necessity of scapegoats, such as Aveling, Toblen and the Indonesians, to maintain the stability of the stronger party or the status quo. Van Riebeck employs his position and reputation to uphold the integrity of his position and reputation.

The play between the projected image of the Institute and the actual forces and decisions which drive it make that projected image a myth. In Bhabha's terms the projected image of the Institute is the pedagogical, or that which is taught at the Institute, while the actual decisions and actions which drive the Institute are the performative. The myth of the pedagogical is maintained for the reputation of the academy, for the reputation of its dignified board, for the reputation of its graduates, and for the reputation of international law.²⁵ Furthermore, Leon maintains that the Institute's "great exam is a myth", and the Warden rejoins that "social order is sustained by myths" (28). Thus the accepted orthodox view is displaced, through the exposure of a double play or double standard, into a heretical, disturbing view. The play at work in the novel exposes the myth of equality and justice, showing instead that it is, in fact, the reputation of equality and justice for which the individuals and

²⁵ Further irony is found in the novel's setting in The Hague, or Den Haag as it is called in the novel, which is the home of the Peace Palace and of the International Court of Justice. The setting of the Grotius Institute in the Hague is not entirely fanciful, for in Yacker Hasluck states that in 1976 "I went across to the Hague Academy of International Law which gave me the setting for The Bellarmine Jug" (164).

societies sacrifice themselves.

Leon together with Aveling, and Van Riebeck coupled with Niesmann have differing Western imaginations. They speak the same words in a similar language which presents the same ideals, but their desires are different. Desire, then, drives the actions which result from individual or collective constructions of imaginations. It is desire which constructs and defines what is regarded as orthodox and what is regarded as heretical. Australia's location means that when European desires land on its shores they are displaced into a world totally different from Europe, and, thus, while the European imagination, or European Symbolic, in Australia may be similar to Europe's, it often finds itself at odds with European actions. If the European centre is the orthodox, then in Australia the orthodox tends to be displaced into actions which are heretical and hybrid. Moreover, while the European imagination may reside in Australia, its desires are not compatible with the desires of Eastern imaginations, or Asian Symbolics, for not only are Asia's desires different from those of Europe, but its imaginations are as well, so the potential for misunderstanding and discord is doubly prevalent. Thus, in The Bellarmine Jug, Australia, through its geographic location, is the ever-present site of hybrid interaction between the worlds of European and Asian orthodoxy.

Speculative Fiction

One of Europe's orthodoxies which Hasluck interrogates, though not through the location of Australia, is the orthodoxy of Western literature. He achieves this by the ploy of composing the novel in a realist style, only to subvert that approach in the last chapter. What the reader discovers at the end of the book is that The Bellarmine Jug is

not just a history written by the "real" author, but it is also a novel written by the narrator, Leon Davies, in honour of Mondrian, a retired lecturer from the Grotius Institute. Through the sudden shift Hasluck introduces his own surplus, or gap, by displacing his novel so that it is not what the reader imagines it to be. Consequently, although the reader knows that the book is a work of fiction, he or she is not left with that knowledge in an unconscious form, but is presented with it clearly on the page. Via this authorial device The Bellarmine Jug satirically and powerfully exposes Western culture's narration of its own story. What is disturbing to the reader is that the entire book is a play on the play within the novel. John Hanrahan, in "A Jugful of Ideas," recognises "that this is a novel about a novel," and he concludes that it "keeps daring us to think about the nature of fiction, daring us to sort it out" (15). The convolutions of the novel and the shifting boundaries between truth and conjecture are finally summed up by Mondrian who states: "The blend of fact and fantasy. One knows scarcely where it begins and where it ends" (259). This blend, or double play, characterises both the production and the themes of The Bellarmine Jug.

Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman, in The New Diversity, take up the point of the double play maintaining that "Hasluck's fiction is also metafiction, a speculation about its own fictional processes; his work, as well, seeks to fictionalise history, attempting to break down the barriers between the two discourses" (137). Gelder and Salzman categorise The Bellarmine Jug as "speculative fiction," because it explores a historical gap. The double play of fiction in the novel, then, is also paralleled in the double play of history versus speculative fiction. Pelsaert's journals, with their historical account of the wrecking of the Batavia and the subsequent mutiny, are part of that historical gap. This speculative history, involving Europe and Asia, is played out on the shores of Australia.

The historical gap concerning the Batavia's ill-fated voyage is one of the motivations that led Henrietta Drake-Brockman to produce her "authoritative" work on Pelsaert, entitled Voyage to Disaster. Drake-Brockman, who published the first English translation of Pelsaert's journals, claims that the Dutchman was neglected in his home country as well as in Australia, for she writes in 1963 that the "name of Francisco Pelsaert is written on the map of the world, yet is little known in Holland" (3). The continuation of the historical gap in relation to Pelsaert and the Batavia mutiny is highlighted by Hasluck as he rues the fact that Drake-Brockman's work, too, "has been shamefully neglected since her death" (Yacker 177). In the novel, the play of history versus speculative fiction appears in the retelling not only of the histories of Pelsaert and the mutineers, but also of the Rosicrucians, the Indonesian independence struggle, the development of international law, the Petrov affair and the Cold War scandal involving Burgess and McLean. "The past is there to be explored, embellished, and reconstituted, but in a way which will constantly bear upon the preoccupations of one's current situation," writes Hasluck in "The Past's Deceitful Dream" (78). Such speculative retelling of history is a heretical act against the telling of orthodox histories by orthodox historians, such as Drake-Brockman.

