'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

Indigenising settler nationalism in 1930s Australia

by

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Abstract

Questions over what, whether and when the Australian nation is or might be have been of consistent concern throughout most of Australia's settler-colonial history and remain so today. In attempting to construct a national culture and identity, settler Australians, like settlers elsewhere, have invested in the establishment of a national literary tradition. This project of national cultural construction has emphasised a dual process of acclimation and maturation to claim the settler collective's attainment of maturity and legitimacy within the metropolitan domain of world literature *and* belonging to the land that provides the underlying imperative for settler colonisation itself. In the standard story of inevitably unfurling national cultural development towards these two ends, Britain has played the part of 'the mother country' (or parent oak), while Australia is the child (or seedling) that eventually and inevitably reaches maturity in the new soil. In Manning Clark's famous application of Henry Lawson's phrase, Britain was 'the Old Dead Tree', Australia 'the Young Tree Green'.

Yet these narratives of national maturation operate to conceal the nature and the complexity of the environment the national literary culture was supposed to be acclimatising to, and becoming expressive of. In constructing narratives of Australian national cultural development in terms of bilateral oppositions between colony and metropole, such narratives neglect the complexities of the settler-colonial, as distinct from the colonial, 'situation'. On the contrary, this thesis is premised on the central proposition that the settler-colonial situation is fundamentally conditioned by a triangular system of relationships involving settler, metropolitan and Indigenous agencies. In this schema, the settler is compelled towards both indigenisation and neo-European replication, while both trajectories are similarly founded on the prior displacement — both literal and symbolic — of pre-existing Indigenous populations.

The 1930s was a crucial moment in the project of national identity construction, in which prevailing circumstances combined to make settler nationalism simultaneously more urgent and increasingly problematic. In particular, the demise of the 'doomed race' ideal, which had until then envisaged the inevitable and imminent resolution of the triadic relations of settler colonialism into the dyadic ones of 'franchise' or 'dependent' colonialism, meant that settlers, and especially settler nationalists, found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the boundaries of the settler nation. They were therefore compelled to negotiate the more complex — for the nationalist project, at least — trilateral relations characteristic of settler colonialism, rather than the relatively more straightforward bilateral ones of colonialism proper.

This dissertation focuses on this historical and cultural context, and on three exemplary settler nationalists working within and responding to it: writer, editor and publisher, Percy Reginald 'Inky' Stephensen (1901–65); poet and editor, Reginald Charles (Rex) Ingamells (1913–55); and writer and polemicist, Alfred Francis Xavier Herbert (1901–84). At a historical moment marked by ambivalence in Australia's relationship with metropolitan England, Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert sought to establish settler Australia's national cultural independence. In doing so, they each encountered, and responded to, the reality of a persistent and resistant Indigenous presence within the settler nation. While Stephensen posited himself and the Australian national culture he sought to construct as inheritors of both European and Indigenous traditions, and Ingamells engaged in a project of radical indigenist appropriation that separated and usurped a symbolic indigeneity from its bearers, Herbert celebrated instead the potentiality of 'Euraustralian' hybridity to overcome his own, and by extension his compatriots', illegitimacy. While these approaches are ostensibly at odds, the central argument advanced in this thesis is that they share a drive towards settler indigenisation and independence as their common, overriding concerns.

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Declaration

I confirm that the following thesis:

1. Contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma; and

2. To the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Dan Tout, 30 June 2018

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Introduction

A story of two Australias?

Richard White has labelled questions about what, whether and when the Australian nation *is* or *might be* 'a national obsession'.[1] Whereas in the Old World the 'discovery that national (and other) identities are "inventions"' has been a relatively recent one, 'long ago' authors and artists in the Anglophone settler colonies 'presumed that the nation lacked an identity, and that it was their task to invent one'.[2] In attempting to construct a

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[1] Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), viii. A *highly* selective survey of texts dealing directly with Australian national culture and identity published in the years *after* White's seminal intervention bears this out: Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988); N. K. Meaney, *Under New Heavens: Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia* (Port Melbourne: Heinemann Educational, 1989); Richard Nile, ed., *Australian Civilisation* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994); Wayne Hudson and Geoffrey Bolton, eds, *Creating Australia: Changing Australian History* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997); Geoffrey Stokes, ed., *The Politics of Identity in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997); David Day, ed., *Australian Identities* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998); Catriona Elder, *Being Australian: Narratives of National Identity* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2007); J. B. Hirst, *The Australians: Insiders & Outsiders on the National Character since 1770* (Melbourne: Black, 2007); Suvendrini Perera, *Australia and the Insular Imagination: Beaches, Borders, Boats, and Bodies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia after Empire* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2010); Robert Manne and Chris Feik, eds, *The Words That Made Australia: How a Nation Came to Know Itself*, 2nd ed. (Collingwood: Black Inc. Agenda, 2014).

[2] Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 12. It is not necessary for present purposes to digress into the theoretical disagreements that still permeate debates around the theorisation and historicisation of nationalism and national formation. Suffice to say that across the modernist–primordialist spectrum, with Anthony D. Smith occupying an important and influential middle-ground (even if this 'spectrum' is often overstated, and Smith misplaced within it), few theorists would now accept the fully 'inventionist' thesis encapsulated in Gellner's famous remark that nationalism 'is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist' (*Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 168). Even Gellner's own elaboration here, and especially after, was far more nuanced than this pithy remark suggests (see *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983)). Instead, some combination of 'culturally invented' and 'historically grounded' elements is usually accepted, even if differentially emphasised, so that, to take a useful local example, a nation can be defined as 'an abstract community but one which always, subjectively and ideologically, reaches back to more concrete ways of living and representation' (Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London: Sage, 1996), 2). To the extent, however, that in the settler colonies — especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when questions of national formation were of pressing concern — these 'more concrete ways of living and representation' appeared to exist elsewhere and/or belong to someone else, settler nationalists have been both more conscious of and troubled by the nationalist project than were its advocates and ideologues in other metropolitan and even (nominally) post-colonial settings. For an important comparative contribution

national culture and identity, settler Australians, like settlers elsewhere, have invested in the establishment of a national literary tradition.[3] According to Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, the project of national literary-cultural construction entailed 'establishing a distinctively Australian tradition' that 'would at last prove the colonists' right to belong, both to the metropolitan centre and in the territory that they had invaded and colonised, Australia itself'.[4] As David Carter points out, this project 'has rarely been about literature alone; at stake has been the nature of civilisation, culture and "character" in Australia and the authority to speak in their name'.[5] Writers, critics and cultural nationalists more broadly (although in Australia these have more often than not been the very same figures) have at various historical moments argued over different dimensions of the search for belonging Hodge and Mishra identify — some emphasising Australia's British inheritance, others stressing the production of new, 'native' cultural forms.

The standard story of Australian national cultural development has been structured around this conflict between the 'two arch-opponents' of Australian cultural and political life: 'the Anglo-Australian loyalists and the radical Australian nationalists',[6] the latter 'creative, original and truly Australian', the former 'sterile, derivative and suburban'.[7] In this story of 'two Australias' — which typically takes the form of a 'literary historiographical melodrama' that 'apes the conflicts of convicts against their gaolers, bushrangers against squatters' — Britain plays the part of 'the mother country', while

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on this issue, see Gérard Bouchard, *The Making of the Nations and Cultures of the New World: An Essay in Comparative History*, trans. Michelle Weinroth and Paul Leduc Browne (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

[3] See David Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', in *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Webby (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Carter observes that literature had an 'exalted role' in the project of national cultural construction 'because of its seemingly more "organic" relationship to place and race: it was "the basis, the soil of the arts"' (261).

[4] Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), x.

[5] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 260.

[6] Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace: The Demise of the Imperial Ideal* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 261.

[7] David Walker, *Dream and Disillusion: A Search for Australian Cultural Identity* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), 205.

'Australia is the child who reaches maturity'.[8] Various periodisations of this narrative are possible, but most feature the 1890s as a moment of adolescence — whether one of youthful exuberance, full of promise, or one marked by arrogance and immaturity — followed by a 'coming of age' in the post-war period. Such narratives typically frame the 1930s, the period under examination here, as a period of stalled development, or, more positively, as the period in which the institutional foundations for the post-war cultural boom were constructed.[9]

For Stephen Alomes, the entire period from 'after Federation until the Second World War' comprised 'the nadir of intellectual life', in which 'the creativity of the late nineteenth century retreated' and a 'Dominion Culture' prevailed.[10] Alan McLeod concurs. In his appraisal of *The Pattern of Australian Culture*, his titular subject was conceived as having progressed in two stages:

> The first, which occurred from about 1880 until Federation, saw the establishment of a truly national identity … Most significantly, this first period gave indication that Australian culture would not be just a pale imitation of then contemporary British culture. But no sooner had this first flush of cultural independence appeared than it was brought to a lamentable and sudden end by a series of malign circumstances: depression, world war, depression, world war.[11]

McLeod's second period, 'which commenced about 1948, has seen a truly remarkable and rapid cultural maturation'. In his conclusion, foreshadowing Alomes' assessment,

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[8] Peter Pierce, 'Forms of Australian Literary History', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. Laurie Hergenhan (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988), 84; Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism*, 3rd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1986), 9. For an illustrative account of the 'two Australias' narrative, see Manning Clark, *A History of Australia. Volume 6: 'The Old Dead Tree and the Young Tree Green', 1916–1935* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1987).

[9] See, for example, White, *Inventing Australia*.

[10] Stephen Alomes, 'The Forgotten Critics: Freelance Intellectuals in Australia in the Twentieth Century', *Meanjin* 50, no. 4 (1991): 554–55.

[11] Alan L. McLeod, ed., *The Pattern of Australian Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 8.

the 'contrast between the legendary 1890's and the dolorous 1930's was indeed a sobering one; the two periods represent almost precisely the zenith and nadir of intellectual and artistic achievement to that time'.[12] Geoffrey Serle balances the negative (culturally oriented) and positive (institutionally oriented) assessments of the 1930s as an intermediate period, quoting R. M. Crawford's suggestion that there were 'clear signs of a new level of maturity and professional skill in Australian life in … the late 1930's when Australia was emerging from the depression … a corner was turned in Australian history at that time'.[13] In response to Crawford's confident assertion that '[r]arely indeed is one given the means of dating the coming of age of a new nation so precisely as they are given in this case', Serle suggested instead:

> The notion of Australia turning a corner and coming of age may perhaps be argued more easily with regard to public life than cultural, and more convincingly dated in the war years than in the late 1930s … despite the undoubted improvement in quality and scale, cultural development seemed to stop just short of maturity. There was to be a curious sense of unfulfillment and hesitation on the brow of the hill during the decade after the war'.[14]

This thesis argues that the 1930s are worthy of examination precisely *because* of this period's apparent intermediacy, for two main reasons. First, as a result of its frequent framing as a low ebb in the rising tide of Australian national cultural development or, at best, a period of national institutional progenation, the continuities within and between the tensions and debates over Australian national culture and identity in the 1930s and other periods, both before and after, have often been overlooked. Second, while these continuities should not be overstated, the tensions evident in the historical-cultural context of 1930s Australia are themselves revealing of oft-neglected aspects of the settler

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Geoffrey Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia: A Cultural History*, revised ed. (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1987), 148; Raymond Maxwell Crawford, *An Australian Perspective* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960).

[14] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 177.

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'situation' that have had, and continue to have, significant structuring effects on settler Australia's (and Australians') self-understandings over the course of Australia's settler-colonial history.[15] Indeed, it is the proposition of this thesis that it is precisely these persistent features of the settler situation that produced what Geoffrey Serle characterised as the 'curious hesitation in development towards nationhood' prevailing over the entire period 1900–40.[16] While such pronouncements have most commonly been made in and of the 1930s, as the following suggests, they are by no means confined to that period alone.

Regardless of the periodisation, Serle's teleology of national cultural development in 'new countries of European settlement like the United States, Canada and Australia', involving 'a process of maturing, and growing out of a colonial situation', is exemplary:

> An early period of imitation, of working in the styles of the parent civilization, is followed by a stage of national assertiveness which celebrates the local subject-matter and values of the new nation struggling to be born; then an uneasy period of clash between the nativists and those holding fast to the values of the imperial source; and finally, when something like mature nationhood has been achieved, a reconciliation in which a relaxed sense of nationality is combined with openness to international influences.[17]

There have, of course, been dissenters from the nationalist imperative, and various nomenclatures have been used to describe the opposing critical traditions: 'localists and universalists', 'democratic populists and Anglophile elitists', 'nationalists and internationalists' — even '"Abos" and "Pommies"', as A. A. Phillips once suggested.[18] In

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[15] On the settler 'situation', see Lorenzo Veracini, 'The Settler-Colonial Situation', *Native Studies Review* 19, no. 1 (2010).

[16] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 88.

[17] Ibid., 225.

[18] Brian Kiernan, 'Cultural Transmission and Australian Literature: 1788–1998', in *Studies in Australian Literary History* (Sydney: Sydney Association for Studies in Society and Culture, 1997), 70. The list could go on (and does). Peter Pierce recounts the following: 'colonial and national, national and international, utopian and vitalist (Buckley), vulgarity and refinement (D. R. Burns), land and language (Goodwin) and Wilkes' … contrast of stockyard and croquet lawn' ('Forms of Australian Literary History', 86). David

1976, Gavin Souter rehearsed the narrative in his 'chronicle of the nation's coming-of-age', *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia*, which 'traces a national character in evolution'.[19]

Yet even those who have most vociferously denied the need for, and the value of, a national literary tradition have, in so doing, defined themselves in relation to it, and have typically bought into the same notions of national maturity that have been central to such debates since their inception. As Patrick Buckridge accurately surmises, given the centrality of the Australian

> national literary project … even those who have been least sympathetic to nationalist ideals … have none the less had to acknowledge the presence of that powerful imperative within Australian culture, and to negotiate a definite relationship to it, whether it be one of outright opposition or of partial obedience.[20]

Even John Docker's arch-metaphysicist Vincent Buckley was concerned with 'the maturity of Australian life', and saw in the tradition of 'Brennan and the Brennanites' and their attempt to 'fuse the two traditions' of nationalism and vitalist romanticism 'our best hope of maturity'.[21]

Carter convincingly argues that 'the opposite of nationalism in Australia has seldom been internationalism', since nationalism 'has never been just parochial' — certainly the case for my subjects here — but rather 'what we might call universalism: that argument about art, about individuals and society, about culture and tradition which seeks to resolve all issues of difference by translating them into the realm of universal values' ('The Natives Are Getting Restless: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migrant Writing', *Island Magazine*, no. 25–26 (1986): 3).

[19] Gavin Souter, *Lion & Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia* (Surry Hills: Xoum, 2012). In an extraordinary and instructive instance of settler indigenisation, the process whereby a settler collective claims belonging as an 'indigenous' one, Souter begins his 'chronicle' by equating the 'Australian Britons' with 'the Aboriginal societies they had displaced', then proceeds to take them through an 'initiation … considered in much the same terms as initiation among the Aranda', until by the end of his narrative they have been rendered fully and unproblematically 'indigenous' (25, 366).

[20] Patrick Buckridge, 'Intellectual Authority and Critical Traditions in Australian Literature 1945 to 1975', in *Intellectual Movements and Australian Society*, eds Brian Head and James Walter (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), 190.

[21] John Docker, *In a Critical Condition: Reading Australian Literature* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1984), 103.

For Alec Hope, no friend of the nationalists himself, national maturity remained a necessity, even if only as one more step along the path towards the re-integration of Australian into world literature.[22] In his interpretation, Australian literature is 'a colonial literature, that is to say, a branch of English literature' (resort to botanical analogy is pervasive on either side of the 'great divide'), and

> most colonial literatures seem to go through much the same stages of development: first one of provincial dependence on the home country; next, one of provincial self-assertion or 'nationalism', and lastly one of secure establishment and acceptance in which it ceases to be a colonial literature and becomes a national one … in which the self-consciousness has largely disappeared.[23]

Australia's literature was, he felt, 'still in the … provincial stage', but was

> approaching this third stage. Now what is holding us back? It is, I believe, that Australian writers have felt called on to be too consciously Australian. The writer's chief task, the expression of his individual vision, has been complicated and distorted by a task which is strictly irrelevant, the task not of being himself, but of being in some way typically Australian.[24]

H. P. Heseltine charts a similar 'pattern' of cultural 'progress' for countries founded through 'colonization and conquest' in his rejection of what as he sees as the 'empty inheritance' of A. A. Phillips' 'democratic theme':

> First of all there is likely to be a period of imitation of the models provided by the parent civilization; this is likely to be followed by a period of intense and sometimes acrimonious debate between the forces of nationalism and those which continue to pay homage to the imperial source; for a time

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[22] See Alan Lawson, 'The Recognition of National Literatures: The Canadian and Australian Examples' (PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 1987), n.p.

[23] A. D. Hope, *Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature, 1936–1966* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1974), 86, 74.

[24] Ibid., 74.

nationalism will appear to be triumphant; but as pre-condition of full maturity, nationalism must suffer rejection and be replaced by a sense of nationhood which is assured and un-selfconscious.[25]

The clear parallels between Serle's 'relaxed sense of nationality' and the 'relaxed erectness of carriage' A. A. Phillips had earlier identified as the antithesis of, and only antidote to, the Cultural Cringe are instructive.[26] For both authors, a fully 'mature' Australia would move beyond the bumptious tendency to define itself in relation to the metropolitan centre, and into an easy and 'relaxed' sense of national independence and self-confidence.[27] Yet from an ostensibly opposing perspective, Hope's insistence that writers should cease to be 'too consciously Australian' and Heseltine's sought after 'sense of nationhood which is assured and un-selfconscious' do nothing at all to detract from the nationalists' insistence that they should ultimately become unselfconsciously Australian. While the two critical projects diverge most dramatically over means, their ends are ultimately not so far removed from one another after all.[28]

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[25] H. P. Heseltine, 'Australian Image: The Literary Heritage', *Meanjin Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1962): 36–37. In keeping with the tradition identified and elaborated below, in which (futile) attempts are made to 'leap over' Australia's apparent provincial belatedness (see David Carter, *Always Almost Modern: Australian Print Cultures and Modernity* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2013)), Heseltine excavates Australia's 'literary heritage' in order to 'isolate that peculiarly modern element in modern literature which, it is my contention, Australian literature so early laid hold on': 'its long-standing awareness of the primal energies of mankind' ('Australian Image', 39–40). Heseltine is insistent: behind the 'façade of mateship, egalitarian democracy, landscape, nationalism, realistic toughness … looms the fundamental concern of the Australian literary imagination': to 'acknowledge the terror at the basis of being … It is that concern which gives Australia's literary heritage its special force and distinction, *which guarantees its continuing modernity*' (ibid., 49, emphasis added).

[26] Arthur A. Phillips, 'The Cultural Cringe', *Meanjin* 69, no. 4 (2010): 52.

[27] It is noteworthy that 'the cringe' continues to make its presence felt in contemporary Australian cultural life, if far less frequently and with a much wider set of metropolitan authorities in mind, the United States now foremost among them. A recent and relevant example can be found in Alison Carroll's 2017 article on *The Conversation*, in which she unproblematically appropriated 'the oldest continuing culture in the world' in her insistent rebuttal to 'old furphies … about our "lack of culture"' (see '"Australia Has No Culture": Changing the Mindset of the Cringe', *The Conversation*, 8 November, 2017, n.p.). As Debra Adelaide remarked as recently as 2014, 'debate about the cultural cringe has raged intermittently but has never been extinguished' (see 'The Book Club, Flanagan and Our Endemic Cultural Cringe', *The Conversation*, 16 October, 2014, n.p.).

[28] Patrick Buckridge, for example, maintains that far from affirming the apparent antagonisms between our two traditions, the prominent debate between A. A. Phillips and H. P. Heseltine in the pages of *Meanjin* in 1962 revealed that 'the two men clearly agree on some very important assumptions' ('Intellectual Authority and Critical Traditions', 195–96).

H. M. Green described the 'development of Australian literature' as entailing two related but independent aspects: 'the gradual growth of the native at the expense of the overseas element and their fusion into something new; and the gradual attainment of absolute value'.[29] For those occupying the localist/nationalist positions within the oppositions just outlined, the focus remained on the first of Green's progressions; for those in the universalist/internationalist camp, on the other hand, the focus was on the second. C. Hartley Grattan, along with others including Green himself, as well as Vance and Nettie Palmer, sought to stake out a middle-ground position that emphasised Australian cultural independence *and* sought to claim a sense of national 'maturity' and sophistication. For Grattan, the long 'nineties', which he extended to include the post-federation period leading up to the First World War, was Australia's 'most seminal period', but its uncritical celebration was to be avoided. Instead, he counted himself among a third group, beyond the binary oppositions outlined above: 'those who are sure that there is an Australian tradition of good work if only it can be discriminated from the rubbish and *faux bon* stuff in which it is now embedded'.[30]

Docker usefully recounts the radical-nationalist teleology (with which he associates Serle) and associated analogies — both botanical and ontogenetic — as follows:

> [C]olonial and post-colonial societies all go through various stages of evolutionary adaptation to their particular environments. Australian culture can be seen as going through stages of adaptation and maturation, like a plant: from the pre-1890s colonial émigré culture, to the 1890s nationalist stage, and on to the post-1890s state of cultural maturity. Each stage prompts its own characteristic set of metaphors: in the émigré stage an alien European culture tries to impose European cultural forms, which fail to take root and wither in the unreceptive soil; in the nationalist stage, indigenous cultural

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[29] H. M. Green, 'Literature', in *Australia*, ed. C. Hartley Grattan (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), 291.

[30] C. Hartley Grattan, ed., *Introducing Australia*, 2nd ed. (Sydney & London: Angus & Robertson, 1949), 150.

forms evolve which send down strong, new roots which take hold; and in the next stage, these forms spread and flower and mature and become abundant. In these terms, the growth of Australian culture is also very similar to stages of human maturation, from child through to adolescent to adult.[31]

Whether the attainment of national cultural 'maturity' entails a level of sophistication in line with, or at least in aspiration of, European standards, or a national literature 'racy of the soil',[32] the periodisations and, more importantly, the stadial progressions, remain, if not the same, then startlingly similar. Kiernan's catalogue of evolutionary metaphors entailing 'transplantation, adaptation and modification, hybridisation, or the rejection of exotic varieties and the spontaneous emergence of new indigenous growth'[33] aptly captures the continuities and discontinuities: each option entails a similar progression towards maturation, but implies a different interpretation of the proper balance within and between the settler–metropole relation.

Keith Hancock's influential articulation of the botanical variation is indicative, and relevant here. Insisting that '[w]ithout some sending down of roots, no community can live an individual life — there cannot, indeed, be a community', he observed that '[t]he roots sent down in Australian soil by the transplanted British have only here and there struck deep beneath the surface'. Later in his seminal history, however, he conceded that there was 'an encouraging variety in recent Australian fiction. Novelists have at last

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[31] Docker, *In a Critical Condition*, 34. In *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (2008), Robert J. C. Young suggests that metaphors involving 'branches of the original tree flourishing abroad' were in fact, like the tree, of metropolitan (English) origin: it is instructive that even settlers' metaphors are derivative (*The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 219). Young is also gesturing here towards one aspect of what James Belich termed the 'settler transition', which itself possessed contradictory implications for settler societies themselves (see James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chapter five).
[32] See Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals' and Jayne Regan, '"Racy of the Soil": Ian Mudie, Right-Wing Nationalism, and the South Australian Soil Erosion Crisis', *Environment and History* 24, no. 3 (2018) on the salience of 'racy of the soil', and J. O. C. Phillips, 'Musings in Maoriland — Or Was There a Bulletin School in New Zealand?', *Historical Studies* 20, no. 81 (1983) on its trans-Tasman significance.
[33] Kiernan, 'Cultural Transmission', 71.

understood the significance of Australian history as a transplanting of stocks and the sending down of roots in a new soil'.[34] Manning Clark, on the contrary, and in specific contradistinction to Hancock, borrowed from Henry Lawson's settler nationalist call to arms, 'Song of the Republic', to distinguish an ascendant Australia ('the Young Tree Green') from an England in decline ('the Old Dead Tree').[35]

Humphrey McQueen summarised and summarily dismissed the ontogenetic version in one characteristically incisive comment:

> It is rare for this idea [Australia's growing independence from Britain] to be elaborated and almost unheard of for it to be explained except by resort to an analogy in which Britain is the mother country and Australia is the child who reaches maturity, flexes its muscles and engages in several other pleasing metaphors. There is nothing wrong with analogies if they illustrate an argument that has been demonstrated. In the case of Australian nationalism the analogy has all too often been the only evidence offered.[36]

These two sets of metaphors possess distinctly different implications for settler nationalists. On the one hand, botanical metaphors of oaks, acorns, roots, branches, seeds, seedlings and saplings imply an inheritance that almost inevitably, in spite of the efforts of Clark and others, leaves the settler nation in an inferior position vis-à-vis the metropole. These implications are rendered explicit in A. A. Phillips' account of the 'colonial dilemma':

> The dilemma of the Australian writer lies in the fact that he is a colonial. He inherits a European culture which he can no more reject that a plant can discard its roots; somehow, by the most delicate re-adjustments, he must re-

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[34] W. K. Hancock, *Australia* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1961), 42, 261.
[35] Clark, *A History of Australia*.
[36] McQueen, *A New Britannia*, 9.

fashion that instrument to fit it for his special task of interpreting a changing type of European living.[37]

The radical alternative, which attempts to leap over, or escape, Australia's British inheritance by emphasising 'the spontaneous emergence of new indigenous growth', is less common and, arguably less convincing, for reasons explored below in relation to Stephensen's attempt to do just that. (Although Geoffrey Rush was recently tempted into attempting a similar escape, claiming in his Australian of the Year acceptance speech in 2012 that '[w]e've grown in less than two generations from a relative wasteland into a unique species of native tree that only the soil of this rich country can cultivate' — by what process of spontaneous botanical generation this had occurred was not entirely clear.)[38]

Metaphors analogising Australia's ontogenetic development from childhood through adolescence and into mature adulthood vis-à-vis the 'mother country', on the other hand, have often been adopted by the loyalist side of the 'two Australias' divide for the same purpose of insisting on national immaturity, typically glossed, as is the case in Hope's account, in terms of provincialism and all that this entails. As Leigh Dale points out, provincialism has been the 'most damaging epithet of condemnation', since it derives from the Latin 'meaning conquered territory' — for colonialists like Hope, the 'struggle is to remain, as Judith Wright termed it, of the conquerors, rather than the conquered'.[39] Yet these organic analogies also open up the possibility, for settler nationalists at least, of imagining moments of transition, in which declensionist

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[37] Quote from Arthur A. Phillips, 'Jindyworobak Review, 1938–48 [Book Review]', *Meanjin* 8, no. 1 (1949): 66. On the 'colonial dilemma', see Arthur A. Phillips, 'The Family Relationship', in *The Writer in Australia: A Collection of Literary Documents, 1856 to 1964*, ed. John Barnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[38] Geoffrey Rush, 'Transcript of Geoffrey Rush, Australian of the Year 2012, Acceptance Speech', *Australian of the Year Awards*, last modified 28 February, 2012, accessed 24 March, 2018, https://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/news-and-media/news/article/?id=transcript-of-geoffrey-rush-australian-of-the-year-2012-acceptance-speech.

[39] Leigh Dale, *The Enchantment of English: Professing English Literatures in Australian Universities* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012), 283.

narratives render the 'old world' in decline and, correspondingly, present the 'new world' as the future (it is much easier for a child to surpass its parents than for a plant to discard its roots). For obvious reasons, such narratives of transition, involving the passing of the mantle of civilisation from a Europe in decline to the settler colonies on the rise, were increasingly common in the first half of the twentieth century,[40] although similar inversions of the colonial relationship imagining Australia as 'the Land of the Future'[41] can be traced at least as far back as W. C. Wentworth's forecast of 'Australasia', Britannia's 'last-born infant', as 'a new Britannia in another world!'[42]

Two is not three (and three is not all)

Numerous authors, including many literary figures embroiled within the milieu this thesis focuses on, have remarked on what has been variously described as Australia's 'colonial dilemma', Australia's 'double aspect', the 'Archibald paradox', or even simply the 'Great Australian Paradox'.[43] These various descriptions capture the fact that the 'settler nationalisms of the British Empire (and their respective sub-imperialisms) remain intractably ambivalent', since 'their claims are routinely premised on their arising simultaneously from the settler locale and in relation to the originating metropole'.[44]

These narratives of tension, even contradiction, between language and/or culture and environment, and correspondingly between localism or nationalism on the one hand and universalism or internationalism on the other, identify and address the dialectical

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[40] It is telling that Manning Clark attempted to transpose this metaphor of transition into the realm of botanical analogy with his opposition between the 'old dead tree' and the 'young tree green' in relation to the period 1916–1935 (see *A History of Australia*).

[41] Arthur A. Phillips, *The Australian Tradition: Studies in a Colonial Culture* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1958), 36.

[42] On Australia's 'settler transition', which entailed a psychological shift from one of colonial exile to a settler-colonial consciousness that imagined 'New World political regimes … as regenerative in relation to an enfeebled or embattled Old World' and turned 'one imaginary into its opposite — a "Commonwealth of Thieves" into a "New Britannia"', see Lorenzo Veracini, 'Ian Turner's *The Australian Dream* and Australia's "Settler Transition"', *Journal of Australian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2016): 306.

[43] Phillips, 'The Family Relationship'; Judith Wright, *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1965); Sylvia Lawson, *The Archibald Paradox: A Strange Case of Authorship* (1983: Allen Lane, 1983); John K. Ewers, *The Great Australian Paradox* (Perth: Carroll's, 1939).

[44] Lorenzo Veracini, 'Isopolitics, Deep Colonizing, Settler Colonialism', *Interventions* 13, no. 2 (2011): 173.

relation between (settler) colony and metropole. In this view, across the nationalist–universalist spectrum, national maturation and sophistication is ultimately and (usually) inevitably attained, whether through conscious Australianism or by virtue of natural evolutionary growth and re-integration. While, as it turns out, the poles are less than poles apart,[45] perhaps the greatest affinity between these ostensible oppositions is that *both* sides of the 'two Australias' divide — nationalist and universalist alike — and, indeed, attention to the divide itself, function to conceal the nature and the complexity of the social, cultural, historical *and* geographical environment the national literary culture was supposed to be acclimatising to, and becoming expressive of.

As J. J. Healy has outlined, 'an authentic consciousness trying to grasp the *distinctive* characteristics of European society in Australia would, sooner or later, find itself face to face with the Aborigine and the land'.[46] In the context of his pioneering attempt to account for 'the efforts of white Australian writers to come to grips with the Aborigine', Healy tended to overstate both the prevalence and the significance of this imaginative 'encounter', and his attribution of 'authenticity' to only one set of the many possible nationalising (and indeed universalising) positions is reflective of his own critical perspective as much as it identifies a necessary or persistent thread in others. Without necessarily endorsing Healy's conclusion that '[t]he dominant energies of Australian literature in the twentieth century have been directed towards the recovery of the Aborigine by the Australian imagination' (even if he recognises the self-interest at least in part informing this project of 'recovery'), we might suggest instead that the figure of the indigene has operated as a kind of structuring absence in and on the national literary

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[45] Most on the nationalist side of the 'great divide' held, with Tom Inglis Moore, that 'a true universality … rises out of the particular' (*Social Patterns in Australian Literature* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1971), 8). This was certainly the position Stephensen expressed when he insisted that 'cultures must remain local in creation and universal in appreciation' (*The Foundations of Culture in Australia: An Essay Towards National Self-Respect* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 17).
[46] J. J. Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia*, 2nd ed. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), 173, emphasis in original.

imagination (especially for those on the national/ist side of the two Australias divide).[47] The relative degree of confrontation and engagement, or alternatively denial and disavowal (and, relatedly, embrace or rejection) adopted by settlers in relation to the indigene has varied according to a shifting matrix of internal and external ambivalences, elaborated below. As Nicholas Thomas observes: 'Indigenous reference has been far more conspicuous at certain times than others, but it has often been prominent, and has had paradoxical effects'.[48]

The terminology suggested by A. A. Phillips, cited above, is telling: he is not referring to a conflict, cultural or otherwise, between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures on the one hand and 'Pommies' on the other. He is, rather, positioning settler nationalists as 'Abos', discursively arrogating to them a precursively evacuated indigeneity that simultaneously displaces and disavows the position of actual Indigenous people. Phillips' terms were themselves appropriated from Philip Rahv's famous 1939 essay entitled 'Paleface and Redskin', in which Rahv enacted a similar effacement of the Indigenous presence from the American settler-colonial scene in his account of what he characterised as 'the ills of a split personality' afflicting '[t]he national literature'. In Rahv's schema, which mirrors, in general terms, the story of Australia's own 'split personality' outlined above, Henry James and Herman Melville are rendered 'palefaces', while Walt Whitman and Mark Twain are 'redskins': representatives of 'a purely indigenous phenomenon'.[49] Actually existing indigenous peoples, on the other hand, are nowhere to be found.

A similar form of effacement is evident in Tom Inglis Moore's examination of what he terms the 'social patterns' in Australian literature, in which the second 'pattern'

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47 Ibid., 2, 291. See Anthony Moran, 'The Psychodynamics of Australian Settler-Nationalism: Assimilating or Reconciling with the Aborigines?', *Political Psychology* 23, no. 4 (2002); Anthony Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler/Indigenous Relations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 6 (2002); Bouchard, *Nations and Cultures of the New World*, chapter five.
48 Thomas, *Possessions*, 12.
49 Philip Rahv, 'Paleface and Redskin', *Kenyon Review* 1, no. 3 (1939), 253, 251, 254.

identified, immediately after 'the spell of the bush', is what he terms 'the clash of cultures'. Yet contrary to contemporary expectations, this 'clash' is rendered as that between 'the established colonialism, based on the imported British way of life', and the 'growing indigenous ethos', and culminates in these 'two cultures' becoming 'integrated finally in an independent Australian culture'. Tellingly, Indigenous people appear in Inglis Moore's account only as one aspect of 'the spell of the bush', as a 'fertilizing element' in 'our literature', and not at all in relation to the 'clash of cultures' between our 'two Australias'.[50] This is not merely a historical, or a presentist, concern. As Alan Lawson contends, in seeking settler independence from the metropole, settler nationalisms routinely function as a 'strategic disavowal of the colonizing act',[51] and conceal the settler's dual position as both coloniser and colonised. Universalist settler claims to metropolitan inheritance and European continuity have a similarly effacing effect vis-à-vis the Indigenous peoples whose lands they seek to usurp. As Docker points out, those belonging to what he termed the 'metaphysical ascendancy' were — as much as their opponents in his 'mythic struggle', the radical nationalists — 'equally desirous to secure and own the whole continent'.[52]

In addressing, in one way or another, the relation between the metropole and the (settler) colony, whether to insist on cultural/civilisational continuity, or instead on the inevitable unfurling of national cultural independence — the twinned 'omnipresent and competing dynamics' of settler-colonial societies, what Gérard Bouchard has termed 'continuity and rupture'[53] — standard narratives of Australian national cultural development thus neglect the complexities of the settler-colonial, as distinct from the colonial, situation. This is to the obvious, extensive and ongoing detriment of the Indigenous peoples on and in relation to whose lands the settler nation is continually being constructed. It is

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[50] Inglis Moore, *Social Patterns in Australian Literature*, 19, 87–88.
[51] Alan Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory and the "Settler" Subject', *Essays on Canadian Writing*, no. 56 (1995): n.p.
[52] Docker, *In a Critical Condition*, 83.
[53] Bouchard, *Nations and Cultures of the New World*, 14.

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

also to the detriment of our understanding of the predicament (rather than the paradox, problem or dilemma) characteristic of settler colonialism (rather than colonialism). The approach adopted here insists that the settler-colonial situation in Australia, as in Serle's other 'new countries' and beyond, is organised around a 'fundamentally triangular system of relationships … comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies' within which settlers are subject to 'conflicting tendencies': towards 'indigenisation and national autonomy' on the one hand, and towards 'neo-European replication and the establishment of a "civilised" pattern of life' on the other.[54]

In Terry Goldie's convincing account, indigenisation is defined as the process 'through which the "settler" population attempts to become as though indigenous, as though "born" of the land' and both expresses and addresses a desire on the part of settlers to erase what he terms their 'separation of belonging' from the land.[55] Yet in attempting to undertake a process of settler indigenisation and to thereby distinguish their own indigeneity, and that of their cultural products, from their European cultural inheritance, settler nationalists inevitably confront the limits imposed on this process by the necessity of maintaining the colonial authority and sovereign capacity they derive from this very inheritance. As a consequence, they continually confront what Patrick Wolfe has described as 'the problem of the fragment': that is, 'how to be British for the purpose of expropriating Australians and Australian for the purpose of independence from Britain?'[56] In attempting to respond to and thereby overcome this settler-colonial conundrum, as Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson contend, the settler always, whether

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[54] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 6, 21.

[55] Terry Goldie, 'The Man of the Land/The Land of the Man: Patrick White and Scott Symons', *SPAN: Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies*, no. 36 (1993): n.p.; Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 12.

[56] Patrick Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era', *Social Analysis*, no. 36 (1994): 126.

'wittingly or unwittingly', addresses *both* of what they term its 'antecedent authorities/authenticities'.[57]

There are a variety of possible responses to this predicament. In the first instance, with regard to the settler–metropole relation and settlers' search for belonging 'to the metropolitan centre', responses vary from the rejectionist extremes of anti-colonial nationalism, epitomised by *The Bulletin* of the 1890s, to the conservative Anglocentrism represented in the 1930s and 1940s by the likes of G. H. Cowling and J. I. M. Stewart, Professors of English at the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide respectively. More moderate inheritors of these traditions would follow, as represented in the post-war period, for example, by the radical nationalists and their project of 1890s revivalism on the one hand, and Docker's universalist 'metaphysical ascendancy' and the 'alternative stream of "Australian literature"' (from Christopher Brennan to Patrick White) it sought to rescue from its previous reputation 'as alien, belonging neither to its time or place or to its public' on the other.[58]

The second relation, that between settler and indigene, and the settler's search for belonging to 'the territory that they … invaded and colonised', simultaneously structures the preceding tension between the competing imperatives of 'continuity and rupture',[59] while also seeming to offer at least some settlers an apparent path towards its supersession. The variety of possible responses to this second relationship range from disavowal of either the sovereignty or significance of indigenous peoples on the one hand, to a radical mode of indigenist appropriation on the other. These are the dual

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[57] Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, eds Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 370.

[58] Quote from Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 271–72. The nationalist tradition received its authoritative statements in a series of books published in the 1950s, in particular Vance Palmer, *The Legend of the Nineties* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1963); Phillips, *The Australian Tradition*; Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958). On the 'metaphysical ascendancy', see Docker, *In a Critical Condition*, chapter four. Docker places Serle in the nationalist tradition, and notes the anomaly of his using a quote from Hope's poem 'Australia' as the title for the first edition of his cultural history (ibid., 27) — see Geoffrey Serle, *From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788–1972* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1973).

[59] Bouchard, *Nations and Cultures of the New World*.

strategies Goldie has termed '*penetration* … and *appropriation*', *both* of which aim towards the goal of settler indigenisation and to construct the conditions for imagining the unmediated encounter between the settler and the land towards which settler colonialism ultimately strives. The penetrationist tradition is similarly exemplified by *The Bulletin*, in which '[e]ach reference … to the white Australian as "native" or "indigenous" is a comment on indigenization, regardless of the absence of Aborigines in those references', while the appropriationist approach is most easily identifiable in the explicit indigenism of Margaret Preston, and one of the subjects of this thesis, the Jindyworobaks.[60]

A kind of soft penetrationism is also evident in the neglect, or the passing and dismissive acknowledgement, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in the accounts of 'middle-ground' critics such as H. M. Green and C. Hartley Grattan.[61] For Grattan, who in 1938 was prepared to support the 'fundamental truth' of Stephensen's nationalist position that 'any culture of moment in Australia must be deeply rooted in the Australian earth',[62] the earth was presumed available for easy, if prolonged, usurpation. While Grattan praised what he described as 'sympathetic' views 'of the aboriginal [sic] in Australian literature', contrary to Stephensen's position, elaborated in Chapter 2 below, he nevertheless held that at the moment of settler-colonial invasion in 1788 Australia contained 'no indigenous civilization from which white men could draw much usable wisdom'.[63]

The third possibility, missing from Goldie's picture (concerned as he was to account for the same 'encounter' as Healy), is what I term the 'colonialist' option. The 'colonialists' (although they would reject the term) are those for whom metropolitan continuity is

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[60] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 15, 14; see Dan Tout, 'Neither Nationalists nor Universalists: Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks', *Australian Humanities Review*, no. 61 (2017).

[61] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 278.

[62] C. Hartley Grattan, 'On Australian Literature, 1788–1938', *Australian Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1938): 33.

[63] C. Hartley Grattan, *Australian Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Book Store, 1929), 33; Grattan, *Introducing Australia*, 4.

emphasised and the indigenising imperative is repressed or rejected out-of-hand. If Margaret Preston and the Jindyworobaks represent the appropriationist option in its ideal-typical form, and the nationalist lineage from *The Bulletin* through to A. A. Phillips and beyond the penetrationist, then the 'Pommies' or the 'palefaces' — the loyalists, Europeanists, or simply universalists — are representative of the colonialist option. Examples of this position abound, especially in the 19th century and extending well into the 20th, but a particularly relevant one in the context of this thesis is the aforementioned J. I. M. Stewart, who famously introduced what was reported as his inaugural lecture for the Commonwealth Literary Fund (itself an important institution of Dominion nationalisation) in 1940 with the statement: 'I am most grateful to the Commonwealth Literary Fund for providing the funds to give this lecture on Australian Literature, but unfortunately they have neglected to provide any Literature — I will lecture therefore on *Kangaroo* by D. H. Lawrence'.[64] His choice of barb was telling: as Nicholas Birns remarks, Lawrence has often been 'seen as standing in the way of an appreciation of "real" Australian literature', and both Stephensen and Ingamells (not to mention Manning Clark) engaged directly and persistently with Lawrence's ideas, especially those representations of Australia expressed in the novel Stewart elected to lecture on.[65] However, since the colonialist option is settler colonial but neither nationalist nor indigenising, it falls beyond the scope of the present dissertation.

These dynamics and the tensions they produce on the part of settler nationalists and settler universalists alike intersect in a variety of ways, reflecting the complexities of the

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[64] Geoffrey Dutton, *Out in the Open: An Autobiography* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1994), 90. This story has circulated since as an apocryphal anecdote amongst those concerned to reject or overcome its derisive implications about the national literary project, although Butterss suggests that (unsurprisingly, perhaps): 'The truth … is much more complicated' ('Australian Literary Studies in the 1940s: The Commonwealth Literary Fund Lectures', *Australian Literary Studies* 30, no. 4 (2015): 115). The lecture was not Stewart's first, and according to Butterss, based on his opening address the audience would have been well aware that 'Stewart's words were … not to be taken at face value', but would also have known that 'his introduction, though ostensibly a joke, was also a statement of his scorn for a great deal of Australian literature' (ibid.).
[65] Nicholas Birns, 'Something to Keep You Steady: Egalitarianism and Distinction from D. H. Lawrence to Christos Tsiolkas', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 9 (2009): 1.

triangular relations of settler colonialism. And so, for example, when in the late 1930s Rex Ingamells founded the Jindyworobaks and advocated the appropriation of what he conceived as a remnant indigeneity as a strategy of settler indigenisation, the otherwise opposed universalist, anti-Australianist Alec Hope and the radical nationalist A. A. Phillips found common cause in attacking him and his appropriationist program on the grounds of a perceived lack of value in the Indigenous cultures from which the Jindyworobaks sought to borrow. As Bruce Clunies-Ross remarks, the Jindyworobaks found themselves 'attacked' on the one hand 'by those who maintained the essential European traditions of culture in Australia and on the other hand by those committed to a different, and incompatible, view of the Australian tradition'.[66]

The positions held by Hope and Phillips — those of the universalists (read Europeanists) and penetrationist-nationalists alike — each emphasise a different element of H. M. Green's model of the 'development of Australian literature', with Phillips stressing the first element — 'the gradual growth of the native at the expense of the overseas element and their fusion into something new' — and Hope emphasising the second — 'the gradual attainment of value'.[67] Yet *both* elements, indeed the model as a whole, as with Grattan's evolutionary model of national cultural independence, are concerned with only the first aspect of Australia's settler-colonial system of relations and, in this way, function in line with Alan Lawson's characterisation of settler nationalism in general as a 'strategic disavowal of the colonizing act'.[68]

Always almost 'coming of age'

The tensions produced by the triangular system of relations characterising the settler-colonial situation mean the imperatives towards settler indigenisation and neo-European replication compete for supremacy but are never ultimately resolved.[69] This is

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[66] Bruce Clunies-Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks', *Kunapipi* 3, no. 1 (1981): 59.
[67] Green, 'Literature', 291.
[68] Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.
[69] See Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, chapter one.

one factor behind the fact that the search for national cultural maturity remains a matter of ongoing and unresolved concern (albeit understood and approached in very different terms depending on the period and setting under examination). Over the course of Australian settler-colonial history, as David Carter remarks, the 'national literature or culture was always emerging but never fully emerged', and the project of national literary and cultural construction has remained, in Miles Franklin's words, 'chronically incipient'.[70]

Carter provides an illustrative catalogue of examples:

> Frederick Sinnett, in 1856, found 'some small patches' of the potentially vast fiction fields that had 'been cleared, and fenced, and cultivated'. Two decades later, Marcus Clarke found in Adam Lindsay Gordon's verse 'something very like the beginning of a national school of poetry'. Two decades more, and H. G. Turner could claim only that 'Australian literature begins to assume some definiteness of form'. A. G. Stephens, no friend to the critical views of Clarke or Turner, saw in Lawson and Paterson 'something like the beginnings of a national school of poetry'. Vance Palmer in 1905: 'even now the national movement is beginning'. P. R. Stephensen in 1935: 'we are on the threshold of Australian self-consciousness, at the point of developing Australian nationality, and with it Australian culture'. And Vincent Buckley in 1957: 'we are still not quite modern … yet we are on our way to being mature'.[71]

We might add a few more. In 1945, John K. Ewers surveyed *Creative Writing in Australia* and observed that 'the Novel Begins to Grow up'.[72] Despite having felt sufficiently

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[70] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 260.

[71] Ibid. In an extraordinary instance of misappropriation, in a book described as '[t]he story of our rich literary heritage', John Miller rehearses verbatim Carter's outline (sans acknowledgement), repurposing it to serve the author's insistence — within the grand tradition of nationalist teleology — that 'Australian literature, just like the nation itself, is still developing but it most certainly has arrived' (*Australia's Writers and Poets* (Wollombi: Exisle, 2007), 90).

[72] Pierce, 'Forms of Australian Literary History', 78.

confident in 1938 to assert that 'the roots' of Australian (settler) culture had 'gone down deep into the soil', in 1949 Rex Ingamells expressed a curious but suggestive hesitancy with regards to Australian maturity: 'Australian Literature', he felt, had 'reached a stage not far short of maturity'.[73] In 1953, Leslie Rees' influential study of plays by and about Australians bore the anticipatory title 'Towards an Australian Drama'.[74] Following Rees' lead, two years after his anticipatory remark quoted by Carter above, in 1959 Vincent Buckley called for 'genuine criticism' and the establishment of a 'provisional canon of our writers' in his article aiming 'Towards an Australian Literature'.[75] In 1964, the inaugural editorial in Rupert Murdoch's 'first truly national newspaper', *The Australian*, queried 'But have we really grown up? It seems we have not … We are growing up. But we have manifestly not yet achieved maturity'.[76] In accepting his Australian of the Year award in 1965, Sir Robert Helpmann noted: 'I don't despair about the cultural scene in Australia because there isn't one here to despair about'.[77]

In the introduction to her collection of essays entitled *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry* (1965), on the topic of 'Australia's Double Aspect', Judith Wright wrote:

> We are becoming identified with this country; we are beginning to know ourselves no longer exiles, but at home here in a proper sense of the term. We are beginning to write, no longer as transplanted Europeans, nor as rootless men who reject the past and put their hopes only in the future, but as men with a present to be lived in and a past to nourish us.[78]

Wright's qualifications are exemplary, and alongside the other examples certainly seem to evidence what Robert Dixon has described as 'the precariousness of the cultural-

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[73] Rex Ingamells and Ian Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture* (Adelaide: F. W. Preece, 1938), 13; Rex Ingamells, *Handbook of Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1949), 16.

[74] Leslie Rees, *Towards an Australian Drama* (Sydney & London: Angus & Robertson, 1953).

[75] Quoted in Lawson, 'Recognition of National Literatures', n.p.

[76] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 18.

[77] Quoted in Nick Bryant, 'Cultural Creep: Australian Arts on the March', *Griffith Review*, no. 36 (2012).

[78] Wright, *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*, xxii.

nationalist project in Australia', which he aptly characterised as 'poised between what never was and what did not yet exist'.[79]

In their account of 'Australia after Empire' as an *Unknown Nation*, James Curran and Stuart Ward demonstrate that into the 1960s, Australians continued to struggle 'to find the appropriate language and rhetoric to invoke *the coming nation*', and identify 'residual tensions over Australia's colonial past' as late as 1993.[80] As Ward remarked elsewhere, '"real" nationhood was something discussed in the future tense'.[81] Additional examples abound: Stephen Alomes' added a question mark to his reflections on more than a century of Australian nationalism in *A Nation at Last?*, while Brigid Rooney remarked on the 'recurrent concerns revolv[ing] around how nation is imagined and defined', and observed that 'questions of nationhood have … been profoundly anxious' in Australia.[82] In 2009, in an almost perfect echo of David Carter's historical account, quoted at the beginning of this section, but with a revealingly different period in mind, Tim Soutphommasane sidestepped the issue with the evasive proposition that the 'national project is something that never is but is always becoming'.[83] Curran and Ward ultimately conclude that Australia has appeared to be 'endlessly coming of age', a conclusion that seems to confirm John Hutchinson's suggestion that what he terms 'New World societies, are marked by distinctive "status anxieties", formulated in a language of

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[79] Robert Dixon, 'Australian Fiction and the World Republic of Letters, 1890–1950', in *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, ed. Peter Pierce (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 237.
[80] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 5, emphasis added. Tellingly, Curran and Ward also identify the trans-Tasman parallels. Especially worthy of note is their reference to W. B. Sutch's *Colony or Nation?* (1965), which not only mirrors Stephensen's intermediate interpretation (see Chapter 2) but illustrates the persistence of such questions beyond the more limited scope of their study (ibid., 20).
[81] Stuart Ward, 'The "New Nationalism" in Australia, Canada and New Zealand: Civic Culture in the Wake of the British World', in *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, eds Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, and Stuart Macintyre (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 239.
[82] Brigid Rooney, *Literary Activists: Writer-Intellectuals and Australian Public Life* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2009), xxi.
[83] Tim Soutphommasane, *Reclaiming Patriotism: Nation-Building for Australian Progressives* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

maturation, that require them to assess periodically their progress through time and to construct landmarks as galvanizers of future action'.[84]

Curran and Ward's account is important, and their examples extensive and instructive. However, rather than entering into long-running debates around the centrality or otherwise of Britishness as a constitutive component of Australian national culture and identity, or indeed the related debates concerning the proper nomenclature of (settler) colonial nationalism, towards which Curran and Ward's intervention is substantively addressed, what is striking in terms of the interpretive perspective adopted here is the extent to which such debates ultimately re-capitulate the reductive dyadic understandings already identified.[85]

Thus, even for a historian such as Russell McGregor, who has dedicated the vast majority of his historiographical attention to what has been loosely (and not unproblematically) termed 'Aboriginal history', a singular turn towards the question of 'the Necessity of Britishness' as the 'ethno-cultural roots of Australian nationalism' makes only passing mention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and then only to dismiss what this thesis terms the indigenist option. McGregor concludes (not altogether inaccurately) that for settler nationalists, at the time of federation, 'as a source of meaningful heritage,

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[84] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 224; John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: Fontana Press, 1994), 165–66. Curran and Ward are hardly blind to the persistent nature of the settler predicament, however. Quoting Benedict Anderson to the effect that even '[i]f nation-states are widely conceded to be "new" and "historical," the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and … glide into a limitless future', they make the important point that the 'new nationalism' (though they really should have said Australian settler nationalism) 'could only speak to the latter half of this equation, and without conviction' (*The Unknown Nation*, 256; see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)).