In The Bellarmine Jug, the historical gap concerning Pelsaert's journal is speculatively filled through the "heretical" history told in an appendix to Pelsaert's journal, which has long been hidden in the depths of the library of the Grotius Institute. The appendix recounts the aftermath of the Batavia disaster on the Western Australian coast in 1629, and it was written by Pelsaert in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies. A few of the characters in the novel, such as the Australian student, Harry Aveling, believe in the authenticity of the Pelsaert appendix. Some, like the Warden of the Grotius Institute, Van Riebeck, believe it is a hoax. Others do not make clear what

they really believe, but rather use the presence of the appendix to pursue their own ends.

Hugo Grotius and the Netherlands' Golden Age

The "heretical" difference between the speculative fiction of the secret appendices in the Grotius Institute's library and the actual record of Pelsaert's journals published in Drake-Brockman's Voyage to Disaster is twofold. Firstly, the appendix alleges that Hugo Grotius,²⁶ the son of the founder of the Grotius Institute, was one of the main conspirators in the mutiny on the Batavia, and in the atrocities committed on the Abrolhos Islands, in which over 120 people were murdered. The appendix reveals that Hugo Grotius Jr., whose name Pelsaert expunged from the main body of his journal, was punished, along with two other mutineers, by being cast ashore on the coast of Western Australia at Wittecarra Creek. The reason for Hugo Grotius Jr.'s involvement in the mutiny was his desire to be a part of a conspiracy to establish a new constitution and a new nation, through allegiance to a new religious order. This has immense implications for the national imaginings of the Dutch and for the integrity of international law.

The Netherlands, although only a small country on the western coast of Europe, trebled the size of its merchant fleet between 1600 and 1650, supplying about half the world's shipping. Amsterdam was the world's major commercial city. In 1602 the Dutch East India Company was formed and it founded Batavia in the East Indies as its

²⁶ Hereafter referred to as Hugo Grotius Jr. to differentiate him from his father who has the same name.

headquarters.²⁷ Drake-Brockman states that in "the Netherlands, people still refer to this period as the Golden Age" (6). To substantiate her claim she cites such famous Dutch names as Grotius, Huygens, Rubens, and Rembrandt. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), Dutch lawyer, theologian, statesman, poet, and speculatively the founder of the Grotius Institute, is considered in legal circles to be the father of international law. It was his arguments which allowed the Dutch imperialist intentions to treat the open seas as their own God-given domain. The importance of this is alluded to by the Warden in The Bellarmine Jug when he states that in "1609 Grotius proclaimed a famous doctrine, the freedom of the seas. That doctrine became a means whereby the Dutch East India Company broke the monopolies in the East of Spain and Portugal" (51). While Spain and Portugal were Roman Catholic in religious orientation, Grotius was a Protestant theologian.

The Rosicrucians

Religious allegiances characterise the second "heretical" aspect in which the speculative fiction of Pelsaert's appendix differs from the Pelsaert journals published by Drake-Brockman. The conspirators on the Batavia are alleged to be Rosicrucians.²⁸ The Rosicrucians were a secret society which sprang into prominence through a hoax in

²⁷ For further detail see C. R. Boxer's The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800 (1965).

²⁸ Drake-Brockman links Jeronimus to Torrentius van der Beeke who was accused of trying to establish the Rosicrucians in the Netherlands (75). Dolin also refers to the connection between the mutineers and the Rosicrucians being raised by Randolph Stow in "The Southland of Antichrist: The Batavia Disaster of 1629" (54). Hasluck takes this minor point and makes it pivotal to his narration.

the early 1600s. Christopher McIntosh, in a comprehensive study entitled The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology and Rituals of an Occult Order, states that the Rosicrucian mythology "was, so to speak, deliberately 'launched' with great suddenness on its strange course through history" (18). The Rosicrucians began in 1614 with the publication of a German text, the title of which can be translated as The Declaration of the Worthy Order of the Rosy Cross. The Declaration purported that the burial vault of Christian Rosenkreuz "had been discovered by the brotherhood, and this discovery heralds the dawn of a new age" (19). The vault of Rosenkreuz has never been found, though not for want of trying. The doctrines of Christian Rosenkreuz are those of the ancient Gnostics, an early Christian sect, which emphasised the evil of the physical world and the purity of knowledge. Knowledge, especially secret knowledge, is, according to the Rosicrucians, the way for humanity to find salvation beyond this world. The Rosicrucians initially had strong ties with alchemy and claimed many eminent scientists in their ranks. The magic of secret societies has been roundly dismissed by Western critics, but, as Colin Wilson writes in a "Foreword" to McIntosh's book, the "invention of Christian Rosenkreuz is not so much a hoax as a cry of rejection and a demand for new ways: in short a kind of prophecy" (10). The independent imagination and the utopian prophecies of the brotherhood apparently struck a chord with Hugo Grotius Jr. and the band of disillusioned mutineers. However, to the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of the Netherlands the Rosicrucians were heretics. Their new ways not only distorted the dogma of the Church but proclaimed a new society in the face of the ordered prosperity of the Golden Age.

The autonomous nature of the Rosicrucians helped the Order's survival. One of the reasons, given by McIntosh, for the resilience of the movement is its lack of formal organisation and its fluidity (or in Bhabha's term its hybridity). The original message

was that those who were members of the brotherhood would know who they were, and they would be contacted by the brotherhood in due time. The Order has never clearly established a coherent worldwide entity, but has been left to develop its own life in different localities. The independent nature of the different chapters of the sect opens it wide to continually propagating heretical branches which feel no obligation to a central orthodoxy. Rosicrucianism is attributed to be the forerunner of secret societies such as the once influential Golden Dawn, and the present-day Freemasons.

McIntosh also alludes to another reason for the durability of the society which began as a hoax, in the appealing symbolism of its motif, the Rose Cross. The Rose Cross has both an aesthetic and a religious attraction. Its aesthetic attraction is the rose, while its religious element is the cross, the cardinal symbol of Christianity. The misappropriation of the symbol of the cross visibly opens the Rosicrucians to the accusation of heresy. With the publication of the Order's second title in 1615, it became obvious that the brotherhood, although heretical, was decidedly Protestant in orientation as it repeated the message of the Declaration "with even greater force, holding out the promise of a reformed world and the overthrow of papal tyranny" (19). At the time of the publication of these extraordinary hoaxes, Germany was gripped by the build-up to the Thirty Years' War, which lasted from 1618 to 1648. This last of the great religious wars devastated Germany and left it destitute, an open target for utopian visions of future hope. While the war was originally between the Catholic and the Lutheran churches, it spread to include the Calvinists who sought to gain an equal footing with Catholicism and Lutheranism. The Netherlands was a stronghold of Calvinism, and Hugo Grotius, although a moderate, numbered himself in their fold. Speculatively, therefore, it is not beyond reason that Grotius's son should become involved in a heretical secret society which McIntosh claims "was initially ultra-

Protestant" (20), and that his eminent, Calvinist father should seek to disown him because of his violent and heretical aspirations.

Hugo Grotius Jr., and his fellow conspirators in The Bellarmine Jug, then, were a local group of Rosicrucians who were looking to create a new world and a new nation in the vicinity of Australia. They were hybridising the imaginings of Europe and the Netherlands in its Golden Age, and were establishing their "new world order" through mutiny and cold-blooded murder. They used the symbol of the Rose Cross as an emblem of their collusion to implement the insurrection and they inscribed it over the picture of Cardinal Bellarmine on the Bellarmine jugs. Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621), as an Italian Jesuit theologian, was a key figure in defending the rights of the Roman Catholic Church against the absolutism of kings and against the advance of Protestantism.²⁹ The significance and power of the symbol of the Rose Cross threatened European imaginations, and later, as we will see, it became a weapon in the Indonesian independence campaign. The inventive play in the Symbolic upset the apparent stability of the conventions of the West, and so menaced the very heart of Western society.

Australia, the Site of Hybridity

Although the novel is mainly set in the Netherlands, the double play as speculative fiction, with its threat of the heretical, distinctly relates to Australia.

²⁹ According to Marvin O'Connell in The World Book Encyclopaedia, Cardinal Bellarmine was canonised into sainthood in 1930.

Hasluck is an Australian author, and although Australia is not mentioned, except briefly in relation to Aveling, the Abrolhos Islands, the Wittecarra cliffs and the Petrov affair, yet it maintains a critical position in the novel.³⁰ Australia, with its European heritage and its constitutional style of government, can easily be related to the novel's interrogation of the West's imagination of itself. But Australia is used most dramatically in the novel through the construction of a hybrid interaction between the East and the West. As we have seen, according to Bhabha, hybridity is a process which interrogates, rather than a fixed position of merger. The process mimics and mocks the orthodox, displacing and threatening it in much the same way as heresy threatens accepted dogma. While all that is hybrid may not be considered heretical, all which is heretical is hybrid. In order to be heretical, a teaching must mimic the orthodox closely enough so as not to be totally distinct from the orthodox, yet it must be different from the orthodox so that it displaces it, subverts it, and challenges it.