[85] See, for example, Neville Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity: The Problem of Nationalism in Australian History and Historiography', *Australian Historical Studies* 32, no. 116 (2001); Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*; Ben Wellings, 'Crown and Country: Empire and Nation in Australian Nationalism, 1788–1999', *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 5 (2004); Russell McGregor, 'The Necessity of Britishness: Ethno-Cultural Roots of Australian Nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 3 (2006); Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, and Stuart Macintyre, eds, *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2007); Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*; Christopher Waters, 'Nationalism, Britishness and Australian History: The Meaney Thesis Revisited', *History Australia* 10, no. 3 (2013). For an excellent summary of both debates, see Stuart Ward's contribution to *Britishness Abroad* ('The "New Nationalism"'), which demonstrates the parallels across the settler-colonial contexts of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

conveying a sense of the time-depth of the nation, Aboriginal culture and the Aboriginal past were irrelevant'.[86] In an exploration into what she classifies as the 'Historiographical Paradox' of Brian Fitzpatrick's twinned interests in the British Empire and Indigenous histories running in parallel yet never being brought together, Ann Curthoys wonders: 'how was it that a historian so aware of the complexities and significance of empire, and who as a citizen understood and at times fought for Aboriginal rights, did not see these two issues as related?'[87]

My point here is not to deemphasise the significance of the settler–metropole dialectic, since it is the relation to which both sides of our 'great divide' are inevitably addressed, whether consciously or unconsciously, but to insist rather on attentiveness towards the reciprocal impacts between this relation and that between settler and indigene *as well* and *at the same time*. This was Curthoys' challenge: 'to build an account of Australian history which is grounded in an understanding of both its imperial and its settler-colonial character'.[88]

The demise of Britishness as a 'credible totem of civic and sentimental allegiance' in the wake of empire — what Curran and Ward characterise as 'the unravelling of the empire and Britain's retreat into Europe' — undoubtedly raised important and ongoing questions about Australian national identity and Australia's place in the world, arguably even to the extent that they caused what Donald Horne described as a 'general "national identity" crisis'.[89] Yet not only were these questions also provoked by decolonisation processes more generally, which raised awareness of and drew attention to the situation of indigenous peoples around the world, including in Australia, but also by strident and well-organised Indigenous activism (the two movements were not unrelated), through

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[86] McGregor, 'The Necessity of Britishness', 502.
[87] Ann Curthoys, 'A Historiographical Paradox: Brian Fitzpatrick, the British Empire, and Indigenous Histories', in *Against the Grain: Brian Fitzpatrick and Manning Clark in Australian History and Politics*, eds Stuart Macintyre and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 70.
[88] Ibid., 84.
[89] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 7, 16, 61.

which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples attained a level of symbolic national inclusion in 1967 and demanded rights and recognition in its wake.[90]

Reciprocally, settler attempts to construct a national culture and identity on and in relation to expropriated Indigenous lands have inevitably operated in accordance with either or both of Goldie's two indigenising options, as Anthony Moran's analysis of settler nationalism in the post-1967 context makes abundantly clear.[91] Indeed, it is no coincidence that the two periods in which clearly indigenising forms of settler nationalism emerged — the 1970s (the focus of Moran's analysis, as well as that of Curran and Ward) and the 1930s (the focus of mine) — are the two periods in which both aspects of Australia's settler-colonial system of relations were especially under strain.

Ultimately, while in periods of 'identity crisis' one or other or, more unusually, both aspects of the settler situation are brought to prominence, the structuring system of relations remains. As Andrew Lattas concludes, albeit from a very different theoretical vantage point, '[t]he continual questioning of who we really are is the essence of Australian nationalism'.[92]

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[90] See, for example, John Chesterman and Brian Galligan, *Citizens Without Rights: Aborigines and Australian Citizenship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights: A Documentary History* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 1999); Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2003); Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The 1967 Referendum: Race, Power and the Australian Constitution*, 2nd ed. (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007).

[91] Anthony Moran, 'Imagining the Australian Nation: Settler-Nationalism and Aboriginality' (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1999); Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'; Moran, 'Australian Settler-Nationalism'. Moran distinguishes between what he terms assimilationist and indigenising settler nationalisms, which broadly conform to Goldie's penetrationist and appropriationist options. With an eye towards what he terms 'indigenous transnationalism', Ravi de Costa has similarly distinguished between what he calls 'progressive' and 'defensive' nationalisms (*A Higher Authority: Indigenous Transnationalism and Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006)). I adopt Goldie's terminology here, with the addition of a 'colonialist' option, to distinguish between assimilationist *nationalists* (who are indigenising) and assimilationist colonialists (who refuse indigenisation).

[92] Andrew Lattas, 'Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism: Primordiality and the Cultural Politics of Otherness', in *Race Matters: Indigenous Australians and 'Our' Society*, eds Gillian Cowlishaw and Barry Morris (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997), 231.

Settler cultural construction in 1930s Australia

The prevailing circumstances of the 1930s, and their particular Australian manifestations — including the aftermath of World War I, the Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster, the various impacts of the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the imminent threat of Australia's involvement in another European war, as well as the tensions these events produced in Australia's relationship with Britain — combined to make settler nationalism simultaneously more urgent and increasingly problematic throughout this period. As Peter Kirkpatrick describes, 'Western civilisation was in a state of almost perpetual crisis after World War I. The Great Depression was swiftly followed by the rise of fascism and a growing sense that another international war was inevitable'.[93] More specifically, Australia's relationship with England was troubled by the 'havoc wreaked by the Great Depression of the 1930s'.[94] Stephen Alomes offers a summary of relevant events:

> During the collapse of world trade which followed the Wall Street Stock Exchange collapse of 1929 a decline in world commodity prices crippled the Australian economy. It also brought demands from the City of London for the repayment of Australian loans, including war loans. The result was social and political as well as economic turbulence, with Australia suffering one of the highest levels of unemployment in the Western world during the 1930s. The implications for nationalism were profound. The debate over the repayment of loans to London was worked out in terms of opposing views of the nation. Conservatives believed that national honour demanded the scheduled repayment of loans to the London banks. Labor Party people, particularly the idiosyncratic Premier of New South Wales, Jack Lang, believed, however, that debt interest repayments should be delayed to

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[93] Peter Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity": Jindyworobak Primitivism', in *Adelaide: A Literary City*, ed. Philip Butterss (North Terrace: University of Adelaide Press, 2013), 136.
[94] Stephen Alomes, *A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880–1988* (North Ryde: Angus & Robertson, 1988), 74.

reduce the suffering of ordinary Australians. … The 'Bodyline' cricket controversy reflected, among other things, the frustration Australians felt at the human cost of the Depression. At the same time the 'Bodyline' tactics severely qualified Australians' loyalty to Britain.[95]

The 1930s can therefore be read as a period of what James Belich has termed 'recolonization' in Australia's relationship within and to the British Empire. This stage of colonisation typically occurs in the aftermath of an economic cycle of boom and 'bust', when

grand dreams of great independent futures faded, growth slowed, and export rescue eventually took hold … The relationship between oldland and new tightened, against the grain of expectations about the steady emergence of independence or parity. Collective identities shared by oldland and new strengthened along with economic re-integration, though the one did not necessarily determine the other … It … was a multidimensional shift with political, social, and cultural aspects.[96]

John Rickard confirms it:

The ambivalence of Australian attitudes to Britain seemed magnified and dramatised by the events and concerns of the inter-war years, from the myth-making of Anzac to the passions of the cricket pitch. There seemed, too, an element of gathering but inarticulate tension in the relationship, particularly as in the late 1930s the crisis in Europe escalated, and the vulnerability of the Empire was more than ever apparent.[97]

Alomes outlines what he describes as the 'Dominion Economy and Dominion Culture of virtually the first half of the twentieth century [which] dramatically circumscribed

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[95] Stephen Alomes, *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History* (North Ryde: Collins/Angus & Robertson, 1991), 202.
[96] Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, 179.
[97] John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996), 137.

independent Australian nationalism'.[98] Yet resistance against processes of political and economic recolonisation instituted and instantiated through, for example, the Great Depression and the City of London's calls for repayment of Australian loans, including war loans, was evident in the Lang Plan and the Bodyline era, as Alomes suggests.[99] This was also a period in which new paths towards independence were being developed, either in awareness of, or at times in response to, the intensification of Australia's colonial ties and the threat of Australia's involvement in another European war. The two are related, and what James Walter has termed the '"Australianist" cycle' operates in dialectical relation to global and, especially, imperial crises.[100] In the literary field in particular, which, as we have seen, has consistently been central to debates over Australian national culture and identity, numerous authors and critics attempted to overcome the stifling intellectual atmosphere by charting new paths towards cultural independence.

At this historical juncture, however, what Michael Griffiths has described as the 'decreasing tenability' of the doomed race ideal in the interwar period also meant that settlers found themselves confronting what Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra have termed 'the intractable conditions of [settler Australia's] foundation event'.[101] While at times exclusive emphasis on the settler–metropole relation may be maintained, at other historical moments the disavowal or denial of the settler–indigene aspect of the settler situation common to the nationalist and universalist traditions alike is either undermined or rendered untenable by changing circumstances. The nationalist surge of the 1890s, for example, was underwritten by social evolutionism and the 'doomed race' ideal, which imagined an imminent future in which triadic relations would be resolved into dyadic ones. This enabled settler nationalists on the eve of federation to focus their

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[98] Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 73.

[99] Alomes, *Australian Nationalism*, 202.

[100] James Walter, 'Why Australian Studies?', in *Australian Studies: A Survey*, ed. James Walter (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5–6.

[101] Michael R. Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts: Biopolitics, Cultural Memory, and the Public Sphere in a (Post)Settler Colony' (PhD thesis, Rice University, 2012), 11; Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 26.

attentions on claiming national cultural, even political, independence from the metropole. Relatedly, the penetrationist approach that characterised both the universalism and radical nationalism of the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s was facilitated by a policy of forced assimilation that envisaged a similar resolution of relations, albeit by different means.

The 1930s, on the other hand, was a period marked by the demise of the doomed race ideal. According to McGregor, from a population of under 10,000 before World War I and 11,579 in 1921, the loosely defined 'half-caste' population exploded from 15,468 in 1927 to almost 24,000 by the time of the 1937 conference on Aboriginal welfare, which infamously concluded that 'the destiny of the natives of aboriginal [sic] origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth'.[102] This demographic transition brought settlers face-to-face with settler colonialism's 'foundation event', since the notion that the demise of the Aboriginal 'race' was inevitable and that the only task remaining was to 'smooth the dying pillow' was irrevocably undermined. Under these circumstances, Healy's 'encounter' — between 'an authentic [settler] consciousness', 'the Aborigine and the land' — became, if not inevitable, then at least much more likely. At this historical juncture, settler nationalists found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the settler nation, and were forced to negotiate the triadic relations of settler colonialism rather than the dyadic ones of colonialism proper.

It is instructive that Baz Luhrmann explicitly explained his decision to set his (indigenising settler) nationalist epic *Australia*, which shares more than a few similarities with the work of Xavier Herbert, in the 1930s, precisely because he wished to explore the triangular relations of settler colonialism with which this thesis is concerned. Luhrmann implied that he perceived these as especially exposed in this period: 'there were a few

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[102] Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1997), 134–35; Commonwealth of Australia, *Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities* (Canberra: April 1937), 3.

specific issues I wanted to explore. One was our relationship with England, the parent country, and why, when Australians have self-confidence in so many areas, do we not have the confidence for self-governance? Another was to do with Australia's indigenous population'.[103]

It is into this historical-cultural context that this thesis situates my three subjects: Percy Reginald 'Inky' Stephensen (1901–65), writer, editor and publisher; Reginald Charles (Rex) Ingamells (1913–55), poet and editor; and Alfred Francis Xavier Herbert (1901–84), writer. These subjects were not selected for their representativeness as settler nationalists in general, but rather for their explanatory potential as exemplars of particular tendencies in indigenising settler nationalism. (In a not dissimilar manner, Russel Ward defended his seminal — and highly problematic — account of the 'typical' rather than the 'average' Australian on the basis of distinctiveness rather than representativeness, although my project is critical rather than celebratory.)[104] In attempting to negotiate the development of an Australian national culture and identity under circumstances in which the teleological progression towards national maturity appeared to have 'stalled', and in which its advocates found themselves confronting a persistent, pre-existing Indigenous authority, these three settler nationalists produced a series of original, if problematic and ultimately unsuccessful, responses.

J. J. Healy is clear: Stephensen was '[o]ne of the key people' in the 'intensification of interest in nationalism and in the Aborigine' in the early 1930s; it was Ingamells who 'stumbled into [the] truth' that Healy's encounter was necessary, if not inevitable (even if he 'hit' this 'very serious set of problems — the Aborigine, cultural nationalism — from a very narrow angle and from a restricted base of experience'); and Herbert was the 'central figure … who brought the Aborigine, in his contemporary manifestation, to full

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[103] Baz Luhrmann, 'How We Made the Epic of Oz', *The Guardian*, 2 November, 2008.
[104] Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980), 254. Like the 'bush ethos', indigenising settler nationalism is '*distinctive*, not *representative*' (Walter, 'Defining Australia', 25).

focus'.[105] Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra agree. While Michael Griffiths has recently analysed these three figures in relation to one another, he pursues a different line of enquiry.[106] My reading draws on and responds to these and other readings of these and other indigenising settler nationalists to examine the underlying dynamics of settler-colonial relations that conditioned their responses to the settler predicament and continue to do so today.

Thesis outline

Chapter 1 sketches out the stages and strategies of settler colonialism referred to here as displacement, disavowal and replacement, with two aims in mind. The first is to identify the structural imperatives underlying the Australian settler project's originary

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[105] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 168, 173, 154.

[106] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 58; Michael R. Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences: Settler Nationalism, Thanatopolitics, and the Perils of Hybridity', *Australian Literary Studies* 26, no. 2 (2011); Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts', chapter four. Hodge and Mishra write of Herbert that 'he may be loosely associated with the Australia First Movement and, ironically enough, with the pro-Aboriginal poetic movement of the late 1930s, the Jindyworobaks, especially insofar as his utopian vision of Australian culture required a positive acknowledgement of the Aboriginal past' (*Dark Side of the Dream*, 58). Each of these three subjects have recently received renewed interpretive attention, separately and together, and my project attempts to contribute an original interpretation to the emerging body of literature concerned with re-examining their significance in Australian cultural history. For a selection of only the more recent and relevant examples, see Sean Monahan, *A Long and Winding Road: Xavier Herbert's Literary Journey* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2003); Tim Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War: A Comment on *The Black Swan of Trespass*', *Australian Cultural History*, no. 25 (2006); Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, 'Some Whites are Whiter than Others: The Whitefella Skin Politics of Xavier Herbert and Cecil Cook', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* (2007); Ouyang Yu, 'Xavier Herbert', in *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, eds Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer (Rochester: Camden House, 2007); Liz Conor, 'A "Nation So Ill-Begotten": Racialized Childhood and Conceptions of National Belonging in Xavier Herbert's *Poor Fellow My Country* and Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*', *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 4, no. 2 (2010); Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'; David S. Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime: Australian Enthusiasts for Hitler's Germany* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012); Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts'; Peter Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist: The Jindyworobaks as Avant Garde', in *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*, eds Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon (University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012); Ellen Smith, 'Writing Native: The Aboriginal in Australian Cultural Nationalism 1927–1945' (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2012); Barbara Winter, *The Australia First Movement and the Publicist, 1936–1942* (Carindale: Glass House Books, 2012); Nicholas Birns, '"This Piece of Hardwood, Cunningly Shaped": Rex Ingamells Kicks off the Jindyworobaks', in *Telling Stories: Australian Life and Literature 1935–2012*, eds Tanya Dalziell and Paul Genoni (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2013); Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity"'; Ellen Smith, 'Local Moderns: The Jindyworobak Movement and Australian Modernism', *Australian Literary Studies* 27, no. 1 (2013); Ellen Smith, 'White Aborigines', *Interventions* 16, no. 1 (2014). See also the dedication special section, 'Xavier Herbert: Forgotten or Repressed?', edited by Liz Conor and Ann McGrath, in *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2017).

displacement of pre-existing Indigenous populations from the literal and symbolic space of the Australian settler nation, as well as the subsequent disavowal of this foundational displacement. The second is to draw attention to the ongoing and always incomplete attempts on the part of settlers — and the settler state — to replace the troubling figure of 'the indigene' on and *of* the land. The chapter therefore emphasises some of the problems these processes of displacement, disavowal and replacement continue to present to the settler project itself, since the persistence of a sovereign Indigenous presence within the settler body politic undermines settler claims to settlement; or, which is the same thing, the completion of settler colonisation. This is an issue returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 2 comprises an overview and analysis of the existing literature concerning 'Inky' Stephensen's current place in Australian cultural history. It finds that despite significant and sustained attention across the fields of literary, cultural and political historiography, Stephensen has frustrated existing attempts at analysis and explication by evading classification within existing interpretive frameworks. Taken together, the existing literature presents a picture of Stephensen and *Foundations* as riven by inconsistency, contradiction and radical disjuncture. On the contrary, this chapter attempts to illustrate that it is the existing historiography concerned with the significance of Stephensen and his essay that remains inconsistent, rather than its subject. A settler colonial studies interpretive perspective is introduced in order to reconcile Stephensen's ambivalences within a single interpretive frame and thereby facilitate a more comprehensive and convincing account of this otherwise enigmatic figure.

Chapter 3 examines Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobak poetry movement and maps them in relation to the historical and structural dynamics outlined in the preceding sections of this introduction. While the Jindyworobaks have typically been associated with the nationalist side of the 'two Australias' divide, this chapter argues that they in fact sought to chart a new path that rejected both the straightforward traditions of anti-colonial nationalism and the 'alien' influence of imported European culture; that they

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

rejected *both* extremes and sought instead to achieve a synthesis of the two. With this aim in mind, they turned towards Aboriginal people, as bearers of the spirit of *this* place, in an attempt to appropriate an imagined environmental essence and to thereby construct the conditions for an unmediated encounter between the settler and the land. In formulating their program in these terms, the Jindyworobaks conformed to a broader tradition David Carter has characterised in terms of its 'radical originality': seeking to identify Australia's *genius loci*, the spirit of place, as a source of alterity and to solve the problems of settler nationalism by means of an originary emergence. Following the pattern established in the Chapter 2, the concluding section of Chapter 3 similarly draws on the settler colonial studies literature in proposing an original reinterpretation of the Jindyworobaks as neither universalist nor exclusively nationalist, and neither nationalist nor exclusively indigenist, but rather ambivalent settler nationalists expressing the typical settler-colonial desire to overcome the contingencies that are characteristic of the settler-colonial condition.

Chapter 4 triangulates Xavier Herbert's racial understandings against those of both Stephensen and Ingamells, reading them all in relation to the prevailing circumstances of 1930s Australia. At a historical moment marked by ambivalence in Australia's relationship with metropolitan England, Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert sought to establish settler Australia's national cultural independence. In doing so, however, at a moment marked by the demise of the 'doomed race' ideal, they found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the settler nation. While Stephensen subscribed to the 'Aryan Aborigines' hypothesis and emphasised Australia's supposed racial purity, positing himself and the Australian national culture he sought to construct as inheritors of 'the mantle of belonging to the land',[107] and Ingamells engaged in a project of radical indigenist appropriation that separated and usurped a symbolic indigeneity from its bearers towards the very same end, Herbert

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[107] Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2004), 117.

celebrated instead the potentiality of 'Euraustralian' hybridity to overcome his own, and by extension his compatriots', illegitimate status as 'alien' and 'invader'.[108] These approaches are ostensibly at odds, yet they share a drive towards settler indigenisation and independence as their common, overriding concerns.

By (re)focusing attention on these three settler nationalists as exemplars of particular trends in indigenising settler nationalism in the 1930s, the following discussion may appear to reaffirm the supremacy of the white settler male in the Australian national imaginary, as well imply the stasis and homogeneity (not to mention exclusivity) of the three categories of identity — settler, indigene and metropole — I emphasise as central to the settler nationalist project. In relation to the former, the approach remains critical of gender hegemonies, in line with the findings of a generation of feminist historians.[109] In relation to the second limitation, the settler situation is such precisely because of the primacy of the settler, even if this primacy remains partial and incomplete as a result of the resistance and persistence of Indigenous and exogenous 'others' against which the settler defines his own identity and asserts his own supremacy.[110] The objective here is to highlight *for the purpose of critique* the very hegemony and the terms of identity, power, sovereignty and belonging it establishes, or asserts.[111]

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[108] Frances de Groen and Laurie Hergenhan, eds, *Xavier Herbert: Letters* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2002), 71.

[109] See Marilyn Lake, 'The Gendered and Racialised Self Who Claimed the Right to Self-Government', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 13, no. 1 (2012). I am more than persuaded by critiques of the gendered, classed and racialised exclusions of the 'Australian legend' and its settler nationalist derivatives and alternatives, including the historiography that has responded to it (for example, McQueen, *A New Britannia*; Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, and Ann McGrath, *Creating a Nation* (Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1994); Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to the Present*, 4th ed. (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999); Richard Nile, ed., *The Australian Legend and Its Discontents* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000)). My suggestion here is that, in much the same way as whiteness studies seeks to render visible the otherwise hidden privileges and practices of whiteness, identifying and analysing the underlying and often unrecognised dynamics and implications of Australian settler nationalism will help to render them visible and thereby, I hope, subject to destabilising critique.

[110] See Lorenzo Veracini, 'On Settlerness', *Borderlands e-Journal* 10, no. 1 (2011). Veracini insists that 'even if indigenous and exogenous subalternities are dialectically related to it, it is the settler that establishes itself as normative' (2).

[111] The distinctive singularity and exclusivity of the settler state's understanding of its relations with and responsibility towards Indigenous peoples can be seen as operative in the contemporary Australian context in the dismissal out-of-hand of the Uluru Statement from the Heart by the Australian government, to cite just one recent example. (For an illuminating and instructive triangulation of this 'moment of truth'

Beyond this critical objective lies a further political imperative concerning the possibilities of and strategies for settler decolonisation. As the following discussion shows, the settler nationalist project in Australia, as elsewhere in the settler-colonial world, has sought since its inception to supersede both its settler and colonial dimensions — to attain the status of fully independent 'nation' free from its external colonial relationship with 'mother England' *and* its internal colonial relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Strategies of 'decolonisation' that seek to resolve the contradictions inherent within the settler-colonial situation — through, for example, the common progressive fantasy of a 'reconciled republic', for example — run the risk of inadvertently furthering or even fulfilling the aims of the settler-colonial project itself, and thereby operating as forms of 'deep colonising' rather than decolonisation.[112] Alternative understandings of and approaches to settler decolonisation are canvassed in the conclusion.

In relation to the latter possibility, it is not my intention to reassert settler supremacy in and over the Australian nation, nor to reify the relations between settler, metropole and indigene, nor to exclude other relations that have characterised and conditioned settler colonialism in Australia and elsewhere and continue to do so today. At the same time, however, in a manner corresponding to the way in which the settler's assertion of his own supremacy demands a critical attentiveness towards the assertion and its ongoing implications, settlers in general, and settler nationalists in particular, have primarily defined their own identity in dialectical relation with (which is to say against) two constitutive 'antecedent authorities'[113] — metropole and indigene. These relations therefore call for careful, critical attention and analysis. It may well be a truism that

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with questions of the proper relation between settler and metropole in contemporary Australia, see Mark McKenna, 'Moment of Truth: History and Australia's Future', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 69 (2018)). This episode is returned to in the conclusion of this dissertation.

[112] See Veracini, 'Isopolitics'.

[113] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 370.

national (and other) identities are a product of relations between self and other, but for settlers there are two 'others' of primary (albeit historically contingent) concern.[114]

Terminological notes and definitions

An outline of the inherently complex and dynamic population economy of settler colonialism, which includes (and excludes) numerous exogenous 'others', including migrants and metropolitans, lies beyond the scope of this analysis. Besides, the question of who is, and who is not, a settler in the context of settler colonialism as an *ongoing* form of domination continues to be hotly contested within and beyond the field of settler colonial studies.[115] This thesis adopts a definition of settlers in line with Ghassan Hage's identification of white nationalists, so that the term settler refers to those who experience a sense of what Hage has termed 'governmental belonging' in their relation to the

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[114] Australians have identified themselves in relation to other exogenous alterities as well, of course, perhaps most consistently and persistently an undifferentiated 'Asian other' that, especially because of geography, has troubled settlers and the settler state in Australia to a significant degree (see David Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850–1939* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999)), but the assertion of settler supremacy against an Asian alterity has been conditioned by, and in turn conditioned, the two relations emphasised here. The assertions of British racial superiority that underpinned the institution of the white Australia policy at the moment of Australia's national constitution, for example, drew upon Australia's colonial inheritance, as discursively acknowledged in the language itself, while at the same time the edifice of white Australia as a means of protecting the 'workingman's paradise' from (stereotypically) harder working (non-white) men reflected a defining mythology of the settler colonies that distinguished between the old world and the new. It is neither coincidental nor incidental that the 'white men's countries' that were responsible for 'drawing the global colour line' were settler colonies, as Lake and Reynolds' seminal study makes clear (see *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008)). Relatedly, the defensive, racist responses provoked by irrational fears of an 'Asian invasion' from the north troubled imperial relationships and prompted greater demands for settler autonomy from the metropole (and, correspondingly, over Indigenous populations). As Lake and Reynolds remark: 'Migration rested on and required Aboriginal dispossession' (ibid., 6). The relations emphasised here are constitutively *prior* to the relations between settler self and other exogenous alterities: Australian 'anxieties' about an invasion from the north (or, in the US case, from the south) and ensuing responses can logically and historically only succeed an originary invasion of Indigenous lands and an assertion of settler sovereignty against metropolitan control and interference (these two are related, so that settlers assert their external sovereignty *over and at the expense of* Indigenous peoples and *against* the metropole).

[115] For a succinct recent summary of these debates, see Alex Trimble Young, '"Settler"', *Western American Literature* 53, no. 1 (2018). For a summary of the contrasting perspectives on this and other questions between the two most prominent theorists of settler colonial studies, see Lorenzo Veracini, 'Patrick Wolfe's Dialectics', *Aboriginal History* 40 (2016).

Australian national imaginary; those who see themselves as inhabiting 'what is often referred to as the national will'.[116]

Settlers have been defined by Lorenzo Veracini as '*founders* of political orders [who] carry their sovereignty with them' and can be distinguished from migrant populations on the basis that the latter move to 'a political order that is already constituted … and are characterised by a defining lack of sovereign entitlement'. Whereas '[m]igrants … move to *another* country and lead diasporic lives, settlers … move … to *their* country'. Yet the boundaries delimiting migrants from the settler population are by no means permanently fixed; the population economy of settler colonialism is 'a dynamic environment where different groups are routinely imagined as transiting from one section of the population system to another'.[117] The conception of a restrictedly dynamic settler Australian population adopted here may therefore be conceived as closely resembling Hage's categorisation of 'White Australians', into which migrants may be 'assimilated' through the accumulation of sufficient 'practical nationality', a process nevertheless constrained by an individual's *habitus* and the limitations imposed upon it by the 'aristocracy of the field'.[118]

I am persuaded by Avril Bell's recent suggestion that 'all non-indigenous citizens within settler societies are implicated in the colonial dynamics of those societies. While there are differential positions of power in the national field, there are no positions of innocence'.[119] On the other hand, 'while all non-Indigenous peoples residing in settler states may be complicit in settlement, making us all settlers, not all settlers are created equal'.[120] In Australia, the 'aristocracy' of the 'national field' comprising what Anthony

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[116] Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 45–46.

[117] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 3, 20.

[118] Hage, *White Nation*, 53–62.

[119] Avril Bell, *Relating Indigenous and Settler Identities: Beyond Domination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 7.

[120] Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntasse, 'Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations', *Decolonization* 3, no. 2 (2014): 6.

D. Smith has influentially termed the *ethnie* — the dominant ethnic core of the national community[121] — has been historically claimed and inhabited by settlers of Anglo-Celtic origins and descent, and it is this 'aristocratic' section of the Australian population to which this analysis primarily pertains. Yet beyond this analytically useful categorisation, the complexity and contingency of the settler collective must also be acknowledged; in adopting the terms 'settler' and 'settler Australians', the intention is not to artificially homogenise or render monolithic a dynamic and heterogeneous population. Rather, a settler colonial studies analytic emphasising the triangular relations of settler colonialism is intentionally deployed in order to uncover, analyse and thereby problematise the imperatives and exigencies that have been and remain central to the settler Australian experience, perhaps more central to the experiences of settlers of Anglo-Celtic origins than others, but of relevance to all those who regard themselves as belonging and contributing to the settler Australian national imaginary nonetheless.

The terminology used in the Australian settler-colonial context, as in other comparable settings elsewhere, to refer to the diverse groups that together comprise the generalised category of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is complex, contingent and contested. Since I am dealing generally with settlers' conceptions and constructions of Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples rather than with the experiences and expressions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves, and in line with contemporary usage, I use the adjectives 'Aboriginal' when referring to mainland Aboriginal people and either 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' when referring to Indigenous peoples in Australia more generally. (Comparable conceptual concerns surrounding the term 'settler' are addressed in detail in Chapter 1.) Correspondingly, I use 'Aboriginality' and 'indigeneity' to refer to the attributes, often glossed as 'spirits' or 'essences', my subjects attributed to Aboriginal cultures and their representatives, and which they then used, engaged with and appropriated for their

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[121] See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986).

common purpose of settler indigenisation.[122] Generally, however, I prefer 'indigeneity' precisely because this is, I argue, the status that indigenising settler nationalists attempt to arrogate to themselves. Aboriginality, on the contrary, is rarely, if ever, engaged with or appropriated *as a presumed identity for* and *of* the settler; it belongs, that is, to Aboriginalism rather than indigenism.[123]

To emphasise but hopefully not perpetuate the easy (and technically plausible) slippage between Indigenous and 'indigenous', which remains important for advocates of settler indigenisation by penetration today,[124] I use the uncapitalised form 'indigenous' (with quotation marks) to refer to the indigenised settler self/culture/identity that is the desideratum-in-common of each of the authors I focus on throughout this dissertation, as well as many others both before and since. (I use the same form sans quotation marks if and when referring to indigenous peoples in general.) At the same time, however, I am not using 'indigenous' in its normally received definition to refer to anyone 'born in a country', but rather in light of the status the term has been conferred in the context of the global indigenous rights movement, which (not unproblematically) takes on at least some of the meaning of Aboriginal (from the Latin *ab origine*, meaning 'original

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[122] Of course, settler constructions of Aboriginality do not displace Aboriginalities as lived, experienced and asserted by Aboriginal people themselves, as Mick Dodson observes ('The End in the Beginning: Re(de)finding Aboriginality', in *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, ed. Michele Grossman (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003)). See also Marcia Langton, 'Aboriginal Art and Film: The Politics of Representation', in *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians*, ed. Michele Grossman (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003); Anita Heiss, 'Writing Aboriginality: Authors on "Being Aboriginal"', in *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, eds Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer (Rochester: Camden House, 2007); Anita Heiss, ed., *Growing up Aboriginal in Australia* (Carlton: Black Inc., 2018).

[123] This distinction is similar to that Elizabeth Povinelli draws between '(ab)originality and autochthony' ('Reading Ruptures, Rupturing Readings: Mabo and the Cultural Politics of Activism', *Social Analysis* 41, no. 2 (1997): 25)). David Pearson captures these dynamics when he refers to 'the linked processes of … the aboriginalization (of aboriginal minorities), the ethnification (of immigrant minorities) and the indigenization (of settler majorities)' in 'settler and post-settler' societies (although given his concern with citizenship, he confines these processes to the 1970s and after ('Theorizing Citizenship in British Settler Societies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, no. 6 (2002): 990).

[124] For example, Andrew Bolt, 'I Am, You Are, We Are Australian', *The Herald Sun*, 29 January, 2014; Charlie Peel, 'Commonwealth Games 2018: Hanson Hits out at Indigenous Focus of Opening Ceremony', *The Australian*, 7 April, 2018.

inhabitants'; 'from the beginning').[125] The definition of 'indigenous' provided in the *Oxford Dictionary of English* — '[o]riginating or occurring naturally in a particular place'[126] — is apposite here, since the sense of natural emplacedness, even emergence, it implies is precisely what indigenising settler nationalists desire (at the concomitant expense of *already* emplaced indigenous peoples themselves).

I have avoided terms such as 'First Nations' or 'first peoples' throughout because this is not how my subjects understood, engaged with or represented Australia's first peoples: had it been, their 'encounters' with indigeneity would likely have been more troubled than was actually the case (even though a 'first' normally foreshadows a 'second'). Likewise, I have avoided the term 'native' due to its pejorative connotations vis-à-vis Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and its far more prevalent and often unproblematised usage in relation to non-Indigenous (and almost always Anglo) Australians, as in the case, for example, of the 'native-born Australians' as *the* generation of the 1890s, or 'nativism' as an exclusive form of (white) ethnic nationalism.[127] In these instances, it is typically used literally to mean 'a person born in a specified place or associated with a place by birth' and therefore evades those questions of belonging that the term 'indigenous' implies.[128]

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[125] See Robert Paine, 'Aboriginality, Authenticity and the Settler World', in *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values*, ed. Anthony Paul Cohen (London & New York: Routledge, 2000). Paine is drawing on the *Oxford English Dictionary* here. It is indicative that the *Oxford Dictionary of English* now defines 'indigene' as 'an indigenous person', while acknowledging the term's etymological implications meaning 'born into' (from French *indigène*, from Latin *indigena*, from *indi-* (strengthened form of *in-* 'into') + an element related to *gignere* 'beget') — see Angus Stevenson, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[126] Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary*.

[127] John Molony, *The Native-Born: The First White Australians* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2000); Murray Goot and Ian Watson, 'Nativism as Citizenship: Immigration, Economic Hardship, and the Politics of the Right', in *From Migrant to Citizen: Testing Language, Testing Culture*, eds Christina Slade and Martina Möllering (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[128] Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary*. The actual significance of 'native' in settler-colonial contexts is not so straightforward. See, for example, Mahmood Mamdani, 'When Does a Settler Become a Native? The Colonial Roots of Citizenship', *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2 (1998); Pal Ahluwalia, 'When Does a Settler Become a Native? Citizenship and Identity in a Settler Society', *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001); Mahmood Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001).

I am employing the term 'indigenism' here in a particular way, and for a particular purpose. Now most closely associated with the rise of the global indigenous rights movement,[129] I am using it here to refer to a specific form of, or more accurately a tendency within, what I am terming, following Anthony Moran but with a retroactive application of his thesis to the 1930s, 'indigenising settler nationalism'.[130] I am adopting 'indigenism' and 'indigenising' (these are not the same thing, since as I will argue, while all settler nationalists are more or less indigenising, only some are indigenists), because I find them more revealing than both Goldie's terminology of 'appropriation' and the translation of Said's Orientalism into the Australian context in the guise of what has been termed 'Aboriginalism'.[131] Ian McLean runs into trouble, for example, when he classes both Ward's *Australian Legend* and Margaret Preston's appropriation of Aboriginal art as 'Aboriginalism'. Ward's 'legend' clearly and at times almost admittedly appropriated important aspects of Aboriginality, but his 'typical Australian' was ultimately not Aboriginal but rather 'indigenous' (in the sense of a fully indigenised settler), as McLean well recognised: 'Ward's nativism is a type of Aboriginalism which, in the manner of the

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[129] See, especially, Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003). On antecedent and/or alternative forms of indigenism as localised indigenous rights movements, or as 'the political middle ground arising out of the engagement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous meanings' (Jeremy Beckett, *Encounters with Indigeneity: Writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014), xxiv), see Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism, 1985–1995* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1996); Eva Marie Garroutte, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Sheila Marie Contreras, *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); James Clifford, *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Latin-American *indigenismo*, which emerges in contexts where 'expatriate colonies try to forge a nationalism that separates them from the mother country', is much closer to my usage here (Beckett, *Encounters with Indigeneity*, 170; see Jorge Coronado, *The Andes Imagined: Indigenismo, Society, and Modernity* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Ángel Rama, *Writing across Cultures: Narrative Transculturation in Latin America*, trans. David Frye (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012)).
[130] See Moran, 'Imagining the Australian Nation'; Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'; Moran, 'Australian Settler-Nationalism'.
[131] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*; Bain Attwood and John Arnold, *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines* (Bundoora: La Trobe University Press, 1992); Ian McLean, 'Aboriginalism: White Aborigines and Australian Nationalism', *Australian Humanities Review*, no. 10 (1998). Patrick Wolfe criticised Hodge and Mishra for inadvertently engaging in a form of postcolonial indigenism themselves — for acting as 'reluctant invaders' — see 'Reluctant Invaders [Book Review]', *Meanjin* 51, no. 2 (1992).

day, displaces Aboriginality within a white *indigenity* [sic]'.[132] Conversely, Preston's appropriation of Aboriginal symbolism was not nativist in the sense in which this is commonly understood — in general accordance with Goldie's penetrationist option — but rather indigenist. She sought, and found, (again, as McLean recognised) 'in Aboriginal art the source for a distinctive Australian identity'.[133]

There are important distinctions to be drawn between 'playing Indian', 'going native' and 'becoming indigenous'. (The differences between settler indigenism and modernist primitivism are explored in detail in Chapter 3.) To generalise these acts in their ideal-typical forms, the first is a sign of *dis*recognition and misappropriation for the purpose of denial (of the subjectivity of 'the Other'), or of misrecognition and misappropriation as a straightforward (re)assertion of superiority/supremacy, while 'playing' implies an eventual return to 'reality' (non-Indianness).[134] The second involves the degeneration of the formerly civilised subject into 'barbarism', even 'savagery', and envisages a transition from one state to the other without disrupting or superseding the populations of either — this is an option to be specifically guarded against in settler-colonial settings.[135] The final operates within the triangular relations of settler colonialism as a form of what Edward Soja refers to as 'Thirding-as-Othering', a 'cumulative trialectics' which works towards the attainment of what I describe here as the 'thirdspace' of indigenised settlerness, a 'transcending inclusion' above and beyond — but

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[132] Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 88, emphasis added. Yet his terminology invites him to take things too far: Ward's 'new Australian', he writes, 'was a white Aborigine sprung from the land itself' (ibid.). I disagree. Ward's 'new Australian' was 'indigenous', but not Aboriginal, and his project was one of penetrationist indigenisation, not Aboriginalism: if the latter works to make 'the Other' speak, Ward's does precisely the opposite. For a recent reconsideration of the origins of the Australian legend, with attention to its Indigenous (rather than 'indigenous') roots, see Fred Cahir, Dan Tout, and Lucinda Horrocks, 'Reconsidering the Origins of the Australian Legend', *Agora* 52, no. 3 (2017).

[133] Ibid., 89.

[134] See Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998).

[135] See Deborah Bird Rose, 'Australia Felix Rules OK!', in *Race Matters: Indigenous Australians and 'Our' Society*, eds Gillian Cowlishaw and Barry Morris (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997); Lorenzo Veracini, 'Historylessness: Australia as a Settler Colonial Collective', *Postcolonial Studies* 10, no. 3 (2007).

consumptive of aspects of — both metropole and indigene.[136] Contrary to Soja's trialectics, however, which are 'radically open to additional othernesses', the cumulative, consumptive trialectics of indigenising settler nationalism disavow. An indigenised settler, after all, cannot comfortably co-exist with an actual authoritative indigene.[137]

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[136] Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 60, 61, 70. My usage here is contrary to articulations of thirdspaces as 'places outside of the hegemonic control of the settler-state' (Jay T. Johnson, 'Indigeneity's Challenges to the White Settler-State: Creating a Thirdspace for Dynamic Citizenship', *Alternatives* 33, no. 1 (2008): 31), as 'in-between' spaces (Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994)), and even of a '"third space of sovereignty" that resides neither simply inside nor outside' the settler political system 'but rather exists on these very boundaries' (Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.–Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xvii). Indeed these spaces of hybridity, rupture, openness and/or externality are precisely the spaces the settler project, as I see it, seeks to arrogate and eliminate, since as Bruyneel points out their very existence 'expos[es] both the practices and the contingencies of … colonial rule' (ibid.). Yet to suggest that my usage is contrary is not to suggest that my opinion follows, and in the conclusion I return to discuss the productive possibilities arising out of the *incompleteness* of the settler project.

[137] Soja, *Thirdspace*, 61.

Chapter 1

Displacement, disavowal and replacement in Australian settler colonialism

Introduction

This chapter outlines and elaborates the stages and strategies of settler colonialism referred to here as displacement, disavowal and replacement, with two aims in mind. The first is to identify the structural imperatives underlying the Australian settler project's originary displacement of pre-existing Indigenous populations from the literal and symbolic space of the Australian settler nation, as well as the subsequent disavowal of this foundational displacement. The second is to draw attention to the ongoing and always incomplete attempts on the part of settlers — and the settler state — to replace the troubling figure of 'the indigene' on and *of* the land, highlighted in the introduction. The chapter therefore emphasises some of the problems these processes of displacement, disavowal and replacement continue to present to the settler project itself, since the persistence of a sovereign Indigenous presence within the settler body politic undermines settler claims to settlement; or, which is the same thing, the completion of settler colonisation. This is an issue returned to in the conclusion.

Beginning with an overview of settler colonial studies as an interpretive paradigm, the following discussion maps in very general terms what might be described as the conceptual process of settler colonialism. In focusing on the persistent structural features of settler colonialism, the chapter presents a necessarily simplified picture of the complex and contingent realities of the settler situation as it is actually experienced 'on the ground'. As Lorenzo Veracini has consistently emphasised, while settler colonialism and colonialism should be conceptualised as distinct, even antithetical, modes of domination,

they often, if not always, coexist, overlap and interpenetrate in practice.[138] Yet a structurally broad and therefore, to some extent at least, historiographically 'flat' approach to the study of settler-colonial phenomena is important, since it enables an examination and understanding of the consistencies and continuities between, along with the amendments and adaptations to, the various stages and strategies of the settler project. As Patrick Wolfe has remarked, by focusing on the resilient features — what he termed the 'cultural logic' — of settler colonialism, as distinct from the somewhat less permanent and *relatively* pervious historical features of colonialism 'proper', it becomes possible to keep 'the continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures' of 'the historical development and complexification of settler society' in view, which in turn 'enables us to perceive the underlying coherence of Australian history'.[139]

The emergence and consolidation of settler colonial studies

In recent years and especially since the late 1990s there has been an increasing and now significant and sustained scholarly interest, alongside a correspondingly expanding body of literature, concerning the explication and analysis of settler colonialism as a distinct colonial formation.[140] In Wolfe's seminal definition, settler colonialism is

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[138] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*.

[139] Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 402; Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 96. The unqualified term 'colonialism' is now commonly understood to refer to the colonial formations Wolfe describes as 'franchise or dependent' colonies, in contradistinction to settler colonialism (Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London & New York: Cassell, 1999), 1), although this is a reversal of historical formulations such as those of Marx and Engels, for whom the settler colonies were the 'colonies proper' (see David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 29; Lorenzo Veracini, 'The Imagined Geographies of Settler Colonialism', in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 179). The shifting history entailing the separation, conflation and reseparation of these distinctive colonial formations has been thoroughly outlined by Veracini (see '"Settler Colonialism": Career of a Concept', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (2013); also *Settler Colonialism*, especially chapter one).

[140] For settler colonial studies as an interpretative paradigm, see, for example (this list is by no means comprehensive): Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds, *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London: Sage, 1995); Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*; David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Societies: States of Unease* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Lynette Russell, ed., *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Julie Evans et al., *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights: Indigenous People in British Settler Colonies, 1830s–1910* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2003); David

distinguished from colonialism proper on the basis that whereas the objective of colonialism is the extraction of surplus value from peripheral territories through the enforced exercise of Indigenous or imported labour, the primary object of settler colonialism is the land itself.[141] Settler colonialism's 'irreducible' territorial imperative has serious consequences for pre-existing sovereign Indigenous populations, since inherent to the settler project is the fact that '[s]ettlers are made by conquest, not just by immigration'.[142]

In contrast to typical colonial formations, the settler colonies 'were not primarily established to extract surplus value from indigenous labour', but were instead 'premised on displacing indigenes from (or replacing them on) the land'.[143] Whereas within

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Trigger and Gareth Griffiths, eds, *Disputed Territories: Land, Culture and Identity in Settler Societies* (Aberdeen: Hong Kong University Press, 2003); Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, eds, *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2005); John McLaren, A. R. Buck, and Nancy E. Wright, eds, *Despotic Dominion: Property Rights in British Settler Societies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Annie E. Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Patricia Grimshaw and Russell McGregor, eds, *Collisions of Cultures and Identities: Settlers and Indigenous Peoples* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, Department of History, 2006); Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Carole Pateman, 'The Settler Contract', in *Contract and Domination*, eds Carole Pateman and Charles W. Mills (Cambridge & Malden: Polity, 2007); Alyosha Goldstein and Alex Lubin, eds, *Settler Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds, *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Robert Bickers, ed., *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2010); Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*; Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds, *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); John Hinkson, Paul James, and Lorenzo Veracini, eds, *Stolen Lands, Broken Cultures: The Settler-Colonial Present* (North Carlton: Arena, 2012); Bell, *Indigenous and Settler Identities*; Lorenzo Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Penelope Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation: Frontier Violence, Affective Performances, and Imaginative Refoundings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, and Ravi de Costa, eds, *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation: Non-Indigenous People and the Responsibility to Engage* (Singapore: Springer, 2016); Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini, eds, *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017). The arrival of the peer-reviewed journal *Settler Colonial Studies* in 2011 signalled the consolidation of this emerging field (see <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rset20/current>). For an overview of its emergence and consolidation, see Veracini, '"Settler Colonialism"'.

[141] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 163.
[142] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 388; Mamdani, 'The Colonial Roots of Citizenship', 249.
[143] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 1.

colonialism 'proper', 'a determination to exploit sustains a drive to sustain the permanent subordination of the colonised', leading to an operative logic of extraction that requires the preservation of native populations for the purpose of continued exploitation, the settler project conceives of 'the exploitation of indigenous labour [as] subordinate to the primary project of territorial acquisition'.[144] In other words, while the colonial authority has an interest in the preservation of native populations for the purpose of continued exploitation, the settler project conceives of indigenous exploitation as of secondary importance to the primary object of territorial expansion. In the settler-colonial equation, pre-existing indigenous populations are rendered eminently expendable. Even though 'in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensible [sic] to Europeans, settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement'.[145]

Settler-colonial formations are premised on the foundational projection of permanent territorial sovereignty. The clue is in the name: unlike the temporary colonial sojourner, the settler stays.[146] The peculiarities of the sovereign intentions of the settler project, which seeks to establish exclusive territorial sovereignty over expropriated indigenous lands (even if 'perfect settler sovereignty' takes some time to establish),[147] produce an

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[144] Lorenzo Veracini, 'Introducing Settler Colonial Studies', *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 2; Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 11.

[145] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 163.

[146] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 6.

[147] Ford, *Settler Sovereignty*. Ford argues that '[p]erfect settler sovereignty rested on the conflation of sovereignty, territory, and jurisdiction. Their synthesis was both innovative and uniquely destructive of indigenous rights' (ibid., 2). Indeed, as Veracini noted in a review of Ford's intervention, 'sovereignty's territorialisation, a global shift that fundamentally redefined the meaning of sovereignty, was crafted in settler peripheries' ('Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836 [Book Review]', *Australian Historical Studies* 42, no. 3 (2011): 426). More than the consolidation of modern forms of sovereignty 'at the periphery' (see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004)), Ford's analysis suggests not only that settler sovereignty is territorial, but that territorial sovereignty is settler colonial. Tellingly, Ford argues that the compulsion towards the territorialisation of settler sovereignty and the extension of settler jurisdiction over local indigenous populations that was its logical corollary was 'necessary to shore up the legitimacy of settlement' (*Settler Sovereignty*, 3). This is representative of precisely the process of displacement, disavowal and replacement, and their multifarious narrativisations, examined here, and the impulses underlying them: settler colonialism is, after all, a 'winner takes all' project that 'demands that settler sovereignties entirely replace Indigenous ones' (Veracini, 'Imagined Geographies', 189). It is, therefore, 'not a coincidence that it is in settler colonial locales that sovereignty

operational 'logic of elimination', defined by Wolfe as 'a sustained institutional tendency to supplant the indigenous population'.[148] The imperative Wolfe identifies towards the elimination, or at the very least the displacement, of indigenous populations for the purpose of replacement 'is premised on the securing — the obtaining and the maintaining — of territory' and, in 'its purest form … seeks to replace indigenous society with that imported by the colonisers'.[149]

As Elkins and Pedersen have also suggested,

> insofar as there was a logic to [settlers'] approach to the indigenous populations, it was a logic of elimination and not exploitation: they wished less to govern indigenous peoples or to enlist them in their economic ventures than to seize their land and push them beyond an ever-expanding frontier of settlement.[150]

Within a framework comprising settler–indigene–land, settlers — and the settler state — are compelled to eradicate the pre-existing (and inconveniently persisting) indigenous presence in order to establish their own direct connection with the land. In Wolfe's description, '[w]hatever settlers may say — and they generally have a lot to say — the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element'.[151] This settler-colonial form of territoriality is not *only* about displacement (although it is about that too), but about 'the fusion of people and land', a fundamental

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first became understood in terms of territorial jurisdiction: as settlement is primarily about land, settler colonial formations, more than colonial or metropolitan ones, are about territory and territorialisation' (Veracini, 'Settler Sovereignty', 427).

[148] Quote from Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 96. See also Wolfe's *The Transformation of Anthropology* and 'The Elimination of the Native'.

[149] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 402; Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 93.

[150] Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, 'Introduction. Settler Colonialism: A Concept and Its Uses', in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*, eds Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 2.

[151] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 388.

organising principle of settler society in general, and settler nationalism in particular.[152] Settler colonialism is and has always been about land, territory, *place*.[153]

As a result, and as Deborah Bird Rose has suggested, 'to get in the way all the native has to do is stay at home'.[154] The (ongoing and continual) confrontation between the settler-colonial logic of elimination and an agentive, opposing indigenous presence that resists elimination leads to the initiation and replication of a variety of settler-colonial strategies aiming towards the destruction (or at least the displacement) and replacement of the sovereign indigene. This tendency persists into the present, because the continuing presence of indigenous peoples within the boundaries of the settler nation poses an enduring challenge to the legitimacy of the settler order. In Wolfe's now widely cited refrain, 'invasion is a structure not an event'.[155]

And yet these structuring imperatives do not mean that invasion is always and everywhere enacted in the same forms, or with the same consequences. Broadly speaking, we might identify an important divergence between a logic of *literal* elimination which, as Wolfe rightly points out, pertains primarily to the early 'frontier' phases of settler-colonisation, and a persistent desire for symbolic and discursive elimination, or, perhaps more aptly, 'transfer', in aid of subsequent appropriation characteristic of subsequent stages of settler colonisation.[156] There are clearly important qualitative distinctions to be drawn, for example, between the practices of the 'frontier', encapsulated in the early Australian motto 'if it moves shoot it, if it doesn't move chop it down',[157] and subsequent policies of protection, assimilation, integration, self-determination and 'practical reconciliation' (even though these distinctions may not be as stark as many contemporary Australians seem to believe). Nor do Australia's settler-

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[152] Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016), 34.
[153] It is no coincidence that settler cultural constructions and their representations (such as those examined here) have been commonly generated in response and relation to the same.
[154] Paraphrased in Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 1.
[155] Ibid., 2.
[156] See Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation'.
[157] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 35.

colonial foundations — despite being 'Australian society's primary structural characteristic rather than merely a statement about its origins'[158] — explain these policies in their entirety, since there are always, and inevitably, other influences operating in and on the Australian context. Settler approaches towards the resolution of Australia's 'Aboriginal problem' (which is only a problem from a settler perspective, emphasising the permanent projection of exclusive territorial sovereignty) are conditioned by historical circumstances, as explored in further detail below.

What the identification and explication of these structuring characteristics within settler colonial studies affords, however, is an explanation of the motivations underlying the Australian settler project's various 'solutions' to its 'Aboriginal problem' (which are really responses to what this thesis defines as the 'settler predicament'). While the logic of elimination is subject to temporary easement and even (at least partial) abatement, it persists as a structuring imperative inherent within the Australian settler-colonial project itself. This leads to the development and deployment of a range of strategies, including physical destruction and displacement, as well as symbolic and historical disavowal and denial. These strategies aim towards the ultimate eradication, whether literal or conceptual, and subsequent supersession of the pre-existing indigene, while also taking into account the shifting national and international circumstances in which they arise.