The most distinctive process of hybridity alluded to in the novel involves the Rose Cross. According to Niesmann, the librarian at the Grotius Institute, the Rose Cross was first taken to Eastern Java by Nestorian missionaries in the seventh century, before the advent of Islam. Christian Rosenkreuz, in the fourteenth century, had brought the Rose Cross back to Europe from Arabia, where it had acquired a heretical mix of Christianity and Eastern mysticism, and he used it to give birth to Rosicrucianism. Of this hybrid process Niesmann states that

this world has been crisscrossed by journeys and migrations that you and I

³⁰ Hasluck himself may not agree with this proposition, for in *Yacker* he states concerning *The Bellarmine Jug* that "the Australian connection of the Monte Bello tests and the *Batavia* wreck were incidental. They provided a means of keeping the plot simmering" (169).

can hardly dream of. Ideas float on timeless currents, they travel through subterranean channels and on overgrown tracks. They are taken up, embraced, discarded, and taken up again. They never cease to exist. The scholar hears the ceaseless hum of pollination. (145)

The cross-pollination in The Bellarmine Jug is significant in that the mythologies of the West have been three times transported to the East, and three times returned, each of the interchanges hybridising and further displacing the Western Symbolic. After the moments of the Nestorian missionaries and the Batavia mutineers use of the Rose Cross, it was taken a third time to Indonesia through a deliberately altered copy of the Pelsaert manuscript. The third occasion was a move to resist the Dutch and disrupt the fledgling independence movement under Sukarno. The hybridity of the transported concepts challenged, and so threatened, the harmony of the national imaginations in both Europe and Indonesia.

In many Australian novels set in Asia, Australians seek to find meaning and relevance in life through exploring a single two-way exchange with Eastern mythology. In The Year of Living Dangerously, for example, Christopher Koch uses the Hindu mythology of the wayang kulit to disrupt and intrude on the equilibrium of Guy Hamilton, the self-sufficient Australian reporter. Koch explores the relationship of Eastern and Western thought as a two-way exchange which happened in antiquity, for in his article "Crossing the Gap," he argues that India's Aryan past means that the gods of Hindu mythology are probably of pre-Christian, European origin.³¹ Hasluck makes

³¹ Koch cites his source as the Bengali writer and poet, Nirad Chaudhuri. He claims the "Hindus are Europeans in exile," who having left "the grasslands of Hungary and the banks of the Danube . . . have never quite come to terms with the Dravidian spirit. . . . Hence the strange tension in the Hindu soul" (13). The existence of European equivalents of the Hindu goddess, Durga, are found in such goddesses as the Greco-Roman

an even stronger reversal than Koch by exploring the possibility of the East subverting the very heart of the West's imagination - Christianity itself - returning it repeatedly to them in a continually changing, heretical, potent, crossbred form. "Far from importing a gospel to the new world," Niesmann states, "Jeronimus and his mutineers were carrying back the bastard offspring of a creed which had already been exported to the old" (145). The "bastard offspring" was used by the mutineers to challenge the might, the reputation, and the religious dogmas of the greatest economic and naval power of the world in 1629.

The mutiny failed, but the defiance of the Rose Cross lived on in the sculpture of the Rose Cross on the cliffs of Wittecarra Creek and in the Bellarmine jugs which were scattered at its base. The cliffs and the jugs were discovered by Indonesian fishermen, and some of the jugs were carried back to Eastern Java, where the mythology of Messianic cults prevailed in the hope of the coming of Ratu Adil (the Great One). The stories which came from the south, of a people who had risen up against their Dutch masters, brought with them the promise of a mythical light-skinned deliverer. In the speculative fiction of the novel, Dr Melik Sanwar, an Indonesian freedom fighter and an expert in East Javanese mythology, uses these myths and the re-appearance of the Nestorian symbol of the Rose Cross to stir up Indonesian nationalism. The mutineer's rebellion against Dutch authority becomes an arousing symbol for the PKI's (the Indonesian Communist Party) own resistance to the Dutch, their colonial masters. Thus

Demeter (the Mother Goddess of the Earth), Artemis or Diana, Aphrodite (the Goddess of Love) and Circe. These were expunged from Europe by the spread of Christianity, and Koch states that "when the goddess of dual nature departed, she took away a symbolism which left the Western poetic imagination somewhat deprived, since she did so much to embody the paradox at the heart of life" (11-12). Thus the concept of the goddess largely disappeared from European literature and mythology, leaving, says Koch, a gap. It is this gap, which Koch explores in much of his work.

the symbol, which had heretical connotations in the West, re-enters Indonesia through Australia to subvert and displace the imaginings of the East as well.

Indonesian Imaginations

Dr Sanwar, the master of the Indonesian national imaginings is a past student of the Grotius Institute. He has been taught well, for the former student returns to haunt, and nearly destroy, the Institute. Dr Sanwar is the Director of the Surabaya Museum in East Java, an expert on the myths of the Malaccan archipelago, and he is well aware of the presence of the Rose Cross of the Rosicrucians at Wittecarra Creek on the West Australian coast. Niesmann, the librarian, illegally gives him the original copy of Pelsaert's appendix to help in his research in the 1920s, but the Dutch arrest the hapless Dr Sanwar and the document disappears. Thus the original, pure, orthodox manuscript was lost. Niesmann alerts Van Riebeck to his grave breach of trust, and the second manuscript, which Niesmann copied from the original, was kept under wraps to protect the librarian. Then, in 1948, Dr Sanwar reappears with Harry Aveling, to ask Niesmann to make a translation of the appendix for the Australian. Dr Sanwar also asks Niesmann to make a few changes to the text, in order to enhance the myth for the benefit of the Indonesian Independence Movement. So, not only is the original document lost, but the copy of the Pelsaert journal is translated and replaced with a deliberately heretical account. The play between speculative fiction, sanctioned histories, conflicting national imaginings, heresy and orthodoxy is thus problematised in the dry parchments of the Pelsaert journal.

But Dr Sanwar is not only the scholar who studies myths, he is also the myth-maker. National imaginings are distorted and reshaped to suit their exploiter. Van

Riebeck believes that Dr Sanwar is working for the Dutch so he can overthrow Sukarno, and he alleges, "Fragmentation is Sukarno's enemy, and Dr Sanwar is his nemesis, the creator of a thousand myths" (129). Dr Sanwar is willing to sacrifice his Indonesian friends, the Institute, and his own life for the development of a national imagination which will bring him power in his new homeland.³²

In the flexibility of national imaginations, Australia, lying juxtaposed to Indonesia and in the path of the trading route between the Netherlands and its colony, is the site for the reintroduction of the hybrid into Indonesia. The Southland is the land of European atrocities and of Indonesian hopes. A land of evil and conspiracy to the Dutch who chose to forget it in the telling of their history, but a land holding a promise of future deliverance to the oppressed islands of the East Indies. Perhaps it is for this reason that Dr Sanwar seeks to use the Australian, Harry Aveling, as a tool in his desire to expose the distinguished establishment of the Grotius Institute. Dr Sanwar introduces Aveling to the Rose Cross and the Bellarmine jugs found at Wittecarra Creek. Additionally, Dr Sanwar introduces Aveling to Niesmann, the librarian at the Grotius institute, and arranges for him to get a doctored translation of the Pelsaert appendix. So the Australian stands between, and links together, the corruption and heresy of the East with the corruption and heresy of the West. Australia, as portrayed by Hasluck in *The Bellarmine Jug*, is a site for the development of the hybrid: a place of displacement, a way station for heresies, a surplus which interrogates both East and West, and yet in the process is not a part of the main game, being incidental to all the

³² Dr Sanwar does give his life, in fact, for he is found dead, floating in a slimy canal in Den Haag, his hands amputated in the same way as were those of the *Batavia* mutineers.

major participants. Australia is thus a place of ambiguity, not only to Europe, but also to Indonesia, for no lasting friendship or enduring relationship is forged between the Australian and the Europeans, or the Australian and the Indonesians, in the speculative fiction of the novel. In Bhabha's sense of hybridity within the novel, each of the national imaginations displaces, and is displaced, however, neither Europe, Indonesia nor Australia enters into a hybrid relationship.

Instead, Hasluck seems to be saying, the aims and demands of national imaginations are constructed through desire. Where the desires differ, so the objectives of the imaginings differ. Imaginings are built from the broken mirror of memories, and the attempt to reconstruct the mirror leads to different results, even though the same fragments may be used. Hasluck does not seem to hold much hope for ideals such as truth, justice and equity, and in this sense he is challenging the idealism of the myths held in the youthful country of Australia. To Hasluck, Australia is incidental on the stage of the world. Yet it is a site of hybridity, a thorn in the paws of the imaginary lions which roar in the minds of the East and the West.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The Theory of Cultural and National Identity

Lacan sees the construction of the Other/other as important to an individual's identity. In the process of developing an identity, the Imaginary other is suppressed by the hegemony of the Symbolic Other. The Imaginary other is characterised by close, associative links and fluidity in concepts and meanings, while the Symbolic Other seeks to fix meanings and to give them abstract significance. The metaphor becomes the mode through which the individual identifies with the Symbolic Other. The Symbolic's seeking of stability makes it tend towards dogmatic distinctions and value-laden ideals. This means that differing Symbolics will clash both on the level of fixed dogmatic meanings, and on the level of implied value and significance. Furthermore, for Lacan, the desired stability of the Symbolic is a fiction because meaning is always in process, and the fixing of the Symbolic Order is constituted in an endless chain of signifieds.

The Lacanian model of identity can be applied to cultures as well as to individuals. The Imaginary in cultures is also less fixed than the Symbolic, so the cultural Imaginary has less value-laden significance, and possesses a more direct association between language and meaning. The Imaginary, then, provides a better medium for cross-cultural exchange.

Following Wagner's argument, on the difference between Western and Tribal cultures, it can be seen that Tribal societies show a greater emphasis on the Imaginary other. Western societies, which are structured around the Symbolic Other transmitted through print, media and Western educational institutions, have shown less adaptability than the more fluid Tribal societies. The adaptability of Tribal societies is achieved

partly through ceremonies, or performative educational structures, which constructively re-interpret the world in new ways. In the West performative ceremonies have been kept "off stage." The instability of Tribal societies has been despised in the West, which has promoted its own Symbolic Other through the hegemonically powerful constructs of science, education, and nationhood. The West, as Wagner points out, has failed to see that it has invented its own view of the world, and from a process of continual re-invention it has unquestioningly re-affirmed its own Symbolic. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which is always in process, and Lacan's concept of the Symbolic Other which is always in a chain of signifieds, can never be fixed, for they are always being reconstituted. The West, however, has constructed its Symbolic as fixed and true, so it has become the only possible means of knowing the "truth" and of viewing the world. Gayatri Spivak, in "Can the Subaltern Speak?," states that some of

the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject. The theory of pluralised "subject-effects" gives an illusion of undermining subjective sovereignty while often providing a cover for this subject of knowledge. Although the history of Europe as Subject is narrativised by the law, political economy, and ideology of the West, this concealed Subject pretends it has "no geo-political determinations." The much-publicised critique of the sovereign subject thus actually inaugurates a Subject. (271-272)