In his theoretical elaboration of settler colonial studies, Veracini outlines a total of twenty-six settler strategies for what he terms the 'transfer' of indigenous populations, referring to the variety of processes by which the unsettling category of 'indigene' is actually or symbolically emptied out to enable its replacement.[159] This diversity of strategies reflects the multiple and dynamic modalities of Australian settler colonialism,

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[158] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*.
[159] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, chapter one, especially 33–52.

which has consistently adapted itself to changing local and international circumstances, while always operating within the structural confines of the settler order.

The Northern Territory Emergency Response — the 'Intervention' — and the subsequent 'closures' of remote Aboriginal communities in Western and South Australia stand as only the most obvious and recent examples of the logic of elimination in its contemporary guise.[160] In these instances, Wolfe's notion of 'repressive authenticity' — in which 'authentic' indigeneity is reduced to a 'pristine essence' rarely, if ever, attainable by actually existing Indigenous people[161] — contributes significantly to an understanding of the symbolic violence perpetrated by a prevailing neoliberal policy framework that aims to enact displacement through the dehumanisation and deterritorialisation of 'authentic' ('real') Indigenous people from particular parts of Australia (not coincidentally, resource-rich areas subject to competing claims for 'title', the 'native' version of which is irrevocably underminable — *extinguishable* — by virtue of *interruption*).[162]

While issues relating to the identification, uniformity, application and ultimately the incompleteness of a logic of elimination have received significant attention in the literature that has responded to Wolfe's intervention in particular,[163] the key aspect of the 'cultural logic' of settler colonialism with which this thesis is concerned is the desire to 'supplant' or to 'replace' the Indigenous population on and of the land. Indeed, the former only makes sense in light of the latter: the requirement for displacement is driven precisely by the desire for replacement. This is arguably so to the extent that replacement

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[160] See Dan Tout, 'Stabilise, Normalise, Eliminate', *Arena Magazine*, no. 118 (2012); Dan Tout, 'Settler Colonial Closures', *Arena Magazine*, no. 133 (2014).

[161] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 124.

[162] On neoliberalism and settler colonialism, see Elizabeth Strakosch, *Neoliberal Indigenous Policy: Settler Colonialism and the "Post-Welfare" State* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). On 'native title' as 'inherently vulnerable and fragile', see Lisa Strelein, *Compromised Jurisprudence: Native Title Cases Since Mabo*, 2nd ed. (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2009).

[163] For an instructive exchange between a prominent detractor and defender of settler colonial studies, see Tim Rowse, 'Indigenous Heterogeneity', *Australian Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2014); Lorenzo Veracini, 'Defending Settler Colonial Studies', *Australian Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2014).

is in fact the primary 'logic' guiding and governing the ongoing operations of settler colonialism — the logic of elimination is the outcome of the desire for replacement, rather than the other way around.

The first conceptual 'move' of settler colonialism — the displacement of the indigene and the subsequent disavowal of this displacement — has understandably attracted the most significant and sustained scholarly attention, not least because this move is still being attempted and re-attempted in settler societies today, with dire consequences for indigenous peoples in those settings (the fact of its ongoing failure stands as testament to indigenous strength and resilience, and should not blind us to either the desire itself, nor to its imperatives). My emphasis here is, rather, on the logic of replacement, and the ways in which this complicates already complex questions of national formation and, in particular, the construction of national cultures and identities in settler-colonial settings.

Yet I wish to stress before proceeding that in focusing my attention on the settler's desire to replace the indigene — to become, as I will characterise it, 'indigenous' without becoming Indigenous — I am not attempting to overcome the 'unsettlement' that has often been taken to characterise settler identity.[164] Instead, I am concerned with the implications of this desire and its multiple manifestations for ongoing relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Australia, and in other comparable settler-colonial settings as well. This is a point I will revisit throughout, and return to explicitly in my conclusion.

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[164] See, for example, Ken Gelder and Jane M. Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1998); Ghassan Hage, *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2003); Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas, and Hilary Ericksen, 'Introduction', in *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia & Aotearoa New Zealand*, eds Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas, and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999).

Displacing the pre-existing indigene

Displacement and its concealment are at the centre of settler colonialism, even at the level of language. Whereas in their popular usages, colonialism and imperialism evoke images of violent domination and subjugation under circumstances conceptualised as both spatially and temporally transient, the use of the term 'settler' emphasises instead notions of peaceful population transfer and permanence. Not only does this linguistic sleight of hand at the heart of the settler project conceal the always violent — literally, symbolically or, more usually, both — displacement of indigenous populations, it simultaneously functions to construct settlers as the permanent (and peaceful) sovereign people of a territory, in opposition to not only the 'uncommitted colonist who will return home', but also to the 'nomadic' and therefore non-sovereign, and thus both dispossessed and subsequently disenfranchised, indigenous populations whose lands the settler violently claims.[165] This is, of course, most obvious in the Australian context in the legal fiction *terra nullius*, which, contrary to popular conception, denotes not an empty land but rather a land devoid of sovereignty and ownership.

In Wolfe's description, 'settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions' (although to the extent that both of these dimensions possess distinctly negative implications for indigenous peoples, they might be more appropriately referred to in terms of the destructive and constructive processes of displacement and replacement respectively).[166] Regardless of terminology, the initial phase of settler colonialism is typically defined by attempts to eliminate, or at least to comprehensively displace, indigenous peoples from the land, while the second phase is marked by attempts to construct a sovereign settler society in their place. It is important to note here that these phases are not temporally sequential, despite settler attempts to imagine a (peaceful) linear progression from one to the next, and as long as indigenous people continue to

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[165] Veracini, 'Introducing Settler Colonial Studies', 6.
[166] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 388.

survive — to 'stay at home' — they are continually repeated and re-enacted, both literally and symbolically, albeit under the influence of prevailing historical conditions.

The initial destructive process of displacement for the purpose of subsequent replacement constitutes a fundamental, foundational feature of the settler-colonial order. As Wolfe has succinctly put it: 'Settler colonialism destroys to replace'. Wolfe cites Theodor Herzl's exemplary observation: 'If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct'.[167] This phase itself consists of two aspects, the first literal and the second symbolic. In the first, the process of displacement involves the actual elimination of indigenous peoples initiated through the frontier practices generally (though not always) contained within what Wolfe has termed the 'confrontation' stage of settler colonisation, during 'which territory is first seized' and which 'is principally characterised by indigenous mortality, attributable to four main (and mutually supportive) agencies: homicide, sexual abuse, disease and starvation'.[168] Yet while the initial 'frontier' phase of settler colonisation tends to feature the most dramatic literal destruction of indigenous populations, the logic of elimination persists beyond the 'closing' of the frontier and permeates the subsequent stages and strategies of protection, assimilation, integration and even self-determination. 'When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop — or, more to the point, become relatively trivial — when it moves on from the era of frontier homicide'.[169] Thus from a settler colonial studies perspective, policies as ostensibly diverse as those of protection, absorption, assimilation, integration and even self-determination similarly express a 'settler-colonial will' operating under the structuring influence of a logic of elimination (even though they are conditioned by the historical circumstances in which they are conceived and implemented).[170]

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[167] Ibid.
[168] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 99.
[169] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 402.
[170] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 97. See also Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native'.

In the second, symbolic, aspect of settler-colonial displacement, a series of settler-colonial strategies of conceptual effacement are deployed in order to imaginatively construct what Deborah Bird Rose has described as a metaphoric '*tabula rasa* upon which [the colonising culture] will inscribe its civilisation'.[171] The necessity of imagining an empty landscape (along with its corollary of Australia as a 'timeless land') is implicit in the very language of 'settlement'. As Veracini notes, while '[s]ettler projects are inevitably premised on the traumatic, that is, violent, replacement and/or displacement of indigenous Others', the 'very idea of settling the land … is inevitably premised on the perception of "empty lands" [and] the systematic disavowal of indigenous presences'.[172] Thus '[c]laims that areas to be annexed and opened up for colonisation are "vacant" are a constituent part of a settler colonial ideology'.[173] Indeed, as Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson have suggested, '[f]or the settler … the land had to be empty', since '[e]mpty land can be settled, but occupied land can only be invaded. So the land must be emptied so that it can be filled with both words and herds'.[174] And yet this symbolic vacuation remains partial and incomplete, and a recurrent process of disavowal is necessitated 'by the very detection of indigenous peoples and their connection to the land'.[175]

The dual aspects of literal and symbolic displacement are mutually supportive, since the decimation, incarceration and assimilation of Indigenous populations — and especially their devastation in advance of the settlers' arrival through the spread of introduced disease 'beyond the limits of British settlement'[176] — reinforced settler perceptions of Australia as an 'empty land', while settlers' pre-conceived notions of an empty land functioned to justify their often-violent attempts to make it a reality. Ultimately, since

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[171] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 62.

[172] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 75; Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 4.

[173] Lorenzo Veracini, 'Settler Collective, Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2008): 368.

[174] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 364.

[175] Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 4.

[176] David Hollinsworth, *Race and Racism in Australia*, 3rd ed. (South Melbourne: Cengage, 2006), 69; see also N. G. Butlin, *Our Original Aggression: Aboriginal Populations of Southeastern Australia, 1788–1850* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983).

settler colonialism seeks the establishment of a direct sovereign connection between the settler project and its territorial object, 'the disavowal of both a founding violence and of indigenous presences systematically informs settler perception' so that 'the only encounter that is registered is between man and land'.[177]

Settler-colonial ideologies of emptiness based on the dual processes of literal and symbolic displacement are most obviously and explicitly evident in Australia's foundational denial of Indigenous sovereignty enacted under the legal doctrine of *terra nullius*.[178] The circumstances surrounding Australia's foundation under what Paul Havemann describes as this 'convenient legal fiction' — which designated occupied Indigenous lands as 'land belonging to no one' and thus 'marked a land full of people as empty of possession' — are well-known.[179] Suffice to say that the primary 'ideological justification for the dispossession of Aborigines was that "we" could use the land better than they could', a justification legitimated by reference to God's command to Adam to 'go forth and till the soil' alongside John Locke's conceptualisation of property as deriving from the mixture of land and labour.[180] In Locke's conception, '[w]hatsoever … he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his Labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property'.[181] No 'matter how far back from the coast the Europeans advanced they found the Aborigines in occupation of the land'; the land was clearly occupied and, indeed,

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[177] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 84.

[178] While in the popular-political consciousness, this denial was reversed by the High Court in its famous 1992 decision in *Mabo No. 2*, in fact the court only overturned the doctrine 'in relation to property but reaffirmed it in the matter of sovereignty' (see Henry Reynolds, 'New Frontiers: Australia', in *Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand*, ed. Paul Havemann (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999), 139).

[179] Paul Havemann, 'Introduction: Comparing Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand - Some Signposts', in *Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand*, ed. Paul Havemann (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8; Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, 2nd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1992), 12; Tracey Banivanua Mar, 'Carving Wilderness: Queensland's National Parks and the Unsettling of Emptied Lands, 1890–1910', in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 85.

[180] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 389; Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes', 1024.

[181] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, new ed. (London: Thomas Tegg, 1823), 116.

carefully cultivated.[182] Yet the colonists' failure to recognise the reality of Indigenous relationships to country resulted in the fundamental and foundational misconception that Indigenous peoples in Australia 'did not really inhabit the land after all, but merely wandered across it'.[183]

Here, the ideologies of progress and improvement, which have 'had a reciprocal association' with European understandings of property rights since at least the time of the Enlightenment, meant that since 'indigenous peoples did not engage in European style agriculture, they did not really own the land, but merely ranged over it'.[184] In settler-colonial formations, and 'in typically Lockean fashion, possession flows from improvement and it is labour expended on the land rather than an historical or an ancestral relation to it that can sustain an exclusive claim'.[185] (This does not prevent the settler nation that attempts to establish itself on expropriated indigenous lands seeking just such an historical or ancestral relation to the land in question for the purposes of national construction.)

As David Carter has described, one result of this settler-colonial failure to recognise, which can also be read as a strategic disavowal, is that the settlers perceived Indigenous peoples in Australia as existing 'in a "state of nature" … the very opposite of civilisation'. Since, according to the settlers, Aboriginal people 'had done nothing to "civilise" the land or make it productive' and had instead left it, to European eyes, 'in its original "unimproved" state', the settlers they 'had no notion of property or possession' and 'the land was available for settlement without the need for their consent'.[186] This is not an

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[182] Quote from Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, 35. On Indigenous cultivation, see Bill Gammage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2011); Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu, Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident?* (Broome: Magabala Books, 2014).

[183] David John Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity: Issues in Australian Studies* (Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education, 2006), 69–70.

[184] John C. Weaver, 'Concepts of Economic Improvement and the Social Construction of Property Rights: Highlights from the English-Speaking World', in *Despotic Dominion: Property Rights in British Settler Societies*, eds John McLaren, A. R. Buck, and Nancy E. Wright (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 81; Genevieve Lloyd, 'No One's Land: Australia and the Philosophical Imagination', *Hypatia* 15, no. 2 (2000): 34.

[185] Veracini, 'Historylessness', 274.

[186] Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity*, 70.

original strategy of disavowal, since as Veracini points out, '[t]he perception of a "state of nature" and the appraisal of a vacuous/defective indigenous authority are recurring components in the articulation of a settler project'.[187] In the Australian case, Aboriginal people were conceived as so in touch with nature as to be inseparable from it. In Anthony Moran's account, the settlers

> viewed the natives as hardly separable from nature at all, equating their, apparently, different relationship to nature with being not-quite-human —
> as if what defined being human was a vigorous separation from, and hostility towards, a nature that must be subdued and dominated.[188]

Here we can see settler territorialisation and Indigenous deterritorialisation operating simultaneously, both working to enact, justify and legitimate settler colonisation. Since territory is settler colonialism's 'specific, irreducible element', settlers are 'territorialised in unprecedented ways (hence the pivotal importance of the term "settler", which implies a marked degree of fixation)'.[189] And since settler colonialism is about the *exclusive* possession of territory, the territorialisation of the settler necessitates the concomitant deterritorialisation of the indigene. Indigenous peoples are thus simultaneously reduced to a 'part of nature' and glossed as 'wandering savages' unable to lay claim to their ancestral lands. This contradictory construction comes to further serve the interests of the settler project in subsequent stages of settler-colonial invasion, since the displacement enacted against Indigenous peoples on the basis of this contradictory construction of displaced emplacedness is later turned against them in the guise of 'repressive authenticity', whereby *interruptions* to Indigenous connections to country (such as those imposed by settler-colonial invasion) 'extinguish' Indigenous claims. (It is an instructive paradox that settler archetypes are often simultaneously territorialised *and* nomadic, in the mould of Russel Ward's 'Australian legend'[190] —

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[187] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 82–83.
[188] Moran, 'Imagining the Australian Nation', 72.
[189] Veracini, 'Settler Collective', 367.
[190] Ward, *The Australian Legend*.

nomadism indicates a lack of ownership and sovereignty on the part of Indigenous people, but precisely the opposite for their replacements.)

It is not insignificant that culture, cultivate and colony derive from the same etymological foundation (from the Latin verb *colere*, meaning to tend, cultivate or inhabit), as do nature, native and, indeed, nation (from the Latin verb *nasci*, meaning to be born, or to spring forth), so that the opposition between cultured settlers and natural indigenes precedes and is deeply embedded within the cultural and epistemological foundations of the settler project itself.[191] Importantly, as Moran points out:

> By claiming that Aborigines had no proprietary interest in the land, white
> colonizers were claiming that only they had real ownership of the land, and
> were the first to take real possession of it. Thus their emergent link with and
> attachment to the land was — in their own eyes — originary.[192]

To the extent that *terra nullius* functioned to facilitate the Australian settler project's direct sovereign connection with its territorial object — as Wolfe contends, '*terra nullius* was … a rationalization rather than a motive for colonial invasion'[193] — *terra nullius* may be conceived first and foremost as a settler-colonial strategy of symbolic displacement for the purpose of replacement. Yet it was by no means the only such strategy, with settler conceptualisations of Australia as a 'timeless' land or a 'sleeping garden' similarly operating to efface or displace the indigene from the Australian landscape and thereby enabling the perception of an unimpeded and, crucially, peaceful process of settlement.

In the first instance,

> Aboriginal civilisation was viewed as part of the natural environment within
> which it had evolved. It was primeval, like the flora and fauna, indeed like
> the continent itself … Thus the 'timeless land' wasn't very different from the

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[191] Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary*.
[192] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes', 1021.
[193] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 27.

'empty land'. Both removed Aborigines from the progressive history of the nation, the former by removing them from 'national time', the latter by removing them from 'national space'.[194]

In the second, settler-colonial conceptions of the Australian lands 'as a "sleeping garden" implied a country awaiting settlers, awaiting an act of settlement so natural that it could be understood as not needing an act of conquest'.[195] Here, 'settlement' is reimagined as a process of 'awakening' Indigenous lands and peoples from their 'dreamtimes', a state of 'precolonial somnambulance, a blend of dreaming and the aimless Walkabout', in order to render them subject to 'the improving iron of cultivation' and 'the doctrine of progress' respectively. Through the process of 'reducing the land to order … settlement was rescuing it from nature as reason rescues consciousness from the chaos of dreaming … dreaming aborigines [sic] had merely occupied the land, so settlement was not occupation'.[196]

Disavowing Indigenous existence and elimination

Importantly, despite the fact that settler projects are invariably founded on the violent decimation and displacement of pre-existing indigenous populations, as Veracini has emphasised, settler societies also need to 'disavow any foundational violence' in order to maintain the myth of 'peaceful settlement', since '[o]nly a sustained disavowal of any founding violence can allow a seamless process of territorialisation'.[197] As Henry Reynolds has remarked, for settler colonists '[t]he theory of an uninhabited continent was just too convenient to surrender lightly'.[198]

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[194] Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity*, 72.

[195] Veracini, 'Historylessness', 277.

[196] Patrick Wolfe, 'On Being Woken Up: The Dreamtime in Anthropology and in Australian Settler Culture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33, no. 2 (1991): 210. Crucially, as Goldie points out, the term 'dreaming' also 'allows a simultaneous incorporation of the indigene as mystical and the indigene as of another time' (*Fear and Temptation*, 161).

[197] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 75; Veracini, 'Settler Collective', 367.

[198] Reynolds, *The Law of the Land*, 32.

In the context of a national imaginary emphasising the peaceful settlement of an empty continent, Indigenous peoples constitute a 'maximal threat to [the] legitimacy' of the Australian settler project by undermining its already insecure sovereign foundations.[199] The vehemence with which the history wars were (and continue to be, although now primarily from the trenches of *Quadrant*) prosecuted in Australia reflects the centrality of these myths to settler national consciousness, as well as their precarity.[200] Ann Curthoys accurately captured the crux of the matter when she described the debate as being about 'the moral basis of Australian society'.[201] Prominent warriors Keith Windschuttle and John Howard attested to this when, for example, the former set out to defend 'the character of the nation and, ultimately, the calibre of the civilization Britain brought to these shores in 1788' against the wave of revisionist historiography that had overwhelmed the great Australian silence since the late 1960s.[202] According to Windschuttle, 'colonial authorities wanted to civilize and modernize the Aborigines, not exterminate them. Their intentions were not to foster violence towards the Aborigines but to prevent it'.[203] In Windschuttle's extraordinarily tendentious and anachronistic account:

> Ever since they were founded in 1788, the British colonies in Australia were civilized societies governed by both morality and laws that forbade the killing of the innocent. The notion that the frontier was a place where white men could kill blacks with impunity ignores the powerful cultural and legal prohibitions on such action. For a start, most colonists were Christians to

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[199] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 25.

[200] See Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004). On a parallel instance of 'unease' on the part of 'Pākehā (non-Māori) … at the unravelling of settler colonial forms of national identity since the 1970s', see Vincent O'Malley and Joanna Kidman, 'Settler Colonial History, Commemoration and White Backlash: Remembering the New Zealand Wars', *Settler Colonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2018). O'Malley and Kidman observe that, like Howard, 'many Pākehā New Zealanders … harked back to what some Pākehā saw as simpler, more homogenous and harmonious times' (299).

[201] Ann Curthoys, 'Constructing National Histories', in *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, eds Bain Attwood and S. G. Foster (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003), 186.

[202] Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History. Volume One: Van Diemen's Land, 1803–1847* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002), 3. On the great Australian silence, see W. E. H. Stanner, 'After the Dreaming', in *The Dreaming & Other Essays*, ed. Robert Manne (Collingwood: Black Inc. Agenda, 2009).

[203] Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, 9.

whom such actions were abhorrent. But even those whose consciences would not have been troubled knew it was against the law to murder human beings, Aborigines included, and the penalty was death.[204]

Howard, for his part, while famously acknowledging the 'blemishes' on Australia's settler-colonial history, railed against 'the Black Armband view' of 'Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism' on the instructively extraneous grounds that such a view 'will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved'.[205] Howard outlined his 'vision for Australia' as a 'nation that feels comfortable and relaxed about three things: about their history, about their present and the future'.[206]

As manifestations of the Real, 'that part of social reality which … the inhabitants of the White [settler] fantasy cannot face without risking the undermining of the viability of their construction, including their construction of themselves', the continuing existence and constant (re)appearance of Indigenous peoples precipitates amongst the settler population a 'continuous need to generate new forms of the foundation myth, which exists to annul, defuse, displace and negate the intractable conditions of the foundation event'.[207] The preceding, foundational strategies of displacement must therefore themselves be subsequently disavowed through a series of complex and strategic adaptations in response to changing circumstances (although the strategies available in the settlers' toolkit at any given moment are dependent on broader historical and political realities). As Johnston and Lawson contend:

> Settlers are colonizers in an ineluctable historical and continuing relationality to indigenes and indigeneity. This necessitates the

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[204] Keith Windschuttle, 'The Myths of Frontier Massacres in Australian History. Part II: The Fabrication of the Aboriginal Death Toll', *Quadrant* 44, no. 11 (2000): 23.

[205] Quoted in Norman Abjorensen, 'The History Wars', in *The Culture Wars: Australian and American Politics in the 21st Century*, eds Jim George and Kim Huynh (South Yarra: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 151, 148, 152.

[206] Quoted in Judith Brett, 'Relaxed and Comfortable: The Liberal Party's Australia', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 19 (2005): 30.

[207] Hage, *White Nation*, 235; Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 26.

establishment of legitimizing narratives that will: naturalize their place; resolve the double bind (or what used to be called ambivalence); and explain (or explain away) their relation to indigeneity.[208]

This is evidenced by, to take an important historical example, the enthusiasm with which social evolutionary theory was adopted and applied to the Australian settler-colonial context as a means of naturalising the devastation already wrought on Indigenous society by settlers themselves, and thereby absolving settlers of responsibility (settler absolution is a constituent component of settler consciousness).

Following the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1859, with some delay, social evolutionary theory was applied to the Australian colonial context by writers such as Herbert Spencer, transforming the Great Chain of Being — which 'ordered species on an evolutionary ladder from the most simple organism to the most complex', and which (since it was a European theory) placed Europeans 'highest among the races of mankind and the Aborigines as one of the lowest, nearest the animals' — from a 'static hierarchy of life forms into a progressive one' while nonetheless failing to disrupt the degraded positioning of Indigenous peoples as at the lowest level of the human hierarchy.[209]

Within social evolutionary theory, human development was regarded as passing through three key stages towards 'evolutionary perfection: savagery, barbarism and civilisation'.[210] Given the construction, by Europeans, of Indigenous peoples in Australia as comprising the basest level of human evolution — 'savagery' — due to a lack of any recognisable system of government or ownership of land, as outlined above, and given

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[208] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 365.

[209] Shayne Breen, 'Re-Inventing Social Evolution', in *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2003), 140; Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians: Black Responses to White Dominance, 1788–2001*, 3rd ed. (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 94; Pauline Turner Strong, 'Fathoming the Primitive: Australian Aborigines in Four Explorers' Journals, 1697–1845', *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 2 (1986): 179.

[210] Breen, 'Re-Inventing Social Evolution', 140.

the conceptual association between civilisation and cultivation implicit in the doctrine of *terra nullius* itself, evolutionary theory served to legitimise the European invasion of Australia as a natural and inevitable process unfolding in accordance with, even in aid of, Spencer's pseudo-scientific doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest'.[211] Rather than emphasising Indigenous adaptation to the Australian environment, as Darwin's theory may have allowed (even if Darwin's own earlier remarks on Aboriginal people suggested he may himself have digressed from this possibility),[212] the notion of 'the survival of the fittest' was instead accepted as scientific confirmation of the earlier conception so that Indigenous peoples remained confined to a primitive past, one Europeans were understood to have long since surpassed.[213]

Importantly, social evolutionary theory meant that the dispossession and subsequent decimation of the Indigenous populations of Australia, already well under way by the time these theories had been developed and had penetrated the public consciousness of Australian society in the late nineteenth century, could be imagined as a natural and unavoidable consequence of 'civilising' colonialism, phenomena 'outside the sphere of moral opinion or remedial action'.[214] As Wolfe describes,

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[211] Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity*, 74. Spencer made explicit the parallels between his doctrine and its Darwinian origins: 'This survival of the fittest, which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms, is that which Mr. Darwin has called "natural selection", or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life' (*The Principles of Biology, Volume I* (London, Williams and Norgate, 1864, pp. 444–45)).

[212] In 1836, Darwin wrote that Aboriginal Australians in general were 'far from being such utterly degraded beings as they are usually represented', yet nevertheless ascribed to a 'mysterious agency' the fact that '[w]herever the European has trod, death seems to pursue the Aboriginal' (*Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the Various Countries Visited by H. M. S. Beagle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 519–20). He concluded that 'the varieties of man seem to act on each other; in the same way as different species of animals — the stronger always extirpating the weaker' (ibid., 520). Later, in the second edition of *Descent of Man* (1882), Darwin invoked Aboriginal Tasmanians in a section on 'the extinction of races' to assert that 'the grade of their civilisation seems to be a most important element in the success of competing nations' (*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1882), 183).

[213] Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity*, 71; Breen, 'Re-Inventing Social Evolution', 140.

[214] Mark Francis, 'Anthropology and Social Darwinism in the British Empire: 1870–1900', *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 40 (1994): 207. I have avoided use of the term 'dispossession' throughout, except where directly applicable (as is the case here), in consideration of Robert Nichols' important examination of both the pitfalls and potentialities of the term in settler-colonial analysis and critique (see 'Theft Is Property! The Recursive Logic of Dispossession', *Political Theory* 46, no. 1 (2018)).

evolutionism performed one of the basic functions of ideology, that of naturalising. Though, in common with many other facts of nature, the spectacle of extinction was undoubtedly cruel, it did not figure as the consequence of any volitional human activity. Rather, it was a foregone conclusion whose implementation, being in higher hands, left no more to be done than the alleviation of its symptoms.[215]

In this context, it is important to note that 'scientifically inspired writers did not invent the idea that indigenous peoples were disappearing' but may be better understood as having employed an available and contemporarily acceptable explanation in an attempt to absolve European settlers from any blame for the destructive colonial processes that were already under way.[216] This was a crucial justificatory step for the Australian settler project, since while Europeans had already 'been convinced of the inferiority of the Aborigines, … that did not justify their extinction. Social Darwinism did. Racial conflict was reduced to a question of the struggle for Life and the Survival of the Fittest'.[217] Thus social evolutionism served the specifically settler-colonial purpose of disavowing the foundational violence inherent within the settler project itself. All that remained was to 'smooth the dying pillow'.[218]

In David Hollinsworth's description,

Social Darwinism provided colonial Australia with the reassuring twin assumptions that firstly, Aborigines were a dying race, expected to soon cease to be a problem or embarrassment, and secondly, Europeans were

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[215] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 106.

[216] Francis, 'Anthropology and Social Darwinism', 207; Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, 96.

[217] White, *Inventing Australia*, 69.

[218] Wolfe memorably characterised the missions and reserves on which remnants of the 'doomed race' were to be 'sequestered' as 'antechambers of extinction' and thus as entirely compatible with the logic of elimination (*The Transformation of Anthropology*, 175).

destined to replace indigenous people because of their inherent biological and moral superiority.[219]

Yet crucially, while the first assumption was progressively abandoned, 'the second (the belief that Aborigines were biologically and culturally inferior) [remained] deeply entrenched in Australian social and political structures, and largely unquestioned'.[220]

Indeed, the pseudo-scientific conceptualisations of Indigenous peoples furnished by Linnaean conceptions of 'primitive savages' and evolutionary understandings of the Europeans' inherent biological and cultural superiority not only informed the development of the 'doomed race' ideal,[221] but were transferred into the present within the discursive regime Bain Attwood and John Arnold termed 'Aboriginalism'. In the process, they were translated into a series of settler-colonial tropes that together function(ed) to re-perpetuate the originary conception of Australia as an empty land and thereby reinforce and retrospectively legitimate the foundations of the Australian settler project. Here, Indigenous peoples are 'constructed … as the primordial or primitive other, a paradigm of originality and antiquity … and figure as "savages" or as "an ancient people in an ancient land" or as "a stone age people"'. In this conception, Aboriginality 'represents a place which Europeans have left behind in order to assume "civilisation" or enter into modernity, whereby Aborigines stand for the past, for our origins or beginnings, the childhood of humankind'.[222]

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[219] Hollinsworth, *Race and Racism*, 83.

[220] Ibid.

[221] The term 'doomed' rather than 'dying' is adopted here to denote the fact that the 'ideal' itself refers to settler fantasies of Indigenous disappearance including but not limited to 'death'. Even if *Indigenous peoples* are not 'dying', as was the common and comforting belief until at least the late 1930s, *indigeneity* (as a form of antecedent Indigenous alterity) can be conceptualised as 'doomed' nonetheless. Settler fantasies of Indigenous disappearance and the unmediated encounter between settler and land this disappearance would enable can therefore be projected into the future ad infinitum. Contemporary discourses emphasising Indigenous 'dysfunction' and proposing policies of 'mainstreaming' and 'normalisation' as the only possible response, for example, are underpinned by an understanding of Indigenous difference as anachronistic and envisage, albeit in a different form, Indigenous peoples' 'ultimate absorption' into the now-neoliberal settler body politic.

[222] Attwood and Arnold, *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, iii–iv.

The summary effect of these discursive constructions is the conceptual confinement of 'authentic' Aboriginality to a remote spatial and temporal location and the institution of an eliminatory equation whereby the closer Indigenous people come to settler society (in either spatial or temporal terms and in either the physical or metaphysical realm) the less Indigenous they become. As Veracini has suggested, '[t]he settler irruption is … a movement that flattens the indigenous sector of the population system on "the past" and confirms what anthropologist Johannes Fabian has called a "denial of coevalness"'.[223] This insuperable temporal barrier is further reinforced by the radical temporal disjuncture typically drawn between Australian history and Indigenous 'prehistory', whereby in contradistinction to 'white Australian society, which is assumed to be diachronic, Aboriginal society is allowed no room for the flux of history. The prehistoric Aborigine is Aborigine; the present Aborigine is not'.[224] Crucially, as David and Denham point out,

> the words 'prehistory' and 'history' do not merely demarcate a division between, respectively, 'a time without' and 'a time with' writing. The prefix 'pre' shows that one state will advance to the other. The very definition is itself evolutionary in character, imbued with the notion that cultures will move forward from a lower to a higher state.[225]

Indigenous peoples thereby come to be conceived as 'a base for Australian culture, not a part of its developing fabric'. This is a particularly powerful settler strategy of

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[223] Veracini, 'The Settler-Colonial Situation', 105. See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). Mark Rifkin has recently highlighted the risks inherent in challenging the denial of coevalness with a straightforward insistence on its opposite (see *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2017)). Rifkin writes: 'an emphasis on coevalness tends to bracket the ways that the idea of a shared present is not a neutral designation but is, instead, defined by settler institutions, interests, and imperatives' (viii). Rifkin's critique resonates in the Australian context with, for example, the differing historiographical understandings underlying, and implications arising from, the competing conceptions of 'shared history' and 'sharing histories' operative in the reconciliation debates and after (see Bain Attwood, 'Unsettling Pasts: Reconciliation and History in Settler Australia', *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 3 (2005)).
[224] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 151, 168.
[225] Bruno David and Tim Denham, 'Unpacking Australian Prehistory', in *The Social Archaeology of Australian Indigenous Societies*, eds Bruno David, Bryce Barker, and Ian J. McNiven (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2006).

disavowal, since it enables the expression of sincere settler guilt 'for the mistreatment of the Aborigine in the past' without risking the possibility of 'the Aborigine [becoming] other than of the past'.[226]

From a settler colonial studies perspective, Wolfe has suggested that the strategic constructions of Aboriginality as confined to settler Australia's remote spatial frontiers and distant temporal past are not themselves a thing of the past, but rather have persisted into the present under the guise of what he terms 'repressive authenticity'.[227] In this discursive regime of ever-diminishing returns (for Indigenous peoples, that is — the same regime produces correspondingly expanding returns for settlers), 'authentic Aboriginality is constructed as a frozen precontact essence, a quantity of such radical historical instability that its primary effect is to provide a formula for disqualification'. Within regimes of repressive authenticity, 'Aboriginality is severally constructed as somewhere else'.[228] Wolfe's concept accords with the 'contradiction' identified by Jeremy Beckett, whereby:

> The location of the 'real Aborigines' simultaneously in the remote past and the outback, bring together time and space within a unitary concept. The link between the prehistoric Aborigines and the outback Aborigines is made through the idea of heredity, concretised in metaphors such as blood and family likeness. But whereas among westerners the succession of generations is coordinated with history, if not the advance of civilisation, that among 'real Aborigines' entails no such progression. Compared with, and at times comparing themselves with, the 'real Aborigines', Aboriginal people are caught between the attribution of unchanging essences (with the implication of an Inability to change) and the reproach of inauthenticity.[229]

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[226] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 149.

[227] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 110. See Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*.

[228] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 204, 179.

[229] Jeremy Beckett, ed., *Past and Present: The Construction of Aboriginality* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1994), 194.

Here the 'narrative structure' becomes that of 'the excluded middle. The more polarized the binary representation, the wider its intervening catchment of empirical inauthenticity' — and 'the positive production of … *in*authenticity, a condition that it is appropriate to eliminate', is precisely the point.[230] Whereas in the former evolutionary paradigm the settler-colonial logic of displacement and replacement operated on the basis of literal elimination by violence and violent exclusion, under the regime of repressive authenticity the operational logic is that of symbolic elimination by inclusion. In this construction, '[t]hose most Aboriginal are those furthest away in space and those furthest away in time … Those nearest in space are those nearest in time but also least Aboriginal — the approach to the coeval leads to a decrease in Aboriginality'. Crucially, regimes of repressive authenticity carry the logic of elimination beyond the 'frontier' and the era of social evolutionism, so that 'whether or not the indigene in body dies, the indigene dies'.[231]

Importantly, as Wolfe has outlined, the ideology of 'repressive authenticity' underpins Australia's ostensibly progressive 'native title' legislation by requiring claimants to prove their 'traditional connection' with the land in question, thereby shifting 'the burden of history from the fact of expropriation to the character of the expropriated' and disadvantaging 'those groups (a substantial majority) who have been removed from their land'.[232] Rose's suggestion that '[t]ime was on the side of the settler' was made manifest in Justice Olney's infamous decision in the *Yorta Yorta* case, the first heard by the Federal Court in the wake of Mabo and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), that the 'tide of history' had 'washed away' the Yorta Yorta community's native title rights.[233] Tellingly, the court prioritised the written (historical) account of a settler colonist

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[230] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 181.

[231] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 165–66, 15. Tim Rowse, in apparent contradiction of his stated intention of refuting the utility of settler colonial studies, evinces precisely this in his account of the various manifestations of what he terms 'the Dying Native fantasy' ('Indigenous Heterogeneity', 307).

[232] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 122.

[233] Deborah Bird Rose, 'Aboriginal Life and Death in Australian Settler Nationhood', *Aboriginal History* 25 (2001), 152, 158.

invested in Aboriginal dispossession over the oral (prehistorical) testimony of the Yorta Yorta themselves.[234] Thus despite the fact that 'in recent years, Australian state strategies have been culturally rather than genetically coded, their logic has remained consistent … land-rights legislation continued the logic of elimination that the initial invasion expressed', a situation which begs the question as to whether 'the legislation will come to be seen as … marking the point where *terra nullius* had completed its historical task'.[235]

Crucially,

> though the official rhetoric of land rights … is ostensibly benign, the rarefied traditional Aboriginality that it promulgates is still conducive to the logic of elimination. This continuity reveals the synecdochic fullness of identity politics, which are in no sense superstructural or epiphenomenal … On the contrary, the sum of settler-colonial history is simultaneously present at each imposition, enactment or refusal of an Aboriginal identity.[236]

Replacing the indigene on and of the land

Having comprehensively (yet — and this is crucial — not completely) displaced and subsequently disavowed the existence and persistence of sovereign Indigenous peoples from the literal and symbolic landscape comprising its ultimate object through the overlapping and interrelated strategies outlined above, in its second 'positive' (or productive) phase the settler project attempts to construct 'a new colonial society on the expropriated land base'.[237] In addition to the obvious literal manifestations of this settler-colonial process of replacement and in accordance with the preceding compulsion towards the disavowal of the settler project's inherent foundational violence, settlers are

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[234] See Wayne Atkinson, '"Not One Iota" of Land Justice: Reflections on the Yorta Yorta Native Title Claim, 1994–2001', *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 5, no. 6 (2001); Rose, 'Aboriginal Life and Death'; Wayne Atkinson, 'Reflections on the Yorta Yorta Native Title Claim, 1994–2003', *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues* 6, no. 1 (2003); Strelein, *Compromised Jurisprudence*, chapter seven; Samuel Furphy, *Edward M. Curr and the Tide of History* (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2013).

[235] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 118, 122.

[236] Ibid., 113.

[237] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 388.

compelled towards what Terry Goldie has termed the 'impossible necessity' of settler indigenisation.

In Avril Bell's recent summary:

> Settlers are a particular kind of colonizer, those who seek to make a new home on the lands of others. Crucially also, this primary desire for indigenous land as a settler homeland sets up a particular relationship between settlers and indigenous peoples, one in which the settler seeks to replace the indigenous as the people of the land, to become indigenous themselves. Either indigenous peoples must disappear (literally or symbolically) or the two peoples must be merged – and in some versions these two are tantamount to the same thing.[238]

As noted, in Goldie's influential account, indigenisation is defined as the process 'through which the "settler" population attempts to become as though indigenous, as though "born" of the land'.[239] This compulsion arises out of the continuous encounters between settlers and indigenous peoples, which institute what Rob Garbutt has termed a 'longing for belonging' at the centre of settler consciousness.[240] In Goldie's terms,

> Australians, New Zealanders, and Canadians have, and long have had, a clear agenda to erase … [their] separation of belonging. The white Canadian looks at the Indian. The Indian is Other and therefore alien. But the Indian is indigenous and therefore cannot be alien. So the Canadian must be alien. But how can the Canadian be alien within Canada?[241]

It is no great leap to transpose this exemplary imagined encounter into the Australian settler-colonial context. The original process of displacement, despite often substantial efforts being dedicated towards its subsequent denial and disavowal, 'marks a return

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[238] Bell, *Indigenous and Settler Identities*, 7.
[239] Goldie, 'The Man of the Land', n.p.
[240] Rob Garbutt, *The Locals: Identity, Place and Belonging in Australia and Beyond* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 194.
[241] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 12.

whereby the Native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society'.[242] The settler is therefore compelled to address itself towards the indigene it has already displaced through further strategies of disavowal. As Alan Lawson suggests:

> The Second World [settler-colonial] narrative … has a double teleology: the suppression or effacement of the Indigene, and the concomitant indigenization of the settler, who, in becoming more like the Indigene whom he mimics, becomes less like the atavistic inhabitant of the cultural homeland whom he is also reduced to mimicking.[243]

Goldie identifies two main strategies of indigenisation, although as Veracini points out, '[t]hese are … complementary approaches': 'penetration' and 'appropriation'.[244] To put it more succinctly, in the first instance 'the white culture … reject[s] the indigene', while in the second '[t]he white culture … attempt[s] to incorporate the Other'.[245] As Veracini elaborates:

> In the first instance, the settler destroys in order to replace; in the second one, the settler stands in and replaces the native (this applies to indigenous peoples but indeed to anything indigenous as well, as epitomised in an Australian context, for example, by comprehensive attempts to reorganise the landscape and its constitutive elements on the one hand, and, on the contrary, by instances of emotional investment in Australian landscapes, flora, and fauna).[246]

Yet the intended outcome of both strategies remains the same: the institution of the settler as a new and improved indigene. Settler indigenisation is not an additive process — 'indigenisation was and is about the replacement of one socio-political collective with another' — and the emplacement of the settler as a 'transcending inclusion' of its

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[242] Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 33.
[243] Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.
[244] Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 8; Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 15.
[245] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 12.
[246] Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 8.

metropolitan and indigenous antecedents/authorities enacts the displacement of the actually existing indigene (and the concomitant indigenisation of the European settler).[247] (As noted in the introduction, however, there is also a third alternative, beyond the bounds of this thesis, in which metropolitan continuity is emphasised and the indigenising imperative is repressed or rejected out-of-hand — I call this the 'colonialist' option.)

The notion of a new and improved indigene is evident in Garbutt's analysis of the claims of Australian settler locals to a state of 'cultural autochthony', in which this specific mode of settler belonging is conceived as being 'marked by the dispossession of Indigenous peoples by settlers seeking legitimation through a "founding forgetting" of that dispossession'.[248] For Garbutt, 'claims of being a local are claims of belonging that draw on the legitimacy conferred by autochthony. These autochthonist claims are founded upon the practices of nineteenth-century settler colonialism and articulate with contemporary post-colonial settler nationalism to produce ongoing colonising effects'. Importantly, in typical settler-colonial fashion, '[c]laims of autochthony are double claims with people and place forming a single and particular interpretation of society: a territory belonging to a people and a people belonging to a territory'.[249] The requisite 'founding forgetting' of claims to cultural autochthony

> is expressed in the idea of *terra nullius* and is aided by a linear history that marks the point of replacement of one autochthon by another as time zero. The settlers, thereby, naturalise themselves to place and to the history of that place. In the process there is a double effacement of memory: an effacement of the migratory history of the settler and the effacement of the Aborigines as autochthons.[250]

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[247] Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 61.
[248] Garbutt, *The Locals*, 191.
[249] Rob Garbutt, 'White "Autochthony"', *ACRAWSA e-Journal* 2, no. 1 (2006): 3, 5.
[250] Garbutt, *The Locals*, 191.

This notion becomes more explicit in Deborah Bird Rose's account, in which settler indigenisation is envisioned as entailing a transfer of 'belonging to the land' from the indigene to the settler at the historical moment of settler colonisation, conceptualised here as 'Year Zero', a 'long transitive moment' marked by the dual settler-colonial imperatives towards the violent displacement of Indigenous peoples and the 'redemptive purpose' of 'the creation of a new civilisation' through the replacement of 'Aboriginal people' by 'White people'.[251] In Rose's imaginative retelling:

> Settler (male) encounters Aboriginal (male) in a moment of recognition as the Aboriginal dies and the settler flourishes. In that moment the Aboriginal passes the mantle of belonging to the land (autochthony) to the settler. A new relationship is established as the settler inherits the world of the Aboriginal … The White man knows that he belongs to the future, and that the Aboriginal man belongs to the past. The dynamic between them is an act of conferral … Treating whole groups of people as if they were generations, the relationship is linear: the ancient autochthon passes away and the settler takes his place as the new (and superior) indigene.[252]

Of course — and importantly — the dual symbolic process of displacement and replacement indigenisation describes does not involve the detached and purely ideological operation of identity politics removed from the circumstances of material reality. On the one hand, this process seeks to establish the settler project's requisite (primary and exclusive) connection with its territorial object, while on the other it aims

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[251] Rose, 'Australia Felix Rules OK!', 123; Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 66.

[252] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 117. In an earlier illustration of this imaginative encounter, Rose highlighted the masculinist logic of this settler-colonial fantasy, in which (white) women may at times be bestowed the status of 'honorary mates (males)' by their white male counterparts, but where women's status more generally 'will remain ambiguous' ('Australia Felix Rules OK!', 137). Such encounters are not confined to the Australian settler-colonial context: Prats identifies an analogous moment in his *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western* (2002), in which 'the Indians, just before they vanish, perform a crucial errand: they validate — and by validating proclaim uncontested and foreordained — the Edenic inheritance of the white hero. They identify, anoint, and then yield to this one white man, as if in confirmation of his exalted status as hero of a redeemed Western civilization in the New World' (*Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 5).

to construct the foundations for settlers' subsequent claims for independence from the metropole. Yet to the extent that it is not an actual 'historical indigeneity' the settler seeks to (re)appropriate, but rather 'a conveniently mythical one of its own construction' — which it produces through the very same processes by means of which it initially empties the category of indigene it seeks to subsequently inhabit — the 'condition of this replacement is precisely the elimination, or displacement, of the empirical indigene within civilization'.[253] The literal and symbolic aspects of settler-colonial displacement, disavowal and replacement interact and are mutually constitutive. As Wolfe describes:

> On the one hand, settler society required the practical elimination of the natives in order to establish itself on their territory. On the symbolic level, however, settler society subsequently sought to recuperate indigeneity in order to express its difference — and, accordingly, its independence — from the mother country.[254]

Crucially, the settler-colonial strategies of indigenisation are both contingent and complex, and Nicholas Thomas aptly captures the 'basic multifaceted ambivalence around the denial and affirmation of the indigenous presence, around the virtue and illegitimacy of the colonial presence' evident in settler-colonial settings.[255] Indeed, indigenisation is even (perhaps especially) evident in those circumstances marked by the distinct absence of indigenous peoples themselves. In much the same way that Rahv's 'paleskins' and 'redskins', and Phillips' local (racist) adaptation, write over and thereby efface the indigeneity these authors simultaneously seek to arrogate to themselves, as Goldie points out, '[e]ach reference in *The Bulletin* … to the white Australian as "native" or "indigenous" is a comment on indigenization, regardless of the absence of Aborigines

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[253] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 208.
[254] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 389.
[255] Thomas, *Possessions*, 34. Wolfe puts it more succinctly: 'ambivalence emerges as a primary settler affect' ('The Settler Complex: An Introduction', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2013): 8).

in those references'.[256] More explicitly, its regular section entitled 'Aboriginalities' had nothing whatsoever to do with Aboriginal people themselves.[257]

In his response to Mahmood Mamdani's question: 'When Does a Settler Become a Native?', first posed in relation to African colonialism and transposed into the Australian settler-colonial context, Pal Ahluwalia outlines the Australian settler project's deployment of the term 'aboriginal native' as an 'exclusionary category' which 'stripped the rights of Aboriginal peoples' by denying them 'not only the franchise but also any financial benefits that were available to the white settler population'.[258] Whereas other indigenous populations throughout the British Empire were typically referred to by the unmarked term 'natives', as Anthony Trollope observed in 1873, 'the government officially called the indigenous population "Aboriginals", whilst the "word native is almost universally applied to white colonists born in Australia"'.[259] The category 'native' was thus conceptually emptied out to enable its subsequent arrogation by settlers themselves, as was the case elsewhere.[260] As Ahluwalia points out:

> The idea that white colonists born in Australia were natives whilst the indigenous population were not was an important one. It was an idea that went to the heart of the manner in which the continent was settled. The myth of *terra nullius* was dependent upon the non-recognition of the local population and the 'indigenisation' of their white conquerors.[261]

As Patrick Wolfe pithily remarks, 'the Australian Natives Association is definitely not an Aboriginal club' (despite its decorative use of Aboriginalia and reference to meetings as 'corroborees').[262]

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[256] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 14.

[257] Thomas, *Possessions*, 112.

[258] Ahluwalia, 'Citizenship and Identity', 64. See Mamdani, 'The Colonial Roots of Citizenship'.

[259] Ahluwalia, 'Citizenship and Identity', 64.

[260] See, for example, Mark Williams, 'Crippled by Geography? New Zealand Nationalisms', in *Not on Any Map: Essays on Postcoloniality and Cultural Nationalism*, ed. Stuart Murray (Exeter, Devon: University of Exeter Press, 1997).

[261] Ahluwalia, 'Citizenship and Identity', 64–65.

[262] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 127; J. B. Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39.

And yet, in some sense at least, the settler imaginary remains just that, for as Goldie's imagined encounter implies, the continuing existence of an *ab original* presence — literally, a presence from the origin — functions constantly and unsettlingly to remind the settler of his status as an alien in his own land. Each public utterance or even appearance of actual indigeneity puts paid to settler claims to such status; the (re)appearance of an originary native presence within the settler body politic displaces the settler from the status claimed through the language of settlement. In Rose's terms, the 'long transitive moment poses problems for settlers as well as for Aboriginal people', since '[p]ublic declarations of Indigenous survival challenge complacency about the completion of conquest'.[263] Once again, having 'stayed at home' — which is to say having survived — Indigenous peoples confront settler Australians with not only the reality of their own pre-history elsewhere, but also with the facticity of the foundational act of violent dispossession; this is what Gérard Bouchard has termed 'the Aboriginal fact'.[264] As a result, as Anthony Moran contends, '[w]hether through deafening silence, denial, justification, or accommodation, the discourses of settler nationalism must continue to engage with histories of indigenous dispossession, in order to explain the nature and quality of their national existence'.[265] Whether directly or indirectly — as structuring absence, or less frequently as structuring presence — indigeneity both provokes and conditions settler self-understandings and cultural constructions.

Furthermore, as Jay Arthur has also outlined, the double vision inherent within the settler Australian lexicon leads to a continuing colonial consciousness 'of two places at the same moment', a simultaneous awareness of 'the colonised landscape and the landscape of origin'.[266] To the extent that this awareness remains a facet of settler existence for 'as long as the colonist remembers that this was a place where the colonist

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[263] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 66.
[264] Bouchard, *Nations and Cultures of the New World*, 232.
[265] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes', 1016.
[266] J. M. Arthur, *The Default Country: A Lexical Cartography of Twentieth-Century Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 27.

society or individual once was not' — a memory embedded within the language itself — settlers are repeatedly reminded of both their exile and arrival and yet prevented from either escaping the former or ultimately establishing the latter. Settler Australians therefore find themselves haunted by what Veracini characterises as a specifically settler-colonial form of Anderson's 'spectre of comparisons'.[267] As is explored in detail in Chapter 2, the Jindyworobaks' attempt to develop an Australian poetic idiom in accordance with what they described as 'environmental values' through the appropriation of a decontextualised 'essence' of authentic Aboriginality reflects precisely an (unsuccessful) attempt on the part of these indigenising settler nationalists to reconcile their double vision — to 'adjust', as they would have it, English (as their 'Mother Tongue') to Australia (as their 'Motherland').[268]

To the extent that the settler-colonial imagination constructs a geographically and historically negated space emerging at the moment of its own inception, the dual settler-colonial processes of displacement and replacement outlined above appear relatively straightforward. However, as Arthur's analysis implies, and as Veracini explicitly outlines, the settler situation is more complex than this since it establishes a 'fundamentally triangular system of relationships … comprising metropolitan, settler, and indigenous agencies' within which settlers find themselves simultaneously positioned as both coloniser and colonised.[269] Whereas the structural formations of colonialism proper, as well as the corresponding analytical approaches of colonial and postcolonial studies, typically collapse all colonial forms into one overarching structure within which the operating dialectic is that between coloniser and colonised (even if hybridity between antitheses is emphasised), settler colonial studies explicitly recognises the settler as necessarily and simultaneously negotiating complex and contingent relations with both the metropole and the indigene.

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[267] Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 3.
[268] Rex Ingamells, 'Introduction', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948,* eds Rex Ingamells et al. (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948), 21.
[269] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 5–6.