The West has sincerely believed its own narration of the world, which asserts that the West has "progressed," and that, therefore, other narrations are primitive and inferior to it.

The Western Symbolic Other includes the construct of the nation with its

creations such as international law, sovereign rights, national histories, and national institutions, such as archives, museums, etc. Nations seek to stabilise and control their borders, their institutions, their histories and their citizens' identity. This desire to develop the Symbolic Other of a nation is the political process of nation-building, which, Anderson asserts, invents the apparent stability, truthfulness and horizonless past of such imaginations.

Political Novels: Satires on Culture and Nation

The composition of the nation, with its institutions, its control over the citizens, and its retelling of histories, is exposed in the novels Games of the Strong and The Bellarmine Jug. These novels uncloak the construction of the nation and nationalism showing that what a nation imagines itself to be is constantly changing and at play. In Lacan's terminology there is a surplus, a gap between the identity of the Other/other and the Real. The novels emphasis the gap by developing the play in the cultural, political and national Imaginary.

Both the Games of the Strong and The Bellarmine Jug are political novels, and as such they can be seen as dissident acts of resistance to the dominant narrations of the nation in Australia and the Western world. Salman Rushdie claims that

description is itself a political act. . . . It is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it. And particularly at times when the State takes reality into its own hands, and sets about distorting it, altering the past to fit its present needs, then the masking of the alternative realities of art, including the novel of memory, becomes politicised. . . . Writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both groups try

to make the world in their own images; they fight for the same territory. And the novel is one way of denying the official, politician's version of the truth. ("Imaginary" 14)

Games of the Strong is dissident through its emphasis on the role of the writer in resistance to political domination. Similarly, The Bellarmine Jug is dissident through its emphasis on different narrations of history, different constructions of international law and through its positioning of Australia in relation to Eastern and Western civilisation. Each novel, like their ineffective protagonists, can be seen as disempowered through negative reviews and marginalised by a lack of interest in them by the reading public. It could be that, besides literary considerations, what Australians find disagreeable and unsettling about these narrations is the way they expose the cultural, political and national unconscious embedded in Australia's history, politics and lifestyle.

The lack of interest in political themes in Australia is not new. Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman, in The New Diversity, emphasise this Australian characteristic when they state that in

the broadest sense of the word, a great deal of the [Australian] fiction . . . is 'political' fiction, but only a few authors have written fiction directly concerned with politics. A tension seems to have developed over the last decade [1980s] in particular between a literature of engagement, which has confronted difficult problems of form and content, and a somewhat solipsistic literature of retreat into the family and the philosophical. (243)

Both Games of the Strong and The Bellarmine Jug are political novels which confront "problems of form and content" in such a way that neither novel is easy to fathom. They interrogate the politics of national imaginations, the politics of justice, the politics of truth, the politics of morality, the politics of the law and the politics of the writer,

both in and between Western and Eastern society.

Games of the Strong looks at the construction of a nation, its inner political core, resistance and complicity to that core and the submissiveness of the fringe society. Furthermore, the novel examines the role of the writer in building and maintaining a national imagination. The play between the Asian setting, the Western political themes, and the author's own background and stated ambitions, reveals the ambiguity and puzzlement of Australia's own geographical setting in Asia as opposed to its Western ideological outlook. The novel exposes the fictional nature of the nation and its imagination, showing how the dominant hegemonic imagination of the ruling elite is sufficiently fluid to crush, or to accept and absorb, any resistance to it. Thus Bhabha's constant process of hybridity works within the political intrigue of the novel and within the confluence of Western themes and Eastern contexts.

The Bellarmine Jug is about the play of the Western Symbolic coming back to itself twice over through the East. The returning Symbolic is heretical, being deviant from the orthodox, and, therefore, its presence is threatening to the West. The novel also exposes the fictional nature of national imaginations from Europe, Asia and Australia. The book is set in a Western institution, and it examines a compromised and hybridised form of the Western Symbolic, dissecting the Symbolic's elements such as truth, justice, international law and morality.

The major difference between the two novels is that Games of the Strong does not use the play between the East and the West to critique the West, but simply tries to illuminate the play of the West in an Eastern context. The placement of a Western Symbolic in an Eastern setting, with no Western characters at all, is itself a hybrid form of the novel, but it does not produce a cross-fertility of ideas and concepts, except for those readers familiar with the nuances of both the Eastern context and the Western

Symbolic.

Each novel unmasks a hegemony within the nation and its institutions, showing how the stronger party has control over the narration of the national identity. In the Games of the Strong it is the construct of the Complex which prevails, while in The Bellarmine Jug it is the view of the Warden of the Grotius Institute and the construct of the Cold War which dominate. Both the main protagonists in the novels fight against the hegemony of the stronger political views, but to no avail, for they have no alternative possibilities to offer. What the reader is left with is a sense of the normally unseen power behind the constructs of nations and behind the fabric of international relationships. That power is sometimes crushing, yet often dissipated; occasionally dogmatic, yet always shifting; highly confrontational, yet difficult to retaliate against.

In both novels the place of resistance is ambiguous, and the relationship between the various opposing parties oscillates, narrowing down to a vying for power rather than a fight between good and evil, or between right and wrong narrations of the nation's history and identity. Narration, "justice," and "truth" become weapons for either the maintenance of power, or for attempting to displace entrenched forces. In this context, then, the invention of narrations, whether in terms of nations and nationhood, or in terms of larger constructs such as culture and universal humanity, are all inventions which seek to maintain or acquire power over other narrations. In "A Writer's Story," Hasluck states that illusions are "destroyed not by ridicule but by better, more fiercely held illusions" (51). That contest becomes the games of the strong, and the narration of the national imagination enlarges the interests of the stronger party.

These narrations, while claiming a stability through the depiction of a "stable" past, are continually reinventing themselves. This is seen in Games of the Strong when

the Complex adjusts itself to contain the wayward Neila, while Neila in turn appears to change her views and opinions of the Complex with the proficiency of a chameleon. In The Bellarmine Jug the concepts of Christianity are reinterpreted through a double cycle of movement from the West to the East and back again. In each cycle displacement, change and reordering occurs, and, therefore, the heretical concepts of a distorted Christianity return with a threat of instability and lawlessness to the West. To maintain a sense of stability and order the Rosicrucians and the fragments of Pelsaert's journal are given the status of hoaxes. But behind all the imaginings of the novel lies the new construct of the Cold War, and this new imagining, in the end, is shown to be covertly in control of all the others.

Both novels produce a powerful narration of political and national constructs which do not claim to have "the whole truth," for they do allow a level of resistance and criticism to continue. But at the same time the powerful narrations claim a right to survive which is greater than the right of the "truth" to exist.³³ The narrations, which depend on their narrators who wield great political power, will not allow the "truth" to continue when it threatens the foundation of their own existence. By the end of each novel the protagonists have been used by the dominant narrations for their own purposes, in spite of the protagonists' attempts to resist. The attempt to expose and critique the major narrations of nation leads them to complicity. Resistance appears to produce disempowerment, marginalisation, ineffectuality, and, inadvertently, a reinforcement of the political status quo with its dominating national imagination.

³³ The West sets up the narration of the nation with its ideals of truth, freedom and justice. It then criticises other nations with differing ideals, while unconsciously not living up to those ideals themselves. For this reason the West's ideals, in political and national terms, must always be "qualified."

Both novels show that the central political powers which are adaptable and inventive, not holding to rigid Symbolics, are able not only to survive but to displace and defeat any resistance to them (the Complex and the Grotius Institute). In this sense the Western State Apparatuses which appear rigid institutions allow themselves to be reordered and rearranged by temporal, fluid, inventive, "Tribal" configurations. In this way resistance to them is not defeated by power, but by play. Power is not the weapon but what is desired, the object. Both Neila and Leon, whose Symbolics have a sense of value and morality, remain satisfied with dissatisfaction. Even when the play in the Symbolic of the nation is revealed, and they find that what they were resisting is not the evil terror that they imagined, they continue to choose to resist. This, in turn, exposes their own desire for power, and therefore, the play in their own national imaginings.

What becomes important, therefore, in both novels is the play within the fiction and the story of the nation. A complex and shifting interaction takes place between the main protagonists and the main institutions, or political parties. Nothing is straight forward, or clearly defined in stable opposites, for "truth" becomes attached to the desire for power. What each player in the text desires in terms of power determines the "truth" for them. "Truth" and fabrication, "justice" and a good reputation, the orthodox and the heretical, become shifting fictions, and act like commodities. Thus, as often quoted in *The Bellarmine Jug*: "Justice is the interest of the stronger party." The nation is not a solid construct, its foundations are not immovable, its stability is a fiction, its right to exist cannot be conceived of in moral terms of good and evil, and to resist it is consequently problematic. How can one resist something one cannot clearly locate?

Resistance, as Lacan, Bhabha and Wagner substantiate, is in hybridity: in the re-articulation of the Symbolic, or in the re-inventing of conventions. The process of hybridity is produced through provoking interaction between the Imaginary and the

Symbolic which displaces the Symbolic. This process is most clearly seen in The Bellarmine Jug, where what is displaced is the meanings and values of Christianity. The heresy threatens the constructs and values of the Protestant nation of the Netherlands, and of international law founded on Hugo Grotius's precepts. The threat is particularly powerful to the Protestant nation because of what it perceives as an Asian cross-cultural Imaginary re-articulating a primary Western Symbolic, and the effect is most powerful in Western nations because of the centrality of the Symbolic in the construction of the nation in the West. As with all nations, the West believes in its own values, its own constructs and its own inventions, but predominantly within the West inventiveness in ceremony and in collective, performative action remains "off stage." The threatened West, then, seeks, at all cost, to maintain the stability and hegemony of the constructs it has invented.