As Veracini describes:

> A triangular relational system … emphasises the difference between colonial and settler colonial regimes by complicating the bilateral opposition between coloniser and colonised, and between colonising metropole and colonised periphery that is paradigmatic of the interpretative categories developed by colonial studies.[270]

This is important, since when the settler is approached from a perspective emphasising an exclusive bilateral relation between coloniser and colonised, the settler only ever appears, alternately, in one role or the other, depending on which direction they (or the analysis) is facing. The settler is, quite literally, two-faced. As Robert Paine suggests, '[v]is-à-vis the mother country, the Settlers are colonials, vis-à-vis the Aboriginals they are colonizers; and without a doubt, being entwined in this double role affects Settler dispositions'.[271]

In these complex and contingent circumstances, settlers find themselves

> ambiguously positioned … In their role as colonisers they represent Home; the discontinuity between home and colony positions them on the side of Home and thus alienates them from the place where they actually live and from the Indigenous people whose homes are here. In their role as settlers who come to stay, however, they are positioned as colonials. The discontinuity between Home and colony now positions them on the side of the colony, alienating them from their own origins and kin, and assigning them a lower-order identity.[272]

As a consequence of their ambiguous positioning, settlers experience 'a filiative and an affiliative connection with "home" … where "home" is alternatively (or simultaneously)

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[270] Veracini, 'On Settlerness', 2.
[271] Paine, 'Aboriginality, Authenticity', 104.
[272] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 54.

both the "old" and the "new" place'.[273] Also (and importantly), to the extent that the settler project is ultimately founded on the presumption that 'settlement' is equivalent to 'civilisation' (of both lands and peoples), the connections and continuities between the 'old' and the 'new' place cannot be abandoned without the project itself being undermined. Thus, in Johnston and Lawson's description, the settler appears

> as uneasily occupying a place caught between two First Worlds, two origins of authority and authenticity. One of these is the originating world of Europe, the Imperium – the source of its principal cultural authority. Its 'other' First World is that of the First Nations whose authority they not only replaced and effaced but also desired.[274]

The settler thus finds himself 'suspended between "mother" and "other," simultaneously colonized and colonizing' and 'an important site of conflict … is generated, as the backward-looking impotence of exile and the forward-looking impetus to indigeneity collide'.[275]

While these relationships operate in multiple and dynamic ways, this 'triangular understanding of the settler colonial situation' emphasises the fact that 'there are conflicting tendencies operating at the same time on the settler collective: one striving for indigenisation and national autonomy, the other aiming at neo-European replication and the establishment of a "civilised" pattern of life'.[276] Settlers must inevitably confront 'the problem of establishing their "indigeneity" and distinguishing it from their continuing sense of their European inheritance' whilst simultaneously — and crucially — attempting to maintain the colonial authority and sovereign capacity deriving from this very inheritance.[277] The simultaneous operation of these competing imperatives

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[273] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 21.
[274] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 370.
[275] Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.; Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 135.
[276] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 18, 21.
[277] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 134.

inevitably leaves the settler in the ambiguous situation of attempting to establish a position as both European and 'indigenous', yet the persistent existence of a scornful metropolitan perspective on the one hand and an assertive Indigenous agency on the other renders this position inherently unstable. In Johnson and Lawson's terms, the settler finds themselves 'always addressing both the absent (and absentee) cultural authority of the Imperium and the unavailable (and effaced) cultural authority of the indigene'.[278]

These conflicting yet not necessarily incompatible imperatives originating from within the structures of the settler-colonial situation have been defined by Veracini as 'indigenisation' and 'Europeanisation', the first 'striving for indigenization and national autonomy, the other aiming at neo-European replication and the establishment of a civilized pattern of life'. In the first instance, the imperative towards indigenisation reflects the settler's desire to 'transform an historical tie ("we came here") into a natural one ("the land made us")', while the imperative towards Europeanisation reflects a desire and 'consists of an attempt to sustain and reproduce European standards and ways of life'. In other words: 'Europeanization and indigenization respond to the complementary needs of transforming the environment to suit the colonizing project and of renewing the settler to suit the environment'. Importantly, while these tendencies appear to point in two different directions, both address the settler's compulsion to supersede both the settler and colonial aspects of the settler-colonial situation, and to attain the 'thirdspace' of indigenised settlerness. Ultimately, however, for reasons explored below, this sought-after state of trialectical transcendence remains a fantasy; settlers 'need to maintain a balance between indigenization and Europeanization — embracing both — and this split is rarely reconciled'.[279]

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[278] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 370.
[279] Veracini, 'The Settler-Colonial Situation', 105–09.

Crucially,

> Indigenization and Europeanization should … be seen as asindotic [sic] progressions — the line separating settler and indigenous must be approached but is never finally crossed. The same goes for neo-European imitation, where sameness should be emphasized but difference is a necessary prerequisite of the absolute need to distinguish between settler self and indigenous and exogenous Others.[280]

The settler is consistently compelled towards the supersession of both his indigenous and exogenous relations, and thereby the settler situation itself. And yet in speaking against either one of his antecedent authorities, the settler necessarily calls upon and appropriates (and thereby inadvertently affirms) the authority of the other aspect of a triangular system of relationships. He cannot, therefore, authoritatively address both aspects of the settler-colonial situation at the same time, and is consequently unable to ultimately supersede the conditions of his own existence. This is an ambiguous and ambivalent situation. In Rose's terms:

> A reflection must bear some relation to the source, and in Imperial geography a settler colony must be a distorted reflection of Home. In fact Home will insist on both: that its colony mirror it, and that the colony fail accurately to mirror it. Superiority is produced and authenticated precisely through this double bind.[281]

As Alan Lawson points out, for the settler:

> The inherent awareness of both 'there' and 'here', and the cultural ambiguity of these terms, are not so much the boundaries of its cultural matrix, nor tensions to be resolved, but a space within which it may move while

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[280] Ibid., 107.
[281] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 45.

speaking. That is the source of its distinctive creative power: the ambi/valence, the source of its power to contra/dict.[282]

The settler narrative therefore

> has a double teleology: the suppression or effacement of the Indigene, and the concomitant indigenization of the settler, who, in becoming more like the Indigene whom he mimics, becomes less like the atavistic inhabitant of the cultural homeland whom he is also reduced to mimicking.[283]

Yet to the extent that the settler cannot entirely disavow the authority assigned by his association and identification with the metropole, a modification might be made to Lawson's formulation, so that the settler nationalist may be conceived as necessarily negotiating the dual and competing imperatives towards the 'impossible necessity' of settler indigenisation through the suppression or effacement of the already existing indigene on the one hand, and the maintenance of sufficient, though not excessive, European cultural continuity as a legitimating factor on the other. The settler situation may thus be conceptualised as always and inevitably constituting an 'interstitial cultural space', with settler cultures comprising 'liminal sites at the point of negotiation between the contending authorities of Empire and Native'.[284]

Settlerness may therefore be envisaged as a state of interminable striving, pulling in two different directions at once and therefore always and inevitably in process. As Veracini has outlined, 'indigenization and Europeanization, despite recurring fantasies of ultimate supersession, are never complete, and a settler society is always, in Deriddean terms, a society "to come," characterized by the promise rather than the practice of a "settled" lifestyle'.[285] Since

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[282] Alan Lawson, 'A Cultural Paradigm for the Second World', *Australian–Canadian Studies* 9, no. 1–2 (1991): 69.

[283] Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.

[284] Ahluwalia, 'Citizenship and Identity', 70; Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.

[285] Veracini, 'The Settler-Colonial Situation', 107.

settler invasion 'is a structure not an event' — no matter how much it tries, the settler-colonial situation cannot ultimately supersede itself. Despite settler delusions of final transformation, save for indigenous genocide, mass deportations, or a settler counter-exodus that empties the population system of its settler component.[286]

The persistence of the structural features of settler colonialism remain unavoidable. Importantly, such an understanding sharply contradicts Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen's retrospection, made in 2005, that '[t]he age of settler colonialism maybe behind us, but its legacies are everywhere to be seen'.[287]

The predicament of settler nationalism

Patrick Wolfe has characterised the cluster of contradictions outlined above as 'the problem of the fragment: how to be British for the purpose of expropriating Australians and Australian for the purpose of independence from Britain?'[288] The question, that is, in the terms adopted here, of how to become 'indigenous' without becoming Indigenous. This amounts to a neither/nor equation in which attainment of identification with either of the settler's primary counterpoints (the metropole or the indigene) negates at the moment of its attainment the 'thirdspace' of settlerness as a 'transcending inclusion' of both aspects of the settler situation. Wolfe's 'problem' is really a 'predicament'.[289]

In *The Long Descent: A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age*, John Michael Greer usefully distinguishes between a 'problem' and a 'predicament' as follows:

The difference is that a *problem* calls for a solution; the only question is whether a solution can be found and made to work and, once this is done,

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[286] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 52.

[287] Elkins and Pedersen, 'Introduction', 1.

[288] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 126.

[289] I am not the first to use this term. Klaus Neuman, Nicholas Thomas and Hilary Erickson used 'settler predicament' to refer to 'the unsettlement brought about by settlement' in their *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia & Aotearoa New Zealand* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999).

the problem is solved. A *predicament*, by contrast, has no solution. Faced with a predicament, people come up with responses. Those responses may succeed, they may fail, or they may fall somewhere in between, but none of them 'solves' the predicament, in the sense that none of them makes it go away.[290]

Responding to the predicament in 1930s Australia

As outlined in the introduction, the 1930s was an ambivalent period for Australia, both externally and internally, and this was reflected in what Stephen Alomes described as the 'Dominion Culture' of the time.[291] The competing dynamics of the settler predicament — towards indigenisation and 'civilisation' — and the tensions associated with them for settler nationalists in particular, were both placed under particular pressures throughout the interwar period. And these pressures provoked a number of original and often quite radical responses, those examined in Chapters 3–5 among them.

While at times exclusive emphasis on the settler–metropole relation may be maintained, at other historical moments the disavowal or denial of the settler–indigene aspect of the settler situation common to the nationalist and universalist traditions alike is either undermined or rendered untenable by changing circumstances. The nationalist surge of the 1890s, for example, was underwritten by social evolutionism and the 'doomed race' ideal, which imagined an imminent future in which triadic relations would be resolved into dyadic ones. This enabled settler nationalists on the eve of federation to focus their attentions on claiming national cultural, even political, independence from the metropole, and 'protecting' the nation from non-white others. As Russell McGregor makes clear, the different levels of consideration paid to the 'threats' non-white immigrants and Indigenous people presented to white Australia were founded on the widely-held assumption that

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[290] John Michael Greer, *The Long Descent: A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age* (Gabriola Islands: New Society, 2008), 22.

[291] Alomes, 'The Forgotten Critics', 554–55.

active measures had to be taken to safeguard white Australia against coloured aliens, but not against the coloured indigenes, since they were expiring independently of government action or inaction. The white Australia ideal faced little threat from a dying race.[292]

Relatedly, the penetrationist approach that characterised both the universalism and radical nationalism of the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s was facilitated by a policy of forced assimilation that envisaged a similar resolution of relations, albeit by different means.

During the early 'frontier' phases of settler colonisation, the solutions to the prospect of coexistence were predominantly violence and displacement, with a series of retrospective explanations (taxonomic and/or evolutionary) offered as means of justification, and absolution. In the wake of the 'frontier', throughout colonial Australia Indigenous reserves and 'fringe' populations were spatially situated away from — outside — the so-called 'settled districts' — 'out-back', in 'the interior', or even in the *never-never*, that 'far outside country beyond the centres of civilization'.[293] The transfer of 'belonging' necessary for settler indigenisation came to be enacted through the interaction between man and land, exemplified in Ward's 'legend', which as we have seen 'displaces Aboriginality within a white indigenity [sic]'.[294] As Deborah Bird Rose neatly encapsulates, in settler societies 'the frontier is a site of violence, replacement and nation-building' and sometimes, as Frederick Jackson Turner inadvertently revealed, explicit indigenisation.[295]

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[292] Russell McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion: Aboriginal People and the Australian Nation* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011), xxi.

[293] On the language of settler colonialism in Australia, see William Ransom, 'Wasteland to Wilderness: Changing Perceptions of the Environment', in *The Humanities and the Australian Environment: Papers From the Australian Academy of the Humanities Symposium, 1990*, ed. Derek John Mulvaney (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1991); Arthur, *The Default Country*.

[294] McLean, *White Aborigines*, 88.

[295] Deborah Bird Rose and Richard Davis, eds, *Dislocating the Frontier: Essaying the Mystique of the Outback* (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2005), iii. Turner wrote that 'at the frontier … the man … must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails … The fact is, that here is a new product that is American' ('The Significance of the Frontier in

At the moment of federation, as Edmund Barton so evocatively expressed, the boundaries of the settler nation were extended outwards on a continental scale.[296] Robert Dixon refers to Barton's rhetoric as 'typical of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultural nationalisms, which envisage an isomorphic alignment of literature, land, and nation'.[297] There was work to be done. As Alfred Deakin, one of the 'fathers of federation' himself, acknowledged, federation did not create 'a nation, but simply preludes the advent of a nation'.[298] Historians began to turn their attention away from the violent history of colonisation, and towards 'nation building and the construction of the unifying mythologies necessary to buttress it'.[299] Writers were compelled by the same prerogative, as Nettie Palmer made clear in the opening to her *Modern Australian Literature 1900–1923*:

> The opening of the twentieth century is a convenient starting-point for the examination of tendencies in Australian literature. Turning a corner in time is often a tonic, but this milestone was for Australia a point recognized by poets, politicians, and patriots. That 'Australia is the unit' was the refrain of some hammering verses by Joseph Furphy … Perhaps the chief possession of Australian writers in the year 1901 was this consciousness of nationhood. Australia was no longer a group of more or less important colonies, hanging

American History', in *The Annual Report of the American Historical Association* (Washington: American Historical Association, 1893), 201).

[296] Tellingly, corresponding to and following the transition from an outward orientation that conceived of central Australia especially as the 'dead heart', in the wake of the 'inward turn' this thesis is concerned with and the reconceptualisation of the 'dead heart' as the 'red centre' this shift entailed, the 'Never-Never Land' explored in films such as *Australia* (2008) comes to be represented as 'an, albeit problematic, "indigenizing" space that can be entered imaginatively through cultural texts including poetry, literature and film, or through cultural practices including touristic pilgrimages … These actual and virtual journeys to the Never-Never have broader implications in terms of fostering a sense of belonging and legitimating white presence in the land' (see Jane Stadler and Peta Mitchell, 'Never-Never Land: Affective Landscapes, the Touristic Gaze and Heterotopic Space in *Australia*', *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 4, no. 2 (2010): 173). On the shift from the 'dead heart' to 'red centre', see Roslynn D. Haynes, *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter five; Libby Robin, *How a Continent Created a Nation* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2007).

[297] Robert Dixon, '"A Nation for a Continent": Australian Literature and the Cartographic Imaginary of the Federation Era', *Antipodes* 28, no. 1 (2014): 141.

[298] Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity*, 59.

[299] Ann McGrath, *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines Under the British Crown* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1995), 365.

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

loosely together with the Bermudas and Fiji on the ample bosom of Britannia; Australia was henceforth Australia. What that name was to mean it lay in the hands of her writers, above all, to discover.[300]

As Patrick Wolfe has outlined, at the moment of federation 'Australia became a national as well as a geographical entity', and 'at a single stroke (the last one of 1900) settlers became, and Aborigines ceased to be, Australians'.[301] With the extension or, which is the same thing, 'demise of the frontier', Aboriginal people were rendered anomalous within the geographical and cultural confines of the (imagined) settler nation.[302] This anomalous presence, and the challenge to the legitimacy of the settler it presents, could be endured but only on a temporary basis; this was the promise of social evolutionism and the doomed race ideal. The persistent belief in the latter component of the eliminationist settler imaginary meant these histories were by and large produced in the absence of Indigenous peoples, and so the 'great Australian silence' was constructed.[303]

By the 1930s, with the demise of the doomed race ideal, however, Palmer's project of discovery was being conditioned by an Indigenous presence *within* the boundaries of the settler nation.[304] As early as 1910, the Commonwealth Year Book was warning that '[t]he

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[300] Nettie Palmer, *Modern Australian Literature (1900–1923)* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1924), 1.

[301] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 101.

[302] This extension was not immediate, absolute, nor complete, beyond the level of the purely symbolic. As Jay Arthur illustrates, conceptualisations of what Rifkin has more recently come to call 'settler time' (see *Beyond Settler Time*) and settler space work together to exclude Aboriginal people from the national imaginary, so that space 'unoccupied' (by settlers) is conceived as 'timeless' even after federation (see *The Default Country*, chapter three). So Charles Bean, in *On the Wool Track* (1910), could write of the west of New South Wales: 'This region, though it makes up the inside of the continent, they call the "outside" country, because it is on the farthest outskirts of civilisation, the centre of Australia being *uninhabited*' (quoted in Ann Curthoys, 'Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology', *Journal of Australian Studies* 23, no. 61 (1999): 9). Bean went on to remark that however far west one travelled, there was always a 'real "outback"' further out: 'However far you search for the "out-back", there seems to be always an "out-back beyond"' (quoted in ibid.) — the frontier had not yet fully closed. Recurrent anxieties about 'developing the north' reflect ongoing concerns that the sought-after continental 'closure' is not yet complete (see Russell McGregor, *Environment, Race, and Nationhood in Australia: Revisiting the Empty North* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)).

[303] Even where 'invasion' was mentioned, as was the case in Hancock's *Australia* (1930), the Indigenous presence was nevertheless disavowed in the descriptions of 'empty' and 'uninhabited' lands.

[304] The historical scope of Russell McGregor's definitive account — *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939* — leads directly into the transformations in Australian settler cultural nationalism with which this thesis is concerned.

half-caste problem threatens to become serious'.[305] In 1918, it declared that 'the natives … are rapidly dying out', but by 1924 it was noted that 'the aboriginal births now exceed the deaths at many places'.[306] The national population figures for 'full-bloods' remained reasonably consistent throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but while this stabilisation was seen as problematic, it was the 'half-caste menace' that proved of most concern. As noted above, from a population of under 10,000 before World War I and 11,579 in 1921, the loosely defined 'half-caste' population exploded from 15,468 in 1927 to almost 24,000 by the time of the 1937 conference on Aboriginal welfare.[307]

At the conference, Western Australian Commissioner of Native Affairs, A. O. Neville, and Chief Protector in the Northern Territory, Cecil Cook, outlined their absorptionist solutions to the 'half-caste problem'. Neville famously declared that

> the native population is increasing. What is to be the limit? Are we going to
> have a population of 1,000,000 blacks in the Commonwealth, or are we going
> to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there
> ever were any aborigines [sic] in Australia?[308]

For Cecil Cook, 'three alternatives' presented themselves: the 'repugnant' possibility of 'a policy of *laissez faire*'; the development of 'an enlightened elaborate system of protection which will produce an aboriginal population … likely to swamp the white'; or 'a policy under which the aboriginal [sic] will be absorbed into the white population'. Cook expressed his preference for the third option, since 'unless the black population is speedily absorbed into the white, the process will soon be reversed, and in 50 years, or a little later, the white population of the Northern Territory will be absorbed into the black'. The conference concluded that 'the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin [sic],

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[305] G. H. Knibbs, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1910), 175.

[306] G. H. Knibbs, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1918), 1076; Chas. H. Wickens, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1924), 960.

[307] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, 134–35.

[308] Commonwealth of Australia, *Aboriginal Welfare*, 11.

but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end'.[309]

This demographic transition brought settlers face-to-face with the circumstances of Australia's settler-colonial foundation. The notion that the demise of the Aboriginal 'race' was inevitable and therefore beyond the scope of moral opinion or remedial action, and that the only task remaining was to 'smooth the dying pillow', was irrevocably undermined. Previously, theories and conceptions of race had, on the one hand, encouraged the perpetuation of myths concerning the 'peaceful settlement' of empty lands, while on the other allowing those few settler nationalists interested in engaging with the figure of the indigene to imagine the encounter and associated transfer of belonging as passing, or already passed. As Goldie suggests, '[t]he inevitability of the demise of indigenous peoples so permeates nineteenth-century images of indigenes that it is difficult to find examples which do not reflect the theory'.[310] Under the changed conditions of the 1930s, Healy's 'encounter' became, if not inevitable, then at least much more likely (even if historians, by and large, perhaps soothed by the prospects of absorption and, later assimilation, failed to acknowledge changed conditions for another generation). This is by no means an incidental confrontation for settler nationalists, since as Anthony Moran has remarked, 'Aboriginal Australia fits the bill of the "natural" Australian ethnic group or nation far more convincingly … than does the settler nation'.[311]

The demographic transition of the Indigenous population in the 1930s, and the demise of the doomed race ideal that this in part precipitated, induced and produced new, appropriative approaches to settler indigenisation, equally informed by changing anthropological understandings as earlier penetrative visions had been. It is no

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[309] Ibid., 14, 3.
[310] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 153–54.
[311] Moran, 'Imagining the Australian Nation', 17. Moran specifically situates this confrontation in the 1930s, as a response to the demise of the doomed race ideal.

coincidence, as Ellen Smith has observed, that it was in this period that 'Australian cultural nationalism [became] explicitly invested in the Aboriginal figure, Aboriginal culture, and an Aboriginal past as aesthetic and cultural resources in the construction of a unique national identity'.[312] These investments were hardly widespread, and their influence and impact on either the self-conceptions of settler Australians or on the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was limited (even if it has been overemphasised since, as Adam Shoemaker suggests).[313] And yet such investments did occur, and the perceptible turn towards indigeneity within Australian cultural nationalism in the 1930s is revealing of the underlying dynamics of settler colonialism in Australia, which continue to condition projects of national cultural construction to this day.

If the 1930s was characterised by the demise of the doomed race ideal, the late 1960s was marked by the demise, or least the abeyance (since we have seen its re-emergence in the decades since), of the assimilationist one. At these historical junctures, settler nationalists found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent, anomalous Indigenous presence *within* the settler nation, and were forced to negotiate the trilateral relations of settler colonialism rather than the relatively straightforward bilateral ones of colonialism proper. In one possible response, *some* settler nationalists — those I am terming here 'indigenising settler nationalists' — sought to symbolically appropriate aspects of Indigenous cultures for the purpose of differentiation against the metropole.[314] This was not a straightforward proposition, however, and the ambivalent nature of these projects

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[312] Smith, 'Writing Native', 7.

[313] Adam Shoemaker, *Black Words, White Page: Aboriginal Literature 1929–1988* (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2004), 41.

[314] See Moran, 'Imagining the Australian Nation'; Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'; Moran, 'Australian Settler-Nationalism'. Shoemaker cautions us against overstating the influence of settler engagements with the figure of the indigene in the 1930s, as Healy is wont to do. He convincingly argues that '[t]he social and political conditions which prevailed between 1929 and 1945 militated against either *Coonardoo* or *Capricornia* having a significant educative impact on racial prejudice and Aboriginal stereotypes, especially before World War II. Such books have more recently been ascribed greater importance as reflections of a changing public opinion of Black Australians than is warranted — even if their influence is still being felt to the present day' (*Black Words, White Page*, 41).

of settler indigenisation reflects the complexity of the triangular system of settler-colonial relations.

The following chapter sets out to explore these ambivalences in relation to one of the central figures in Australian cultural nationalism in the 1930s, P. R. 'Inky' Stephensen, in an attempt to illustrate the ways in which the complexities of the settler predicament Stephensen attempted to respond to have impeded subsequent attempts at the interpretation and explication of this perplexing figure, and the tradition of indigenising settler nationalism he represents.

Chapter 2

Reframing 'Inky' Stephensen's place in Australian cultural history

At this present time (1935) we are no longer a colony pure and simple, nor yet are we a Nation fully-fledged. We are something betwixt and between a colony and a nation, something vaguely called a 'Dominion,' or a 'Commonwealth' with 'Dominion status'.[315]

> — P. R. Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture in Australia*, 1936

I am the same Quixotic tilter, reckless of personal safety; and always going towards the same goal, the mirage (it may be) of Australian nationalism.[316]

> — P. R. Stephensen, *Letter*, 1941

Stephensen was a complex, contradictory, gifted man, impossible to comprehend in one view, or to consign definitively to an insignificant place in our history.[317]

> — Axel Clark, 'Inky Stephensen: A "Noble Ratbag"?', 1984

Introduction

This chapter comprises a historiographical examination of the existing literature surrounding Percy Reginald 'Inky' Stephensen (1901–65) and of the paradoxical, even contradictory, place he inhabits in Australian cultural history. In an attempt to overcome what is presented as the persistent sense of analytical obscurity and uncertainty

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[315] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 18.

[316] Craig Munro, *Wild Man of Letters: The Story of P. R. Stephensen* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1984), 113.

[317] Axel Clark, 'Inky Stephensen: A "Noble Ratbag"?', *Quadrant* 28, no. 9 (1984): 75.

surrounding both Stephensen and his most famous essay, *The Foundations of Culture in Australia*, the following analysis reveals that, considered together, attempts to explicate this perplexing figure present an inconsistent and often conflictual picture of Stephensen. In particular, two central ambiguities in the existing historiography are highlighted, the first revolving around divergent interpretations of Stephensen as either radical or reactionary in intent, the second hinging on competing conceptions of Stephensen as either a cultural cringer or an anti-imperial chauvinist in sentiment. The chapter concludes by introducing a settler colonial studies interpretive perspective as a potential means of incorporating the admittedly ambivalent aspects of Stephensen into a single analytical frame. In so doing, the analysis proposes a reinterpretation of Stephensen as an entirely consistent, if contradictory, settler nationalist intellectual.

Variously described as 'one of Australia's most remarkable men of letters', a man of 'infinite possibilities' and an 'intellectual and literary adventurer'; an 'instinctive rebel', 'noble ratbag' and an 'enfant terrible'; a 'spanking nationalist patriot', a 'right-wing nationalist' and 'missionary for the cause of culture'; a 'rogue elephant constantly in search of a role'; a 'keen advocate of Indigenous rights'; a 'sophisticated Nietzschean Bakunite'; as well as a 'fascist bigot and a fairly vicious anti-Semite' and 'Australia's most prominent Nazi enthusiast', Stephensen was, or so it certainly seems, a 'bundle of contradictions'.[318] The somewhat surprising — and surprised — recipient of the 1924 Queensland Rhodes Scholarship, Stephensen had personal and professional ties to an array of influential Australian and international literary figures, including but not limited to D. H. Lawrence, Aleister Crowley, Norman Lindsay, Miles Franklin, Rex

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[318] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 3; Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 57; Craig Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald (1901–1965)', in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), n.p.; Clark, 'Inky Stephensen', 75; Brenton Doecke, 'Historical Fictions: The Historical Novel in Australia during the 1930s and 1940s' (PhD thesis, Deakin University, 1989), 77; *Nation*, 'The Culturist: P. R. Stephensen's Bright Noon and Sombre Afternoon', 14 February, 1959, 8; Attwood and Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights*, 60; Clark, *A History of Australia*, 422; Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 168; John Chesterman and Heather Douglas, '"Their Ultimate Absorption": Assimilation in 1930s Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies* 28, no. 81 (2004): 47; Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 186; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 15; Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 223; Clark, *A History of Australia*, 423.

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

Ingamells, Hugh McCrae, Banjo Paterson, Henry Handel Richardson, Eleanor Dark, Xavier Herbert, William Baylebridge and Frank Clune.[319] He was also a passionate political polemicist who underwent a seemingly sudden and dramatic conversion from radical to reactionary over the course of the 1930s and early 1940s, a shift which ultimately resulted in his internment from January 1942 until the end of the Second World War 'on suspicion of collaboration with the Japanese and of planning sabotage and assassination'. This 'sudden shift of sympathy from the left to the far right' has remained '[t]he central puzzle of Stephensen's life', and has contributed to a persistent state of analytic uncertainty surrounding Stephensen's literary, cultural and political significance.[320] As a consequence, Stephensen has 'continued to puzzle historians, and to exasperate and intrigue those who knew him'.[321]

In the midst of his apparent political transformation, in 1936 Stephensen produced *The Foundations of Culture in Australia: An Essay Towards National Self-Respect*.[322] A self-proclaimed 'Rubicon-crossing manifesto', Stephensen's essay has been described by his biographer Craig Munro as his 'most significant achievement', and one of the most 'stimulating' and 'influential books of the decade'.[323] In this assessment, Munro receives unequivocal endorsement from John Barnes, who pronounced the essay 'probably the most influential piece of critical writing in the period'.[324]

In this essay, Stephensen set himself the task of establishing precisely the terms for his titular subject (and objective): the foundations of culture in Australia. In keeping with the tradition outlined in the introduction, Stephensen's essay was concerned with

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[319] See Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald'; William H. Wilde, Joy Hooton, and Barry Andrews, 'Stephensen, P. R.', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[320] Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald', n.p.

[321] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 4.

[322] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*.

[323] Doecke, 'Historical Fictions', 252; Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald', n.p.; Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 168–69.

[324] John Barnes, ed., *The Writer in Australia: A Collection of Literary Documents, 1856 to 1964* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1969), 165.

establishing the basis for an independent, mature and sophisticated 'indigenous' (that is, settler) national culture, and with national literature as its essential component. At a moment of political, economic and cultural recolonisation, in which Stephensen regarded Australia as stuck somewhere 'betwixt and between' the status of 'colony and … nation', he attributed this apparent liminality to the absence of a national literature: 'a nation, in fact, without a literature is incomplete. Australia without a literature remains a colony, no nation'.[325]

Stephensen wrote against the 'larrikin' tradition in Australian literature, and determined *The Bulletin* to have had a 'dubious effect on Australian literature, and on culture in Australia'; instead, he sought 'a mature national culture' and 'a more civilised and enfranchised intellectual atmosphere'.[326] Under chapter headings including 'Genius of the Place', 'Race and Place', 'Colony or Nation', 'Isolated from Europe' and, later, 'Politics and Culture', 'Populate or Perish' and 'A New Britannia', Stephensen laid out his argument that an original, 'indigenous' (settler) Australian culture would inevitably, though not without nationalist striving, emerge through the interplay between 'Race and Place' under 'unique' Australian conditions. For Stephensen, 'Culture in Australia' ('indigenous Australian culture' was still an objective rather than a reality) would begin 'not from the Aborigines, who have been suppressed and exterminated, but from British culture'.[327]

While Stephensen's stated and demonstrated focus is directed squarely towards 'indigenous' (settler) Australia throughout the essay, settler Australia's antecedent Indigenous authority haunts the essay as a structuring absence nonetheless. For example, in a suggestive manoeuvre, Stephensen proposed the 'advisability' of adopting a form of 'Initiation Corroboree' from 'our admirable predecessors in sovereignty over

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[325] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 16.
[326] Ibid., 28, 66, 87.
[327] Ibid., 12, 18, 68.

the territory of Australia Felix' as a means of emphasising and instantiating Australian 'national lore', without which there could be 'no national centre: no nation'.[328] Since

> the culture of every nation is an intellectual and emotional expression of the genius loci, our Australian culture will diverge from the purely local colour of the British Islands to the precise extent that our environment differs from that of Britain.[329]

In an original revisioning of the botanical metaphor perhaps most famously enunciated by W. H. Hancock — involving the progressive 'sending down of roots … by the transplanted British' — but embedded across the spectrum of available teleological narratives of national cultural development, Stephensen stated emphatically that 'a gumtree is not a branch of an oak' and maintained that while the 'native plant' might be stimulated by the 'imported phosphates' of British culture, it was 'the plant rather than the phosphates which concerns us most'.[330] Crucially, from Stephensen's perspective, British phosphates were only of use insofar as they would 'fertilise' the emergent 'indigenous' settler culture; unless English culture was 'building up our own indigenous culture, it is a meaningless spectacle to us'.[331] While the coherence of Stephensen's metaphor begins to unravel on closer examination — why, for example, if the plant is native, is it not Indigenous? — it responds to the dual settler desire for indigenisation and Europeanisation in new and important ways.[332]

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[328] Ibid., 12, 98.

[329] Ibid., 13. This was hardly an unusual view at the time or since. Tom Inglis Moore stated essentially the same argument in 1971 in *Social Patterns in Australian Literature*, while a diverse tradition of settler nationalism has emphasised the interactions between 'man and land' as constitutive of settler national culture and identity, Russel Ward's *Australian Legend* standing as only the most famous example.

[330] Hancock, *Australia*, 261, 42; Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 13, 24–25.

[331] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 24–25.

[332] Stephensen later seemed to inadvertently undermine his own adaptation in a letter to Ingamells, when he suggested that 'I have sowed a seed, but other gardeners will have to cultivate that plant and pick its fruits. Confidently I expect a strong growth of Nationalism in Australia within the next ten or twenty years; but you younger men must make it grow' (Letter to Rex Ingamells, 24 July, 1941, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

In place of transplanted British stock attempting to penetrate a foreign soil to put down national cultural roots, and beyond (but before) Manning Clark's appropriation of Lawson's metaphoric contrast of botanical growth and decline, here a fully 'indigenous' settler culture emerges from the land itself, while its imported cultural inheritance remains available as fertiliser for the purposes of national cultural development. In one fell swoop, Stephensen leaps over the conceptual contradictions standard narrativisations inevitably entail (albeit into new ones of his own making), including the association of settlers with what he sees as the destructive processes of colonisation vis-à-vis the settler–indigene relation, as well as the persistent status of provincial belatedness and inferiority the ongoing settler–metropole relation implies. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin point out, Stephensen's 'plant cannot be "inauthentic", nor we assume, could it grow properly anywhere else. It is not a branch from the English tree, but a plant rooted "indigenously" in the new soil'.[333] It is not even Manning Clark's 'young tree green', which we are left to presume derives from the same genus as the 'old dead' one it is set to supplant. At the very point (and moment, which in Stephensen's account is, symptomatically, deferred) of its emergence, Stephensen's plant — 'indigenous' (settler) national culture — will be pre-possessed of the specific sense of *autochthonic* belonging the indigenising settler nationalist project ultimately seeks to attain.[334]

As Rob Garbutt outlines, '[c]laims of autochthony are double claims with people and place forming a single and particular interpretation of society: a territory belonging to a people and a people belonging to a territory'.[335] This is precisely Stephensen's project,

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[333] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 134.

[334] 'Autochthon' is a term borrowed directly from Ancient Greek, meaning 'sprung from the land itself' (see Garbutt, 'White "Autochthony"', 2). The clear parallels with the well-known (and 'specious') Zionist slogan '[a] land without a people for a people without a land', which claims the same relation for a diasporic people, are indicative of the pervasiveness of autochthonic claims within settler colonialism (see Gershon Shafir, 'Theorizing Zionist Settler Colonialism in Palestine', in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London & New York: Routledge, 2017)).

[335] Garbutt, 'White "Autochthony"', 5.

although as already observed the moment of his national cultural emergence is withheld. For Stephensen, 'Race and Place' formed the 'two permanent elements in a culture, and Place … is even more important than Race in giving that culture its direction'.[336] While 'pride of race' remained an important imperative, Stephensen's 'indigenous' Australians were definitively *not* Hancock's 'independent Australian Britons' (even had they been, they would have laid more stress on the first two words than the last).[337] Stephensen's sophisticated and mature settler national culture would emerge from the 'Spirit of the Place' itself (which was 'primitive' and 'empty' and therefore available for usurpation by the 'Coming Man').[338]

Importantly, while Stephensen's focus in the first and second instalments remained almost exclusively Australia's cultural, and especially literary, conditions, by the third he felt he could no longer 'avoid the conclusion that the growth of Australian nationality must become a political and economic question, as well as a "cultural" question'.[339] While his concern remained 'the development of culture in Australia, as a "thing-in-itself," a dynamic contribution to world culture originating in this place', he now considered this would 'not become a real possibility until Australia is emancipated from the economic and political domination of Europe, and of European thought'.[340] In his turn to politics, Stephensen's primary ambition was to save Australia from the coming 'international death-smash' of 'civilisation' in 'Europe's apparently inevitable "next war"'; for Australia to become 'an asylum of culture' in 'a world gone militaristically mad'.[341] At a time when 'the systems of the Old World … appear[ed] to be on the edge of collapse', Stephensen saw Australia's 'isolation and distance' as a potential means of its emergence as 'the sole repository of what were once European culture, ideals of decency, and

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[336] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 15.
[337] See Hancock, *Australia*, chapter three.
[338] Quotes from Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 11, 82. On the 'Coming Man', see White, *Inventing Australia*.
[339] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 139.
[340] Ibid., 165.
[341] Ibid., 89, 88, 185.

civilisation'.[342] Stephensen saw in Australia's imminent future the potential identified by Wentworth more than a century earlier:

> 'A New Britannia in Another World!' — Dare we begin to envisage it, after so many years of misguided sycophancy to the 'Old' Britannia? A new Britannia indeed, and cured of some of the vices, it is to be hoped, of the Old One.[343]

Stephensen's idiosyncratic essay, perhaps predictably, received a range of more equivocal assessments than those proffered by Munro and Barnes, having been described variously as 'a significant cultural document of the 1930s', a 'brilliant plea for a distinct national culture', a 'lively and intelligent essay', a 'brilliant though erratic polemic', a 'polemical little masterpiece', an 'incomparable if uneven aesthetic manifesto', and 'one of the most interesting documents on the state of cultural politics in Australia' — overall, simply 'an amazing book'.[344] And yet, despite generally wide-ranging endorsements of (at the very least) its influence and significance, and its initial reception amongst its intended audience, Australia's 'intellectual minority', as both 'refreshing and inspiriting', *Foundations*, like Stephensen himself, has continued to elude consistent or comprehensive explication.[345]

Stephensen's 'idiosyncratic, but often penetrating' essay has remained, in Miles Franklin's words, 'more assiduously consulted than acknowledged', while its content

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[342] Ibid., 87–89.

[343] Ibid., 189.

[344] Wilde, Hooton, and Andrews, 'Stephensen, P. R.', n.p.; Noel McLachlan, *Waiting for the Revolution: A History of Australian Nationalism* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1989), 233; Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 127; Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 101–02; *Nation*, 'The Culturist', 8; McLachlan, *Waiting for the Revolution*, 233; Stephen Cowden, 'Shaky Foundations', *Antipodes* 14, no. 1 (2000): 65; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 15. The essay's generally favourable reception suggested by these responses was by no means universal. Randolph Hughes, for example, described the essay as 'fumy elucubration … clumsily conceived and barbarously written … the product of a mind that is muddled and ill-furnished' (quoted in Gregory Melleuish, 'Randolph Hughes versus Percy Stephensen: An Australian Cultural Battle of the 1930s', *Arts: The Journal of the Sydney University Arts Association* 18 (1996)).

[345] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 158–59.

has been dismissed as 'uneven', 'erratic', 'confus[ed]' and 'contradictory'.[346] As these descriptions attest, despite significant and sustained attention across the fields of literary, cultural and political historiography, both Stephensen and his essay have frustrated or impeded existing attempts at analysis and explication by evading classification within existing interpretive frameworks. On the basis of previous accounts, Stephensen appears, as Axel Clark suggests, 'a complex, contradictory, gifted man, impossible to comprehend in one view, or to consign definitively to an insignificant place in our history'.[347] Thus, in one of his most recent treatments, Stephensen is assessed by David Bird as 'an historical curiosity … somewhere in between the unhorsed "Don Quixote" that he imagined himself to be and the tainted "Quisling" of the later years'.[348]

And yet, Stephensen was of significant influence upon the Australian literary, cultural and political landscape of the 1930s and early 1940s, by virtue not only of having produced what Gregory Melleuish and Geoffrey Stokes have deemed the first 'powerful intellectual expression' of Australian nationalism[349] — which garnered the attention of such prominent contemporaries as Mary Gilmore, Xavier Herbert, Rex Ingamells and Nettie Palmer, Prime Minister Billy Hughes, and scholar Randolph Hughes — but also his literary and political endeavours spanning a period of almost two decades.[350] In the literary field, Stephensen's significance is evinced through his various roles and activities, including as an anti-censorship crusader and publisher of D. H. Lawrence and Aleister Crowley in London; joint-venturer with Norman Lindsay in the *Endeavour Press*; publisher at *Endeavour* and elsewhere, of titles by Banjo Paterson, Miles Franklin, Henry

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[346] Quotes from Graeme Davison, 'Rethinking the Australian Legend', *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 3 (2012): 438; Miles Franklin, *Laughter, Not for a Cage: Notes on Australian Writing, with Biographical Emphasis on the Struggles, Function and Achievements of the Novel in Three Half-Centuries* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1956), 215; McLachlan, *Waiting for the Revolution*, 233; Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 101; Brenton Doecke, 'P. R. Stephensen, Fascism', *Westerly* 38, no. 2 (1993): 20–22.
[347] Clark, 'Inky Stephensen', 75.
[348] Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 379.
[349] Quote from Gregory Melleuish and Geoffrey Stokes, 'Australian Political Thought', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*, eds Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2007), n.p. The authors observe that *Foundations* was 'admired by both left and right at the time'.
[350] See Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*.

Handel Richardson and Eleanor Dark, amongst others; impetus, inspiration and sporadic advisor to Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks; editor, advocate and publisher of Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* in 1938; less glamorously, ghost-writer for Frank Clune; and consistent, prolific and polemical critic.

In politics, Stephensen's most important — and suggestive — activities included: near-expulsion for communist agitation and involvement in the 1926 General Strike at Oxford; support of banned communist journalist and writer Egon Kisch in 1934–35; involvement with the Aborigines' Progressive Association (APA) of William Ferguson and Jack Patten, for whom he helped organise the Aboriginal Day of Mourning protest conference for the sesquicentenary of 1938 and published and promoted the APA journal, *Abo Call*; and, ultimately, his formation, with W. J. Miles, of the Australia First Party, his public prosecution, in the *Publicist*, of the case for a separate peace with Japan, and his eventual internment from 1942 until 1945 on (unfounded) suspicion of collaboration with the Japanese.[351] As Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer state in their introduction to *A Companion to Australian Literature Since 1900*, 'certain figures … appear, in this book, in more than one context … P. R. Stephensen manifests himself in a variety of contexts, the sheer reach of which suggests he is an underexamined figure'.[352]

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[351] See ibid. While official war historian Sir Paul Hasluck described the internment of Stephensen and his AFM associates as 'the grossest infringement of individual liberty made during the war' (*The Government and the People, 1942–1945* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1970), 742), the authoritative accounts of the Publicist movement and the AFM affair produced by Bruce Muirden and Barbara Winter offer more balanced assessments. They share the view that whereas the internments may have been initially justifiable, having subsequently been found unwarranted, the failure of authorities to release the internees was undoubtedly unjust. See Bruce W. Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots: The Story of the Australia First Movement* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1968); Winter, *The Australia First Movement*. Each author would no doubt concede to Munro's conclusion that 'the vilification of his public name … was the ultimate indignity for a man who genuinely, if misguidedly, loved his country' ('Introduction', in *The Foundations of Culture in Australia: An Essay Towards National Self-Respect* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), xxv). In 1959, an article in *Nation* confirmed that Stephensen 'himself has said he is prepared to accept any kind of unpopularity except the charge of disloyalty' ('The Culturist', 10). With reference to his self-conception as a 'Quixotic tilter … always going towards the same goal … of Australian nationalism', quoted at the beginning of the present chapter, in 1952 Stephensen wrote to Miles Franklin: 'For eleven years, 1931–1942, I was a Don Quixote, then I was unhorsed' (quoted in Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 53).
[352] Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer, eds, *A Companion to Australian Literature Since 1900* (Rochester: Camden House, 2007), 9.

In an attempt to work through and beyond the interpretive opacity obscuring Stephensen's intelligibility, this chapter proceeds through an overview and analysis of the existing literature concerning his current place in Australian cultural history. It finds that existing explanatory efforts have produced an uneven, even contradictory set of interpretations in which Stephensen appears as either a radical or a reactionary on the one hand, and as either a cultural cringer or an anti-imperial chauvinist on the other, depending on the perspective applied. It is, of course, entirely possible that one individual embodied these ostensibly incompatible elements, especially across different periods and under differing circumstances — and reasonable for diverse historiographies to treat each, any or all of them as their subject.[353] However, while such historiographies have tended to trace their subject's trajectory on parallel paths, this chapter concludes by introducing a settler colonial studies interpretive perspective as a possible supplement to existing approaches and as a strategy for bringing the ambiguous and ambivalent aspects of Stephensen into Axel Clark's 'one view'. In so doing, the analysis proposes a reinterpretation of this man of letters as a settler nationalist intellectual.

The central proposition advanced here is that while the ambivalences evident within Stephensen's position as a settler nationalist intellectual have impeded previous attempts at analysis and explication, they should instead be understood as deriving from and reflecting the complexities and contingencies of Australia's settler-colonial conditions. From this perspective, it is not Stephensen and his intellectual and cultural positions or productions that are considered contradictory, but rather the exigencies and imperatives of the situation in which he produced them. Stephensen's shift from left to right, corresponding with a shift in emphasis from culture to politics, has typically been interpreted as revealing, or instantiating, the radical transfiguration of a previously positive literary liberal into a negative political nationalist. Instead, this chapter suggests

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[353] This is Manning Clark's conclusion: 'Taken all in all, he was a man' (*A History of Australia*, 423).

that Stephensen's advocacy of political isolationism and economic autarky was not inconsistent with his previous positions, but rather reflected the complexities of the settler-colonial conditions he confronted. (This is not to deny those aspects of Stephensen's thinking McQueen rightly describes as 'vilely repulsive', but rather to recognise, with McQueen, that overlaying and influencing if not outright determining 'these political aspects was the growing demand for a distinctive Australian culture, in which Stephensen played a leading part'.)[354] The analysis offered has implications beyond a re-reading of Stephensen and *Foundations*, of both Australian and comparative international significance.

For example, Stephensen's position, emphasising as it does the transformative influence of place upon race, possesses undeniable affinities with the frontier thesis of Frederick Turner so central to the subsequent Australian settler nationalist traditions represented by Russel Ward and the rest of the radical-nationalist school.[355] Although these inheritors of the settler nationalist tradition tended much more towards outright disavowal of Indigenous Australia than did Stephensen, due to the shifting historical circumstances of the interwar and post-war periods. Tellingly, narratives of national emergence at 'the frontier' are not confined to the US and Australia. As Michael Roe remarked in a perceptive review of Ward's book in 1962, '[t]he North American frontiersman, the South American gaucho, the Afrikaans trekker are blood-brothers of [Ward's] "true Australian". Alongside them he quickly loses his distinct qualities'.[356]

As outlined in the two preceding chapters, within the triangular system of relations characterising the settler-colonial situation, settlers find themselves confronting Wolfe's 'problem of the fragment', which I have reframed as a predicament: 'how to be British for the purpose of expropriating Australians and Australian for the purpose of

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[354] Humphrey McQueen, 'Rex Ingamells and the Quest for Environmental Values', *Meanjin* 37, no. 1 (1978): 36.

[355] See Turner, 'The Significance of the Frontier'; Ward, *The Australian Legend*.

[356] Michael Roe and Russel Ward, 'The Australian Legend', *Meanjin Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1962): 163.

independence from Britain?'[357] The settler situation, and the predicament it produces — how to become 'indigenous', without becoming, or being able to become, Indigenous — generates a series of ambiguities and ambivalences conditioning settler nationalism and its multiple manifestations, which this chapter and those that follow attempt to explicate by treating Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert as illustrative examples.

The suggestion throughout is that the inherently ambiguous positioning of settler nationalists produces a set of ambivalences within settler nationalism: a simultaneous drive towards the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty and a desire to usurp it (the alternatives Goldie terms indigenisation through 'penetration' and 'appropriation'),[358] alongside the dual imperatives towards independence and the maintenance of inheritance (the tension Bouchard has identified between 'continuity and rupture').[359] In turn, these characteristics, manifest throughout the activities and oeuvres of the three subjects of this thesis, produce the same or similar attributes in the historiography tasked with their explication. In relation to Stephensen, whereas on the one hand his complex negotiations of the settler-colonial system of relations produce a series of ambiguities in interpretations of his cultural significance, on the other, his attempts to articulate a politics for the new world *outside* the crises manifest in the old produce a set of ambivalences with regard to his political positioning.

A history of the historiography on Stephensen and *Foundations*

The most recent instance of interpretative disagreement concerning Stephensen's essay is illuminating and stands as a powerful example of the persistent state of analytical obscurity surrounding both man and manifesto. In 2012, an edited collection by Robert Manne and Chris Feik entitled *The Words That Made Australia* and David Bird's *Nazi Dreamtime* offered two radically divergent interpretations of Stephensen and

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[357] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 126.
[358] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 15.
[359] Bouchard, *Nations and Cultures of the New World*, 14.

Foundations. In the first instance, Manne and Feik revive the essay in the context of a collection claiming to be 'the essential sourcebook of the words that made Australia', describing *Foundations* as 'a muscular and prophetic tour de force', a prescient, persuasive and 'remarkably contemporary' response to the questions D. H. Lawrence had raised in his novel *Kangaroo* and as the precursor to both A. A. Phillips' subsequent work on the cultural cringe and, later, the Whitlam nationalist project.[360] Crucially, in Manne and Feik's rendition, it was only *after* the essay's publication that, in 'one of the more remarkable political reversals of Australian political life, Stephensen was to become the nation's leading exponent of the fascist world-view'.[361]

In dramatic contrast to this conception, David Bird describes Stephensen's 'magnum opus' as derivative and uninspiring, out-dated even at the time it was written.[362] According to Bird,

> Stephensen was not an original thinker — many of the ideas expressed in Foundations were those of the earlier century and would have been already considered outmoded in the period after the Great War had the rise of national-socialism in Europe not revived them.[363]

Further, while Manne and Feik clearly position Stephensen as a progressive cultural nationalist and his essay as a positive intervention with long-lasting, constructive consequences, for Bird 'a close examination of *Foundations* suggests the synthesis that whilst Stephensen was at pains to distance himself from aspects of European, and Australian, fascism in the two 1935 instalments, fascistic ideas had begun to appear in his thinking'. 'No longer a communist', Bird concludes, 'he was now a *quasi*-Nazi enthusiast'.[364]

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[360] Manne and Feik, *The Words That Made Australia*, xi–xii.
[361] Ibid., xii.
[362] Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 58.
[363] Ibid., 59.
[364] Ibid., 59–62.

Such interpretive disagreement is not unprecedented in the history of the historiography concerned with the significance of Stephensen and *Foundations*, with analyses of Stephensen and his essay diverging around the dual ambiguities already identified: firstly on the basis of a distinction between Stephensen's positive early literary career and his 'descent' into extreme political nationalism at precisely the moment *Foundations* was published; and secondly as a result of the absence of an interpretive framework sensitive to the complex historical *and* structural dynamics of the settler situation. Typically, these divergences have corresponded to the fields of historiography from which such analyses have been conducted, yet their very existence (and persistence) points to the apparently confounding nature of Stephensen and his essay as objects of analysis and classification, to which this chapter is addressed. There are, of course, exceptions, the most recent and notable being the theses and corresponding articles of Michael Griffiths and Ellen Smith.[365] Albeit in different ways, Griffiths and Smith examine Stephensen's ambivalent attitudes towards Indigenous Australia in the context of his attempts to identify, and to construct, the foundations for an emergent (settler) Australian national culture and identity.[366] Stephensen's engagements with Indigenous Australia (and indigenist tropes) are returned to in the concluding chapters of this thesis.

As already observed, it was in this period that 'Australian cultural nationalism [became] explicitly invested in the Aboriginal figure, Aboriginal culture, and an Aboriginal past as aesthetic and cultural resources in the construction of a unique national identity'.[367] In part, this was a response to what Griffiths has described as the 'decreasing tenability' of the doomed race theory in light of the reversal of Indigenous Australians' demographic decline from the 1920s onwards and, in particular, a rise in the 'half-caste' population.[368] As we have seen, this shift rendered Indigenous affairs increasingly contentious and led

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[365] Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts'; Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'; Smith, 'Writing Native'; Smith, 'White Aborigines'.

[366] Other significant examples include Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*; McLean, *White Aborigines*; Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War'.

[367] Smith, 'Writing Native', 7.

[368] Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts', 11, 21.

to the systematic development and enactment of various policy 'solutions' to Australia's 'Aboriginal problem', including the prospect of biological absorption and, subsequently, sociocultural assimilation.[369] Together with the rising tensions in relations between Australia and metropolitan England outlined in the introduction, these circumstances made settler indigenisation both more urgent and attractive. Settler nationalists were for the first time forced to confront the possibility of a permanent Indigenous presence persisting within the imagined frontiers of the settler nation to come and, in one possible response, sought to symbolically appropriate aspects of Indigenous culture for the purposes of differentiation against — and escape from the imperial clutches of — the metropole. Stephensen's response to this dilemma was original and inventive, though no less symbolically violent for that.

It is worth observing here, however, that accounts of Stephensen's Indigenous politics have typically read his involvement with the APA as an instrumentalist form of nationalist appropriation,[370] as signalling his racist subscription to one or other of the various theses of Aboriginal–Caucasian race-relatedness,[371] or as an unfortunate combination of the two.[372] On the one hand, as Patrick Wolfe has argued, the prerequisite for symbolic appropriation of indigeneity is the destruction, or at least disavowal, of the actually existing indigene.[373] In focusing its energies and attention towards gaining independence from the metropole — in the settler-as-colonised mode — settler nationalism operates above all as 'a strategic disavowal of the colonizing act';[374] that is, it contributes to (at a symbolic level) and benefits from (at an empirical level) the

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[369] For a detailed outline, see McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*; McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*.

[370] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, and Jack Horner and Marcia Langton, 'The Day of Mourning', in *Australians 1938*, eds Bill Gammage and Peter Spearritt (Broadway: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987), are most scathing on this point.

[371] Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*.