While the threat of the heretical and the hybrid may be greatly felt in the West, the novels show that ironically the dominant narratives and imaginations which survive and exert the greatest power are also the most adaptable and hybrid. Politically, it is those who idealistically resist the powerful national imaginations (such as Neila and Leon) who are driven by fixed Symbolics of what they consider to be "true," of "value," and of "meaning". The powerful imaginations which survive, defeat and outlast them (such as the Complex and the Grotius Institute) project a solid Symbolic, but in fact they acknowledge the fiction of their narrations and are open to change, giving up "values" and "truths" in order to retain power and influence.

Australia's Unique Hybridity

Australia is a Western-style nation, and, therefore, is a nation which emphasises the Western Symbolic with its constructs of democracy, sovereign rights, international law, and so on. These are invented constructs which are continually re-invented, and they are not necessarily the only narration, or world view, which can be given.

Australia tends to be mono-logic in its Western outlook, and it devalues the performative, magical, interpretive aspects of its culture. The East, although having taken on the Western construct of nationhood, also has its alternative view of the world which is based on a collective consciousness and morality rather than on individualism. This not only hybridises the Western notion of nation in Asian countries, but it allows dual readings and multiple interpretations of the Western Symbolic.

In the past, Australia has reacted to its northern Asian neighbours by seeing them as "barbarous" and a threat. Australians, on the whole, have not been willing to enter into constructive dialogue with their own "magical," mythical, and uncritical Imaginary other, let alone the Imaginative other of their northern neighbours. Instead, Australia has sought to be a policeman for the Western Symbolic, and in the process it has failed to realise its own development and change. For example, Alan Renouf, in *A Frightened Country*, points out that Australia's policy towards Indonesia in the years since the Second World War has often left the Indonesians confused. Renouf claims that Australian foreign policy in the region has often "been the product of conflicting considerations - [that is] security, and friendship with South-east Asia, particularly Indonesia" (422-423). The need for friendship and economic ties has often been in conflict with the threat Australia has felt from Indonesian aggression in West New Guinea, Malaysia and East Timor. This has caused Australia to send mixed messages to

Jakarta, but Australians do not like to portray themselves as inconsistent, for it does not fit the national imagination of a strong, stable nation.

Furthermore, Australia has not been interested in the literature of other non-English speaking countries, even though literature is one of the best ways to understand the Imaginary other. Internally, Australia largely ignores migrant, ethnic and Aboriginal literature, relegating them to a secondary position in Australian literature. Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, in the Dark Side of the Dream, maintain that Australian literature has not broken away from the European cultural centre, but is "still determined massively by its complicity with an imperialistic enterprise" (x). Australia is only concerned with speaking and writing to itself in English, re-interpreting and re-inventing its own understandings of itself and its misunderstandings of others. As a nation in Asia, Australia is solipsistic.

For Australia to endure in Asia it must realise that it is a small nation, and therefore subject to the meta-narratives of the region. Its own narrations are marginal to the major narrations within Eastern and Western civilisation. Furthermore, Australia must realise its own narratives are in a continual process of hybridity, and that this, perhaps, is its greatest asset as it straddles the meta-narrations of the world. Australia needs to project a stable and strong identity for its people, while at the same time pursuing constructive transformation. While it is true that a strong identity is important for the health of a nation, and while it must be acknowledged that nationalism has its place, it is also true that a national identity must not be taken too seriously, for it is a fiction. Identity can never be stable, for fixing it will eventually lead to idealism, isolation and a perpetual identity crisis. As Lacan asserts, a stable identity is a fiction, so, therefore, the search for a definitive Australian identity will always prove a fruitless and frustrating dream.

Recognising the play and the power which drives national identities, Australia must enter into serious dialogue with the Imaginary others of its neighbours in order to produce relationships built on a measure of mutual understanding and respect. Australia will always be hybrid in the sense of never being totally Western, nor ever being totally Eastern. Its heritage, its history, its demography and its geography ensure that hybridity. Australia need not be afraid of the hybrid but instead can understand that the process of hybridity is common to all nations and their imaginations. That process never ceases, and it can offer multiple possibilities for greater understanding and harmony both within Australia and with its Asian neighbours.

If Australia starts to take seriously its own Imaginary, and the play in its own national imagination, politics and Symbolic, and if Australia begins to take seriously the Imaginary of its neighbours, both through dialogue and interaction, then, some acceptance of criticism may be possible at the level of the Symbolic. Issues of human rights, democracy and international law, which are so important to Australians, may be mutually discussed and understood between neighbours. The mutual respect of one nation toward another, and the dialogue towards mutual understanding will mean, however, that both participants will continue to be changed, and hybridised, in their international conversation.

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