[372] Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts'; Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'; Smith, 'Writing Native'; Smith, 'White Aborigines'.

[373] As Patrick Wolfe explains, settler colonialism 'does not appropriate a historical indigeneity; it replaces it with a conveniently mythical one of its own construction. The condition of this replacement is precisely the elimination, or displacement, of the empirical indigene within civilization' (*The Transformation of Anthropology*, 208).

[374] Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.

elimination of the Indigenous presence upon which the settler project ultimately rests. And yet, on the other hand, what Tim Rowse refers to as 'indigenism' has 'also *sometimes* included sensitivity to the grievances and wishes of actual Indigenous people'.[375] As Michael Griffiths observes, 'Stephensen's attitude toward the "Aboriginal question" was complex, particularly when nativism, Australian independence, and the concerns of Aboriginal people coalesced'.[376] Even on this topic, this chapter's thesis holds: that contrary to existing accounts, Stephensen's ambiguous and ambivalent historic and historiographic positioning reflects the complexities of his circumstances, rather than inconsistency or incoherence on Stephensen's part.

The dual ambiguities of Stephensen and *Foundations*

As a lens for interpreting Stephensen's overriding ideological imperatives and objectives, *Foundations* has proven not only revealing but also problematic. This is, at least in part, attributable to its emergence at precisely the historical juncture at which Stephensen is typically conceived as having shifted from a left-wing literary liberal to a right-wing political nationalist. On one hand, the essay's chronological coincidence with the commencement of Stephensen's political 'descent' in the form of his embroilment with W. J. Miles, accountant and businessman with nationalist, rationalist and strongly anti-Semitic tendencies, and the *Publicist* movement, has led to conflicting interpretations of the essay as his last statement as a left-wing liberal, his first as a fascist, or as an articulation of his transformation over the course of its three parts.[377] On the other, as noted, the essay's appearance within a historical period marked by insecurity and ambivalence — in particular regarding the relationship between Australia and

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[375] Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War', 28, emphasis in original.
[376] Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts', 220.
[377] On *Foundations* as Stephensen's last statement as a left-wing liberal, see, for example, Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 28; Manne and Feik, *The Words That Made Australia*. On *Foundations* as his first statement as a fascist, see, for example, Drusilla Modjeska's dismissal of the essay and its 'reactionary conclusions' as nothing more than a 'right-wing treatise on a national culture' (*Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers, 1925–1945* (North Ryde: Angus & Robertson, 1991), 141, 68; also Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, chapter three). On *Foundations* as articulating and enacting Stephensen's political transformation, see, for example, Munro, 'Introduction', xix–xx.

Britain towards which Stephensen's essay is substantively addressed — has facilitated conflicting interpretations of Stephensen himself as either a radical or a reactive nationalist, and of his essay as an exemplar of either the 'inverted' or 'direct' configurations of what would later be described as the 'cultural cringe'.[378]

Overall, existing analytical approaches have tended to draw on these circumstances to produce a series of interpretive divergences that reflect the ambiguities operating on Stephensen and the production of his essay. The following discussion will highlight the two most prominent of these, the first revolving around divergent interpretations of Stephensen as either radical or reactionary in intent, the second hinging on competing conceptions of Stephensen as either a cultural cringer or an anti-imperial chauvinist in sentiment.

In the first instance, accounts arising from the perspectives of literary and political history have tended to perceive and perpetuate a biographical bifurcation between Stephensen's earlier incarnation as a positive literary figure and his subsequent turn towards fascism and isolationism in addressing themselves towards the ambiguity surrounding his role as either radical or reactionary. Here, Stephensen's apparently dramatic left- to right-wing political conversion leads to conflicting conceptions of Stephensen as *either* a radical *or* a reactionary and, often though not necessarily correspondingly, as *either* a positive model of cultural nationalism *or* a negative model of political nationalism. Analyses therefore tend to diverge dramatically depending on their relative focus towards *either* Stephensen's earlier 'positive' life and career *or* his subsequent shift from radical to reactionary politics. In the second, cultural historiographical analyses in particular have addressed themselves towards the ambiguity of Stephensen's role as either a cultural cringer or an anti-imperial

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[378] Phillips, 'The Cultural Cringe'. In Phillips' original definition, the 'characteristic Australian Cultural Cringe' manifests in two modes: 'either as the Cringe Direct', founded on the 'assumption that the domestic cultural product will be worse than the imported article', or as 'the Cringe Inverted, in the attitude of the Blatant Blatherskite, the God's-own-country and I'm-a-better-man-than-you-are Australian Bore' (52).

Anglophobe, by focusing on his significance as a cultural nationalist operating within a historical context marked by insecurity and ambivalence.

'Man of letters' or proto-fascist? Literary and political historiography

Accounts of Stephensen's significance conducted from within the fields of literary history, criticism and biography, tend to focus on Stephensen's (positive) earlier life and career as a 'man of letters', in particular with regard to his influence on Rex Ingamells and the emergence of the Jindyworobak poetry movement,[379] and frame Stephensen primarily in terms of his role as a (predominantly positive) literary nationalist. This is due to an implicit emphasis on Stephensen's earlier incarnation as the more accurate and authoritative instantiation of his personal, political and professional personality and purpose. Even when his subsequent position is acknowledged (and this usually occurs only in passing), it is therefore typically framed as a regrettable aberration or diversion from his earlier, authentic expressions of self. For most authors approaching Stephensen from within these traditions, his positive influence and significance is evident both in the inspiration he provided Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks, as well as in his advocacy of an Australian publishing industry. Yet, for those of a universalist persuasion, Stephensen's emphasis on what he regards as the necessarily *national* origins of literature and culture is highly objectionable. Hence Eugene Kamenka's acerbic assertion that Stephensen's view 'elevated, as it still elevates, the landscape and depressed the human mind'.[380] James McAuley, for his part, could not but resort to ridicule in deeming Stephensen's stated position a 'clumsy farce'.[381]

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[379] Notable exemplars include: Barnes, *The Writer in Australia*; Brian Elliott, ed., *The Jindyworobaks* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979); Humphrey McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass: The Emergence of Modernist Painting in Australia to 1944* (Sydney: Alternative Publishing Cooperative Limited, 1979); Geoffrey Dutton, *Snow on the Saltbush: The Australian Literary Experience* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985); Wilde, Hooton, and Andrews, 'Stephensen, P. R.'; Dixon, 'Australian Fiction'; Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*.
[380] Eugene Kamenka, 'Culture and Australian Culture', *Australian Cultural History*, no. 3 (1984): 10.
[381] James McAuley, 'Literature and the Arts', in *Australian Civilization: A Symposium*, ed. Peter Coleman (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1963), 127.

In a revealing reflection published in *Antipodes*, intriguingly titled 'Shaky Foundations' (pointing intentionally to the perceived precarity of Australian literature, but perhaps inadvertently indicating the uncertain nature of the Australian national culture more broadly), in 2000 Stephen Cowling recalled Stephensen's manifesto as 'one of the most interesting documents on the state of cultural politics in Australia in the interwar period'. As is typical for accounts from this perspective, *Foundations* is positioned clearly *prior* to Stephensen's submittal to 'the lure of Miles' fascist politics'. Addressing Stephensen directly rather than indirectly by way of his influence on Ingamells and others, Cowden describes *Foundations* as

> rail[ing] against the double marginalization of Australian literature; in Europe it was seen as 'colonial' and therefore not to be taken seriously, while in Australia, it was completely overshadowed by British and American imports and the institutionalized teaching of 'English' literature by the universities.[382]

Tellingly, Cowden worries whether, in the wake of the development of 'a whole network of support for Australian literature' developed under the guidance of the new nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s (which, as we have seen, Manne and Feik position Stephensen as predecessor to),[383] the prevailing neo-liberal 'doctrine threatens to reproduce in a new guise the situation Stephensen decried'. Cowden concludes that 'as the economic rationalist agenda continues to be ratcheted up by the present Australian government, there is a serious danger that Australian literature will languish in a state of marginalization, both within and outside of Australia, much as Stephensen described'.[384] The Australian (settler) national culture is, it seems, never fully secure even when it is understood as having (finally) emerged.[385]

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[382] Cowden, 'Shaky Foundations', 65.

[383] Manne and Feik, *The Words That Made Australia*, xi.

[384] Cowden, 'Shaky Foundations', 65–66.

[385] None are, of course, as the national anxieties and *ressentiments* behind Brexit, Trump and the patterns of political polarisation and fragmentation playing out around the world suggest. And yet there seems little doubt that Australians have 'indulged' in an unusual amount of 'searching, questing, yearning for an

From an almost directly contrary perspective, associated mainly with what might be termed political history, Stephensen is framed as a proto-fascist and political nationalist as a result of his role as a propagandist for the *Publicist* movement, his involvement with the Australia First Movement (AFM) and subsequent internment. Here, authors are inclined to position Stephensen as an inherently negative political nationalist, even a national socialist, as a result of their almost exclusive focus on Stephensen's latter incarnation as *Publicist* propagandist.[386] Even where Stephensen's earlier positive contribution is acknowledged, it is generally dismissed as a temporary deviation from his true vocation. For those analyses of Stephensen and his essay arising from this perspective, there remains some limited scope for sympathetic readings,[387] and accounts vary as to the extent of their assignation of blame for Stephensen's decline to the influence of W. J. Miles.[388] Yet the prevailing view is that of a 'good' literary nationalist turned 'bad' political nationalist at, during, or around the time *Foundations* was produced.

As a result of the chronological coincidence of the essay's production with Stephensen's apparent political conversion, these perspectives similarly interpret *Foundations* as either arising at or elaborating a critical juncture for Stephensen, whereby his energy, attention

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identity' that has nevertheless remained consistently and persistently 'elusive' (Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 16, 224), even if, as this thesis attempts to show, this national quest has had a far longer historical trajectory than Curran and Ward concede.

[386] Significant examples include: Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*; Noel Macainsh, *Nietzsche in Australia: A Literary Inquiry into a Nationalistic Ideology* (Munich: Verlag für Dokumentation und Werbung, 1975); Doecke, 'Historical Fictions'; Doecke, 'P. R. Stephensen'; James Saleam, 'The Other Radicalism: An Inquiry into Contemporary Australian Extreme Right Ideology, Politics and Organization 1975–1995' (PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1999); Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*; Robert Loeffel, *The Fifth Column in World War II: Suspected Subversives in the Pacific War and Australia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[387] See, for example, Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, chapter one.

[388] With whom Stephensen entered into what Winter has described as a 'Faustian pact' during the production of *Foundations* (*The Australia First Movement*, 14). The matter of Miles' influence on Stephensen and the production of his essay is no more settled than the significance of the essay itself. Winter's interpretation — that '[s]oon after publication of *Foundations of Culture in Australia*, his [Stephensen's] outlook altered drastically, and Miles probably caused the changes', and that 'Miles, not Percy Stephensen, was the key figure' in the Publicist and Australia First Movements (ibid., 16, 1–2) — represents one extreme on the scale of attribution. Doecke's assertion that 'the second and third parts [of the essay] are not some kind of aberration resulting from W. J. Miles's influence on Stephensen' represents the other ('Historical Fictions', 73).

and ambition came to be diverted from the positive cause of Australia's literary and cultural development towards an insular, isolationist and anti-Semitic form of nationalist socialism. Consequently, despite diverging almost diametrically in focus, emphasis and understanding, these two perspectives share a common conception of the essay as a turning point, whether signalling the end of Stephensen's preceding positive personification, the beginning of his subsequent decline, or an interstitial articulation of his transformation over the course of its three parts.

This conception is aided by the circumstances surrounding the essay's production, in particular the fact that Stephensen produced the essay with the assistance, and under the influence, of his newfound patron, W. J. Miles. As Munro has outlined in his introduction to the essay's 1986 edition, *Foundations* was originally conceived as 'a series of editorials for [Stephensen's] *Australian Mercury* magazine'.[389] The first instalment was written in June 1935 and appeared in the first and, as it turned out, only issue of the magazine in July, the second was written for the stalled August issue, while the third was written six months later, under the patronage of W. J. Miles and with book publication specifically in mind. In Munro's account, '[t]he three sections are therefore quite varied in tone as well as spirit', a fact he attributes to Stephensen's personal, professional and financial difficulties over the period in which the essay was written, as well as to Miles' patronage. In his description, the latter half of 1935 'had seen

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[389] Munro, 'Introduction', xvii–xxi. In 1959, *Nation* implied that Stephensen's choice of title reflected the 'Menckenian undertones' of the publication ('Traveller's Ghost: The Tempestuous and Hitherto Unlogged Voyage of P. R. Stephensen', 31 January, 1959, 12), although it likely had more to do with his antagonism towards J. C. Squire and his *London Mercury*, against which Stephensen had earlier launched a 'counterblast' in the form of his and Jack Lindsay's also short-lived *London Aphrodite* (Percy R. Stephensen, *Kookaburras and Satyrs: Some Recollections of the Fanfrolico Press* (Cremorne: Talkarra Press, 1954), 27). Stephensen regarded Squire as 'the leading representative of a deplorable type (the critic) in the contemporary world of English letters … an apotheosis of the average' (quoted in Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 21). And although Muirden cites 'some evidence' of correspondence between Stephensen and Mencken (ibid., 41), Munro quotes the former deriding the latter for offering nothing more than 'wise-cracking sneers' (*Wild Man of Letters*, 61). The suggestion that Stephensen based his *Mercury* on titular inspiration other than that provided by Mencken is further supported by both his original proposed title — *Cooee* — and his rather more worldly suggestion to Dr F. W. Robinson at the University of Queensland that he had in mind 'the standards set by the *London Mercury*, the *American Mercury*, and the *Mercure de France*…' (quoted in ibid., 154).

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

Stephensen's world and his literary hopes collapse'. Munro therefore identifies a marked shift from the first to the second instalments wherein '[u]nder the pressure of failure, exasperated with himself and his country, and lacking faith in his own future, Stephensen bitterly turns to prejudice and paranoia', but finds the 'greatest contrast' between the second and third instalments, where Stephensen's 'polished polemical style gives way … to political rhetoric, prophecy and prejudice — some of it reflecting the views of the eccentric Miles'.[390]

Never one to admit to personal or intellectual influences beyond his individual agency and intellectual development, Stephensen's own foreword to *Foundations* acknowledged the essay's shifts in tenor but attributed these to the prevailing historical, cultural and especially geopolitical circumstances of the 1930s, rather than the influence of Miles per se:

> The first instalment represents a mood of exuberance based on a resurgence of Australian literature during the years 1933 and 1934, which I felt required a critical examination. The second instalment was written with a consciousness that all cultural achievement in Australia is threatened by militarism and bureaucratic fascism. The third instalment, written and published under the cloud of another imminent world war, which, if it occurs, will quite destroy European culture, takes the argument much farther than could have been foreseen or intended when the essay was begun.[391]

As noted above and returned to in further detail below, however, Stephensen consistently insisted that his aim remained the same: Australian national cultural independence. In the first section of the essay, Stephensen asserted that he was 'not arguing politics, imperial or otherwise', but was, rather, 'seeking a basis for indigenous culture in Australia'. While by the time of writing the third section of *Foundations* he felt

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[390] Munro, 'Introduction', xvii–xxii.
[391] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 465.

he could no longer 'avoid the conclusion that the growth of Australian nationality must become a political and economic question, as well as a "cultural" question', his primary concern nevertheless remained 'the development of culture in Australia, as a "thing-in-itself"'.[392] As Munro remarks, 'Stephensen's ideas on politics, on fascism and anti-fascism, were in fact peripheral to the cultural foundations he was at pains to unearth and display'.[393] This continued to be the case, as was reaffirmed when, as late as 1959 and 1962, he recapitulated the same arguments for cultural independence first and most forcefully introduced in *Foundations*, this time without their more problematic political and economic corollaries.[394]

As a consequence of these circumstances, and in spite of Stephensen's insistence as to his own consistency, the essay's apparent *intermediacy* makes it possible for analyses to differ markedly in both interpretations and conclusions, even amongst those conducted from the same explanatory perspective. To cite just one example: while Muirden and Bird similarly examine Stephensen's essay from a perspective emphasising his political position as a proto-fascist, they nevertheless diverge in their descriptions of *Foundations*, with Muirden interpreting the essay as Stephensen's 'final public statement as a liberal', and Bird concluding that 'the completed *Foundations* was stamped with an anti-imperialist, xenophobic and racially-conscious character — a *quasi*-national-socialism in appearance, albeit with Australian characteristics'.[395] Winter, on the other hand, does not even attempt an explication of the essay itself, pronouncing it simply 'an amazing book'

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[392] Ibid., 31, 139, 65.

[393] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 158.

[394] Percy R. Stephensen, *Nationalism in Australian Literature: Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture at the University of Adelaide, 30th September, 1959* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 1959); Percy R. Stephensen, *Colonial Australian Literature: Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture at the University of Queensland, 5th June, 1962* (Brisbane: University of Queensland, 1962); Percy R. Stephensen, *National Australian Literature: Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture at the University of Queensland, 7th June, 1962* (Brisbane: University of Queensland, 1962). In his lecture on *National Australian Literature* in June 1962, he rehearsed well-worn analogies of Australia 'coming of age' and insisted that the proper analogy 'of Australian life is of adult people who, on coming of age, leave their parents' homes, to establish a home and family of their own', and concluded with the query: 'If Australia is not adult, at the age of 174 years, when will it become adult?'.

[395] Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 28; Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 61.

and declaring that its 'most surprising feature is that Stephensen, who only two years later sounded like a fascist bigot and a fairly vicious anti-Semite, was in 1936 both anti-fascist and lavish in his praise of two Jews'.[396] These interpretive disagreements mirror precisely those outlined above. From both literary and political historiographical perspectives, then, *Foundations* appears to remain ultimately unclassifiable and its significance unsettled, due to the apparent disjuncture — either interpolated or identified as the outcome of an either/or analytical approach — between Stephensen's preceding left-wing, liberal literary career and his subsequent 'descent' into far-right fascist politics, with the essay conceived as either an instigator, an outcome or an articulation of Stephensen's transmutation.

Cringer or chauvinist? Cultural and national historiography

The second interpretative ambiguity, revolving around competing conceptions of Stephensen as either a cultural cringer or an anti-imperial chauvinist, is most apparent in the divergent analyses offered up from within cultural historiography.[397] Accounts conducted from this perspective tend to focus on Stephensen's significance as a cultural nationalist operating within a historical context marked by both internal and external insecurities and ambivalences.[398] Here, it is the essay's emergence under complex and contingent colonial historical circumstances that is important, rather than the chronological coincidence of its appearance within the period of Stephensen's apparent political transformation. The transformation is externally (historico-culturally) rather

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[396] Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 15.

[397] Important examples include: *Nation*, 'The Culturist'; *Nation*, 'Traveller's Ghost'; Ian Turner, *The Australian Dream: A Collection of Anticipations about Australia from Captain Cook to the Present Day* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1968); Russel Ward, *A Nation for a Continent: The History of Australia 1901–1975* (Richmond: Heinemann Educational Australia, 1977); Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*; Melleuish, 'Randolph Hughes versus Percy Stephensen'; Manne and Feik, *The Words That Made Australia*.

[398] In Serle's account, the 'period 1900–40' was defined by 'a perpetuation of colonial dependence and a curious hesitation in development towards nationhood' (*The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 88). Alan McLeod is more explicit, stating that no sooner had the 'first flush of cultural independence appeared [in the 1890s] than it was brought to a lamentable and sudden end by a series of malign circumstances: depression, world war, depression, world war' (*The Pattern of Australian Culture*, 8). As Rickard remarks, the 'ambivalence of Australian attitudes to Britain seemed magnified and dramatized by the events and concerns' of the period (*Australia*, 137).

than internally (personal-professionally) induced, but it remains a transformation nonetheless. In this context, Stephensen's nationalist striving in the form of *Foundations* is conceived as either a progressive yet ultimately premature attempt to construct a sophisticated Australian national culture for which Australians were not yet prepared, or as evidence of the already and inevitably thwarted and corrupted cause of cultural nationalism in Australia at the time.[399]

Analyses conducted from cultural historiographical perspectives also draw on the circumstances surrounding the essay's production in attempting to interpret both Stephensen and his essay, although the focus here is on the fact that Stephensen was provoked into producing what would become the basis for the first two instalments of *Foundations* as what he termed a 'Retort Courteous' to a February 1935 article in the Melbourne *Age* by Professor G. H. Cowling, the 'English Professor of English at Melbourne University' dubbed by Stephensen 'an Unteachable Englishman … resident in Australia'.[400] Cowling's article, entitled 'The Future of Australian Literature', contained his condescending response to an article of the same name by Vance Palmer published earlier in the same newspaper, in which Palmer had claimed 'that scattered literary work of great value ha[d] been done in Australia' and continued his call for Australians to 'discover ourselves … through the searching explorations of literature'.[401] In his imperious reply, as Manning Clark remarks, Cowling 'repeated all the arguments the British had used for years to keep the Australians in their place', opining that 'an Australian is a Briton resident in Australia' and, with imperial scorn, deeming Australia '"thin" and lacking in tradition' due to the absence of 'ancient churches, castles, ruins'.[402] Clark describes the reaction to Cowling's article with characteristic flourish:

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[399] On Stephensen's approach as prematurely progressive, see, for example, Manne and Feik, *The Words That Made Australia*. On Stephensen as evidence of the corruption of Australian cultural nationalism in the 1930s, see, for example, Turner, *The Australian Dream*; Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*.

[400] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 155; Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 101; Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 20–21.

[401] Vance Palmer, 'The Future of Australian Literature', *The Age,* 9 February, 1935, n.p.

[402] Clark, *A History of Australia*, 480.

Australian writers were incensed. Miles Franklin spluttered and spat as only she could sputter and spit that there must be an end of these exiled Europeans in Australia. 'Inky' Stephensen took up his pen, and began to write a long reply. Australia, he wrote, was not a community of British exiles. Australia, he said, 'is a unique country … A new nation, a new human type is being formed in Australia'. Australian culture would evolve instinctively — and become quite different from British culture.[403]

On the face of it, this outline spells out the seemingly straightforward situation clearly enough: Stephensen was retorting (albeit courteously) to Cowling's imperial view of Australian culture and, in doing so, was speaking on behalf of the anti-imperial, nationalist side of the 'two Australias' divide. However, even here interpretations concerning the significance of Stephensen's response have almost diametrically diverged, with Geoffrey Serle classifying Stephensen as an 'extreme' example of the inverted (that is, assertive and anti-imperial) variety of the cultural cringe, John Rickard interpreting the very fact of Stephensen's provocation by Cowling as evidence of the persistent 'deference to the European, and specifically English, source … later dubbed "the cultural cringe"', and Russel Ward interpreting the essay as instantiating a denouncement of the cringe in its entirety.[404] Additional examples of interpretative disagreement on this point abound.[405]

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[403] Ibid., 480–81.

[404] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 140; Rickard, *Australia*, 135; Ward, *A Nation for a Continent*, 212.

[405] An intriguing assortment of literary and political historians line up alongside Serle in accusing Stephensen of anti-Empire chauvinism and Anglophobia, including, for example, Brian Kiernan, *Criticism* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1974); Peter Coleman, 'Australia: The Party's Over', *The Salisbury Review* 11, no. 1 (1992); Saleam, 'The Other Radicalism'; Peter Morton, 'Australia's England, 1880–1950', in *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, ed. Peter Pierce (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*; Peter Coleman, 'Australian Notes', *The Spectator*, 4 February, 2012. The two alternative perspectives receive less support. Axel Clark and Richard Carr both stand with Rickard in his view of Stephensen as subject to the cultural cringe (Clark, 'Inky Stephensen'; Richard Carr, 'Writing the Nation, 1900–1940', in *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, eds Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer (Rochester: Camden House, 2007)), while Manne and Feik support Ward with their view of Stephensen's essay as amounting to a precursory diagnosis of the cringe, even an instance of its overcoming (*The Words That Made Australia*, xi).

Such divergences within the same historiographical field are instructive. Cultural historiographical analyses tend to measure Stephensen's contribution against the teleological narratives of national maturation outlined in the introduction, and therefore interpret Stephensen in unnecessarily restrictive terms, *either* as a positive figure ahead of his times, *or* as already inevitably thwarted by prevailing historical-cultural circumstances. There is therefore an interpretive affinity between this and earlier either/or approaches, since in accounts arising from this perspective Stephensen is similarly subject to vacillating interpretations depending on differing analytical emphases. Here he tends to appear either as a positive but premature cultural nationalist, as is the case in Ward's account, or as an already and inevitably thwarted nationalist, as is implied by Serle's analysis and rendered explicit in that of Ian Turner. Yet in contrast to those analyses emerging from the literary and political historiographical perspectives outlined above, whether Stephensen is conceived as an instance of nationalism 'too soon' or of nationalism 'gone wrong' (or of nationalism 'gone wrong' because 'too soon'), he is at least approached here on his own terms as, first and foremost, a cultural nationalist.

Serle's account in *The Creative Spirit* is significant for its relatively sensitive and extensive interpretation of Stephensen and his essay in relation to the historical *and* structural circumstances in which the essay was produced. In Serle's account, as we have seen, the 'nationalist surge of the 1880s and 1890s', while promising, ultimately 'proved to be a false start' thwarted by the '[d]epression, drought, class war and military adventuring in South Africa [that] ushered in the twentieth century'. Since the 'achievement of federation, against the tide, brought little revival of national aspiration', the period 1900–40 is defined in Serle's terms by 'a perpetuation of colonial dependence and a curious hesitation in development towards nationhood'. In the context of 1930s Australia as a time of thwarted national(ist) potential and soon-to-be-overcome hesitancy in national cultural development, Stephensen emerges as a decade *too early* as a 'flamboyant nationalist' whose 'lively and intelligent essay … allowing for some polemical

exaggeration, [was] far more rational than the later political writings by which he was so discredited'.[406]

Serle's explicit focus on the cultural aspects of Australian national development enables his acknowledgement of several often-unacknowledged aspects of Stephensen's essay, including the suggestion that '[t]here was no reason why borrowings should not be made; English and other cultures should fertilize and stimulate the indigenous Australian culture'. And his diachronic analysis of (settler) Australian cultural development facilitates his recognition of Stephensen's *internal* consistency as a cultural nationalist, so that the 'frenzy … of Stephensen and the Jindys' is ascribed externally to the adverse historical-cultural circumstances in which they found themselves writing, in which the 'serious writer was alienated from the community and could not find an audience'. The 'frenzy' cannot, Serle insists, 'be understood unless placed in context'.[407]

And yet, despite constant rhetorical qualification,[408] Serle's bifurcated viewpoint, reliant as it is on the dual narrative devices of nationalist teleology and the tale of 'two Australias', leads him into a restricted understanding of both Stephensen and his essay. Despite his recognition of and sensitivity towards Stephensen's emphasis on the importance of imported culture as a 'fertilizer' for settler Australia's 'indigenous' culture, Serle nevertheless insists on a strict classification of Stephensen as operating on only one side of the 'two Australias' divide. In his influential account of the 'two Australias' teleological narrative, '[t]he 1930s saw an extreme polarity of attitudes between nationalist writers like Stephensen and the Jindys and the contemptuous importers of culture'. Stephensen is thereby reduced to an 'extreme' example of the 'the inverted … Cringe … the bumptious and arrogant Australians … the small minorities of hardliners — anti-imperialists akin to the old Bulletin type', in specific contradistinction

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[406] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 88, 127.
[407] Ibid., 128–29.
[408] Serle is careful to insist that '[h]aving stated the extreme positions so bluntly, one must recognize how untypical they were' (ibid., 140).

to 'examples of the … direct Cringe … the servile and pathetic anti-Australians … and exclusive imperialists'.[409]

Ultimately, in Serle's conception, characteristic of those conducted from a cultural historiographical perspective, since Stephensen is unmistakably a nationalist, according to the 'two Australias' narrative structure he must be anti-imperial (hence the 'extreme'), while at the same time, since Stephensen is a nationalist at a time of thwarted nationalism, according to the teleological narrative of Australian national cultural development he must therefore also be frustrated (hence the 'frenzy').

Ian Turner, in his important analysis of *The Australian Dream*, similarly frames Stephensen alongside the Jindyworobaks in a historical context in which 'the dominant note is doubt'.[410] Here, Stephensen and the Jindyworobaks are conflated as 'extreme nationalist[s]' operating on 'the far borders' of a new, insular and insecure form of nationalism which articulated a 'quasi-fascist nationalism' that 'rejected the whole of the European heritage and sought an identification with the land akin to that of the Aboriginal altjeringa [sic]' (an important lacuna returned to in the concluding chapters of this thesis).[411] Since, for Turner, the 'decisive turn in the way Australians thought about themselves and their future' brought about by the 'optimists of the nineties' had by this time already been (albeit only temporarily thwarted), Stephensen is once again read as an extreme, reactive product of unfavourable historical circumstances. Indeed, in Turner's account it is only his subsequent involvement with Australia First, rather than his positive articulation of Australian cultural nationalism in *Foundations* that rates a mention.

Russel Ward concurs with the narrative structure deployed by Serle and Turner, yet his interpretation diverges in important respects based on his more positive reading of

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[409] Ibid.
[410] Turner, *The Australian Dream*, xix. For a settler colonial studies analysis of the significance of Turner's book, see Veracini, 'Australia's "Settler Transition"'.
[411] Turner, *The Australian Dream*, xix.

Stephensen's significance and influence. In his *A Nation for a Continent*, Stephensen is posited as a product of the post-Great War period, in which the 'always strong Anglophile tendencies of Australian conservatives' were accentuated, with a corresponding intensification in the 'denigration of all things Australian … just because they were Australian'. In this context, while Stephensen's polemic is conceded to have been 'exaggerated and partisan', it is nevertheless introduced as 'passionately denounc[ing] what A. A. Phillips was in 1950 to define brilliantly as the "Cultural Cringe"' as part of 'an aggressively Australian literary movement' (which, Ward concedes, ultimately 'developed some fascist overtones'). Ward acknowledges the 'tremendous impact' *Foundations* had on 'young writers of that generation', but in line with other interpretations of Stephensen's prematurity, he defers the major influence of Stephensen and the Jindyworobaks to 'the following generation'.[412] In Ward's account, the torch of nationalist teleology is conceived as passing (untainted) from these premature cultural nationalists to others operating under more advantageous historical circumstances after the war.

Crucially, given his desire to claim the inheritance of Stephensen's position for the radical nationalists, in his brief biographical outline of Stephensen, Ward includes his radical credentials only, to the exclusion of his reactionary influences and tendencies. Similarly selective in his reading, Ward applies an antithetical framing to that preferred by Turner. Only Stephensen's contact with the 'red-hot red ragger'[413] and anti-conscriptionist Vere Gordon Childe at Maryborough Grammar School in 1918; his prominent role in student politics at the University of Queensland; his early membership of the 'infant Australian Communist Party in 1921'; as well as his role as 'Communist propagandist' at Oxford and the 'first translator into English … of Lenin's *Imperialism*' rate a mention. While Ward concedes that Stephensen went on to become 'bitterly anti-

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[412] Ward, *A Nation for a Continent*, 211–13.
[413] This was the contemporary characterisation of Childe in the *Maryborough Chronicle*, as cited in Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 9.

Communist', this is not allowed to interfere with his incorporation into the radical-nationalist teleology of Ward's account.[414]

Interestingly, even accounts adopting a critical stance towards both the typical radical-nationalist teleology of unfurling Australian independence and its counterpart in the 'two Australias' divide, including those of David Walker and Stuart Ward in particular, tend to position Stephensen as an example of thwarted nationalism produced by the unfavourable conditions of 1930s Australia. In Walker's account of Australia's cycles of *Dream and Disillusion*, which argues explicitly against 'attempts to explain the emergence of a "national culture" in terms of a steady ascent from colonial backwardness to national maturity', in the wake of the 'apparent collapse of radical initiatives within Australian society' Stephensen once again emerges as an extreme exemplar of Australian nationalism 'gone wrong'. Here, however, in an original move that would have come as quite a surprise to Stephensen himself, contrary to the typical correlation if not outright conflation of Stephensen and the Jindyworobaks, Walker associates him with the 'increasingly narrow and reactionary' *Bulletin* instead.[415] From a perspective that contrasts markedly with Walker's while remaining similarly critical of radical-nationalist historiographical traditions, Stuart Ward frames Stephensen as one of a number of nationalists whose 'voices trailed off in marginalised despair' when they recognised that their nationalist sentiments conflicted with the British race patriotism and loyalist self-interest predominant in Australian society at the time. Thus 'P. R. Stephensen … railed against Australia's cultural subservience to Britain in the 1930s, only to find himself interned as a traitor and subversive in 1942'.[416]

Drawing on Ward's important distinction between sentiment and self-interest, John Rickard contends:

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[414] Ward, *A Nation for a Continent*, 212.
[415] Walker, *Dream and Disillusion*, 211.
[416] Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*, 29.

The ambivalence of Australian attitudes to Britain seemed magnified and dramatised by the events and concerns of the inter-war years, from the myth-making of Anzac to the passions of the cricket pitch. There seemed, too, an element of gathering but inarticulate tension in the relationship, particularly as in the late 1930s the crisis in Europe escalated, and the vulnerability of the Empire was more than ever apparent.[417]

In this context, Australia's continuing cultural connection with Britain became ever 'more complex', with an emergent appreciation of diverging interests between settler-colony and metropole conflicting with the persistent 'belief that London was still the Empire's cultural capital' to produce 'a potent … cultural schizophrenia' amongst Australia's creative classes. Tellingly, in contradistinction to Serle's account of Stephensen as an exemplar of the cringe inverted, here he is paradoxically presented as an example of the opposite: the 'direct' configuration of the cultural cringe. In Rickard's account, Stephensen is positioned as demonstrating the 'deference to the European, and specifically English, source' characteristic of this formation of the cringe by virtue of having been provoked into producing *Foundations* by Cowling's derisory account of 'The Future of Australian Literature'. Having identified not only the 'ambivalence of Australian attitudes to Britain' throughout this period, but also the notion that for 'creative artists the question of loyalties was particularly disturbing, for the provincial–metropolitan nexus seemed more problematic, yet more confining than ever',[418] Rickard nevertheless fails to situate Stephensen's essay in relation to these contradictions, instead reverting to an either/or interpretation in which Stephensen is relegated to one side, and one side only, of the 'two Australias' divide.

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[417] Rickard, *Australia*, 137.
[418] Ibid., 135, 138.

In his introduction to the 1986 edition of *Foundations*, Munro positions Stephensen within a historical context defined by a 'deep state of insecurity'.[419] In this context, Australian writers grew increasingly

> concerned with national character, with the Aborigines, soil erosion, and the 'vast open spaces' of the interior. There was a preoccupation amounting almost to an obsession with the 'spirit' … [which] soon developed, under the increasing threat from Japan, into a fixation about holding these under-utilised vast open spaces against an Asian invasion.[420]

Stephensen's essay is therefore framed as 'both a product of this national identity crisis', as well as (as is only proper for a biographer) his 'personal and political frustrations'.[421] Richard White's influential history of Australia's 'obsession' with 'national identity' before, during and beyond Munro's historically-induced moment of 'crisis' similarly recognises the 1930s as an ambivalent historical period.[422] Within this insecure and insular historical-cultural context, White identifies an emergent group of what he terms '[n]ationalist intellectuals', who around this time began to articulate 'an image of Australia as independent and "mature", an 'idea … they associated with a self-contained, urban manufacturing society and a more complex, sophisticated and vital cultural life'.[423] While White perceptively positions Stephensen within a collective of creative cultural nationalist intellectuals calling on Australia to 'grow up', he also frames him as having 'become hysterical' in the face of unfavourable circumstances.[424]

The apparent consensus concerning insecurity and ambivalence as characteristics of the period in which Stephensen found himself operating amongst both supporters and critics of the radical-nationalist narrative (despite divergent interpretations of the

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[419] Munro, 'Introduction', ix.
[420] Ibid.
[421] Ibid., x.
[422] See White, *Inventing Australia*.
[423] Ibid., 151. This is a group also identified in both Russel Ward's and Turner's accounts.
[424] Ibid., 145–46.

implications and outcomes arising), underscores the significance of historical factors as explanatory elements in all such attempts to analyse and explicate both Stephensen and his essay from cultural historiographical perspectives. On the other hand, the possibility for divergent interpretations of Stephensen's intentions arising even here suggests once again the ambivalence of Stephensen's attitude towards Australia's continuing colonial condition. While these ambiguities have typically been attributed to the chronological concurrence of *Foundations* with his apparent political transfiguration, or to its historical emergence within the 1930s as a period marked by insecurity and ambivalence, it is the suggestion here that such attributions have primarily operated to obscure the underlying consistency of these persistent *structural* ambiguities. As a result of the expository emphasis placed on the chronological and historical circumstances surrounding and undoubtedly influencing the essay's production, existing analyses relying on historicist interpretations have tended to overlook the continuities within and between Stephensen's various supposed incarnations, from radical to reactionary in intent and from cultural cringer to anti-imperial chauvinist in sentiment.

A more consistent, and comprehensive, approach to an explication of Stephensen's significance is signalled by those accounts arising from within general national history and the historiography of Australian nationalism, where Stephensen is typically treated as an ambivalent colonial cultural nationalist. From this perspective, authors such as Stuart Macintyre and Stephen Alomes in particular have approached Stephensen on his own terms as a (relatively) consistent cultural nationalist, attributing his apparent inconsistencies to both the historical period marked by insecurity and ambivalence in which he found himself operating, as well as to the ambivalent structural conditions of Australian settler colonialism.[425]

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[425] The most notable examples of this approach are Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia. Volume 4, 1901–1942: The Succeeding Age* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), and Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*

The affinities between this and the previous approach are extensive, yet the typical trend of analyses arising from within these two traditions can be distinguished in several important respects. Most relevant for the purposes of this discussion is the distinction that, while those analyses arising from cultural historiography typically situate Stephensen in relation to the insecure and ambivalent historical circumstances in which he found himself operating, those arising from general national historiographical approaches often emphasise in addition — not instead — the *structural* causes of this (admittedly also historical) ambivalence. As a result, whereas the historicisation of Stephensen's significance characteristic of cultural historiographical accounts is most often utilised as a means of positioning him as either radical or reactive on the one hand, and as either a cultural cringer or an assertive anti-imperial Anglophobe on the other, in analyses arising from within general national historiographical approaches, Stephensen's significance is left *relatively* unjudged and is used, instead, as a means of reflecting upon the historical and structural circumstances themselves. Stephensen is therefore conceded a level of consistency and afforded a degree of understanding not usually on offer from within the analytical approaches outlined above.

As an influential example of this approach, Manning Clark introduces Stephensen — albeit briefly — in the context of rising anti-imperial sentiment around the time of '[t]he first confrontation between Harold Larwood and Don Bradman … at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 19 November 1932'.[426] Clark recounts Stephensen's call for

> Australians to stop apologizing for their land and for their literature. Australians, he said, must stop repeating the Englishman's view of Australia … Australian writers must drop the 'nostalgia of the exile' and remove the stigma of 'colonial' from the inhabitants of Australia. There was no need to apologize for being Australian … Australian authors must not concede the

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[426] Clark, *A History of Australia*, 422.

'A gumtree is not a branch of an oak'

Englishman's view that Australia was deficient in culture. Australians

should show the English they knew what was what.[427]

In this account, Clark casts Stephensen firmly in the role of nativist striver in his tale of 'two Australias', framing him as '[a] wild man [who] put himself forward as leader of a movement to express the Australian character and landscape in writing and painting', yet in the end he defers explication, concluding that Stephensen was 'a bundle of contradictions' and that, 'all in all, he was a man'.[428]

A review of Munro's biography of Stephensen by Manning's son Axel similarly emphasises Stephensen's 'wildly inconsistent' nature, suggesting that he 'displayed a breathtaking facility in switching from one confidently-held extreme view to its opposite, and in some cases … managed to hold these opposite views simultaneously, without appearing to notice their incompatibility'. However, Axel Clark nevertheless argues against the common tendency to set him aside 'as an unpleasant crank or a hack,

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[427] Ibid.

[428] Ibid., 423. This despite Clark appearing later to concede to Stephensen, whose 'spirit lived on' in his mind, at least some of the inspiration for what would become his classic *History of Australia*, the 'story' that needed a historian to tell: 'He must evoke the spirit of the place, he must portray the Aborigines, he must create characters and scenes in the drama' (*The Quest for Grace* (Ringwood: Viking, 1990), 160). In 1979, Clark opened his James Duhig Memorial Lecture at the University of Queensland by quoting Stephensen's statement that 'a gumtree is not a branch of an oak' as 'a spring-board from which to dive into [the] deeper waters' of his titular topic: *The Quest for an Australian Identity* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 3–4. The parallels between Clark, the great and controversial prophet of Australian history, and Stephensen, the disavowed champion of settler Australian culture, are intriguing and deserving of far more attention than I am able to offer them here. The most notable indications of these connections include their common experiences as 'colonials' at Oxford between the wars; their subsequent determined returns to what they similarly perceived as a culturally and historically barren Australia in need of their attentions; their shared emphasis on what Clark described as 'the influence of the spirit of place in the fashioning of Australians', drawn perhaps from a mutual fascination with D. H. Lawrence's writings on Australia; their apparently comparable political indeterminacies; and their equally idiosyncratic articulations of indigenising settler nationalism, in which Indigenous people appear, where they appear at all, as structuring absences rather than actually existing presences. The unmistakeable echoes of Stephensen's ambiguities and ambivalences evident throughout Clark's life and work are rendered readily apparent in Mark McKenna's biographical accounts — see *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark* (Carlton, Miegunyah Press, 2011) and 'Clark, Charles Manning (1915–1991)', in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2015), n.p. Tellingly, McKenna concludes his ADB entry on Clark with the suggestion that 'the one consistent and lasting theme of his life, both as historian and public intellectual, was his passion for Australia'.

a man of only minor significance in Australian political and cultural life'.[429] Instead, he suggests, Stephensen's essay should be understood as a 'deeply-felt piece of writing' that

> answered a deeply-felt need in Australia at the time … because it satisfied
> the desire of many Australians for cultural self-respect … in an era still
> deeply infected by that cultural submissiveness which had originated in and
> now perpetuated (indeed exacerbated) Australian cultural shallowness.[430]

Importantly, Clark acknowledges the fact that 'ever since its publication', *The Foundations of Culture* 'has continued to answer a need, has provided a touchstone and a stimulus for people seriously interested in the status of our national culture'. Clark also characterises the essay as 'uncharacteristically steady in its discussion of the roles which the imported and indigenous elements did, could and should play in the national culture'.[431]

In a more detailed account within the context of a broader historical examination and documentation of Australian nationalism, Stephen Alomes positions Stephensen and his essay within a post-federation, pre-World War II 'era of hesitancy in Australian development'.[432] Drawing on Stephensen's own articulation of the Australian situation in 1935 as 'no longer a colony pure and simple nor yet … a great Nation fully-fledged … [but] something betwixt and between a colony and a nation, something vaguely called a "Dominion"',[433] Alomes outlines the exigencies of the 'Dominion Economy and Dominion Culture of virtually the first half of the twentieth century [which] dramatically circumscribed independent Australian nationalism'. Alomes' diachronic analysis facilitates an understanding of Australia as 'a society in transition', caught between 'acquiring the urban institutions of modernity … in imitation of Britain … [yet] cut off from the stimulus of the frontier and … the diversity of immigrant and intellectual

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[429] Clark, 'Inky Stephensen', 75.
[430] Ibid., 76.
[431] Ibid., 75.
[432] Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 73.
[433] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 18.

influences of the nineteenth century'. In what Alomes frames, in line with Stephensen himself, as *intermediate* historical circumstances, '[t]he dominant mould of Australian middle-class to upper-middle-class culture in the 1920s and 1930s was British provincial', while 'the closed nature of influences in Australia created a conservative, inward-looking and complacently self-satisfied society'.[434]

Building on the suggestions of Russel Ward, Turner and, most relevantly, White regarding the emergence of a dissident group of urban nationalist intellectuals around this time, Alomes situates Stephensen in the context of a challenge against the insular, isolating and anti-intellectual status quo, including him amongst a group of '[r]adicals and liberals' who 'believed that Australians were entitled to be in touch with the latest in contemporary international thought'. However, in an apparent endorsement of teleological interpretations of Stephensen as a thwarted nationalist evident in the accounts of Serle, Turner, Walker and Stuart Ward amongst others, while Alomes suggests that Stephensen's 'individual and idiosyncratic' crusade 'struck a chord amongst the radical nationalist minority of writers dispersed across the continent', 'his call fell on deaf ears in the "suburban Sahara" of middle-class Australia'. Ultimately, as a result of the ambivalent circumstances in which he found himself operating, '[i]n the late 1930s and early 1940s Stephensen's writing grew increasingly extreme as he became caught up in the fascist and anti-semitic [sic] (and ineffectual) Australia First Movement'.[435]

In an account bordering on the apologetic, Alomes posits Stephensen's AFM 'madness' as suggesting 'as much about the society which spawned it as about Stephensen' himself. For Alomes, '[j]ust as the internment of the small Australia First group reflected World War 2 repression rather than any real threat, perhaps Stephensen's embrace of extremism reflected cultural despair'. Under circumstances in which 'it was almost

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[434] Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 73–76.
[435] Ibid., 98, 102.

treasonable to voice separatist ideas in defence or culture, it was not completely surprising that the radical nationalist minority eventually lost balance and became diverted into the dead end of extremism'. Alomes' ascription of Stephensen's political 'descent' to ambivalent cultural-historical circumstances in accordance with the radical-nationalist teleology of frustrated potential is clear. Yet what distinguishes Alomes' analysis from those outlined above is not only his extensive examination and explication of *Foundations* in and of itself, but his identification of 'the desert of futility that Stephensen sought to cross' and which ultimately 'drove him to the imaginary oasis of Australia First extremism'. Importantly, in Alomes' account, this desert is conceived as arising out of the structures of colonialism rather than simply the historical circumstances in which Stephensen found himself operating. Indeed, Alomes specifically situates 'the conflict between G. H. Cowling, the English Professor of English at Melbourne University, and P. R. "Inky" Stephensen, publisher of and publicist of Australian literature' as in itself reflecting the 'continuing colonial contradictions of the Australian situation'.[436]

Expressing a similar conception from a similar perspective, although in an analysis featuring an additional emphasis on the era's international ideological environs, Stuart Macintyre attributes Stephensen's unique form of cultural nationalism to the 'crises of the epoch'. Macintyre conceives of the interwar period as one in which the 'well established' argument between 'Empire loyalists and nativists … had long since exhausted its creative vitality' and Australian nationalism had taken on such 'a conservative valency' that 'its conformist demands became stultifying and oppressive'. In broad alignment with Alomes' analysis, Macintyre frames this era as one in which '[c]ommunism, fascism [and] the failure of capitalism … were global forces encouraging a new kind of national sentiment, no longer pro- or anti-colonial but post-colonial'. Importantly, Macintyre specifically states that this 'post-colonial' national sentiment

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[436] Ibid., 101–02.

'could be seen in the views of P. R. Stephensen, who had abandoned his youthful communism and was lurching to the right', but whose 'essay on *The Foundations of Culture in Australia*' nevertheless constituted 'a forceful statement of the need for a distinctively Australian culture'. With both White and Alomes, Macintyre also positions Stephensen as part of an increasingly outward-looking collective of nationalist intellectuals, noting that 'Stephensen appreciated the inadequacy of the "gum and wattle" school' and believed instead that 'cultures must remain local in creation and universal in appreciation'.[437]

Alomes' and Macintyre's explicit acknowledgements of the *structural* imperatives and exigencies resulting from Australia's colonial condition and operating on Stephensen and the production of his essay are significant. In particular, Alomes' citation of Fanon concerning '[t]he psychopathological implications of fighting for a national cultural identity that has been submerged under an imported culture' simultaneously reflects and facilitates an understanding of the complexities and contingencies Stephensen was attempting to address and thereby overcome.[438] However, unlike Fanon, Stephensen was not black, and his nationalism was not anticolonial but rather settler-colonial. In drawing a false equivalence between the two (despite the self-evident similarities in the 'psychopathological implications' of the two projects for their articulators), Alomes inadvertently aligns Stephensen's settler nationalist project of displacement and replacement with Fanon's anticolonial project of national psycho-cultural liberation. As emphasised in the introductory chapters to this thesis, this misleading alignment is typical of settler nationalism, which conceals, or attempts to conceal, its colonising intentions and effects behind an emphasis on settler-as-colonised vis-à-vis the metropole as a 'strategic disavowal of the colonizing act'.[439]

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[437] Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia*, 313.
[438] Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 102.
[439] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 365.

This issue notwithstanding, these accounts offer interpretations of Stephensen's significance that indicate his ambiguous and ambivalent positioning within both the historical but also, and crucially, the structural circumstances of Australian (settler) colonialism in the interwar period. As the following sections of this chapter will suggest, the insights offered here relating to Stephensen's consistency as a cultural nationalist and his ambivalent status as a settler intellectual are critical to an understanding of his significance. In the end, however, while this final strand in the historiography on Stephensen points towards an interpretive framework capable of comprehensively accounting for Stephensen's significance as a specifically settler-colonial intellectual, it does not pursue this line of analysis. This is largely a result of the colonial and post-colonial terminologies adopted and applied by Alomes and Macintyre, which facilitate continuing concessions to chronology, whereby the colonial conditions Stephensen was grappling with appear as important but ultimately impermanent products of the period, rather than persistent characteristics inhering within the settler situation itself (albeit subject, as reiterated repeatedly throughout, to periodic exacerbation followed by intermittent, temporary amelioration, under changing historical circumstances).

Within the interpretive frameworks of Alomes and Macintyre, and characteristic of national historiographies in general, which typically subscribe to and thereby reinforce the teleological narratives of national cultural development elaborated in the introduction (though somewhat less strictly than cultural historiographies have tended to), Stephensen appears once again as an ultimately thwarted radical nationalist operating under unfavourable historical circumstances. This highlights both the utility and limitations of concepts such as 'dominion nationalism', in relation to which Alomes situates Stephensen and his manifesto. While this terminology usefully emphasises the 'continuing colonial contradictions of the Australian situation' and their exacerbation under the circumstances of the period, it also implies an inevitable *de*-dominionisation to follow, in line with nationalist teleology: dominion nationalism is an historical

phenomenon.[440] The very point of settler colonial studies is to insist, on the contrary, on *continuing settler-colonial contradictions* as constituent and determining features of the settler situation: as Patrick Wolfe famously remarked, under settler colonialism, '[t]he colonizers come to stay — invasion is a structure not an event'.[441] This distinction bears significant implications for the rereading of the settler nationalist project offered here, as well as for the prospects for decolonisation in settler-colonial settings like Australia. These will be returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

In case it needs repeating: it is not my intention to deny the importance of history. The presumption underlying this thesis is not that the period in which Stephensen and his settler nationalist peers was writing was not particularly or peculiarly ambivalent with regard to both of settler Australia's structuring relations. On the contrary, this specific historical-cultural milieu is posited as a potentially productive subject of cultural historiographical analysis through the lens of three of its most prominent and perplexing figures precisely *because* it is revealing of the deeper, persistent structural ambiguities emphasised throughout. For now, while the following section reinterprets Stephensen's apparent inconsistencies by highlighting two specific and persistent structural ambiguities operating on Stephensen and the production of his essay, the conclusion sets out to advance this last historiographical strand to its logical conclusion.

Stephensen as a settler nationalist intellectual

A settler colonial studies interpretive perspective has the potential of bringing each of the admittedly ambivalent aspects of Stephensen and his essay into the same analytical frame. Building on insights offered from within general national historiography but with an additional emphasis on the structural imperatives and exigencies operating on the Australian settler-colonial situation, this framework has the capacity to accommodate and thereby explicate Stephensen's ambiguities. The possibility for such a perspective

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[440] Quote from Stephen Alomes, 'The Satellite Society', *Journal of Australian Studies* 5, no. 9 (1981): 101.
[441] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 2.

towards the interpretation of Stephensen and *Foundations* is suggested by the analyses of Noel McLachlan, Ian McLean, Tim Rowse and Libby Robin, amongst others, and has been commenced in those of Anthony Moran, Lorenzo Veracini, Michael Griffiths and even Ellen Smith, despite her criticism of the settler colonial studies literature.[442] Taken together, these sometimes brief but collectively suggestive interpretations indicate that from a settler colonial studies perspective Stephensen's ambivalences might be (re)considered as entirely consistent and characteristic not only of Stephensen, but also of the Australian settler 'situation' more broadly.

In Noel McLachlan's *Waiting for the Revolution: A History of Australian Nationalism*, for example, despite being subjected to only limited analytical attention, Stephensen's essay is nevertheless situated in relation to what McLachlan classifies as 'New world nationalism', a distinctive form of nationalism he identifies as common to other Anglophone settler colonies.[443] Despite McLachlan's cursory description of Stephensen and of *Foundations* as an 'incomparable if uneven manifesto', along with his (misplaced) conclusion that 'the saddest casualty of the War/nationalism was Stephensen who'd moved all the way from communism to National Socialism', Stephensen's essay nevertheless emerges as '[a] brilliant plea for a distinct national culture, neither British nor American … [w]ritten in full conviction of coming war and the need to disentangle loyalties, secede from the Empire, keep our troops at home'.[444]

More productive still may be the passing references to Stephensen's nationalist manifesto made by both Anthony Moran and Lorenzo Veracini who, working within a

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[442] McLachlan, *Waiting for the Revolution*; McLean, *White Aborigines*; Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War'; Robin, *A Continent Created a Nation*; Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'; Veracini, 'Historylessness'; Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'; Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts'; Smith, 'Writing Native'; Smith, 'White Aborigines'.

[443] In McLachlan's definition, Australian nationalism 'was a product of the time, place and character of colonisation', and it therefore had 'enough in common with Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, to justify a distinct category' (*Waiting for the Revolution*, 12, 8). While there is plenty in McLachlan's account to dispute, the very fact of his articulation of 'New World' nationalism as a distinct form of nationalism and his identification of ambivalent and conflicted loyalties and imperatives as definitive characteristics of this tradition makes this a significant contribution.

[444] Ibid., 233, 266–67.

settler colonial studies framework, approach Stephensen's otherwise apparently inexplicable attempt to construct a unique Australian national identity as typical rather than atypical of settler-colonial nationalism.[445] For Moran, the primary importance of what he characterises as Stephensen's 'radical nationalist manifesto' lies in its suggestion that to live in Australia was 'to be in a country without any castles or ruins, to be at liberty in a country in which there were thousands of square miles of ground not staled by history and tradition'.[446] Moran highlights this statement's evocation of the familiar Tocquevillian settler-colonial trope in which settlers are constructed as 'a people without history in a place without history'[447] to emphasise its centrality to the processes of displacement and disavowal (through the erasure of 'Indigenous history and tradition') that are prerequisite to the process of settler indigenisation (replacement) through unmediated interaction between man and land towards which the settler project ultimately aims.[448]

Moran highlights the integral nature of this encounter for Stephensen's project of settler national cultural construction, observing that in Stephensen's view, in the field cleared of an obstructive Indigenous presence by virtue of the displacement and disavowal of Indigenous histories and traditions, the 'new settler culture was giving birth to a new national type, through the interaction between "race" and "place"', while 'the indigenous, "suppressed and exterminated", would make no contribution to the development of that distinctive Australian culture'. Moran highlights two settler-colonial imperatives addressed in Stephensen's construction: first, the requisite 'relationship of settlers to land [which] was felt by settlers as integral to the development of their national identity'; second, the fact that within this dialectical relationship between the settler 'race' and the colonial 'place', 'the indigenous stood in the way of a

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[445] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'; Veracini, 'Historylessness'.
[446] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes', 1019.
[447] Veracini, 'Settler Collective', 367.
[448] See Patrick Wolfe, 'Islam, Europe and Indian Nationalism: Towards a Postcolonial Transnationalism', in *Connected Worlds: History in Transnational Perspective*, eds Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2005), 235.

developing settler Australian relationship with the land'. In his albeit brief examination and analysis of Stephensen's essay, Moran explicitly identifies Stephensen as a settler-colonial nationalist concerned with addressing himself towards and thereby attempting to overcome the imperatives and exigencies of the settler predicament. (Although his assertion that by the time of *Foundations'* publication in 1936 'the indigenous presence, and its implications for the development of national identity, could be widely dismissed or ignored in Australia' runs counter to the central argument of this thesis.)[449]

Building on both of Moran's observations concerning the settler-colonial nature of Stephensen's attempt to articulate a uniquely Australian national culture and identity, Veracini notes Stephensen's call 'for the absorption by settlers of the spirit of a place as a way to establish a new national type, which he called: "the true indigenous Australians"'. Here, the characteristically settler-colonial logics of disavowal, displacement and replacement already identified by Moran as important factors shaping Stephensen's position are succinctly summarised and encapsulated in terms of an overriding settler compulsion to *become 'indigenous'*. In Veracini's terms, '[w]hile settlers recurrently represent themselves as truly native in an attempt to indigenise their claims against Indigenous, migrant and metropolitan others, Stephensen's argument constitutes an exemplary indication that a settler project is especially about replacement'.[450] To the extent that the three elements of territoriality, displacement and replacement may together be conceived as characteristic of the settler-colonial situation, then their collective coalescence within the text of Stephensen's essay suggest *The Foundations of Culture in Australia* as a paradigmatic articulation and elaboration of settler-colonial nationalism.

The significance of place to Stephensen's conceptualisation of 'indigenous' national culture is reinforced by Libby Robin's examination of Stephensen's essay in the context

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[449] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes', 1019–20.
[450] Veracini, 'Historylessness', 277.

of her analysis concerning the especial influence of the Australian landscape on the development of Australian national culture. Robin suggests that in contrast to those Australians who sought to distance themselves from 'local problematic nature and concentrated [instead] on developing culture … that could be identified as Australian in the international world', Stephensen 'took a different view and argued for a culture based on the Genius of the Place itself'. While recognising Stephensen's own acknowledgement of 'Australia's cultural debt to Britain', Robin nevertheless focuses her attention on Stephensen's assertion that 'our Australian culture will diverge from the purely local colour of the British Islands to the precise extent that our environment differs from that of Britain' as indicative of his overriding intention to 'develop a distinctive culture that reflected the fact that "a gumtree is not a branch of an oak"' and to find a way 'to become culturally independent'.[451] Indeed, Gregory Melleuish has suggested that it was Stephensen's emphasis on the 'spirit of place' — which 'remained a somewhat shadowy and mystical notion that he had gleaned from D. H. Lawrence' — that made his form of cultural nationalism of 'crucial importance for a country such as Australia that began its modern existence as a settler society and outpost of empire'.[452]

Yet there exists one additional aspect of the settler situation that remains unacknowledged in the accounts of both Moran and Veracini — an understandable omission given their respective analytical emphases on settler nationalism and settler historiography more broadly — but which is identified by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in their chapter on 'the settler colonies' of the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. That is, the simultaneous operation alongside the compulsion towards settler indigenisation already identified of a desire for neo-European replication. (Veracini recognises this impulse and does the most to make it explicit, as already highlighted, but does not relate it to Stephensen.) From their post-colonial perspective, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin identify the problem faced by settlers 'of establishing their "indigeneity" and

[451] Robin, *A Continent Created a Nation*, 34.
[452] Melleuish, 'Randolph Hughes versus Percy Stephensen', 36, 40.

distinguishing it from their continuing sense of their European inheritance'. Yet in an important recognition of Stephensen as a settler nationalist, they note that for authors operating in the settler-colonial context, 'since the codes are European there is an impulse to compete, on Europe's terms, for literary recognition which will validate the New World in the eyes of the Old'.[453]

In this context, Stephensen's essay is examined as an exemplary attempt on the part of a settler nationalist intellectual to address all of the imperatives and exigencies characterising the settler predicament — territoriality, displacement and replacement, as well as cultural continuation (neo-European replication) — simultaneously. As evidence of this complex cultural conundrum, the authors cite Stephensen's foundational statement that 'there are two elements in Australian culture — the imported and the indigenous' (although it is noteworthy that while the authors begin by observing one of the 'more complex features of settler colonies' as 'the relationship between the Indigenous and settler populations', the uncapitalized 'indigenous' is used unproblematically in Stephensen's sense to refer to settlers themselves, pointing once again to the complexity of the situation he was addressing, and that they are interpreting).[454] They also identify Stephensen's unique adaptation of Hancock's famous metaphor as an innovative, even if indicatively unsuccessful, attempt to supersede the settler predicament towards which his essay was substantively addressed.

While it is tempting to interpret Stephensen's apparent 'confusion of aims and ideologies' as the outcome of the sometimes contradictory confluence of his persistent Nietzschean anarchism, the elitist vitalism of the 'Lindsay aesthetic' and the extreme anti-imperial nationalism of Miles and the Publicist group, and/or the personal and professional frustrations he suffered at the time of writing *Foundations* in particular, these admittedly passing references and reinterpretations which, to varying degrees,

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[453] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 134–35.
[454] Ibid., 134, 141.

highlight the complexities of the settler predicament Stephensen sought to respond to and thereby overcome suggest the positive potential of approaching Stephensen instead as a settler nationalist intellectual.[455] A nationalist, since he sought national independence from Australia's continuing colonial conditions, and an intellectual, in that he wrote against the 'larrikin' tradition in Australian literature and sought instead 'a mature national culture' and 'a more civilised and enfranchised intellectual atmosphere' as the basis for the nation-to-come.[456] And a settler, because he recognised, as Nicholas Thomas has emphasised, that the settler nation (and its culture) was one that must be constructed,[457] and that such a society must be forged in relation to, yet draw upon, both its Indigenous and imperial counterparts and inheritances.[458] In re-reading Stephensen as a *settler*, as a *nationalist*, and as an *intellectual*, we can begin to recognise and reinterpret his consistency, as well as his often-uneasy correspondences with other settler nationalist intellectuals, and indeed with the settler nationalist project more broadly.

Noel Macainsh, in his sensitive and detailed study of *Nietzsche in Australia*, perhaps understandably frames the apparent contradictions of Stephensen's uneasy intellectual-ideological admixture of Nietzscheanism and nationalism as just that: contradictions. As Macainsh observes, 'Nietzsche … cannot be properly construed as a nationalist. His thought … has a supra-national aspect, and this stands in clear opposition to the nationalism of Baylebridge and Stephensen'. Nevertheless, it is a testament to his attentiveness to the complexities of Stephensen's position that he (albeit inadvertently) acknowledges both of Stephensen's ambiguities. For example, Macainsh points out that 'Stephensen declares himself to be a conservative, but he is, of course, revolutionary as

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[455] Stephensen wrote to Jack Lindsay in 1961: 'if I must be classified I am a Nietzschean Bakuninite!' (quoted in Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 262). As Munro has it, '[u]nder the pressure of failure, exasperated with himself and his country, and lacking faith in his own future, Stephensen bitterly turn[ed] to prejudice and paranoia — against Britain, against decaying Europe, against the horror and the "Abyss" of the Great War' ('Introduction', xix).

[456] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 28, 66, 87.

[457] See Thomas, *Possessions*.

[458] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 23.

well', proceeding to draw a connection between this declaration and the 'phase of "Conservative Revolution" in the history of National Socialist ideology in Germany'. Later, Macainsh acknowledges the fact that Stephensen 'was himself by no means divorced from Europe, despite his attempts to give nationalism a local name and place'.[459] Together, these two apparent contradictions summarise Stephensen's dual ambiguities, the first involving his attempt to combine (and yet, simultaneously, to avoid) the forces of both revolution and reaction, the second his attempt to incorporate (and yet, simultaneously, to disavow) both Indigenous and European elements in forming a distinctive Australian national culture and identity.

There is no doubt that Stephensen's hopes on his return to Australia in 1932 to foster, with Norman Lindsay, a sophisticated national literary culture through the efforts of the *Endeavour Press* were dashed as a result of personal and financial mismanagement, the adverse conditions of the Great Depression and the threat of another European war, which only deepened Australia's colonial dependence while making the contingency of this dependence explicit. And Stephensen was, as the list of adjectives offered by way of introduction to this chapter makes clear, a 'rebellious and yet authoritarian' figure with strong nationalistic tendencies and a propensity for hyperbole and polemicism. Yet a close reading of *Foundations*, along with his prior and subsequent writings, suggests that Stephensen imagined himself less in line with fascist ideology as the Fuehrer to a national palingenesis, but rather as a liberatory force responsible for inspiring an original national *genesis*; a leader who would usher in the birth of a nation *still destined to emerge*.[460] As Munro remarks, while 'his enemies saw him as a future fascist dictator of Australia', Stephensen 'saw himself as the inspirational head of a Gandhi-style national liberation

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[459] Macainsh, *Nietzsche in Australia*, 141, 133, 142.
[460] Roger Griffin defines fascism in terms of its combination of 'the myth of imminent or eventual "palingenesis" … with "ultra-nationalism"', the latter aspect of which Stephensen was more clearly associated with (in *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 207). See Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993).

movement'.[461] Self-evident absurdities aside, Stephensen's abiding affiliation with anti-imperial rather than European or internationalist ideals is highly significant.

Stephensen's framing of those he saw as Australia's enemies is instructive here. As his political nationalism became increasingly extreme from the late 1930s and into the 1940s (his cultural nationalism remained consistent from his university days until his dramatic death on-stage in 1965), he came to 'regard the Brit-Usa-Com-Jew combination as the real invaders and opponents of Australia, the real cause of our troubles, and the real ones to be got rid of'. Stephensen saw the future of 'Australian life' as dependent on those few, amongst whom he counted Ingamells, who 'will unremittingly work for the emancipation of Australia from Pom-Jew-Com-Usa domination of our political and cultural life'. For Stephensen, the common denominator tying these 'invaders and opponents of Australia' together was that they were all what he regarded as 'supra-nationalists'.[462] The notion of Jews as anti-nationalist cosmopolitans who threaten national cohesion has a long history, and Stephensen's anti-Semitism became increasingly rampant and repulsive over this period. And yet his inclusion of British and American interests in this hostile category is telling, since these were the forces that, from Stephensen's cultural nationalist perspective, most threatened the further development of the incipient national culture that was and remained his primary concern.

As Noel Macainsh's study illustrates, the primary point of conflict between Stephensen and the Lindsays, first Jack and later Norman, was *always* the former's (itself un-Nietzschean) nationalist emphasis in contradistinction to the anti-nationalism of the latter (despite Norman's apparently contradictory support for the *Endeavour*).[463] The two parties shared a common vitalism, elitism and a belief in the potentiality of Australia as

[461] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 194.
[462] P. R. Stephensen, Letter to Rex Ingamells, 3 January, 1942, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne
[463] Macainsh, *Nietzsche in Australia*, 137. The name of the new publishing venture was purposefully selected by Stephensen as 'an imprint which reflected the aspirations of the cultural voyage on which they were embarking', an emphasis enhanced by Lindsay's 'careful and correct drawing' of its maritime namesake as the firm's trademark (Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 120).

the site of cultural renaissance, yet while for the Lindsays, Norman in particular, this would comprise classical European culture reborn and revitalised in a sunlit Australian setting, for Stephensen it was rather an originary '*indigenous*' settler culture that was to be born *from the land itself* (with, of course, significant nourishment from 'imported phosphates'). And yet these divergences were not as clear-cut as the ways in which they have typically been characterised might suggest. As David Carter remarks, the Lindsays' '*Vision* was more Australianist than it knew', its 'images of a youthful, sunlit Australian-led renaissance' according with 'a widespread imagining of Australia's difference from the old world'.[464] In addition, as Munro points out, both Norman Lindsay and Stephensen, not to mention Xavier Herbert, shared an 'ambivalent nationalism' marked by a love of country and a loathing of its inhabitants; it was this ambivalence that lay behind their joint endeavour towards national literary-cultural development.[465]

This was not all they shared, for as the analyses of Humphrey McQueen and David Carter suggest, both saw Australia as a site of potential escape from the crises and contradictions of the time, including modernist 'decadence', depression and the coming world war.[466] In a very similar fashion to Stephensen, though with a different emphasis on the origins of the civilisation to be saved, for the Lindsays 'Young Australia, at the point of crisis which *Vision* claimed as its own, held the best promise for civilisation's next vital epoch'.[467] Macainsh observes that '[i]t did not seem odd to Stephensen, that Australia should supply the nucleus of ideas for a European, or at least, a British renascence … it seemed proper for the ideas of *Creative Effort* and associated works to have been germinated in Australia from stock transplanted from Europe … they had an affirmation of vitality, a sunlit quality'.[468] In this respect, Stephensen and Norman Lindsay in particular can be seen to conform to the broader settler-colonial tradition

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[464] Carter, *Always Almost Modern*, 104.
[465] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 106.
[466] See Carter, *Always Almost Modern*; McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*.
[467] Carter, *Always Almost Modern*, 105.
[468] Macainsh, *Nietzsche in Australia*, 129.

defined by Veracini as the 'world-turned-inside-out' (rather than upside down), within which settlers 'opt out of both revolution and reaction; they change the world by changing worlds'.[469] If one response to a state and a site of crisis and contradiction, as was Europe in the 1930s, is to attempt to turn the world upside down (as Christopher Hill characterised English society on the cusp of civil war), an alternative response is to attempt to turn the world inside out: to avoid crisis and contradiction by means of sovereign displacement.[470] Settler colonialism is founded on precisely such a displacement (and produces others).

In a period characterised by what James Belich has termed 'recolonization',[471] during which Australia's ties to the Old World seemed to be tightening at the same time as the systems of that world 'appear[ed] to be on the edge of collapse', in Stephensen's settler-colonial imaginings, Australia alone, 'the only whiteman's continent, the only isolated continent', could become the guardian of 'white civilisation, of white culture, of white traditions upon this earth!' Yet Australia's destiny as 'A New Britannia in Another World!' would only result from a truly world-turned-inside-out Australia: an independent Australian nation. If, as Stephensen saw it, '[f]rom the world-depression there seem[ed] no escape except war and revolution', the alternative he proposed was to complete Australia's sovereign displacement and distanciation from the site(s) of imminent conflict and crisis. Stephensen did not seek, as the existing historiographies have presumed, either revolution or counter-revolution, but rather to avoid each of these extremes by means of displacement: Stephensen's originary culture emerging from Australia's *genius loci* and his advocacy of political and economic autarky were aimed toward exactly that end. And, since 'there can be no nation without a national place-idea;

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[469] Lorenzo Veracini, 'Suburbia, Settler Colonialism and the World Turned Inside Out', *Housing, Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2012): 2. For a further exposition of these traditions, see Gabriel Piterberg and Lorenzo Veracini, 'Wakefield, Marx, and the World Turned Inside Out', *Journal of Global History* 10, no. 03 (2015).
[470] Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Temple Smith, 1972).
[471] See Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*, chapter six.

a national culture',[472] its *foundations* constituted the necessary first step. In case it needs repeating once again: Stephensen's 'indigenous' (settler) culture was predicated on, and perpetuated, the displacement and replacement of the pre-existing Indigenous cultures from which it sought to usurp both land *and* indigeneity.[473]

Since 'a world-turned-inside-out imaginary inevitably expresses contrasting and simultaneous images', it tends to defy explanation within existing interpretive frameworks.[474] This has been precisely the problem confounding previous attempts to account for Stephensen and his essay. Contrary to existing, competing accounts of Stephensen as *either* a revolutionary *or* a reactionary, then, reconceptualised as a world-turned-inside-out settler intellectual, Stephensen appears as something else entirely. From this perspective, the 'central puzzle' identified by Munro — that of Stephensen's 'sudden shift of sympathy from the left to the far right' — may be seen less as a puzzle than as a clue.[475] And indeed, reading backward from Stephensen as a settler nationalist intellectual, his consistency is rendered readily apparent.

Stephensen's early association with the Australian Communist Party and radical agitation first in Queensland and later at Oxford has been well documented.[476] However, it is significant that his so-called 'communist' agitation at Oxford involved the distribution of 'Gandhian *anti-imperialist* leaflets' and that even after his ultimate disillusionment with the Communist Party and his turn towards what Munro terms 'extreme nationalism', Stephensen still 'idolized Gandhi rather than Hitler'.[477] Furthermore, despite persistent disagreement as to the timing and motivation of his formal resignation from the party, Stephensen's socialist sympathies continued long

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[472] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 87–92, 19.

[473] To adopt Goldie's terminology, Stephensen was both 'penetrator' and 'appropriator' (see *Fear and Temptation*, 15).

[474] Veracini, 'Suburbia', 6.

[475] Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald', n.p.

[476] See Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, chapter four.

[477] Munro, 'Stephensen, Percy Reginald', n.p.; Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 18.

after.[478] As his brother Eric has noted, while 'Inky' became 'acutely anti-Communist' from around 1935, he nevertheless persisted in preaching 'Australian socialism, as against Russian and German socialism'.[479] *Foundations* itself was initially printed by the Communist Party printery, the Forward Press, in Sydney.[480] And in 1934–35, Stephensen reinforced his radical credentials (and proved his not yet entirely *anti*-communist sentiments) when he once again entered the political arena over the Egon Kisch affair.[481]

Munro has placed Stephensen's formal resignation from the Communist Party in the context of 'his Oxford suppression and the abortive general strike' and the demise of his lingering sympathies around the time of the Moscow trials of 1936–38.[482] Yet it was not communism as such, but *international* communism against which Stephensen turned; in 1937, he wrote in the *Publicist* that Australian Marxists were 'Europe-minded' and had 'never yet formulated an idea which might have any direct reference or application to Australian realities'.[483] Even in *Foundations* he had objected that

> Australian Communists, if they blindly follow European Communist
>
> thought, without adapting it to Australia's specific requirements, in

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[478] Stephensen later claimed to have 'discarded' his communism in 1926, when he had apparently 'discovered that it is only banditry disguised as a political philosophy, based on resentment and hatred, and completely lacking in human-kindliness, toleration and humour' (*Kookaburras and Satyrs*, 21). According to Jack Lindsay, however, Stephensen proffered 'the most varying set of explanations' for his departure from the party, most if not all of which were 'obviously untrue and fail to make sense'; on the contrary, Lindsay contended, '[i]t was years after 1926 that Stephensen broke away from his Communist faith, and the process was uncertain, veiled, torn by unrealised contradictions' ('Mouthpiece of the Unruly', *Overland*, no. 96 (1984): 48). For her part, Winter notes Stephensen's claim to have left the party in 1926 but suggests that he 'retained a lingering attachment to communist ideology for another ten years' (*The Australia First Movement*, 16).

[479] Eric Stephensen, *Brief Biographical Memorandum of Percy Reginald ('Inky') Stephensen, 1901–1965* (Eltham: Eric Stephensen, 1981), 5. National socialism, of course, is now — and was then — associated with a specific movement. And yet this compound term quite literally summarises the political programme Stephensen was to articulate as the platform for the Australia First Movement. Stephensen subsequently defended his use of the term 'national socialism' in his and Miles' 'Fifty-Point Policy' — which first appeared in the May 1940 issue of the *Publicist* — contending, certainly provocatively and probably disingenuously, that he did 'not concede any exclusive right or title to German "Nazis" in the use of the words' but was, rather, '[u]sing these terms in their old-established dictionary meanings as English words in general usage' (*Fifty Points for Australia: An Exposition of a Policy for an Australia-First Party After the War* (Sydney: The Publicist, 1941), 9).

[480] Munro, 'Introduction', xxiii.

[481] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, chapter ten.

[482] Ibid., 45, 268.

[483] Doecke, 'Historical Fictions', 186.

application and idiom, put themselves thereby on the same intellectual level as the imperial-automata who, within Australia, blindly follow the line of imperialist thought imported from Europe.[484]

Stephensen's objections were thus directed towards what he saw as the Communist Party's supranational, rather than national, aspirations at that time.

Conversely, it is, as Munro suggests, 'more than a trifle significant … that Stephensen's first impulsive act was in support of the forces of reaction' when in 1919 he backed the conservative headmaster of Maryborough Grammar, Noble Wallace, in protest against 'the Labor Party's plans for democratizing the school'. Furthermore, while Stephensen's original proposal for an 'Australia First Party' in 1935 — described by Munro as 'a revolutionary and yet conservative confusion of aims and ideologies' — was, according to Winter, 'an echo of Stephensen's communist past …, there were also similarities to the methods of the New Guard, which he despised'.[485] In similar fashion to the conflict between Stephensen and the Lindsays, as both Munro and Bird have observed, the principal distinction and point of disagreement between Stephensen and Eric Campbell, leader of the New Guard, was the latter's British Empire loyalty.[486] As Munro has pointed out, Stephensen's political programme 'included aspects of republican, fascist, and even communist policy' and was thus quite consistent with Stephensen's self-description as primarily *nationalist* in both ideology and orientation. In his introduction to the 1986 edition of *Foundations*, Munro described Stephensen's 'vision' as one 'of past and future which incorporated elements as diverse as Aboriginal and English pre-history, communism, and the dangers of fascism',[487] precisely the platform of a settler nationalist concerned with the political, intellectual and cultural development of a settler nation-to-come.

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[484] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 165.

[485] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 9–11, 164; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 13–14. As Macainsh accurately surmises, 'Stephensen declares himself to be a conservative, but he is, of course, revolutionary as well' (*Nietzsche in Australia*, 133).

[486] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 116–17; Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 60.

[487] Munro, 'Introduction', xxi, xxv.

In relation to the second ambiguity concerning Stephensen's role as either cultural cringer or anti-imperial chauvinist, the essential element that draws his apparent inconsistencies together remains the persistent thread of cultural nationalism. For example, while Muirden's focus on Stephensen's involvement with the AFM leads him to date the advent of Stephensen's 'vigorous new nationalism' to as late as 1934, Munro has described Stephensen as early as 1919 as 'the conventional patriot', noting that his 'article in the June University [of Queensland] Magazine was a strong plea for the study of Australian poets and the "fostering of a national literature", a preoccupation he would return to more zealously in later years'.[488] In an early iteration of arguments he would repeat in *Foundations* more than fifteen years later, in his article Stephensen 'attacked the "imported professors" for the universities' indifference to the teaching of Australian literature' and, '[a]nticipating the title of his later book', 'called for the fearless championing of this cause, as the "foundations" were being laid for a great literary culture in Australia'.[489]

Alomes supports Munro on this point, going so far as to suggest that by 1919 Stephensen was already a 'cultural nationalist'.[490] This position formed the basis of his initial split with Jack Lindsay, who, in 1920, in the same magazine, 'attacked the idea of Nationalism in Australian literature' and 'plumped for satyrs' over 'kookaburras' as symbols.[491] A reversal of Lindsay's title — 'Satyrs or Kookaburras?' — would subsequently provide the rhetorical foundations for Stephensen's belated (and self-aggrandising) riposte to Lindsay's attack on his own ultimate aim — the development of a distinctive Australian national literary culture — in his *Kookaburras and Satyrs*. Here, Stephensen attacked Lindsay's 'desire to escape from the near Australian theme into the supposedly wider world of Somewhere Else', suggesting his 'rejection of kookaburras and adoption of

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488 See Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 4; Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 15.
489 Munro, 'Introduction', x.
490 Alomes, *A Nation at Last?*, 101.
491 For Stephensen's (self-serving) account of this disagreement, see *Kookaburras and Satyrs*. For Munro's more balanced account, see *Wild Man of Letters*.

satyrs, as symbols, was spuriously "classical"' and accusing him and other 'literary emigrants from Australia' of becoming 'shirkers of a task which was waiting for them to do here: the building-up of culture in Australia'. As further testament to his early nationalistic tendencies, Stephensen's decision to rename the University of Queensland's magazine to the Aboriginal word *Galmahra* during his tenure as editor in 1921 was, he later claimed, specifically intended as 'an Australian retort to Sydney University's Europocentric "Hermes" magazine'.[492] And in 1932, upon his arrival in Melbourne to launch his and Norman Lindsay's *Endeavour*, Stephensen announced to the press the advent of a concerted campaign towards 'a national definition in culture and literature'.[493]

Nor did Stephensen's position shift following the publication of *Foundations* or even in the aftermath of his internment and the deep-seated sense of betrayal and resentment he subsequently harboured against what he had earlier described as 'the country I love and the people I hate'.[494] In his first appearance in front of the 1944 Clyne Inquiry into the AFM internments, Stephensen proudly (and disconcertingly) described himself not as a political agitator or polemicist but rather as a 'Man of Letters', a designation from which Munro takes part of the subtitle to his excellent biography.[495] And as late as 1959 and 1962, in his Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures, Stephensen rehearsed almost verbatim the arguments for cultural nationalism first formally and most forcefully articulated more than two decades earlier in *Foundations*, sans the more problematic economic and political arguments advanced in the second and third instalments of his manifesto.[496]

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[492] Stephensen, *Kookaburras and Satyrs*, 13–14. Muirden suggests that Stephensen's characterisation of this move as 'an Australian retort' only came '[m]uch later' and that at the time he had shown more concern with escaping 'the incubus of that cumbrous three-word title' (*The Puzzled Patriots*, 16). It is perfectly conceivable that both factors in fact contributed to the change.

[493] Quoted in *Nation*, 'Traveller's Ghost', 12.

[494] Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 13.

[495] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 1.

[496] Stephensen, *Nationalism in Australian Literature*; Stephensen, *Colonial Australian Literature*.

In the first of these lectures, Stephensen emphasised (again) that his 'concern' was 'not with the political or economic independence of Australia; but with our cultural independence or autonomy, which, as I view it, is far more important for the future of civilization in this continent than any inter-national or sub-imperial commitments of politics, trade, or finance'. Tellingly, Stephensen also reiterated his view of the Australian settler nation as a nation *still* in the making, stating that 'Australia is not yet a Nation, but it is becoming a Nation. An Act of the British Parliament, federating six British Colonies into a political entity, in 1901, for taxation purposes, did not constitute the Australian Nation. That was not an Australian Declaration of Independence. It was a declaration of dependence'.[497] For Stephensen, Australia still remained, more than twenty years after his initial declaration of settler cultural independence, a 'society to come'. Geoffrey Dutton, somewhat paradoxically, disagreed. Instead, he insisted, Stephensen's consistency had by then left him behind the times. As he commented in an article for *Nation* entitled 'The Years have Caught up with P. R. Stephensen', it was 'thanks to Stephensen and pioneers like him that what he has to say seems more than twenty years out of date'.[498]

The unmistakeable continuities in the opinions expressed by Stephensen from his early days at university right up until the 1960s point to the underlying consistency of his cultural nationalist position. While the means he articulated and emphasised may have shifted over time according to personal, professional and historical-cultural-political imperatives and exigencies, his ends remained the same: (settler) Australian national cultural independence. The historian's imperative to locate and identify tipping points, or moments of disjuncture and transformation, has arguably led to an overemphasis on the production and publication of *Foundations* as one such event. Yet as the outline offered above makes clear, existing attempts at explication in these terms are undermined by the inconsistencies within and between competing interpretations of just

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[497] Stephensen, *Nationalism in Australian Literature*, 4.
[498] Geoffrey Dutton, 'The Years Have Caught Up with P. R. Stephensen', *Nation*, 10 October, 1959, 22.

what, precisely, Stephensen's supposed transformation signified. Analyses emphasising change and discontinuity also tend to obscure and therefore overlook the underlying consistencies, ambivalent as they may be, of Stephensen's literary, cultural and political articulations and activities. To the extent that Stephensen's emphasis on establishing Australia's cultural independence whilst maintaining the connection with its European inheritance has tended to impede existing attempts at analysis and understanding — so that Melleuish, for example, pronounces it 'all very odd' — from a settler colonial studies perspective, this apparent inconsistency is revealed as typical rather than atypical of the settler situation.[499]

From such a perspective, Stephensen no longer needs to be exclusively interpreted as *either* an anti-imperial chauvinist *or* a neo-European intellectual; he is simultaneously and coherently *both*. Similarly, ostensibly conflicting interpretations of Stephensen and his essay as instantiating either the 'direct' or 'inverted' configurations of the cultural cringe (or even its outright rejection) can be conceived as entirely consistent with the exigencies of the settler-colonial situation. These modes represent the two sides of the settler-colonial coin; Stephensen exhibited tendencies towards both because, as a settler intellectual, he found himself frustratingly subject to the persistent influence of the cultural cringe and yet, as a settler intellectual, he simultaneously strove to overcome its negative influence on, and implications for, an emergent Australian national culture. Stephensen, as have many others before and since, sought precisely the 'relaxed erectness of carriage' Phillips identified as the antithesis of, and prescribed as the only antidote to, the 'disease' of the cultural cringe.[500] From a settler colonial studies perspective, Serle, Rickard and Ward are all correct: the cultural cringe is not something to be either denounced or submitted to once and for all, it persists as a significant structural feature of the settler-colonial cultural condition.

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[499] Melleuish, 'Randolph Hughes versus Percy Stephensen', 38–39.
[500] Phillips, 'The Cultural Cringe', 52.

Conclusion

It is significant that in accounts arising from within a diversity of analytical approaches, including literary, political, cultural and national historiography, Stephensen has been variously construed as a left-wing liberal or a right-wing reactionary; as a positive cultural nationalist or a negative political nationalist; as a radical or a reactive nationalist; as an instance of nationalism 'too soon' or of nationalism 'gone wrong' (or of nationalism 'gone wrong' because 'too soon'); and as an exemplar of either the 'inverted' or 'direct' configurations of the cultural cringe (or as epitomising its outright rejection). Together, these divergent analyses present a picture of Stephensen and *Foundations* as riven by inconsistency, contradiction and radical disjuncture. On the contrary, this chapter has attempted to illustrate that it is the existing historiography concerned with the significance of Stephensen and his essay that remains inconsistent, rather than its subject. A settler colonial studies interpretive perspective has the potential of finally reconciling Stephensen's ambivalences within a single interpretive frame and thereby facilitating a more comprehensive account of this otherwise enigmatic figure.

The following chapter examines the original response to the settler predicament articulated by another exemplary indigenising settler nationalist, Rex Ingamells of the Jindyworobaks, and maps the Jindyworobak program against the two relations the settler always (whether 'wittingly or unwittingly') addresses. Following the pattern established in the present chapter in relation to Stephensen, the next chapter similarly draws on a settler colonial studies framework to propose an original reinterpretation of the Jindyworobaks as neither universalist nor exclusively nationalist, and neither nationalist nor exclusively indigenist, but rather as ambivalent settler nationalists expressing the typical settler-colonial desire to overcome the contingencies characteristic of the settler-colonial condition.

Chapter 3

Neither nationalists nor universalists: Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks

In the beginning was the word: Jindyworobak. It was Rex Ingamells and it was with him. Until he uttered it darkness covered the face of the waterless land. The word was light and it dawned. Australia was re-created. We enter a mythological world, but it is our own. We take possession of the magic that is our own. We are initiated men. This was the Jindyworobak creed.[501]

— Brian Elliott, *The Jindyworobaks*, 1979

The Jindyworobaks … are those individuals who are endeavouring to free Australian art from whatever alien influences trammel it, that is, to bring it into proper contact with its material.

— Rex Ingamells, *Conditional Culture*, 1938

Introduction

The Jindyworobak poetry movement, founded by Rex Ingamells in 1938, emerged in the context of a literary-cultural milieu split between those who, like Stephensen, were concerned with developing a uniquely 'indigenous' Australian tradition, and those primarily concerned with defending and maintaining continuity with Australia's European inheritance. While the Jindyworobaks have typically been associated with the former tradition, this chapter argues that they in fact sought to chart a new path that rejected both the straightforward traditions of anti-colonial nationalism and the 'alien' influence of imported European culture; that, in responding to what I have defined here

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[501] Brian Elliott, 'Introduction', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), xvii.

as the settler predicament, they rejected *both* extremes and sought instead to achieve a synthesis of the two. In a more radically indigenist approach to settler indigenisation than that advanced by Stephensen, Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks turned towards Aboriginal Australians, as bearers of the spirit of the place, in an attempt to appropriate an imagined environmental essence and to thereby construct the conditions for an unmediated encounter between the settler and the land.

In formulating their program in these terms, the Jindyworobaks conformed to a broader tradition that David Carter has characterised in terms of its 'radical originality': seeking to identify Australia's *genius loci*, the spirit of *this* place, as a source of alterity and to solve the problems of settler nationalism by means of an originary emergence. Yet as this chapter argues, this tradition is itself characteristic of the 'multifaceted ambivalence' of settler-colonial nationalism.[502] Indeed, as the preceding chapters have suggested, conflicts and misconceptions such as those surrounding the Jindyworobaks are typical of settler societies, in which the tensions produced by a system of relations involving settler, metropolitan and indigenous agencies mean that the imperatives towards settler indigenisation and neo-European replication compete for supremacy but are never ultimately resolved.[503] Following the pattern established in the previous chapter, then, this chapter similarly draws on settler colonial studies to propose an original reinterpretation of the Jindyworobaks as neither universalist nor exclusively nationalist, and neither nationalist nor exclusively indigenist, but rather as ambivalent settler nationalists expressing the typical settler-colonial desire to overcome the contingencies characteristic of the settler-colonial condition.

There is an important thread in the historiography on Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks that identifies, but cannot specify, the imperatives underlying their approach as deriving

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[502] Thomas, *Possessions*, 34.
[503] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, chapter one.

from Australia's settler-colonial conditions.[504] Yet this thread does not elaborate the implications of such an interpretation. Importantly, the reinterpretation proposed here is not delimited by either history or geography, yet takes both factors seriously. Indeed, while Les Murray has described himself proudly, if half in jest, as the 'Last of the Jindyworobaks',[505] the cultural dynamics of settler colonialism this chapter identifies and applies to Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks extend well beyond this admittedly limited historical example. Paul Keating's recent call for the 'blending of black and white Australia to create [a] new national identity' stands as only the most recent and public example of a persistent concern for settler indigenisation, or what Philip Mead has described as 'a continuing desire in the white Australian imaginary … for a species of cultural–racial syncretism'.[506] Nicholas Birns captures it well when he writes that 'Jindyworobakism may have been less a special tendency than closer to a general current'.[507]

Perhaps even more significantly still, the imperatives identified here are no more limited by geography than they are by chronology: similar movements driven by similar concerns, albeit exhibiting distinctive characteristics on the basis of differing cultural and political contexts, can be identified in, for example, the literary-cultural strands of

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[504] See, for example, Clunies-Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks'; Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist'; Philip Mead, 'Nation, Literature, Location', in *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, ed. Peter Pierce (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Judith Wright, 'Perspective', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948*, eds Rex Ingamells et al. (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948); Judith Wright, 'Extract from Because I Was Invited, 1975', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979).
[505] Elliott, 'Editor's Note', 283. Laurie Duggan positions Murray in a lineage incorporating Margaret Preston and the Jindyworobaks, for whom 'a fear of the inauthentic led to borrowings from Aboriginality' ('Impostures: Nationalism, Modernism and Australian Poetry of the Late Twentieth Century', in *Antipodean Modern: Cultural Responses to Modernisation in Australia, 1900–2000*, eds Tim Dolin and Neil Levi (Perth: Network Books, 2006), 210). Duggan comments on Murray's 'self-mythologising: that he came from a class that was "below" the Aborigines … [as] an attempt to cut off criticism. His later modification: that he might well be "Aboriginal" is a kind of ride on the perceived success of Aboriginal art' (ibid., 210–11). In 2002, Murray himself reflected on the fact that 'I have lots of Aboriginal relatives but whether I have Aboriginal ancestry I don't know', noting that 'it would be such a simple solution to all my worries' (quoted in Daphne Guinness, 'A Word or Two to the Contrary', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 August, 2002, n.p.).
[506] Andrew Taylor, 'Paul Keating Calls for Blending of Black and White Australia to Create New National Identity', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 October, 2015; Mead, 'Nation, Literature, Location', 560.
[507] Birns, '"This Piece of Hardwood"', 27.

Andean *indigenismo* in Latin America, Chicana/o indigenism, *l'École d'Alger*, the Canaanites in Israel, the Maorilanders in New Zealand, as well as what Shona Jackson terms 'Creole Indigeneity' in the Caribbean.[508] In typically insightful fashion, Nettie Palmer was awake to the comparative dimension at the time the Jindyworobaks were writing, requesting a statement of 'Jindy theory' from Ingamells in 1944 on the grounds that she was undertaking

> a study of Australian literary-historical movements, at one point finding analogous 'moments' in the literary history of another southern continent in the New World: Latin-America. Only its Jindies try to go to a period of the Incas, the Incas whose records and race were blotted out by the Spanish conquest.[509]

Each of these movements, in one way or another, responded to the problems of settler colonialism and modernity in ways informed by their own cultural and political histories and circumstances. While a comprehensive account of the diversity of these movements falls outside the scope of the current discussion, in each instance they involved a turn towards what Ingamells would call 'environmental values', as well as — in a spirit of appropriation yet with sometimes positive long-range outcomes for the subjects of said appropriation — local Indigenous peoples, in a varied set of attempts to overcome the exigencies of the settler-colonial situation. The broader tradition identified here thus reaches beyond the rather more limited historical and geographical confines within which Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert operated. One of the virtues of a settler colonial studies interpretive perspective is its ability to identify and account for 'the

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[508] See Coronado, *The Andes Imagined*; Contreras, *Blood Lines*; Rama, *Writing across Cultures*; Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Azzedine Haddour, *Colonial Myths: History and Narrative* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2000); Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London & New York: Verso, 2008); David Ohana, *The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites Nor Crusaders*, trans. David Maisel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jane Stafford and Mark Williams, *Maoriland: New Zealand Literature 1872–1914* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006); Shona N. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
[509] Nettie Palmer, Letter to Rex Ingamells, 10 May, 1944, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures' within and between settler societies, and against non-settler ones as well.[510]

The Jindies' response to the predicament of settler nationalism

This chapter attempts to map the Jindyworobaks' radically original response to the settler predicament against the two relations the settler always (whether 'wittingly or unwittingly') addresses.[511] As outlined in the introduction, in relation to the settler-metropole relationship, relevant responses varied from the extremes of anti-colonial nationalism, epitomised by *The Bulletin* of the 1890s, to the conservative Anglocentrism represented in the interwar period by the likes of G. H. Cowling and J. I. M. Stewart. Each of these tendencies provided important impetuses for the Jindyworobak program, which sought to propose a new way forward that, like Stephensen, rejected the 'larrikin' view of Australian life and literature presented by *The Bulletin* on the one hand, and, more stridently than Stephensen, also sought to set aside the 'alien' influence of imported European culture on the other; that is, the Jindyworobak response rejected *both* extremes and sought instead to achieve a synthesis of the two.

The settler–indigene divide, on the other hand, both structures the tension between what Gérard Bouchard has characterised, as noted, as the competing imperatives of 'continuity and rupture', yet also seemingly offers settlers one potential strategy towards its supersession. The variety of possible responses to this second relationship range from disavowal of either the sovereignty or significance of indigenous peoples on the one hand, to a radical mode of indigenist appropriation on the other. These are the dual strategies of penetration and appropriation, *both* of which aim towards the goal of settler indigenisation and to construct the conditions for imagining the unmediated encounter between the settler and the land towards which settler colonialism ultimately strives.[512]

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[510] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 402.
[511] Johnston and Lawson, 'Settler Colonies', 370.
[512] Wolfe, 'Islam, Europe and Indian Nationalism', 235.

Variously positioned between the nationalist-universalist and nationalist-indigenist extremes, individuals and movements also had to find ways of relating to the historical circumstances of the interwar period out of and into which the Jindyworobaks emerged. As outlined in the introduction, these exigencies, and their particular Australian manifestations — including developments following the aftermath of World War I, the Balfour Declaration and the Statute of Westminster, the various impacts of the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the imminent threat of Australia's involvement in another European war, as well as the tensions these events produced in Australia's relationship with Britain — combined to make settler nationalism simultaneously more urgent and increasingly problematic throughout this period. Perhaps most importantly, the demise of the doomed race ideal in the interwar period also meant that settlers found themselves confronting the settler-colonial conditions of Australia's foundation.

These circumstances contributed to the emergence and the urgency of two strands of thought of particular significance in this historical moment, both of which responded to the exigencies of the settler situation in ways conditioned by the pressures of the period. In the first instance, a new form of cultural nationalism emerged, associated with figures such as Miles Franklin and the Palmers, along with the subject of the previous chapter, 'Inky' Stephensen, which asserted Australian independence yet nevertheless sought to claim a sense of national 'maturity' and sophistication; the second entailed an explicit indigenism marked by a sense of fascination with the figure of the indigene and most strongly represented by Margaret Preston and the subjects of this chapter, the Jindyworobaks.[513] The Jindyworobaks were associated with both.

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[513] While Humphrey McQueen has rightly cautioned that the indigenist aspects of the Jindyworobak program were rather more limited than their reputation (and nomenclature) might suggest, Ingamells' emphasis on Aboriginal culture as a culture linked with the Australian environment in his polemical and critical writing suggests the centrality of indigenism to the Jindyworobak creed, at least as far as its chief architect and advocate were concerned. This was certainly the most original aspect of the Jindyworobak program. See McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, chapter six; also John Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement: 1935–1945' (PhD thesis, Flinders University, 1978), 47–59. Preston certainly approved of the Jindyworobak project, writing to Ingamells in September 1941 to praise the movement as part of a shift she identified, whereby 'the song people of Australia are at last owning a country', and to sign up to the 'Club' (Letter to Rex Ingamells, 13 September, 1941, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library

Rex Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks

The Jindyworobak poetry movement was founded as, and remained, a broad church, more open along gender lines than many comparable literary movements of the time,[514] and open to sceptics, even critics, within its own ranks so long as key precepts were accepted and adhered to. And yet, despite the sometimes uncomfortable coexistence within the original Jindyworobak Club (the nomenclature is telling) of 'cosmopolitan' Jindyworobaks like Flexmore Hudson on the one hand, and nationalist-indigenists of an even more radical ilk than Ingamells like Ian Mudie on the other,[515] it was Rex Ingamells who maintained a clear line on key points of emphasis throughout the movement's existence, until its eventual decline under the altered cultural and political conditions of the second post-war period. As the quotation at the beginning of this chapter suggests, in many ways Rex Ingamells *was* the Jindyworobak poetry movement, or at least its most powerful material and intellectual, if not creative, driving force. John Dally quotes Ian Mudie conflating the two: 'All the time when I think about Jindyworobak, I go to say "Rex" because the whole movement *was* Rex — there's no doubt about that … He just dragged people along willy-nilly'.[516] Ingamells was not shy about his centrality, writing to Stephensen in 1941 that 'I am indeed the mother, father and uncle and aunt of

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of Victoria, Melbourne). In December 1942, Preston described herself to Ingamells as 'a Lady Jindy' (Letter to Rex Ingamells, 26 December, 1942, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne), and she would go on to contribute artwork for a number of Jindyworobak publications. On Preston's indigenism, see McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*; Elizabeth Butel, *Margaret Preston: The Art of Constant Rearrangement* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1985); McLean, *White Aborigines*.

[514] Birns, '"This Piece of Hardwood"', 25.

[515] On 'cosmopolitan' Jindyworobaks, see Jayne Regan, 'A Cosmopolitan Jindyworobak: Flexmore Hudson, Nationalism and World-Mindedness', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 15, no. 3 (2015). Mudie was Ingamells' first and most direct connection with 'Inky' Stephensen and his Australia First Movement, an association to which Dally attributes at least part of the condemnation the movement subsequently received (*The Jindyworobaks: Literary Philosophers or Literary Victims?* (London: Australian Studies Centre, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1986)). For a recent rereading of Mudie as a settler cultural nationalist, see Regan, '"Racy of the Soil"'.

[516] Quoted in Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 91–92. Along similar lines, Kenneth Gifford referred to Jindy and 'Rex' as 'the same thing' in a letter to Flexmore Hudson in 1944 (Letter to Flexmore Hudson, 23 July, 1944, MS 10098, Kenneth H. Gifford Correspondence, 1941–1944, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

Jindyworobak'.[517] Nor was he afraid to assert his 'proprietary right' over the Jindyworobak imprimatur, writing to his Victorian State Editor Kenneth Gifford in 1944 that his 'authority in all matters of Jindyworobak publishing [was] complete and unquestionable'.[518]

In light of the above, as well as the fact that this chapter is largely concerned with criticisms of the Jindyworobaks, which almost invariably targeted Ingamells, either directly or implicitly, the following discussion focuses on Ingamells' own articulations of the movement's aims and intentions. This is not, however, to deny or downplay the significance of other contributors to the development and dissemination of the Jindyworobak program, in particular Ian Mudie, who first alerted Ingamells to the 'symbolic possibilities' of 'alcheringa',[519] Victor Kennedy and Kenneth Gifford, each of whom published their own statements of the Jindyworobak position, or Roland Robinson, who carried the Jindyworobak mantle well beyond the dissolution of the movement itself and contributed far more than did Ingamells in terms of both evidencing and encouraging an *actual* appreciation of the cultures of Indigenous Australia.[520]

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[517] Rex Ingamells, Letter to P. R. Stephensen, 28 July, 1941, MLMSS 1284, P. R. Stephensen – Papers and Pictorial Material, ca. 1905–1971, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

[518] Rex Ingamells, Letter to Kenneth Gifford, 18 March, 1944, MS 10098, Kenneth H. Gifford Correspondence, 1941–1944, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Gifford's statement of Jindyworobak theory, published the same year, bore a revealing statement on its title page: 'Jindyworobak was registered in the name of Rex Ingamells in 1939, and no person or persons may use its name in any form of business except by agreement with him in furtherance of the cultural purpose of Jindyworobak' (Kenneth H. Gifford, *Jindyworobak: Towards an Australian Culture* (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1944)).

[519] John Dally, 'The Quest for the Jindyworobaks', *Meanjin* 39, no. 3 (1980); Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity"'. In his 1948 reflections on Jindyworobak's inception, Ingamells recalled that it was Strehlow who had told him 'what the Alchera was, and first drew my attention to native legends' in an apparently formative encounter in 1930–31 at Hermannsburg, during a trip to Central Australia he described as having 'begun my interest in the Aborigines' ('Introduction', 11). John Dally, however, is 'very clear' that the concept of Alcheringa came from Mudie and not Strehlow, a conclusion supported by Strehlow's subsequent denial that the Hermannsburg meeting had ever occurred ('The Quest for the Jindyworobaks', 404; 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 47–48).

[520] John Dally casts doubt on what he regards as the 'minimal' influence of Ingamells and Jindyworobak on Robinson's life or work, concluding that the most successful of the Jindy poets 'came *independently* to a love of the Australian countryside and an understanding of the aboriginals [sic]' ('The Jindyworobak Movement', 373–74, 445–46).

To (re)introduce our main protagonist: Reginald Charles Ingamells (1913–55), Rex to his friends (and everybody else), was born in Orroroo, a railway town in outback South Australia adjacent to Goyder's Line and at the very edge of the so-called 'settled' districts, a location Brian Elliott has described as 'a last-outpost meeting-place of the civilized and the savage'.[521] These geographical circumstances and his paternal descent from a Methodist minister, may well have contributed to Ingamells' interest in what he later described as the 'unique qualities in the Australian environment', as well as to what Peter Kirkpatrick has characterised as his 'missionary zeal'.[522] Ingamells would later aim to make good use of these attributes in pursuit of his mission to create an 'indigenous' Australian idiom.[523]

These material and personal bases were reinforced by the historical and structural concerns already outlined and, in combination with a series of subsequent educational encounters and experiences for Ingamells, brought the Jindyworobak program into being. These included a reported encounter with T. G. H. Strehlow on a trip to Central Australia in 1930–31,[524] and the criticism and encouragement he received from Professor L. F. Giblin.[525] In his foreword to Ingamells' first book of verse, *Gumtops* (1935), in what John Dally has described as 'a ludicrously anachronistic paragraph', Giblin stated:

> Australian poets have a long, hard journey before them, though the goal is
> worth the striving. We still need pioneers. They must forget all that they have
> ever learned of the poetry of other lands; shut their ears to all the familiar,
> captivating echoes, and try to give us their first-hand, direct reaction to

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[521] Elliott, 'Introduction', xxiii.

[522] Rex Ingamells, 'Introduction', in *Spoils of Time: Some Poems of the English Speaking Peoples* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1948), xxvii; Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 102.

[523] For Ingamells and other Australian literary figures at the time, 'indigenous' — along with 'native' and the unqualified term 'Australian' — had come to refer to Anglo or settler Australians, while Aboriginal people had come to be known as 'Australian Aborigines', 'Aboriginal natives', or simply 'Aborigines'. This is significant, since it points to one of the main imperatives underlying the Jindyworobak project: settler indigenisation (see Ahluwalia, 'Citizenship and Identity').

[524] While, as already noted, Strehlow would later suggest this encounter had never taken place, his subsequent support for the Jindyworobak program is not in question (see Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 47–48).

[525] See Ingamells, 'Introduction'.

nature and man as they find them in Australia … Such pioneers may in the end do little more than break track for happier successors. It may only be from the ashes of these Sordellos that our Dante will arise.[526]

The incongruity of the final sentence — which Ingamells would have later classified as 'anti-Jindyworobak'[527] — notwithstanding, Giblin's urging was influential on Ingamells' subsequent development of the Jindyworobak creed (indeed the anachronistic final sentence may well have acted as a spur to Ingamells' insistence on an 'indigenous' settler Australian idiom).[528] Giblin offered only tepid endorsement of Ingamells' volume but commended the young poet for being 'on the right track' in his endeavour.[529]

For his part, Strehlow emphasised the 'spirit of Central Australia' that 'brood[ed]' over parts of *Gumtops*, which he 'enjoyed … greatly', having 'derived much benefit and encouragement from my conversation with one who is under the spell of the Central Australian landscape just as I am and ever shall be'. Describing the volume as 'a most enjoyable book … contain[ing] some of the best lines of Australian verse that have as yet been written', Strehlow praised '[t]he young poet' as a 'true "native"' who had 'succeeded in recapturing much of the spirit of this enigmatical country'.[530] The instructive correspondences, continuities and discontinuities between the social evolutionism of Baldwin Spencer and Strehlow's ostensibly more sympathetic 'salvage linguistics' will be returned to in Chapter 4.[531]

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[526] Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 36; L. F. Giblin, 'Foreword', in *Gumtops*, ed. Rex Ingamells (Adelaide: F. W. Preece & Sons, 1935), x.

[527] See Rex Ingamells, 'Note', *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1944): n.p., and below.

[528] Ingamells later wrote to William Hart-Smith that 'Jindyworobak … took its spring … in Professor Giblin's criticism of my early verse-efforts', crediting him with the inspiration for 'environmental values' and as 'the bloke who made it possible' (Letter to William Hart-Smith, 21 August, 1943, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

[529] Giblin, 'Foreword', x.

[530] T. G. H. Strehlow, Letter to Rex Ingamells, 7 April, 1935, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

[531] Philip Jones, 'Strehlow, Theodor George Henry (Ted) (1908–1978)', in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.), n.p.

For now, it is important to note Ingamells' most influential and formative encounters in the literary realm, including the spat between Vance Palmer and Professor Cowling covered in the previous chapter and, in 1936, his reading of the first section of Stephensen's *Foundations*, written in response to the Palmer/Cowling controversy. Stephensen's essay directed him backwards, to D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, from which Ingamells 'gained a strong sense of the primaeval in Australian nature [but] … rejected Lawrence's view of strangeness in the Spirit of the Place', since his 'own first-hand experience of outback life made it familiar' to him.[532] Ingamells also rejected Stephensen's suggestion that 'imported English culture is the most important element in Australian culture', protesting that Stephensen 'was not Australian enough'![533]

It was also in 1936 that Ingamells first read James Devaney's appropriately — albeit inaccurately — entitled collection of short stories, *The Vanished Tribes*, from the glossary of which he 'adapted' the originally hyphenated term 'Jindy-worobak', a term Devaney 'assured' him had belonged to an unspecified 'Queensland tribe' and glossed as meaning 'to annex, to join'.[534] In its original form, 'Jindi woraback' appeared in Daniel Bunce's *Language of the Aborigines of the Colony of Victoria*, first published in 1851, where it was defined as meaning 'annex, to join together' and apparently attributed to the 'Melbourne tribe' (a subsequent collection compiled for the Government of Victoria clarifies that Bunce's vocabulary 'appears to relate almost exclusively to the dialects of the Yarra Yarra and Coast tribes', most likely the Wurundjeri) and from which it was subsequently lifted by Devaney.[535] Tellingly, Ingamells apparently evidenced little interest in its etymology, choosing the term simply because it was 'Aboriginal', 'outlandish according to

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[532] Ingamells, 'Introduction', 10–11.

[533] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 12; Ingamells, 'Introduction', 10.

[534] Rex Ingamells, 'Jindyworobak', *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1945): 63; Rex Ingamells, 'Extract from a Letter to Miles Franklin, 16 March 1948', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 221.

[535] Daniel Bunce, *Language of the Aborigines of the Colony of Victoria, and Other Australian Districts*, 2nd ed. (Geelong: Thomas Brown, 1859), 2. See R. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria: With Notes Relating to the Habits of the Natives of Other Parts of Australia and Tasmania* (Melbourne: John Ferres, 1878) on the issue of attribution, and R. M. W. Dixon, 'Australian Aboriginal Words in Dictionaries: A History', *International Journal of Lexicography* 21, no. 2 (2008) on Bunce as Devaney's source.

fashionable literary tastes', and possessed an 'apt symbolism for its meaning … denoting synthesis of our European cultural heritage with our Australian heritage'.[536]

In 1937, Ingamells took his first tentative steps towards outlining his theory of 'environmental values' for a public audience, in response to Giblin's criticisms and the exigencies of his various other educational encounters and experiences, in a lecture delivered to the English Association in Adelaide. The Chairman at the time was Professor J. I. M. Stewart, the same Professor Stewart who would go on to introduce his Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture with the infamous statement quoted in the introduction: 'I am most grateful to the Commonwealth Literary Fund for providing the funds to give this lecture on Australian Literature, but unfortunately they have neglected to provide any Literature — I will lecture therefore on *Kangaroo* by D. H. Lawrence'.[537] Ingamells later recalled of his own 1937 lecture: 'The opinions expressed by speakers in the audience were, for the most part, vigorously dissentient'.[538] The lecture was subsequently published as the editorial for the first issue of the first series of Ingamells' twice-aborted periodical *Venture* and would later become part of *Conditional Culture*, an essay which itself, John Dally has speculated, may have been lifted from Ingamells' 1936 MA thesis on the topic of 'Australian History as a Background to Australian Literature'.[539] Ingamells' thesis, tellingly, had been rejected the previous year — after Professor G. V. Portus, Chair of Political Science and History, 'consulted' with one Professor Stewart — on the grounds that 'his subject had not been approved'.[540]

The purported 'lack of history' and (therefore) 'background' for Australian literature that we can only assume informed the university's rejection of Ingamells' topic resonates with what Peter Pierce has termed the '*topos* of colonial absences', and provided the very basis for the derisory arguments of Professor Cowling's that had sparked *Foundations*

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[536] Ingamells, 'Letter to Miles Franklin', 221.
[537] Dutton, *Out in the Open*, 90.
[538] Ingamells, 'Jindyworobak', 63.
[539] Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 60–61.
[540] Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 103. See Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 59–62.

and at least partly inspired Ingamells in the first place.[541] Both Stephensen and Ingamells produced their own histories of settler Australia's national origins and development in idiosyncratic attempts to find means of addressing this apparent deficit vis-à-vis the metropole.[542] Ingamells' accounts conformed to the pattern of erasure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history so clearly encapsulated in W. E. H. Stanner's conception of the 'great Australian silence'.[543] While the first dismissed Indigenous people as 'never [having] proved a considerable obstacle to settlement', the second wrote over them entirely in advocating for 'a much stronger public appreciation of indigenous cultural factors' as the basis for 'the rich realization of Australian life' it anticipated.[544]

Stephensen, on the other hand, included a lengthy section on Australian 'prehistory', covering 'at least a million years', which he then incorporated into his national(ist) narrative as a means of insisting that 'far from being a "new" country', Australia is 'really a very old country'.[545] Stephensen implored us not to 'forget the Old People, the Very Old People' and, having thoroughly romanticised Indigenous peoples' 'prehistoric' existence, proceeded to recount the inevitable march of European imperialism until ultimately '[t]he Dreaming Times of our Aborigines … draw[s] to an end'.[546] While clear that we should 'sigh at the passing of the Old Australian People', Stephensen closes Part One heralding '[a] New Australia … in the making: the history of the Whitefellows in

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[541] Peter Pierce, *Absences* (Armidale: University of New England, 1993), 3. This continued to be a bone of contention for both parties, with Stephensen expressing his disbelief in a 1941 letter to Ingamells that there was still 'no Professor of Australian History or of Australian Literature at any one of the six Australian Universities … No wonder Australia has "no history" and "no literature"!' (Letter to Rex Ingamells).

[542] See Percy R. Stephensen, 'The Foundations of History in Australia', 1937, MLMSS 1284, Box 47, P. R. Stephensen – Papers and Pictorial Material, ca. 1905–1971, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney; Rex Ingamells, *From Phillip to McKell: The Story of Australia* (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1949); Rex Ingamells, *Because Men Went Hungry: An Essay on the Uncertainty of Australian Prestige* (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1951).

[543] Stanner, 'After the Dreaming'.

[544] Ingamells, *From Phillip to McKell*, n.p.; Ingamells, *Because Men Went Hungry*, 33.

[545] Stephensen, 'The Foundations of History', 1–3.

[546] Ibid., 78.

our land'.[547] His project of distinction and indigenisation via penetration and appropriation could not be more explicit.[548]

Tellingly, Manning Clark, having completed his MA thesis on Alexis de Tocqueville (whose account, in *Democracy in America*, of 'a people without history in a place without history' has been described as a 'foundational text of settler political traditions') subsequently reflected: 'In the late forties and early 50s, the historical map of Australia was almost a blank: I had to set out on a journey without maps'.[549] Clark too, throughout that period and after, denied the influence of Indigenous 'culture' on the development of Australian 'civilisation', distinguishing between these states in evolutionary terms, a dismissal for which he subsequently and famously apologised (in 1984, in the wake of the second wave of indigenising settler nationalism that emerged after 1967).

Eventually, after a few false starts, in 1938, with the publication of Ingamells' manifesto, *Conditional Culture,* the formation of an official Jindyworobak Club and the establishment of the annual *Jindyworobak Anthology*, the Jindyworobak Movement was founded. In *Conditional Culture,* Ingamells outlined the aims of the Jindyworobak program as follows:

> 'Jindyworobak' is an aboriginal word meaning 'to annex, to join' and I mean to coin it for a particular use. The Jindyworobaks … are those individuals who are endeavouring to free Australian art from whatever alien influences trammel it, that is, to bring it into proper contact with its material. They are the few who seriously realize that an Australian culture depends on the fulfilment and sublimation of certain definite conditions, namely:
>
> 1. A clear recognition of environmental values.
> 2. The debunking of much nonsense.

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547 Ibid., 6, 119.
548 On the other hand, Australia's apparent 'historylessness' has often been turned precisely to the advantage of penetrationist forms of settler nationalist historiography (see Veracini, 'Historylessness').
549 Veracini, *Settler Colonialism,* 79; McKenna, *An Eye for Eternity*, 250.

3. An understanding of Australia's history and traditions, primaeval, colonial, and modern.[550]

Ingamells defined 'environmental values' as encapsulating 'the distinctive qualities of an environment which cannot be satisfactorily expressed in conventional terms that suit other environments'.[551] 'Environmental values', as employed by Ingamells, was not used in the common contemporary sense of 'the environment' as 'the natural world', and did not carry the universalist connotations it appears to today. It was used and understood, rather, in its original, multiple and relational sense to denote 'the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant' — or, in this case, Australian culture — 'lives or operates'.[552] 'Environmental values', Elliott observed, refer to 'the relationship, subjective or objective, between a man and the world about him';[553] the values, that is, of Ingamells' — and Australian settler culture's — physical and geographical surroundings and their individual and collective relationships and connections with them.

John Dally offers an impressively clear precis of Ingamells' less than clear essay:

> Australian culture has always been be-devilled by the influence of European, particularly English, culture. The Bulletin attempt to break away from this was superficial, jingoistic and larrikin and therefore hardly cultural, although it was better than the slavishness of other eras. Culture is partly a matter of merging into, loving one's environment. Australians have no option but to love the Australian environment (it is very beautiful in its own way) and to cease to rely upon word pictures reminiscent of an alien environment. Similarly, culture is partly a matter of the historical and traditional background that one inherits simply by being born into a community. Australians may have little of this but that is no excuse for

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[550] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 4–5.
[551] Ibid., 11.
[552] Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary*.
[553] Elliott, 'Introduction', xxvii.

ignoring what we have or for relying upon a history or tradition unrelated to our country. Once again, words or word-pictures suggestive of such associations should not be used. On the other hand we should recognise that our own culture has been influenced by others and, in fact contains 'countless exotic elements' which we may, of course, adapt to suit the individuality of our nation. One hitherto ignored element of indigenous culture is that practised by the aborigine [sic]. It is our duty to be aware of this culture, to study it and to use it as a kind of mulch in which 'must spread the roots of our culture'. The Jindyworobaks therefore believe in joining Australian art with its material, Australia, by making it clear the essential nature of the Australian environment and using terms appropriate to it, by refusing to be awed by overseas cultural patronage, and by understanding Australian historical tradition from the aboriginal [sic] primaeval to the modern.[554]

Ingamells' program was formulated in response to the various literary and educational encounters just outlined and traced two particular threads of central importance to any attempt to understand him and his movement. First, against the Anglocentrism of Cowling and even the assertive (though not assertive enough for Ingamells) nationalism of Stephensen, Ingamells argued that while Australia's European inheritance was important, it was not and could not be the most important element in developing an 'indigenous' Australian culture, since it was 'imported' and therefore 'alien' to the Australian environment and its cultural conditions. Second, against Lawrence and following from the first, that Australia's 'unique' environment and the Aboriginal cultures he described as 'closely bound in every way' with it were not strange, as Lawrence had claimed, but familiar to those, like himself, who had never known anything else.[555] They could and would, indeed they must, provide the source and

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[554] Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 79.
[555] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 17.

inspiration for the development of a correspondingly unique 'indigenous' Australian culture. Ingamells' conflation of Australian lands and peoples is not incidental to his program, nor to the broader project to which it belongs, as elaborated below. This second thread was, in part, an unavoidable reaction to the first; yet it was also a unique response on Ingamells' part to his geographical circumstances and experiences.

In framing his objections in this way, Ingamells was refuting the claims of those authors and critics — those he classified as holding 'fashionable literary tastes'[556] — who claimed that literature in general, and poetry in particular, were universal in essence and should be adjudged according to existing universal (that is, European) standards. He was also repudiating the perspective of those who, however much they may have emphasised the importance of an 'indigenous' settler national culture, could see no value or promise in the living cultures of the Indigenous peoples of the continent for the purpose of national cultural construction. These were very often the same people and, as the following outline will attest, his approach duly provoked their considerable ire.

There were, of course, other conflicts in which Ingamells became embroiled, perhaps most prominent among them the spat between himself and Douglas Stewart of *The Bulletin*, who studiously ignored the existence of the Jindyworobaks following a public falling out in 1941, but also the mutually suspicious relationship between Ingamells and Clem Christesen, the editor of *Meanjin* described by Peter Kirkpatrick as 'otherwise sympathetic', who objected to what he implied were the 'doctrinaire' and 'chauvinistic' elements of the Jindyworobak program yet nevertheless described himself as 'Jindyworobak … in spirit'.[557] These were largely a result of what Dally has described as the '[e]normous enthusiasms and rivalries' generated between start-up periodicals and their respective editors in the literary milieu Peter Coleman would subsequently

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[556] Ingamells, 'Letter to Miles Franklin', 221.

[557] Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 101; Clem Christesen, Letter to Kenneth Gifford, 3 January, 1944, MS 10098, Kenneth H. Gifford Correspondence, 1941–1944, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

characterise as constituting 'literary gang warfare'.[558] Yet these conflicts reveal little about the substance of, or imperatives behind, Jindyworobak (although they are revealing of Ingamells', as well as Stewart's, if not Christesen's, tendency towards intemperance in dealing with members of rival 'gangs'). Instead, the following discussion will focus on several conflicts revolving around the settler-colonial relations outlined above, in relation to which the Jindyworobaks, and Ingamells in particular, adopted an original, albeit unsuccessful, position.

Universalist objections to the Jindyworobak program

Contemporary critics were not always dismissive in their responses to the Jindyworobaks, and even when they were, they often moderated or modified their position later on. More sympathetic views were in evidence in the *Jindyworobak Review* of 1948, which, to its credit, published these positive perspectives alongside criticisms from the likes of Brian Elliott, amongst others.[559] Yet those critics writing from the universalist (read Europeanist) position typically employed similar critical strategies against the Jindyworobaks. The first was to assert the relative exoticism of Indigenous cultures and languages to European Australians, as compared with the European traditions Ingamells deemed 'alien' to Australia, and to emphasise Ingamells' apparent preference for the former *at the expense* of the latter.

It was on this basis that in 1941 A. D. Hope launched a scathing attack on the Jindyworobaks in *Southerly*. Hope began his review, entitled 'Culture Corroboree' and described by Bruce Clunies-Ross as exemplifying the 'line of attack which was probably the most damaging',[560] by suggesting that '[t]he Jindyworobaks might be described as "the Boy Scout School of Poetry"'.[561] Against Victor Kennedy's suggestion that 'our poets

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[558] Quoted in Dally, *The Jindyworobaks*, 8.

[559] Rex Ingamells et al., eds, *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948* (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948).

[560] Clunies-Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks', 59.

[561] A. D. Hope, 'Culture Corroboree', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 248.

too often write as if they were still living in England and so write badly, for what they write is second-hand and imitative', Hope asserted that

> to the majority of Australians, the point of view and culture of the Aboriginal is still more alien and remote, and the poet who tries to write like a second-hand Abo. is no more likely to produce sincere work than the poet who writes like a second-hand Englishman.[562]

In 1956, Hope reaffirmed what he regarded as the implausibility of indigenist appropriation, writing in a review of Roland Robinson's *The Feathered Serpent* that '[t]he aboriginal [sic] view of the world is passing away. It cannot be grafted onto our own civilization'.[563]

In his editorial introducing the issue of *Southerly* in which Hope's demolition appeared, R. G. Howarth asserted similar misconceptions concerning the Jindyworobak program, objecting to their insistence that Australian writers 'must disown Europe, think and write only of our surroundings and true past' and suggesting, in a familiar move, that the Australia of the Jindyworobaks

> is that of the Aborigines, not that of the so-called usurpers, the white men; according to some of them — if this is not unfair — to be true Australians we must trace our culture back even to Alcheringha [sic], the ancient native 'dreamtime' or period of primitive bliss.[564]

In a similar vein, Max Harris, short-lived founding member of the Jindyworobaks and later earnest and Angry Penguin, in a 1943 article published in *Meanjin*, took umbrage with the Jindyworobaks' 'Aboriginalizing' of English and their use of what he called 'the "exoticism" of foreign verbiage'.[565] This was despite Harris having published his own

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[562] Ibid., 249.
[563] Hope, *Native Companions*, 86.
[564] R. G. Howarth, 'Editorial [*Southerly*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1941]', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 252.
[565] Max Harris, 'Dance Little Wombat', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 261.

first book of verse, *Gift of Blood*, in 1940 under the Jindyworobak imprint.[566] Brian Elliott,

also involved with the movement in Adelaide in the lead-up to its formation and later

describing himself as a 'potential Jindy',[567] reiterated a similar objection in 1947, calling

'the *Alchera*' concept an 'exotic fancy' for 'white Australians'. Elliott founded his claims

in an objection to the Jindyworobaks' supposed 'contention that we must forget our

European origins and find some way of accepting the black gods', an idea Elliott

described as 'absurd', and 'confused and errant in the extreme'.[568] The following year, in

his contribution to the *Jindyworobak Review*, entitled 'Jindydammerung' — despite

disclaiming that his title was 'not to be taken as a sneer or smirk' — Elliott derided the

Jindyworobak program as 'facile' and a 'mistake', albeit an 'interesting' one that had had

a 'notably creative influence'.[569]

These critics typically countered Ingamells' assumed anti-Europeanism with assertions,

or assumptions, that Australia was and remained European in essence and that its

European inheritance was both superior to and more central than any secondary

'environmental' influences, European Australians having only recently 'settled' the land.

So Hope, in response to what he termed 'the series of emotional outbursts masquerading

as an argument' comprising Ian Mudie's contribution to the 1941 collection of

Jindyworobak essays, *Cultural Cross-Section* — in which Mudie claimed that '[w]e are

merely aliens in our own land, and nothing else'[570] — stated unequivocally that '[w]e

have created a new European country in Australia and we belong to the European

nations even though we do not live in Europe'.[571]

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[566] Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 107.
[567] Brian Elliott, 'Jindydammerung', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948*, eds Rex Ingamells et al.
(Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948), 76.
[568] Brian Elliott, 'Breath of Alchera', in *Singing to the Cattle and Other Australian Essays* (Melbourne:
Georgian House, 1947), 10, 5–8.
[569] Elliott, 'Jindydammerung', 76–80.
[570] Ian Mudie, 'Politics and Aboriginal Culture', in *Cultural Cross-Section*, ed. John Ingamells (Adelaide:
Jindyworobak, 1941), 29.
[571] Hope, 'Culture Corroboree', 249.

Harris, for his part, in a 1939 article published in the twice-failed Jindyworobak periodical *Venture*, contrasted the 'prejudiced' and 'often … anti-intellectual' artistic climate in Australia with a progressive, modern Europe, 'in relation' to which he urged the Australian poet to place 'himself [sic]'.[572] Here, Harris objected to Jindyworobak on the basis that it 'distorts, for no logical reason, the Australian's relation to the movements of attitude and outlook that are taking place right through European poetry'. He did, however, and somewhat paradoxically, offer his praise and support to Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks (of which he was still a member) 'unreservedly' for 'arriv[ing] at a poetry which *unknowingly* parallels in approach the poetry of the new-world attitude' through 'their intense concentration on Australia'.[573]

Two years later, following his departure from the Jindyworobaks, Harris penned a 'bad-mannered and ill-tempered' response to a survey initiated by Jindyworobak Victor Kennedy entitled 'Whither Australian Poetry?', intended to inquire into the very possibilities of the same and to establish precisely the 'relation' to 'the wakening attitude and new outlook in European poetry' Harris himself had earlier urged.[574] In his response — which opened with the line '[w]ho the hell cares' and contained a thinly-veiled dig at the Jindyworobaks in the suggestion that 'the air smells of dilettantism and literary clubs. AND I DON'T LIKE THAT SORT OF SMELL' — Harris claimed that he and Patrick White were 'probably the only internationally acknowledged Australian exponents of new verse techniques' and that those 'few others … imbued with a contemporary spirit and genuine creative power' were 'wast[ing] it because they are technically inefficient'. 'The rest', Harris concluded, 'including 90% of the Jindys and

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[572] Max Harris, 'An Approach to Australian Poetry', *Venture: Jindyworobak Quarterly Pamphlet* 1, no. 2 (1939): 12–13.

[573] Ibid., 14, emphasis added.

[574] Max Harris, Letter to Victor Kennedy [response to 'Whither Australian poetry?' questionnaire], 6 March, 1941, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne; Harris, 'An Approach to Australian Poetry', 13.

other literary bodies (or should I say corpses) just stagnate on, and call the smell of decomposition … POETRY'.[575]

A corresponding strategy employed by universalists was the assertion — against Ingamells' emphasis on the importance of 'environmental values' — that poetry should remain universal in nature and should be judged as such. Harris, for example, insisted that '[t]he sole issue of any importance so far as the literature of this country goes is the poetic quality of the poetry' and that the poet's 'fundamental environment is himself'.[576] From a different but overlapping position, Elliott stated in 1947 that '[p]oetry that is real and actual can only have its actuality because everybody knows and sympathizes with the basis of its making', clearly not the case, as Elliott observed, for the 'exoticisms' with which the Jindyworobaks were concerned.[577] These strategies are related, of course, so that the claim that Australian poetry and literature should remain universal in character most often represented a claim for the precedence of Australia's European inheritance over and above its 'environment' — its settler-colonial surroundings.

As James Devaney objected in the 1948 *Jindyworobak Review*,

> critics … say that … [a]rt is never merely local — not nowadays. And they
> would add that the best modern European writing has the universal appeal,
> while our Australian gumtree school continues to write local stuff … The
> answer to that, of course, is that the best work is always both … Yeats was
> right when he said that there is no fine literature without nationality.[578]

These are themes familiar to anyone acquainted with the history of Australian literature and literary criticism, and appear more than once in the rebuttals of Jindyworobaks and their supporters to the criticisms commonly lodged against them. Yet as Devaney

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[575] Harris, Letter to Victor Kennedy, n.p.
[576] Harris, 'Dance Little Wombat', 260, 262.
[577] Elliott, 'Breath of Alchera', 10.
[578] James Devaney, 'Foreword', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948*, eds Rex Ingamells et al. (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948), 3–4.

continues, it is '[i]n Australia alone, it seems, [that] we are asked to be national nonentities in our writing. If such theories had their way we would be the only people in the world without a genuine national literature'.[579] Stephensen, along with many others, would have concurred.

'Australia First' or 'Australia Only'?

John Dally has suggested that these misconceptions of Ingamells' anti-Europeanism and Australian isolationism and the vigorous criticism they provoked derived primarily from his association with Stephensen and the Australia First Movement from around 1941.[580] This was certainly the clear implication of R. G. Howarth's editorial introducing the issue of *Southerly* in which Hope's scathing review appeared. Here, Howarth asserted that '[t]he "Jindyworobaks" … believe in "Australia First" — in fact, one might almost say, "Australia Only"'.[581] Adding weight to this argument, Howarth's editorial, and Hope's review, followed closely a letter from Ingamells to Howarth in which Ingamells had, in his own words, 'unsuspectingly' told Howarth of his 'enthusiasm for Australia First'.[582] It does, therefore, appear to be the case that the political affiliations between Jindyworobak and the Australia First Movement from 1941 helped to bring what Dally has termed the 'night of the long knives' down upon them.[583] If nothing else, it certainly helped push them into the spotlight as what Dally describes as the 'whipping boy for the "heavies"'.[584] Bernard Smith, whose criticisms of the Jindyworobaks are explored in further detail below, subsequently admitted that the 'basic reason' for his

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[579] Ibid., 4.

[580] Ingamells was clearly associated from around this time, writing to Stephensen in July 1941 that 'I've arrived … in the arms of "Australia First"' (Letter to P. R. Stephensen) and admitting to Victor Kennedy in August 1941 that 'I have joined hands with Stephensen … politically' (Letter to Victor Kennedy, 20 August, 1941, MS 9419, Victor Kennedy Papers, 1934–1977, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne). Stephensen responded to Ingamells suggestively: 'now you are in my Tribe as securely as such an initiation ceremony can place you there; and I am in yours' (Letter to Rex Ingamells).

[581] Howarth, 'Editorial', 252.

[582] Rex Ingamells, Letter to Victor Kennedy, 21 March, 1942, MS 9419, Victor Kennedy Papers, 1934–1977, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

[583] Dally, *The Jindyworobaks*, 12.

[584] Dally, 'The Quest for the Jindyworobaks', 399.

having been 'so critical of the group' in 1945 was what he conceived as 'their pro-fascist position'.[585]

However, this was clearly not the only factor at play. A comprehensive examination of the complex literary, cultural and political relations between the various Jindyworobaks (including first and foremost Ian Mudie, but also Ingamells himself) and Australia First (most notably 'Inky' Stephensen) is beyond the scope of this chapter. Even the extent of Stephensen's influence on the formation of Ingamells' own ideas and, for Stephensen, its acknowledgement, has been a matter of some contention, both at the time and since.[586] Yet two points are worth making before proceeding.

Firstly, as Elliott perceived in his 1948 criticisms of the Jindyworobaks, lodged on the basis of the political 'implications' rather than *objectives* or *intentions* of the Jindyworobak program, politics was only ever of secondary concern to what was and always remained a literary-cultural movement. As Elliott remarked, '[t]he Jindies had no political platform' and their 'programme was imaginative only, and not political'.[587] Vincent Buckley agreed, differentiating between 'the Communist poets', whose engagements with 'national subjects, national stereotypes, even allegedly "national" verse-forms' are purely political, and 'the Jindyworobaks', who 'do so for a reason which seems religious

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[585] Bernard Smith, 'Creators and Catalysts: The Modernisation of Australian Indigenous Art', in *Antipodean Modern: Cultural Responses to Modernisation in Australia, 1900–2000*, eds Tim Dolin and Neil Levi (Perth: Network Books, 2006), 23.

[586] For Ingamells' own perspective, which considerably downplays Stephensen's influence, at least on the early formation of his ideas, see 'Introduction'. He later wrote to fellow Jindy William Hart-Smith that 'Jindyworobak was stimulated by Foundations, but it took its spring somewhere entirely different, and anterior … If ever a name is mentioned as the original source of Jindyworobak, the bloke who made it possible, it's not Stephensen but Giblin' (Letter to William Hart-Smith, n.p.). Others have perceived a more direct connection between Stephensen's *The Foundations of Culture in Australia* and Ingamells' *Conditional Culture*, including several of the sources cited in Chapter 2, as well as Stephensen himself. The latter wrote to Victor Kennedy in 1941 to insist that 'my book … antedated the Jindyworobak flaunted banners, and provoked Rex I. to write his "Conditional Culture", which was expressly a reply to my book' (Percy R. Stephensen, Letter to Victor Kennedy, 30 July, 1941, MS 9419, Victor Kennedy Papers, 1934–1977, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne). Dally concludes, in characteristically reasonable fashion: 'Ingamells does manage to borrow from him selectively and to strike out in a fairly distinctive direction; it would be unfair to charge him with plagiarism. On the other hand, Ingamells was almost certainly inclined to minimise Stephensen's influence, in comparison to Giblin's' ('The Jindyworobak Movement', 45).

[587] Elliott, 'Jindydammerung', 79.

rather than political. And this quasi-religious intention colours all the local detail of their verse'.[588]

Regardless, as McQueen has observed, in this historical period, 'Australia First was based on the appeal to put Australian interests above those of Britain. In 1939-41, this meant keeping troops here'.[589] This was, at least in 1941, a less controversial claim than it was to become in the wake of Pearl Harbour, the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin, though it nevertheless provoked the predictable ire of those I am calling the colonialists. And Ingamells had good reason to support it. As he wrote to Stephensen in July 1941, '[p]olitically I thought not at all until my brother John joined the R.A.A.F.'[590] Furthermore, as McQueen proceeds to point out, '[o]verlaying' what he terms the 'political aspects' of the Australia First platform 'was the growing demand for a distinctive Australian culture, in which Stephensen played a leading part, and of which Jindyworobak was merely the most aggressive manifestation'. It is worth observing that after Miles' death on 10 January 1942, Stephensen rapidly reduced the AFM platform from its initial Fifty-Point Plan of May 1940 and its subsequent iteration comprising a more 'innocuous ten points', to 'a more urgent and volatile three, including peace with Japan'. Towards the end of January 1942, he further reduced the platform to just two points: '1 — Recall to Australia of all Australian Armed Forces; 2 — National Independence for Australia'.[591]

Secondly, while political objections amongst literary Australians against Stephensen's increasingly isolationist programme — and, by extension, his supporters and associates — were by no means unusual by 1941, Howarth's editorial in fact lodged similar objections against Ingamells to those arising both before and after the fleeting affiliation between Ingamells and Australia First. Already, by 1939, Ingamells regarded himself as

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[588] Vincent Buckley, 'The Image of Man in Australian Poetry', in *The Writer in Australia: A Collection of Literary Documents, 1856 to 1964*, ed. John Barnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1969), 289.
[589] McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, 130.
[590] Ingamells, Letter to P. R. Stephensen, 2. See note 580 on Ingamells' Australia First connections.
[591] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 216.

having 'experienced sufficient of critical attitudes in certain quarters' and felt sufficiently persecuted on the basis of his founding efforts — expressed principally and most thoroughly in *Conditional Culture* — to come to his own defence, railing against the 'ridiculous' proposition, 'assumed in some quarters', that 'we are against the appreciation of overseas art, or that we regard the only suitable subjects for Australian art to be typically Australian subjects'.[592]

Tellingly, in his editorial, and in an apparent attempt to clarify his own journal's position in relation to the apparent excesses of Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks, Howarth insisted that '[t]his annual harbours no work that is alien to Australia in any way'.[593] He continued:

> The title of the magazine was deliberately chosen to suggest its Australian character; and also, be it noted, chosen with some thought of its relation to England. The organ of an 'Australian English Association' could not well do otherwise than attempt to maintain a relationship which, culturally, is surely all-important.[594]

In one final point of professed contrast, Howarth contended that '*Southerly*, so long as is possible, will remain non-exclusive, liberal towards the English as well as the Australian: will welcome both corroboree chants and critical appraisements of Joyce'.[595] Crucially, these apparent clarifications of purpose do not differentiate themselves from those of Ingamells in any meaningful way, since Howarth is here merely reiterating, or possibly reframing, Ingamells' own suggestions regarding the establishment of an Australian literary tradition full of 'Australian character' and free from 'alien influences' — albeit with some unavoidable consideration of its relation to England, a relationship which, though he might dispute the 'all', Ingamells would certainly concede was 'important' —

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[592] Rex Ingamells, 'Foreword', *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1947): n.p.; Rex Ingamells, 'Editorial', *Venture: Jindyworobak Quarterly Pamphlet* 1, no. 1 (1939): 3.
[593] Howarth, 'Editorial', 252.
[594] Ibid., 253.
[595] Ibid.

yet welcoming of critical and literary approaches drawing from and addressing European, 'indigenous' and Indigenous traditions.

Jindyworobak reconciliations

Each of these critics would subsequently soften their stance towards the Jindyworobaks, with Hope even contributing to the *Jindyworobak Anthology* in 1943 and 1944 and in 1974 prefacing the reprint of his review contained in his collection of criticism — *Native Companions* — with the comment that '[s]ome amends are due … to these Jindyworobaks … I made the mistake of supposing that if a case is badly argued, there is nothing in it at all'.[596] In 1986, he conceded that 'despite its muddled thinking and its impossible demands on artists, it was a healthy reaction against overseas domination of our ideas'.[597] It should, however, also be noted that Hope maintained his misconception of the Jindyworobak creed, asserting in his 1986 reflections on 'the advent of an Australian literature' that

> the so-called Jindyworobak movement of the Thirties was so excessive that
> it failed to take on. It urged Australians to cut all their ties with the white
> man's culture and to develop a new art and literature based on that of the
> aborigines [sic].[598]

Bruce Clunies-Ross, author of one of the more convincing analyses of the Jindyworobak position, offered a fascinating and insightful rebuttal of Hope's continuing misconceptions in a letter published in a subsequent issue of the *London Review of Books*.[599] His reply began in unorthodox fashion:

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[596] Hope, *Native Companions*, 44.

[597] A. D. Hope, 'A. D. Hope Reflects on the Advent of an Australian Literature', *London Review of Books* 8, no. 15 (1986): 10.

[598] Ibid.

[599] Hope's article and Clunies-Ross' reply are available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v08/n15/ad-hope/ad-hope-reflects-on-the-advent-of-an-australian- literature (accessed 13 June, 2018). See Bruce Clunies-Ross, 'Letters', *London Review of Books* 8, no. 18 (1986). For Clunies-Ross' previous analysis, see 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks'.

SIR: A few years ago I wrote an essay in which I attributed to Professor A. D. Hope (amongst others) the misconception that the mainly South Australian poets of the Jindyworobak movement wanted to assimilate Australian culture, and especially Australian poetry, to Aboriginal culture … However, in reconsidering the subject recently, I decided that I had done Professor Hope an injustice: it seemed that in his hostile review of books by Rex Ingamells and Ian Mudie published over forty years ago in *Southerly*, and certainly in his comments on the piece when he collected it in *Native Companions* … he had grasped the central point of the Jindyworobak idea, even if he disagreed with it. I was therefore surprised to find Professor Hope repeating what I originally took to be a misconception in his recent review of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*.[600]

Clunies-Ross went on to restate the Jindyworobak position as one 'based on the simple idea that there was a disjunction between the culture which Europeans brought to Australia and the environment in which they found themselves', an idea whose lineage he traced as far back as Barron Field's *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales* (1825) and all the way forward to Judith Wright's *Because I Was Invited* (1975) in order to demonstrate that this was '[f]ar from … a new or "extreme" idea'.[601]

It is ironic that one of the more effective responses to Hope's criticisms, and corrective to his continuing misapprehensions, was contained within the oft-quoted passages from his own poem *Australia*, '[w]here second-hand Europeans pullulate / Timidly on the edge of alien shores'. Here, Hope appealed for a 'savage and scarlet' spirit to emerge from the central desert and, turning 'gladly home / From the lush jungle of modern thought', hoped against Hope that 'still from the desert prophets come' to free us from 'the chatter of cultured apes / Which is called civilisation over there'.[602] This poem, as

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[600] Clunies-Ross, 'Letters', n.p.
[601] Ibid.
[602] A. D. Hope, 'Australia', *Meanjin Papers* 2, no. 1 (1943).

Brian Elliott has pointed out, would undoubtedly have been welcomed by Ingamells had it been submitted for consideration towards the annual *Jindyworobak Anthology* as what Ingamells would have classified as 'positive Jindyworobak verse'.[603] Moreover, as David Carter and Bridget Griffen-Foley point out, Hope's own expression of a 'radical Australian originality links him unexpectedly to the Jindyworobaks and forward to a poet such as Les Murray', the aforementioned 'Last of the Jindyworobaks'.[604] As Peter Kirkpatrick queries, when 'the Augustan A. D. Hope nicknamed the Jindyworobaks "the Boy Scout School of Poetry", did he not remember his own 1939 poem, "Australia"'?[605]

Max Harris, who contributed to the *Jindyworobak Anthology* in each of its first five years (1938–42) and again in 1947, attempted his own unique brand of reconciliation in his piece for the *Jindyworobak Review* — appropriately entitled 'The Importance of Disagreeing' — stating that '[a]lthough I have been one of the most caustic critics' of the Jindyworobak project, 'I have been always fully aware, both of its creative role historically and the valuable elements its theory contains'. Here he noted that the '"Angry Penguins" expressed a reaction to the ideas of Jindyworobak, perhaps extreme in the other direction', and welcomed the friction between the two 'extreme' positions as Blakean 'contraries without which there is no progression'. He concluded by stating that 'Jindyworobak has played a vital role in the modern literature of Australia, particularly in the realm of ontogenesis' and wishing 'Jindyworobak and its courageous founder the

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[603] Elliott, 'Introduction', lxii. Intriguingly, James McAuley's well-known poem 'Terra Australis' *was* published in the *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1943), although the issue in question was edited by the more worldly-minded Flexmore Hudson (see James McAuley, 'Terra Australis', *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1943): 20). Hudson included an 'Editor's Note' to state his support for the Jindyworobak ideal (defined as standing 'for the use of appropriate Australian diction in Australian verse, for the appreciation of our unique natural environment, for an interest in our land's history and for a love of its aborigines [sic]'), but also to insist that he, along with 'many of the writers represented here', was 'not … a member of the Jindyworobak School' ('Editor's Note', *Jindyworobak Anthology* (1943): n.p.). Hudson's selection caused Ingamells quite some consternation, as evident in a series of letters between the pair as the anthology was being compiled and prepared for publication.
[604] David Carter and Bridget Griffen-Foley, 'Culture and Media', in *The Cambridge History of Australia. Volume 2: The Commonwealth of Australia*, eds Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 251; Elliott, 'Editor's Note', 283.
[605] Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity"', 136.

best of luck'.[606] Harris, like Hope, had already turned inwards himself, though in this case towards a different locus of national emergence, to discover an antipodean modernity emerging out of the bush itself. In 1939, Harris had insisted that 'the Australian bush is in the spirit of this new outlook and will find its best expression there'. In spite of what he regarded as Ingamells' inhibiting emphasis on 'environmental values and a purging of diction that is influenced by overseas traditions and prejudices', Harris nevertheless concluded, 'paradoxically enough', that it was the Jindyworobaks who were producing the 'only worthwhile expression' of this 'true spirit of the Australian bush'.[607]

Howarth, a significant and regular contributor to the *Jindyworobak Anthology* over the course of its existence (appearing in eleven issues between 1940 and 1953) went perhaps the furthest in his 1948 contribution to the *Jindyworobak Review*, where he commented that 'the Jindyworobak Movement represents a further stage in the development of the Australian vision'. Unlike Hope, Howarth's understanding of the Jindyworobaks' program had also improved. Now, in place of the misconception that the Jindyworobaks wished Australian writers to 'disown' their European inheritance, Howarth accepted that Ingamells had 'advocated from the beginning what amounts to self-reliance in our writing' and that 'Jindyworobakism stands for the natural Australian outlook, with some emphasis, to secure effect, on what we may call the pre-history of our continent'.[608]

While maintaining the self-defensive proviso that Jindyworobak Australianism had 'sometimes appeared to err into undue isolation from our Antipodes and into over-emphasis on the aboriginal [sic]', Howarth nevertheless continued: 'If Jindyworobak does no more than succeed in removing "poetic" diction for good from our verse, it will have justified its foundation. One other good effect may well be the encouragement of

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[606] Max Harris, 'The Importance of Disagreeing', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948*, eds Rex Ingamells et al. (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948), 74–75.

[607] Harris, 'An Approach to Australian Poetry', 9, 14.

[608] R. G. Howarth, 'Perspective and Prospective', in *Jindyworobak Review, 1938–1948*, eds Rex Ingamells et al. (Melbourne: Jindyworobak, 1948), 91.

an aboriginal literature'. Howarth concluded his paean to the Jindyworobaks' literary patriotism with the entirely Jindyworobak-compatible contention that '[t]he Australian poet of today will find fulfilment only by being himself — in everything. If we are ever to produce a distinctive literature it must be true in all ways … to its immediate origins'.[609] His ultimate acceptance of a Jindyworobak(ish) position was reinforced by his editing of the 1950 *Jindyworobak Anthology*. This is not at all surprising given the pre-existing affinities between Howarth's editorial policy and critical perspective on the one hand, and that of Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks on the other, as highlighted above.

Elliott also, albeit much later, displayed a surprising degree of sensitivity to the intentions of the Jindyworobaks. Introducing his 1979 edited collection *The Jindyworobaks*, a collection which itself helped generate a renewed interest in the movement, Elliott recognised that, as Ingamells saw it,

> the need was to 'annex' or 'join' the white to the black, or the black to the white … [this] was not a desire to invade and conquer. Nor did they design to be conquered: they always retained their white character, shown in the most unmistakeable way in their continuation in the European tradition of lyrical styles.[610]

This is an important statement: Elliott is acknowledging the predicament Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks confronted *as settlers* and their literary movement as an expression of the ambivalence characteristic of the settler situation. Elliott also recognised in this desire to produce a settler–Indigenous synthesis — to chart a new path between and beyond settlers as colonisers and settlers as colonised — the historical imperative that it was precisely at the moment that 'the vision of the old world lost its appeal … [that] the vision of the new one, the immediate experience, grew more compelling'.[611] While he associated this 'vision' with those he had previously termed 'the professed isolationists',

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[609] Ibid.
[610] Elliott, 'Introduction', xxvii–xxviii.
[611] Ibid., xxi.

presumably with P. R. Stephensen principally in mind, he also recognised their 'new Australian myth' as an 'imaginative escape' from 'the catastrophe they knew … was coming'.[612]

Yet the outline above suggests the often-contradictory nature of the universalist criticisms levelled at Ingamells, which were as much as anything else constructed around a misconception of the Jindyworobak program. This was, as others have observed, in part a result of Ingamells' own failures of expression,[613] since his style of prose was both polemical and imprecise. In his early articulations of the Jindyworobak program in particular, he tended towards overstatement in his suggestion that a 'fundamental break … with the spirit of English culture, is the prerequisite for the development of an Australian culture' and that 'Australian literature must, to develop, diverge in important respects from the course taken by the parent literature'. And he would continue to insist on the primacy of Australian environmental values over the 'alien influences' that he felt would otherwise 'trammel' 'indigenous' settler Australian culture (this was, after all, the very basis of his program).[614]

And yet, as Ingamells himself objected, '[i]t is ridiculous to assume — as is assumed in some quarters — that we are against the appreciation of overseas art, or that we regard the only suitable subjects for Australian art to be typically Australian subjects'.[615] There is enough evidence in Ingamells' published statements to refute the contention that he sought to reject Australia's European inheritance in its entirety. Rather, he was often at pains to emphasise its importance, stating, for example, that '[w]e identify ourselves with Australia, which is our Motherland, and English, which is our Mother Tongue', and observing that '[o]ur traditions are twofold. Inextricably woven with the transplanted

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[612] Elliott, 'Jindydammerung', 79.

[613] See, for example, McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, chapter six; also Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', chapter three. Brian Elliott offered the diplomatic suggestion that Ingamells 'might have been more precise and lucid' in the presentation of his ideas ('Introduction', xxvii).

[614] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 6, 12, 4–5.

[615] Ingamells, 'Editorial', 3.

European culture are our experiences of the Australian environment'.[616] Indeed, in *Conditional Culture* Ingamells even conceded that '[s]ome of the greatest Australian literature yet to be may have no local colour at all', and that '[o]ur best poetry must deal with universal themes'.[617] As Humphrey McQueen has observed, Ingamells 'did not close his mind to the rest of the world', and it was this openness that surely lay behind Ingamells' inclusion of even a 'world-minded' intellectual like Flexmore Hudson within the Jindyworobak congregation.[618]

A series of letters sent from R. D. Fitzgerald to Ingamells in 1942–43 illuminates some of the difficulties in the translation and exchange of Jindyworobak ideas that Ingamells' failures of expression produced, but also perhaps the underlying complexities and ambiguities inherent to his project, and indeed to the predicament that project sought to respond to. And yet it also goes to show that in instances where such issues could be overcome, Jindyworobak ideas were themselves less 'extreme' and arguably more commonly held than they otherwise appeared. In a letter dated 22 June 1942, Fitzgerald describes himself to Ingamells as having found 'much fault with Vision', and yet still holding to

> two principles that Vision taught me … as fundamental to thing [sic] I call poetry … (1) keep your eye constantly fixed on the concrete image (2) disregard accidents of geography and concentrate on writing what in matter form and manner conforms with the habits of the country of poetry.[619]

Fitzgerald, almost certainly correctly, surmises that 'no. 1 probably would receive your endorsement, but no. 2 runs flat up against Jindyworobak'. Pointing out that he had 'never written about skylarks, robins in the snow, nightingales, nor even (as a good Visionary) about fauns, satyrs, centaurs or similar hobgoblins', Fitzgerald nevertheless

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616 Ingamells, 'Introduction', 21; Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 17.
617 Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 6.
618 McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, 128; Regan, 'A Cosmopolitan Jindyworobak'.
619 Robert D. Fitzgerald, Letter to Rex Ingamells, 22 June, 1942, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

insisted on reserving the right to do so 'if I want to'. Objecting to Ingamells' expressed 'preference for work of an Australian character', which suggested to him 'that you regard Australian work as preferable from an Australian writer', Fitzgerald continued:

> You stress Australianity. My work is, I think, Australian, but that is an accident. To stress Australianity in poetry means, to my mind, to introduce a second element, a partner, into the idea of poetry, and so to lessen the paramount importance of poetry itself.[620]

Fitzgerald signed off 'to better understanding', for 'which good cause I've written this long, meandering, egotistical, personal parenthetical letter'. Three weeks later, he wrote again, this time conceding a manner of defeat: 'I grant, in fact I am beaten down by, the force of your arguments'. While he still objected to the 'self-conscious' Australianity of the Jindyworobaks — on the grounds that 'the nationalistic or patriotic motif or atmosphere in verse *if deliberately stressed or encouraged* tends to take possession' and thereby lead to 'a stage … when poetry comes to be estimated and assessed for its Australianity rather than for its merits as poetry' — Fitzgerald nevertheless praised Ingamells for the 'grand job' he was doing 'for poetry in Australia'. And yet he still, at this point in time, felt that his own verses 'could never be happy in your company'. Six months later, however, in January of the following year, Fitzgerald forwarded Ingamells 'something of interest: a press-cutting … [of] an article on Henry Lawson … from the Red Page of the Bulletin about 1928'.[621] What follows is worth quoting in full:

> The strange thing is that whereas the author seems to share something of my view, there are passages in it which Rex Ingamells would almost endorse, would endorse I think. I quote the most relevant paragraph:
>
> 'His poetry's reputation has suffered also … from the reaction against over-emphasis on the importance of Australianism. There still survives in some quarters the idea, rampant a few years ago, that poetry written in Australia

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[620] Ibid.

[621] Ibid.

must be Australian poetry, branded with local colour, and, even in its most lyrical moments, tasting strongly of eucalyptus — an idea carried too far, but evolved from the sound enough principle that a man should know what he is writing about and write about what he knows. In antagonism to the narrowness of that Australianism-or-nothing view, there grew recently among a younger generation, tired of an enforced diet of gum-leaves, a distrust of anything resembling provincialism, any tint of locality. There was considerable justification for this reaction, but like many another reaction it over-balanced and had a fatal tendency to put poetry out of touch with external environment [sic], and hence out of touch with the impetus of experience'.

Much of that last sentence might have been written by one Rex Ingamells. As a matter of fact it was signed as is this letter: Robert D. Fitzgerald.[622]

Ultimately, as both Geoffrey Serle and Brian Elliott have emphasised, and as further testament to the nature of the settler predicament as a predicament requiring a response rather than a problem requiring a solution, for all their indigenist striving the Jindyworobaks 'unwittingly reflected the English Georgian poetry they so vehemently condemned', and revealed to Elliott their 'white character … in their continuation in the European tradition of lyrical styles'.[623] As Elliott observed, 'they were lyrical poets, lyrists in the classical, European and even (deny it as they might) the English tradition; and they were never anything else'.[624] Tellingly, Ingamells himself was not unaware of the relative 'exoticism' of Indigenous cultures and traditions to settler Australians, insisting in *Conditional Culture* that in order 'to ensure imaginative truth our writers and

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[622] Robert D. Fitzgerald, Letter to Rex Ingamells, 31 January, 1943, MS 6244, Rex Ingamells Papers, ca. 1933–1952, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

[623] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 129; Elliott, 'Introduction', xxviii.

[624] Elliott, 'Introduction', xxx.

painters must become hard working students of Aboriginal culture, something initially far-removed from the engaging and controlling factors of modern European life'.[625]

Jindyworobak indigenism and anti-indigenist objections

It was not only the universalists who objected to the Jindyworobak program, however. Objections were also raised from the nationalist end of the settler–metropole spectrum, typically reflecting the racism Humphrey McQueen has identified as common to 'literary Australians' at the time.[626] A. A. Phillips, subsequent designator of the 'cultural cringe', for example, ridiculed the Jindyworobaks in a review of the *Jindyworobak Review*, suggesting that '[t]hey dance their war-corroboree alternately chanting "Alcheringa" — which means nothing to most of us, and "Environmental Values" — a phrase which I find about as firm and about as exhilarating as a slab of boarding-house blanc-mange'.[627] These criticisms are not necessarily surprising from Phillips, who can easily be read as an advocate of the 'penetration' approach to settler indigenisation,[628] and his apparent solution is typical of anti-indigenist forms of settler cultural nationalism: that is, that settlers should simply become *'indigenous'* without becoming *Indigenous*. Phillips also commented that the fact that 'these lively young Australians should have reached their middle twenties with so limited a grasp of our literary history was in itself justification for the foundation of an intransigently Australian movement'.[629] Others, including Nettie Palmer, remarked on the same issue.[630]

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[625] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 17. This confirms Ingamells' indigenising imperative: after all, the study of 'Aboriginal culture' he is encouraging here is posited as necessary for 'our' (settler Australians') attainment of 'imaginative truth' rather than for any other purpose.

[626] McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, 125.

[627] Phillips, 'Jindyworobak Review', 65.

[628] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, chapter one.

[629] Phillips, 'Jindyworobak Review', 65.

[630] See Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 23. H. M. Green used Ingamells' apparent ignorance of 'our literary history' to insist that '[h]e was flogging a dead horse or, as he would probably have preferred to say, shooting a dead kangaroo' (*A History of Australian Literature, Pure and Applied: A Critical Review of All Forms of Literature Produced in Australia From the First Books Published After the Arrival of the First Fleet Until 1950, with Short Accounts of Later Publications Up to 1960* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1961), 984–85).

Those who were sympathetic to Indigenous people themselves were also critical of the Jindyworobaks' indigenism, including notably Bernard Smith. In his seminal *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), Smith objected to what he regarded as their 'neo-Rousseauian romanticism' and their 'invocation to go back to a state of nature … and to return to yams and witchetty grubs, to the spear and the churinga and, finally, to Alcheringa'. Smith railed against what he saw as '[t]he idealisation of the Aboriginal and his endowment by latter-day Australian nationalism of the role of "racial father" to the descendants of a West-European nation, who, in the process of one hundred and fifty years have exterminated the Aboriginal from all but the poorest section of the country'.[631] Subsequently, in his 2006 recollections on the matter, Smith explained his objections on the basis that he had considered the Jindyworobaks a 'cultural expression of the assimilation policy' that prevailed at the time, and sought in that context an 'ethical' rather than an 'aesthetic' attitude towards Indigenous people in Australia.[632] (As noted above, he also believed the Jindyworobaks to be 'pro-fascist', and this belief provided the 'basic reason' for his critique.)

As he elaborated his position in his subsequent reflections, the intention underpinning his initial criticism had been to assert 'that it would be time enough to talk about identifying our own white settler culture with Aboriginal culture after we had faced up to the moral issues presented by living in the same land with the Aboriginal people before we attempt to appropriate their culture as the source of our own'.[633] This may not be entirely ingenuous, since his rejection of the indigenist option seems to have had less to do with any ethical objection on his part than his belief that such a project could only result from 'the mutual contribution of two *living* traditions that … intermingle as they continue their adaptation to a common environment' — and, according to Smith, in 1945

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[631] Bernard Smith, *Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1945), 250, 166, 175.
[632] Smith, 'Creators and Catalysts', 16.
[633] Ibid., 15.

Australia this would remain an impossibility until the 'slow physical extermination' of Indigenous people had been 'arrested'.[634]

While Smith was clearly concerned to critique his 'own predatory culture', and his insistence that Australians should regard 'the Aboriginal, not as an idealized figure symbolic of the perfect cultural amity of man and environment, but as a contemporary of our own with very real problems who has never had even the semblance of a fair deal' was both prescient and important, and of relevance to the present discussion, by 1980 his earlier deferral was, apparently, no longer necessary. The 'blending of two ethnic types', or the (distinctly Jindyworobak) project of 'assimilating the Aboriginal culture with our own' could finally proceed, and so Smith used his Boyer Lectures to articulate his own narrative of settler indigenisation — through what he termed, following the 'Last of the Jindyworobaks', Les Murray — 'a *convergence* of our settler and Indigenous art'.[635]

Along similar though somewhat divergent lines, F. J. Letters expressed his 'grave doubts' about 'the Jindyworobak theory' on the bafflingly literal basis that the 'average white Australian' did not have much love for Aboriginal culture, which was rapidly dying out anyway. Missing the point by a rather wide margin, Letters objected to 'Jindyworobakism' in its entirety on the grounds that Aboriginal people in Australia were 'not nearly so cherished, certainly not nearly so revered in Australia as Jindyworobak principles assume [they are], or should be, and … that few Australians, whether Jindyworobak enthusiasts or not, have even taken the trouble to master the leading native dialects'.[636]

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[634] Smith, *Place, Taste and Tradition*, 176.

[635] Ibid.; Smith, 'Creators and Catalysts', 16. See Bernard Smith, *The Spectre of Truganini: 1980 Boyer Lectures* (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1980).

[636] F. J. Letters, 'Extract from *In a Shaft of Sunlight*, 1948', in *The Jindyworobaks*, ed. Brian Elliott (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 273–75.

Even should this attitudinal obstacle be overcome, a more practical demographic one would, in Letters' view, remain. In his estimation, 'if we subtract from the native population the half-caste and Europeanised sections, the residue will be scanty and difficult of access' and, '[a]s things are now, we shall have to hurry to overtake the living Aboriginal tradition, since its repository is a rapidly dying race'.[637] Underestimating the extent to which this fleeting encounter comprised precisely the foundations on which the Jindyworobak program was constructed, and correspondingly overestimating the necessity of an actual encounter with 'the living Aboriginal tradition' for Jindyworobak indigenism, Letters reflects that the 'Jindyworobaks … must surely have their tongues in their cheeks; otherwise how is it they never face this tragic aspect of the matter?' Assuming they would wish to do so, Letters wonders: 'How do they answer the query: "What are we to do to keep the Aboriginal culture going?"' For his part, only one plausible solution presented itself:

> If the culture is to survive, the race that produced it must be assisted to survive at least until we in turn shall have absorbed the culture. And how are we to give this assistance? Again there can be only one answer. There must be inter-marriage of white and black Australians, since the black, left to themselves, will practically vanish in a generation or two. We must above all aim to multiply the half-castes, as these will absorb the Aboriginal culture in a way no one could suspect of pretence — through their very blood.[638]

This is an extraordinary conclusion that aligns almost perfectly with Xavier Herbert's miscegenist vision of Euraustralian hybridity, examined in detail in the following chapter, and is in similar ideological contradistinction to the absorptionist 'solution' of 'breeding out the colour'. Yet Letters is not optimistic: Australians will not welcome the 'half-caste baby', and so 'the delightful paradox' remains 'that Australia's only hope is a race of virile Euro-Australians which is unlikely ever to be born'. Letters' critique, while

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[637] Ibid., 274.
[638] Ibid., 275.

logically incoherent and politically problematic, is of interest to the extent that it reveals a familiar series of ambivalences regarding the proper relation between 'the Aborigine' and the Australian nation, all while Letters attempts to critique, and ultimately to find the fatal flaw in, Victor Kennedy's provocative suggestion that '"the only true and sincere Australian culture" is "that of the Aboriginal race"'.[639]

Somewhat more intelligibly, Elliott, in the derisory essay mentioned earlier, also objected to the 'callous' nature of the Jindyworobaks' project of indigenist appropriation, suggesting, with some justification, that:

> The Jindies are using the blacks as … symbols; extracting from them a kind
> of essence-of-Australia … they really have no practical use … other than that
> … [o]nce we have imbibed enough of their Alchera, they may … go hang.
> And the sooner the better.[640]

While this seemingly foreshadowed subsequent objections against Jindyworobak indigenism arising on the basis of pro-Indigenous politics from the 1970s onwards, Elliott himself quickly reverted to scornful dismissal of both Ingamells and the object of his appropriation, Aboriginal culture, suggesting that '[t]he *Alchera* is, for white Australians, an exotic fancy'.[641] Unsurprisingly, anti-indigenist criticisms on political grounds would become much more frequent in the post-assimilationist era. These included, for example, J. J. Healy's suggestion that 'Rex Ingamells walked into the hothouse of nationalistic assumption that Stephensen had improvised, and fell into the same tendency to *use* the Aborigine'.[642]

The purpose here is not to argue against these or subsequent objections to Jindyworobak indigenism. The Jindyworobaks, Mudie and Ingamells foremost among them, were, as should be clear from the preceding discussion, indigenists, and therefore manifested a

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[639] Ibid., 275, 273.
[640] Elliott, 'Breath of Alchera', 9–10.
[641] Ibid., 10.
[642] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 174.

tendency to appropriate a symbolic indigeneity for the purpose of settler indigenisation. While Ingamells exhorted settler Australians to become students of the cultures of Indigenous Australia as a means of becoming closer to their environment, it is a matter of some debate just how much interest in and knowledge of the subject he had himself. His formulation of means and ends is important, and his indigenism clearly instrumentalised: Ingamells advocated the study of Indigenous cultures in order that the 'spirit' of these 'forgotten people' could be 'assimilat[ed]' by settler Australia/ns, an 'assimilation' he regarded as 'essential to the honest development of [settler] Australian culture'.[643] And as his appropriation of the decontextualised term 'jindy-worobak' suggests, his indigenism was as much about adopting an antagonistic and contrary position towards established European-Australian traditions as it was about the origins of the term itself. To the extent that such a term was attractive to Ingamells because it denoted 'synthesis of our European cultural heritage with our Australian heritage',[644] this was more a project of settler indigenisation than a product of any interest he might have had in Indigenous culture in and of itself.

Yet while on the one hand the Jindyworobaks' indigenism was indeed 'an instance of cultural appropriation', it remains the case that — albeit to a limited extent and with ambivalent implications — 'appropriation inevitably entails appreciation of that which is appropriated'.[645] While I would hesitate to endorse the positive implications of Ann McGrath's reading of the Jindyworobaks as representing 'a brave step towards achieving a cultural convergence', McGregor's conclusion that Ingamells' 'level of cultural appreciation may have been naive, but his writings were expressions of respect — even veneration — for a cultural heritage that had long been belittled and disdained', seems sound.[646] And while Jindyworobak indigenism necessitated the displacement and

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[643] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 16–17.

[644] Ingamells, 'Letter to Miles Franklin', 221.

[645] McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 26.

[646] Ann McGrath, 'Europeans and Aborigines', in *Under New Heavens: Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia*, ed. Neville Meaney (Port Melbourne: Heinemann, 1989), 45; McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 26.

disavowal of actually existing Indigenous people in order for their spiritual essence to be rendered available for appropriation,[647] as was the case with Stephensen this did not necessarily preclude a co-existing sympathy or even empathy for the plight of Indigenous people themselves. As Tim Rowse has also observed, while 'Ingamells' Aborigines were undoubtedly an abstraction from history, not actual people', there nevertheless remained the 'potential within Australian "indigenism" to be sensitive to the actual, rather than merely the idealised, Aboriginal presence'.[648]

This was clearly the case for Ingamells who, though he was not opposed to appropriating a decontextualised 'essence' of authentic indigeneity for the purpose of indigenisation, expressed his hope that:

> Our interest in the aborigines [sic] will … prove to be not only a literary appropriation, but also vital for their welfare. We wish to deepen the existing sympathy with and understanding for them, which must precede legislation on their behalf.[649]

Indeed, in a move highly atypical within his historical-cultural context, Ingamells went so far as to recognise Aboriginal land ownership and the legitimacy of customary law, even expressing the unpopular view, one that resonates with Xavier Herbert's Euraustralianism, that so-called 'half-castes' were 'a fine Australian type, who deserve attention'.[650] Crucially, while his pronouncement of Indigenous people as 'a forgotten … degenerate, puppet people, mere parodies of what their race once was' remained, as David Carter and Bridget Griffen-Foley have observed, entirely 'consistent with the belief that Indigenous people were doomed to extinction, it also expressed the possibility

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[647] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 208.
[648] Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War', 42.
[649] Ingamells, 'Editorial', 4.
[650] Rex Ingamells, 'The Original Good Australians' [unpublished article sent to Kenneth Gifford], 14 February, 1943, MS 10098, Kenneth H. Gifford Correspondence, 1941–1944, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

of a radical originality in Australian culture with Aboriginality at its centre — a possibility with which Australian culture is still engaged'.[651]

The 'impossible necessity' of settler indigenisation

As the preceding discussion has outlined, Ingamells' expression of a radical and radically original potentiality in Australian culture 'with Aboriginality at its centre' provoked the vociferous criticism of his contemporaries, universalists and nationalists alike. These criticisms can be usefully mapped against Terry Goldie's model of settler indigenisation,[652] with some minor modifications. In the first camp were those who maintained the primacy and superiority of Australia's European inheritance over and above any secondary 'environmental' influences, of which Indigenous people themselves were taken to form a part. This grouping, of those I am calling here 'colonialists', though they would have refused the classification, rejected the option of settler indigenisation altogether and sought instead to emphasise uninterrupted continuity with their European inheritance. In doing so, they refused to countenance the belatedness and derivativeness inherent in the colonialist option despite sometimes also, at least in the cases of Harris and Hope, finding themselves turning inwards in search of their own forms of radical originality (sans the reality of Indigenous occupation).

In the second camp were those Goldie might term 'penetrators', who favoured 'the forcible imposition of the dominator and his discursive system within the dominated space'.[653] These equally *indigenising* but definitely not *indigenist* settler nationalists objected to the Jindyworobaks on the grounds that Indigenous cultures and the peoples representing them were not valid subjects or sources of inspiration for the 'always emerging but never fully emerged' 'indigenous' Australian national literature.[654] This option similarly entailed a refusal of the realities of the settler situation, in which

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[651] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 16; Carter and Griffen-Foley, 'Culture and Media', 246.
[652] See Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*.
[653] Ibid., 15.
[654] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 260.

disavowal presents itself as a desirable option but is consistently undermined by the delegitimising presence of Indigenous populations and their persistent claims against the historical denialism of the penetrationist project.

The Jindies, clearly associated with the approach to settler indigenisation Goldie terms 'appropriation' — entailing 'the consumption enforced by the dominator of what belongs to the dominated'[655] — sought to address the realities of the settler situation and to *synthesise* its conflicting dynamics into an original strategy for their supersession. While, as Goldie's language makes clear, such a project is premised on 'the elimination, or displacement, of the empirical indigene',[656] the shift from outright rejection to tentative embrace (of an albeit decontextualised, symbolic indigeneity) nevertheless opens a path towards subsequent attitudinal shifts in relation to the historical indigeneity the project initially rejects (this transformation is never complete, and the dual imperatives towards disavowal and embrace always uneasily coexist). Yet it was arguably the implications of this option for settlers of both nationalist and universalist persuasion that provoked the critics' indignation, or at least contributed to it. As Clunies-Ross remarks, the Jindyworobaks found themselves 'attacked' on the one hand 'by those who maintained the essential European traditions of culture in Australia and on the other hand by those committed to a different, and incompatible, view of the Australian tradition'.[657]

While the concerns of those objecting to the appropriative nature of Jindyworobak indigenism should be taken seriously, such objections also tend to overlook what Goldie has termed the 'impossible necessity' of settler indigenisation.[658] As Goldie's account suggests, and as Healy's also makes clear, sooner or later, one way or another, all those invested in the construction of an 'indigenous' *settler* national culture find themselves

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[655] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 15.
[656] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 208.
[657] Clunies-Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks', 59.
[658] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 13.

confronting and responding to the figure of the actual, authentic and authoritative indigene. Since the dual indigenising strategies of disavowal and appropriation similarly enact the further incursion of settler-colonial authority into Indigenous discursive space, Ingamells' articulation of the Jindyworobak program represents only one, original and exemplary, response to the exigencies of the settler-colonial condition. The alternatives are no less violent, symbolically or otherwise, in their implications and effects.

The problems of settler-colonial modernity

The indigenist aspect of the Jindyworobak program and the imperative behind it also complicates the various attempts to classify them as either anti-modernist provincial isolationists or, conversely, modernist primitivists. The traditions remain distinct, since the imperatives underlying the settler-colonial compulsion towards indigenism are not commensurate or reducible to those underlying the metropolitan modernist turn towards primitivism. Whereas the latter seeks to recuperate an already superseded and generic state of being as a means of overcoming or escaping a modern malaise conceived in universal (read European) terms, the former seeks to appropriate aspects of a particular and emplaced alterity for the purpose of attaining an always and already desired futurity within a specific locale, the very conditions of which compel their supersession. As Nicholas Thomas remarks:

> Primitivism in settler culture is … something both more and less than primitivism in modernist art … Settler primitivism is not … necessarily the project of radical formal innovation stimulated by tribal art that we are familiar with from twentieth-century modernism. It was, rather, often an effort to affirm a local relationship, not with a generic primitive culture, but a particular one.[659]

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[659] Thomas, *Possessions*, 12–13. Although we might modify the final clause, since as we have seen, a *less* generic 'Aboriginality' is not the same as a particular one.

The project of appropriation for the purpose of settler indigenisation — of displacing an emplaced indigeneity for the purpose of replacement — is distinct from the project of appropriating a romanticised ideal from afar. The latter corresponds with colonial ideologies of racial and cultural/civilisational superiority that look backwards from a distance in order to revivify a society perceived to be in decay, and which rest on presuppositions that have justified the oppression of indigenous peoples around the world since at least the fifteenth century.[660] Yet the former aligns not with a logic of preservation for the purpose of exploitation, but rather with a settler-colonial logic of displacement for the purpose of replacement which seeks to displace in order to replace an emplaced indigeneity from and on the lands the settler project seeks to usurp. Over and above the concerns common to other primitivist movements, '[s]ettler cultures were generally interested … in their own localization'.[661] Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the settler project has often evinced an interest in salvaging a remnant Indigenous essence (salvage ethnography was, after all, a settler innovation), since it relies upon an authentic *antecedent* indigeneity to confer indigeneity upon itself (and to thereby claim an 'indigenous' settler *future* independent from its metropolitan m/other), whether through penetration, appropriation or some combination thereof.

Aided by (perceived) temporal and often geographical distance, and despite a generalised 'denial of coevalness',[662] colonialism and its modernist-primitivist cultural products could countenance, and even desired, the continued existence of the 'primitive' societies they sought to exploit for firstly political and economic and subsequently

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[660] For an important recent reading of literary primitivism in relation to the 'world-historical situation' of the early twentieth century as entailing 'an undertaking to become primitive in a world where, it seemed, such a possibility had been voided', see Ben Etherington, *Literary Primitivism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), xi. Crucially, however, despite writing against what might be loosely classed as 'postcolonial' critiques of primitivism as a 'unidirectional ideological projection from the colonizer onto the colonized' and turning towards its 'most powerful expressions in the peripheries', by nevertheless excising from his analysis those movements, including the Jindyworobaks, accurately recognised as 'indigenizing', Etherington tends to invert (and thereby reaffirm) rather than to move beyond a centre–periphery binary (ibid., xii, xii–xiii, 5).

[661] Thomas, *Possessions*, 106.

[662] Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

cultural and aesthetic purposes. On the contrary, the proximity and competing claims of settlers and indigenous peoples mean that settler indigenism requires instead an imagined 'passing of the mantle', in line with the encounter Deborah Bird Rose describes, in which 'the Aboriginal dies and the settler flourishes … the Aboriginal passes the mantle of belonging to the land (autochthony) to the settler … [and] the settler takes his place as the new (and superior) indigene'.[663] Constructing new formations of this 'act of conferral' in the context of changing circumstances was precisely the Jindyworobak project.

Nevertheless, as outlined in the introduction, and as David Carter contends, throughout the period under examination, 'whether consciously or unconsciously', for Australian writers, publishers, critics and readers 'the acts of writing and reading meant assuming a position, first in relation to their complex literary inheritance and second in relation to modernity and the literary present'.[664] For Australian writers, publishers and the reading public, their identifying dialectics — between settler and metropole, and between settler and indigene — along with their relations to metropolitan modernity, were of central and unavoidable concern. Indeed, for most, if not all, the latter informed the former, so that a claim to settler modernity was also a claim to settler Europeanness, in accordance with the Eurocentrism and Europresentism of Pascale Casanova's 'Greenwich Meridian of Literature'.[665] As Kirkpatrick and Dixon point out, Casanova's construction implies that:

> To be in a rich metropolitan community … is to be modern and up to date;
> to be of the present in terms of time and at the centre in terms of space. To
> work in a new national literature like Australia's is to be belated or old

[663] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 117.

[664] David Carter, 'Modernising Anglocentrism: *Desiderata* and Literary Time', in *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*, eds Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon (University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012), 89.

[665] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

fashioned in terms of time and provincial in terms of space; it is to belong to the literary suburbs.[666]

Carter identifies and illustrates this tendency in his important collection on Australia as *Always Almost Modern*:

> Whether in the 1880s or the 1980s, commentators have repeatedly discovered that the nation's culture was on the verge of modernity; that the signs of modernity were gathering but had not yet, not quite, been consolidated; that the latest great novelist or poet or playwright or painter was a sign that the nation had finally caught up, or *grown up*, for modernity was often linked to cultural maturity (that step beyond colonial status). This response, of course, is an effect of nationalism, manifesting the force of 'imagined community', but it is also a symptom of Australia's colonial/postcolonial situation, that sense of living in a cultural province or 'suburb' in relation to the modernising cultural metropolises, so dramatically and schematically described by Pascale Casanova — or closer to home by A. A. Phillips's resonant notion of the 'cultural cringe'. Provincialism seems to be the very opposite of metropolitan modernity, and the fact that we are a long way away (itself of course a very partial cultural geography) is routinely converted into the sense that we are or were a long way behind. Geographical distance is translated into cultural belatedness.[667]

This model of the centre as prior and superior to the periphery — and, correspondingly, cosmopolitan modernity as prior and superior to parochial provincialism — has been challenged by criticisms and historiographies emphasising the complexity and

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[666] Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon, 'Introduction: Republics of Letters and Literary Communities', in *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*, eds Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon (University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012), x.

[667] Carter, *Always Almost Modern*, viii.

contingency of relations between the local, the national and the global.[668] Yet for literary intellectuals of the interwar period, this was precisely the model and understanding they were forced to confront (and as Carter so effectively illustrates, despite various predictions and proclamations to the contrary it has persisted, abated but not eradicated, into the present). This was certainly the case for the Jindyworobaks, whose 1940 survey 'Whither Australian Poetry?' was intended to inquire precisely as to Australian poetry's relation to the metropolitan meridian of literary modernism, and to thereby map in order to navigate this complex relation. Revealingly, the collection was never published, having been rejected by Angus & Robertson on the grounds that it dealt 'in a very general way with modernism in poetry' and would therefore not be 'of interest to students of Australian literature'.[669]

From a perspective emphasising the importance of Australia's settler-colonial origins and the complex system of relationships these origins establish, there is no need to assert a revaluation of the local over the universal in an attempt to assimilate the literary traditions of Australian settler colonialism to metropolitan models of literary modernity and modernism. This is a move that, as much as anything else, recapitulates the existing binaries of established understandings. Likewise, labouring over relativising concepts such as 'provincial modernism', for example, at best overgeneralises the more specific imperatives underlying such responses, at least in the settler colonies, and at worst simply inverts while failing to disrupt the dichotomised terms of the debate.[670]

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[668] Local examples include McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*; Tim Dolin and Neil Levi, eds, *Antipodean Modern: Cultural Responses to Modernisation in Australia, 1900–2000* (Perth: Network Books, 2006); Peter Kirkpatrick and Robert Dixon, eds, *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia* (University of Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2012); Carter, *Always Almost Modern*.

[669] W. G. Cousins concluded his rejection letter with the rather biting explanation that 'these days we can accept only work that is significant, or that the public wants to read' (Letter to Victor Kennedy, 18 December, 1941, MS 9419, Victor Kennedy Papers, 1934–1977, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

[670] See Smith, 'Local Moderns'. Melinda Cooper's recent interpretation of Eleanor Dark as representative of what she terms '*interwar settler modernism*', defined by 'a distinctive convergence of aesthetic modernism with more vernacular modes and settler nationalist desires … for belonging', comes much closer to capturing the historical and cultural dynamics at play — see '"Adjusted" Vision: Interwar Settler Modernism in Eleanor Dark's *Return to Coolami*', *Australian Literary Studies* 33, no. 2 (2018): n.p.

Peter Kirkpatrick's assessment of Jindyworobak nationalism as 'a considered, if nonetheless troubled — and still troubling — affirmation of the incontestable significance of Aboriginal culture to modern Australian life' aptly captures the dynamics emphasised here. Yet his insistence that the group nevertheless reflects 'a disposition towards primitivism within rapidly industrialising Western societies as part of their collective membership of the modern world', and that they must therefore be situated in relation to the 'transnational modernist context' as 'Jindy modernists' falls into a familiar trap that tends to reaffirm rather than overturn the twinned centre/periphery, contemporary/belated binaries that frame the interpretive field.[671] It is from precisely such a bind that the Jindyworobaks were attempting to escape.

David Carter has characterised the Jindyworobaks' 'attempt to leap backwards over the colonial inheritance, into an Aboriginal connection to the environment, [as] also a step forwards into modernity, into the problem of inventing a language adequate to the present'.[672] Yet it was also a step inwards, towards the Australian environment and away from the problems presented by the specifics of the Jindies' modern settler-colonial condition. For Ingamells, as much as for his own critics like Max Harris, and contemporary critics such as Casanova, modernism was a European phenomenon that could be, indeed had to be, selectively responded to and engaged with from afar. Yet in seeking an alternative to the altogether unsatisfactory options (for a settler nationalist) of either attempting to 'catch up' to European modernity, or rejecting it outright, in a typically settler-colonial move Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks (along with Hope, and others) turned *away* from Europe and turned *inwards* instead, towards the spirit of *this* place. In so doing, they (unlike Hope, and Harris) found themselves confronting the figure of the indigene.

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[671] Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 112.
[672] Carter, 'Modernising Anglocentrism', 97. Carter too is tempted to establish the Jindies' qualified relation to (metropolitan) modernity, describing them elsewhere as the 'first modern-ish literary movement in Australia' (*Always Almost Modern*, 139).

It is the suggestion here that we might more usefully, and appropriately, understand those approaches and phenomena that may otherwise appear as either emergent or belated Australian modernisms as approaches or responses to the unique conditions of Australia's settler-colonial modernity. In a similar manner to the argument presented in the previous chapter — that is, that both the 'direct' and 'extreme' configurations of the cultural cringe should be conceived as dialectically related aspects of the same settler-colonial condition — a concern with asserting Australia's European modernity on the one hand and a bumptious attempt to reject it in favour of a defensive provincialism on the other speak to the same set of conditions and to the same complex of relations involved. As Carter also confirms, while one option for 'leaping over' Australia's apparent 'belatedness' has appeared to inhere in the possibility of reversing the terms, in the 'claim that Australia was *always already* or *almost always modern*' — that 'Australia … is modern not through gradual cultural evolution or sudden modernist revolution but through being "born modern"' — this 'vision neatly transforms dull provinciality into a radical form of originality' but 'scarcely escapes the colonial bind'.[673] The apparent insuperability of these conditions led to a series of often confused and confusing responses — including but not limited to those of the Jindyworobaks — that have confounded attempts to understand them within existing, European-derived interpretive frameworks.

Humphrey McQueen's definition of Australian modernism as entailing 'a *range of responses to a nexus of social-artistic-scientific problems*', and his identification of 'emergent' Australian modernisms *alongside* those examples of modernism that arrived 'in suitcases from Europe', is apposite here.[674] As is Coronado's definition of Andean (settler-colonial) modernities as 'the particular discursive formations belonging to the intellectuals who took it upon themselves to represent indigenous peoples in their own works'. Here, settler-colonial modernity *is* the settler response to the arrival of non-Indigenous

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[673] Carter, *Always Almost Modern*, viii.

[674] McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, xii–xiii, emphasis in original.

cultural, political and economic forms (of which settlers were and are themselves the harbingers) and this response is necessarily predicated on a turn towards the indigene. These responses were, and are, 'assertions of local agency before the often-foreign processes that shape both global and local realities' and, as was the case for the Jindyworobaks, in Andean *indigenismo* 'the indigenous becomes essential to imagining what modernity might — or might not — signify in the Andes'.[675] The Jindies were therefore not only 'antipòdernists', to appropriate Ian Henderson's 'purposefully ugly label',[676] but *settler-colonial* modernists grappling with a similar set of problems to those confronted by other settler populations, in comparable ways that were nevertheless conditioned by the particularities of their own historical and cultural circumstances.

As the Jindyworobaks' indigenism was distinct from modernist primitivism, so too was their impetus towards anti-modernism different, despite ostensible similarities, from the outright rejection of the modern by European fascists.[677] In spite of apparent affinities with the 'blood and soil' ideology of German national-socialism, and despite the not altogether dissimilar implications for those excluded from the national project, the Jindyworobaks' conjuring of an emergent national culture and identity from the spirit of the place involved an *originary* emergence, a national genesis as an escape — through differentiation and distanciation — from the crises of European modernity, rather than the palingenesis of a glorious pre-modernity.[678] Rather than reaching back into the past to reassert the supremacy of a people and a place already defined, Ingamells was

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[675] Coronado, *The Andes Imagined*, 3.

[676] Ian Henderson, 'Modernism, Antipodernism, and Australian Aboriginality', in *Decolonizing the Landscape: Indigenous Cultures in Australia*, eds Beate Neumeier and Kay Schaffer (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2014), 89.

[677] The very existence of the unpublished 1940 Jindyworobak survey 'Whither Australian Poetry?' — intended to inquire as to Australian poetry's relation to the metropolitan meridian of literary modernism — suggests an openness to exploration, if not experimentation. Stephensen came much closer to fascist anti-modernism in his response, although his position appears to have been driven as much by the origination of literary modernism in Europe and North America and the resultantly 'derivative' and 'imitative' nature of Australian modernism as by his association of modernism with 'ghetto-philosophy' and the 'bizarre theories of Marx, Freud, and Einstein' ('The Modernists in Retrospect' [response to 'Whither Australian poetry?' questionnaire], 1941, MS 9419, Victor Kennedy Papers, 1934–1977, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne).

[678] Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*.

responding to the unavoidable truth that the future national culture he sought to construct would necessarily arise out of the interaction between someone else's blood (race) and someone else's soil (place). And in this attempt to invent (or to discover) a national culture and identity for the new world outside and untainted by the conflicts and crises of the old, Ingamells is tied not to the leaders of European fascism, but rather to figures such as Inky Stephensen, and also, less intuitively, to Norman Lindsay and even, as elaborated above, one of his fiercest critics in A. D. Hope.[679]

One way out of the intractable ambivalences of the settler predicament that appears to present itself to settlers of a variety of political and ideological persuasions, especially in a period of increased exacerbation such as that examined here, is the tendency McQueen has identified and referred to in terms of its 'gratitude for Australia's remoteness'.[680] Carter has described a similar tendency: 'even for critics unenthusiastic about nationalism, Australia could be seen as a refuge from the twin aspects of modernity: the decadence of Europe … and the degraded modern culture of America'.[681] As we have seen, Carter allows for the association of Stephensen with the Lindsays within this loose assemblage. McQueen, for his part, associates this tendency with figures as ostensibly diverse as R. D. Fitzgerald (himself a close associate of the Lindsays) and A. D. Hope, both of whom, as already observed, were closer to the Jindyworobak position than at least the latter was prepared to admit. He also associates it with Hans Heysen, to whom the revaluation of Australian landscapes in general is often attributed, and who re-envisioned the 'arid centre' in particular, to the extent that it would subsequently come to 'occupy a prominent place in Australia's national iconography'.[682] Indeed, in almost

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[679] See Carter, *Always Almost Modern*; McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*.
[680] McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, 34.
[681] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 265.
[682] Quotes from McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 69; see also Haynes, *Seeking the Centre*. Tellingly, while 'Heysen wrote about the settlers living in the drought-stricken area of the Flinders Ranges and, to his amazement, maintaining a sense of optimism in a land of "blasted hopes", such people are absent from his paintings. So, too, are Aborigines' (ibid., 167). Haynes reads this erasure as a response to the 'awkward fact that the Aborigines had not, as was confidently predicted, become extinct', and as 'an aspect of a broader effort to vindicate the doctrine of *terra nullius*' (ibid.). Clunies-Ross positions Jindyworobak precisely in relation to 'the movement of the artist's imagination inward, towards the heart of the country', which he

perfect concordance with Stephensen's anticipatory account outlined in the previous chapter, McQueen quotes Fitzgerald 'voic[ing] a prospect which had haunted Australian intellectuals since at least the Great European War: "… it is not impossible that from accidents of geography it may be Australia's duty and privilege to save from the wreck of civilisation the little upon which we may build again"'.[683]

The prevalence and persistence of the Eurocentric interpretive perspectives against which Ingamells and others railed (those, that is, that begin with Europe at the centre and as the original, and extrapolate outwards from there) is affirmed rather than overturned in re-readings of the Jindyworobaks as 'Jindy' or 'provincial' modernists,[684] as well as in readings of Ingamells' and Ian Mudie's association with Stephensen's Australia First Movement in terms of an alignment with European fascism.[685] A perspective that begins with the dynamic relations of settler colonialism, on the other hand, affords an alternative interpretation of Ingamells' and others' uneasy and often complex negotiations of modernism and modernity as responses to European movements and associated crises produced in the context of a sovereign Indigenous territorial space, rather than as derivative or imitative reflections of the European original.

Conclusion

As this chapter has attempted to outline, Ingamells, in ways not often appreciated, sought to chart an original path forward through the complex and contingent conditions

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traces 'from Streeton, through Heysen's paintings of northern South Australia, to the works of Drysdale and Nolan, in which the desert takes on symbolic implications' ('Australian Literature and Australian Culture', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. Laurie Hergenhan (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988), 18).

[683] McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass*, 34.

[684] Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist'; Smith, 'Local Moderns'.

[685] David Bird's exercise in incrimination-by-association is exemplary. Bird goes so far as to suggest that even the 'supposedly minimalist [Jindy] position' of Victor Kennedy, who in his letters to Ingamells was one of the most vociferous opponents of any association between the Jindyworobaks and Australia First, 'contained some of the flavour of Nazism for those determined to detect it' (*Nazi Dreamtime*, 298). That, Bird most certainly is.

of Australian settler colonialism. Rather than advocating a straightforward anti-colonial nationalism, he in fact rejected the 'larrikin' tradition and sought instead to develop an 'indigenous' Australian literature both modern and mature and, crucially, in touch with its European inheritance. While his approach was heavily indigenist in orientation, and therefore *highly* problematic, politically and programmatically, it also conforms to a broader tradition David Carter refers to in terms of its 'radical originality',[686] which seeks to identify Australia's *genius loci*, the spirit of place, as a source of alterity and to thereby escape the exigencies of the settler situation by means of an originary emergence. This is what Ingamells was claiming when he stated, borrowing from fellow Jindyworobak Victor Kennedy, that Jindyworobak had 'existed all along, and merely awaited a name and recognition as the spirit of Australia'.[687] In his 1941 statement on 'Australianism', published in 'the Nationality Number' of the more moderately indigenising *Meanjin*, Ingamells' indigenist imperative almost appears to have been resolved: Jindyworobak, he easily asserts, '*is* Alcheringa, the Spirit of the Place, realised'.[688]

If, as this chapter has attempted to illustrate, the Jindyworobaks' attempt to synthesise settler Australians' inherited European traditions with a sensitivity to the influence of Australia's unique environment was their ultimate, if often misunderstood, aim, then an indigenism which emphasised Aboriginal culture as a culture 'in harmony' with that environment was a convenient and useful, even if ultimately unsuccessful, strategy to be deployed towards that end. In this sense, the Jindyworobaks were proposing an original strategy intended to supersede *both* aspects of their settler situation, and thus the settler predicament as a whole. In the first instance, they sought to synthesise Australia's European inheritance with its now indigenous environment, rendering themselves 'indigenous' in the process; in the second, they sought to appropriate a decontextualised indigeneity towards precisely that end. Brian Elliott has suggested that

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[686] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 266; Carter and Griffen-Foley, 'Culture and Media', 246.
[687] Rex Ingamells, Letter to Kenneth Gifford, 19 April, 1943, MS 10098, Kenneth H. Gifford Correspondence, 1941–1944, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.
[688] Rex Ingamells, 'Australianism', *Meanjin Papers* 1, no. 6 (1941): 3.

in Ingamells' view 'the need was to "annex" or "join" the white to the black, or the black to the white', but the problem persisted: 'it is not clear how'.[689] While Elliott's 'jindi woraback' is between 'white' and 'black', Ingamells' is really between 'man' and 'land', but the ambiguity is inherent in the very project of settler indigenisation and appears and reappears throughout Ingamells' writings, as well as criticisms of the same. Goldie concludes that 'the process of indigenization is complex'.[690] Indeed.

In actuality, the Jindyworobak aim, recapitulating Giblin's emphasis on and ordering of 'nature and man', was the synthesis of Australia's European cultural and intellectual inheritance with the Australian *place*, and only secondarily the 'original good Australians', who functioned as markers of the spirit of that place and seemingly offered settlers the possibility of the unmediated encounter with their environment towards which the imperatives of settler colonialism compelled them. As Peter Kirkpatrick has suggested, the Jindyworobaks were not exclusively 'interested in Indigenous culture for what it had to reveal about Aborigines themselves … but as a set of environmental markers, signs of "Place" that would define their own "Race"'.[691] Indigenous peoples are relevant to Ingamells' project of settler indigenisation only to the extent that they are seen to embody environmental values, since in his conception their 'laws … customs and … art … went to make a culture which was closely bound in every way with their environment'. While, according to Ingamells, Aboriginal culture had, 'for the most part, died with the tribes', he nevertheless maintained that 'something of its spirit has been preserved', and insisted that 'an assimilation' of that spirit would be 'essential to the honest development of Australian culture.'[692] Crucially, Ingamells' careful dissection of indigeneity 'into a dead culture on the one hand and a persistent spirit on the other also enabled the idea of an Aboriginal inheritance for the settler culture'.[693]

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[689] Elliott, 'Introduction', xxvii.
[690] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 14.
[691] Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity"', 133.
[692] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 17.
[693] Smith, 'Writing Native', 190.

In Ingamells' imagined encounter, almost as soon as Aboriginal people appear, they are gone, and settler-colonial Australia's trilateral relations are folded back into the familiar dialectic between man and land: 'Our traditions are twofold. Inextricably woven with the transplanted European culture are our experiences of the Australian environment'. Ingamells' framing of the desired 'adjustment' here is crucial: it does not involve imported and Indigenous cultures, but rather the imported culture ('English, which is our Mother Tongue') and its artefacts and its now indigenous *environment* ('Australia, which is our Motherland'). Hence the precedence of 'environmental values' and, only secondarily, Indigenous cultures as the source of an 'indigenous' (settler) national culture. Ingamells said as much, stating explicitly that the first of the Jindyworobak 'conditions' — the 'clear recognition of environmental values' — was the 'most important'.[694]

Tellingly, in a manner not entirely dissimilar to Geoffrey Dutton's and *Nation*'s revaluation of Stephensen's cultural nationalism as, at least by 1959, behind the times, or Manne and Feik's more recent revival of Stephensen's 'remarkably contemporary' manifesto, as Clunies-Ross has remarked, 'some of the ideas which the Jindyworobaks struggled to express, or embody in their poetry, are now generally accepted, or at least seriously entertained'. More importantly, however, as this chapter has attempted to illustrate and as Clunies-Ross also perceptively observed, the Jindyworobaks 'diagnosed the cultural problem which developed out of European colonization … wherever an attempt has been made to transplant European culture'; that is, that 'Australians have an ambivalent heritage, and any venture in Australian culture had to recognize this and try to connect its two sides'. Jindyworobak, therefore, 'denoted a programme which aimed to join the heritage Australians derived from Europe with their experience in an utterly different antipodean world, to create an authentically Australian culture'.[695]

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[694] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture,* 17, 5.
[695] Clunies-Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks', 57–58.

Others have similarly recognised the indigenising imperative underpinning the Jindyworobak program, with Judith Wright following Nettie Palmer in noting the affinities between Australian and South American literatures and the 'split in … consciousness' characteristic of writers in 'new' countries. In her contribution to the 1948 *Jindyworobak Review*, Wright observed that 'the Jindy movement was essentially an effort to get the problem into perspective … and in fact the work of the outstanding Jindy writers has to some extent already broken the problem down'.[696] Wright subsequently suggested that the Jindyworobaks and the Angry Penguins (in broad alignment with Harris' endorsement of the Jindies and his Penguins as representing Blake's 'contraries without which there is no progression')[697] together

> illustrated the double-sided problem of writing in Australia and the imitativeness that kept us swinging uncertainly between 'indigenous values' and our European origins. The crux of the problem was that both factors were needed, but that it didn't seem possible to bring them into creative reconciliation.[698]

Yet it needs repeating once again: two is not three (and three is not all), and despite Clunies-Ross' sensitivity to the 'ambivalence' of the settler predicament and Wright's attentiveness to (settler) Australia's 'double aspect', these formulations (inadvertently) collapse and thereby recapitulate Ingamells' own attempt to construct an 'indigenous' (settler) national culture through an unmediated encounter between man and land. The slippage in Wright's use of the term 'indigenous values' here may be accidental, but it is far from incidental.

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[696] Wright, 'Perspective', 72–73.

[697] Harris, 'The Importance of Disagreeing', 75.

[698] Judith Wright, *Because I Was Invited* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975), 58. Wright wrote elsewhere of 'Australia's double aspect', by which she was referring to the 'contradiction' between 'the sense of exile' and 'the sense of liberty, of a new chance' experienced and expressed by conservatives and nationalists respectively, in her own articulation of the story of 'two Australias' (see *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*, xi–xiv).

For others still, such as Les Murray and Phillip Mead, the emphasis was on the settler–indigene relation. Murray, for example, claimed that '[t]he Jindies represent a creolising impulse in our culture' (an attractive proposition for Murray, himself a proponent of cultural 'convergence' and therefore an appropriate inheritor of the Jindyworobak tradition), while Phillip Mead recognised the Jindyworobaks as representative of a 'continuing desire in the white Australian imaginary … for a species of cultural–racial syncretism'.[699] These observations have the distinct advantage over those that focus exclusively on the settler–metropole relation of at least implying, if not explicitly acknowledging, the absolute centrality of the settler–indigene relation to the Jindyworobak program, as well as to the broader indigenising project of which they formed a part, and thereby avoiding the common settler-colonial tendency to displace, deny and/or disavow the Indigenous presence altogether. Yet in the absence of an attendant awareness of and attentiveness to the settler–metropole contradiction as a structuring element and imperative behind settler approaches to creolisation, convergence or 'cultural–racial syncretism', a more complex and comprehensive picture is still excluded from view.

The Jindyworobaks sought, on the one hand, to accept the mantle of civilisation from their European forebears and, on the other, to claim the mantle of belonging from their Indigenous antecedents. This is no straightforward matter, and Nicholas Birns neatly encapsulates the apparent paradoxes of Jindyworobakism as 'Royalist and republican, cosmopolitan and isolationist'.[700] Neither universalist nor exclusively nationalist, neither nationalist nor exclusively indigenist, and neither modernist nor exclusively anti-modernist, the Jindyworobaks were, rather, ambivalent settler nationalists expressing the typical settler-colonial desire to overcome precisely the contingencies and exigencies characteristic of the settler situation.

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[699] Mead, 'Nation, Literature, Location', 560.
[700] Birns, '"This Piece of Hardwood"', 29.

Ultimately, the altered circumstances of the second post-war period saw the passing of the Jindyworobak ideal, largely as a result of, and in response to, fascism and the Second World War,[701] and the success of the anti-nationalist backlash that followed, partly also as a result of improvements in what Geoffrey Serle termed the 'quality of public life' in Australia rendering the kind of cultural striving the Jindies and associates had engaged in increasingly redundant.[702] Ingamells himself commented in 1949 that 'Australian Literature to-day has reached a stage not far short of maturity' (the qualification is instructive), while '[i]ts future seems assured'. In Ingamells' interpretation, this assuredness was in no small measure attributable to his own interventions and to the lasting impact of his movement, which in his estimation had 'had its effect over a wide field of writing in which the Jindyworobaks themselves have not been directly concerned'.[703] In Ellen Smith's description, Ingamells' *Handbook of Australian Literature* (itself a Jindyworobak publication) in which these comments appeared, as one of 'several self-mythologizing histories of the movement … named the Jindyworobak movement as the most important of Australian literary history, and presented it as the culmination, and answer to the question of, an Australian national tradition'.[704]

Yet if the *Jindyworobak Review* of 1948 gave the impression that the movement's most important work already lay behind it, its demise seemed complete with the publication in 1954 of Ingamells' culturally cringe-worthy *Royalty and Australia*. This loyalist panegyric featured a glowing introduction by then Prime Minister Menzies, and in it Ingamells proudly proclaimed 'the profound loyalty of Australians to the Throne'.[705] However if, in one sense, the degree of loyalism Ingamells displayed here seems incongruent with much of his earlier work, in its particular cultural and political context

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[701] Ibid., 27.

[702] Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia*, 148.

[703] Ingamells, *Handbook of Australian Literature*, 16, 14.

[704] Smith, 'Writing Native', 166. A. A. Phillips was unimpressed by Ingamells' general 'bumptiousness' about the Jindyworobaks' achievements ('Jindyworobak Review', 64).

[705] Rex Ingamells, *Royalty and Australia* (Melbourne: Hallcraft, 1954), 80.

— marked by a 'maturing' Australian culture,[706] the loosening ties of Empire in a relatively peaceful and increasingly prosperous period, new 'great and powerful friends' (and sources of cultural production), and increasing acceptance of settler indigenism as a source of modern Australian culture and identity — Ingamells' statement that 'to us, this continent is Home, and … we now feel ourselves, our character and our living, to be attuned to the land, identified with it', does not contradict, but rather *enables*, his follow-up statement that as 'an acclimatised British stock we happily retain our British heritage'.[707]

Indeed, in his introduction to the *Handbook of Australian Literature* mentioned above, Ingamells had already felt himself able to acknowledge that 'Australian Literature has behind it the wealthy English tradition: its roots spread into the classical and romantic past, and it should continue to draw nourishment from the whole world of scholarship and creative art'.[708] Comfortable in Australia's cultural, if not yet political, independence, and less fearful of the geopolitical implications of imperial loyalty, an expanded acknowledgement of Australia's British cultural inheritance was rendered acceptable, even to strident settler nationalists like Ingamells. This statement can therefore be read less as a modification of his position than as a different formulation under changed historical circumstances.

Ingamells' Eurocentric epic *The Great South Land* (1951), on the other hand, is not so easily explained, except, perhaps, as either the 'sad aftermath' of Ingamells' previous '[p]remature cultural formulations',[709] or alternatively an expression of what we might

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[706] Dutton, *Snow on the Saltbush*, 30.

[707] Ingamells, *Royalty and Australia*, 94.

[708] Ingamells, *Handbook of Australian Literature*, 1. Ingamells did, however, maintain that 'whatever it has in common with other bodies of literature in the English language', Australian literature 'possesses a character of its own … The writings of British migrants, the utterances of expatriates, have been superseded by the writings in English of indigenous Australians', he and his fellow Jindyworobaks foremost among them (see ibid.).

[709] Birns, '"This Piece of Hardwood"', 28.

interpret as a perverse, unconscious desire on the part of Ingamells to metamorphose into poet laureate for Wentworth's new Britannia in another world!

The following chapter triangulates the understandings and approaches to settler indigenisation articulated by novelist Xavier Herbert against those of both Stephensen and Ingamells, reading them all in relation to the prevailing circumstances of 1930s Australia. At a historical moment marked by ambivalence in Australia's relationship with metropolitan England, Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert sought to establish settler Australians' national cultural independence. In doing so, however, at a moment marked by the demise of the 'doomed race' ideal, they found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the settler nation they sought to claim. While their attempts to negotiate these complex conditions differed in important respects, they nevertheless shared a drive towards settler indigenisation and independence as their common, overriding concerns.

Chapter 4

Encountering indigeneity: Xavier Herbert and the politics of settler indigenisation

Settler (male) encounters Aboriginal (male) in a moment of recognition as the Aboriginal dies and the settler flourishes. In that moment the Aboriginal passes the mantle of belonging to the land (autochthony) to the settler.[710]

— Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 2004

[A]n authentic consciousness trying to grasp the distinctive characteristics of European society in Australia would, sooner or later, find itself face to face with the Aborigine and the land.[711]

— J. J. Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 1989

If the white Australian tries to find his Aboriginal face in the mirror, he may come to see his own face as the face of the oppressor.[712]

— Tony Birch, 'Whitefella Jump Up: Correspondence', 2003

Introduction

As outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, questions about what, whether and when the Australian nation *is* or *might be* have amounted to nothing short of 'a national obsession'.[713] In attempting to construct a national culture and identity, settler Australians, like settlers elsewhere, have invested in the establishment of a national

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[710] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 117.
[711] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 173.
[712] Tony Birch, 'Whitefella Jump Up: Correspondence', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 12 (2003): 87. I am indebted to Fiona Probyn-Rapsey for pointing me towards this 'encounter' (see 'Some Whites are Whiter').
[713] White, *Inventing Australia*, viii.

literary tradition.[714] According to Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, the project of national literary-cultural construction has entailed

> establishing a distinctively Australian tradition, complete with a Great Australian Writer and a Great Australian Novel, whose manifest greatness would at last prove the colonists' right to belong, both to the metropolitan centre and in the territory that they had invaded and colonised, Australia itself.[715]

Writers and critics have at various historical moments argued over different dimensions of the search for belonging Hodge and Mishra identify — some emphasising Australia's British inheritance, others stressing the production of new, 'native' cultural forms. From a perspective emphasising the first aspect of Hodge and Mishra's dual search for belonging, in 1956 Alec Hope described 'the mythical Great Australian Novel' as the 'Bunyip of Australian literature'.[716] Hope was writing of Patrick White, upon whose *The Tree of Man* he was ultimately (and, characteristically, acerbically) unwilling to bestow the honour.[717] It is appropriate, however, that it was Stephensen himself, also known as 'the Bunyip Critic', who, from an antithetical perspective, hailed Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* (which he played a central role in editing and publishing) as an 'epoch-making Great Australian novel' upon its publication in 1938.[718] In this assessment Stephensen was not alone, and if ever a novel attempted to fulfil the second aspect of Hodge and Mishra's purpose — to 'prove the colonists' right to belong … in the territory that they had invaded and colonised', albeit by castigating the colonists' with the history and the consequences of their own invasion — *Capricornia* was it.[719]

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[714] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals'.

[715] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, x.

[716] A. D. Hope, 'The Bunyip Stages a Comeback', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 June, 1956, 15.

[717] Hope infamously described the novel as 'pretentious and illiterate verbal sludge' (ibid.), in what Angela Bennie's entertaining collection of 'unforgettable Australian reviews' calls a 'seminal drubbing' (*Crème de la Phlegm: Unforgettable Australian Reviews* (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2006)). Contrary to his subsequent offer of 'amends' to the Jindyworobaks, Hope stood by his criticisms of White, which even in retrospect he considered warranted.

[718] Quoted in Smith, 'White Aborigines', 11.

[719] Smith observes that 'the most frequent way of talking about the novel was in terms of its Australianness or, as one critic said, its "full bodied Australianity"' ('Writing Native', 1).

The circumstances surrounding the novel's publication, as well as the broader settler nationalist projects of both Stephensen and Herbert, reveal more contradictions than they resolve. Published in 1938 by the Publicist Publishing Company to coincide with the first Aboriginal Day of Mourning protests against the sesquicentenary of Australian colonisation, *Capricornia* represented the highpoint of Stephensen's publishing career.[720] Paradoxically, the Publicist Publishing Company was then, and is still today, regarded as a vehicle for Stephensen's increasingly extreme variety of racially exclusive, isolationist nationalism.[721] Yet Herbert's novel appeared as a searing protest against the exclusion of so-called 'half-castes' from settler Australia, and as an anti-imperialist condemnation of Australia's settler-colonial foundations. Together, Herbert and his patrons capitalised on the sesquicentenary, and the Day of Mourning protests they helped organise, to promote what they proclaimed as 'the novel of the Spirit of the Land'.[722]

This chapter triangulates Herbert's racial understandings against those of both Stephensen and Ingamells, reading them all in relation to the prevailing circumstances of 1930s Australia. At a historical moment marked by ambivalence in Australia's relationship with metropolitan England, Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert sought to establish settler Australians' national cultural independence. In doing so, however, at a moment marked by the demise of the 'doomed race' ideal, they found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the settler nation they sought to claim. While Stephensen subscribed to the 'Aryan Aborigines' hypothesis and emphasised Australia's supposed racial purity, positing himself and the Australian national culture he sought to construct as inheritors of 'the mantle of belonging to the land',[723] and Ingamells engaged in a project of radical indigenist appropriation that separated and usurped a symbolic indigeneity from its bearers towards the very same

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[720] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 177.

[721] See, for example, Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*; Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*.

[722] Quoted in Smith, 'White Aborigines', 11.

[723] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 117.

end, Herbert celebrated instead the potentiality of 'Euraustralian' hybridity to overcome his own, and by extension his compatriots', illegitimate status as 'alien' and 'invader'.[724] These approaches are ostensibly at odds, yet they share a drive towards settler indigenisation and independence as their common, overriding concerns.

The 1930s, as outlined in the introduction, was a period marked by the marked demise of the doomed race ideal, which had until then served, at least discursively, to clear the ground for the foundations of settler national culture. The realisation of this demographic transition carried serious consequences for thinking settler Australia. Of most relevance to the work of Xavier Herbert, this transition also brought to the fore what Miles Franklin described as 'the aboriginal [sic] skeleton in the colonisation cupboard': white Australian men's predilection for so-called 'black velvet', and the progeny that resulted.[725] As Patrick Wolfe has argued, it was due to 'settler-colonial society's inability to moderate the sexual bombardment that non-Aboriginal men were visiting upon Aboriginal women everywhere [that] the so-called "half-caste menace" was threatening to explode uncontrollably'.[726]

The contrast between the memorable comments on this issue made by Deborah Bird Rose and Patrick Wolfe in particular is instructive here. In the first, Rose reads 'the [white] cock' as 'a displaced gun' that stands in as a 'tool of conquest' to underwrite European domination.[727] In a context of forcible child removal by settler-colonial authorities, the 'common practice of White men's sexual use and abuse of Aboriginal women … promoted the disappearance of Aborigines': 'the cock shot its bullets off into future generations of people who would be taken and never returned … White men

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[724] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 71.

[725] Quoted in Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 160. 'Black Velvet' was the original title borne by *Capricornia*, the latter acceded to by Herbert in what Liz Conor describes as 'an uncharacteristic concession to propriety' ('Blood Call and "Natural Flutters": Xavier Herbert's Racialised Quartet of Heteronormativity', *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2017): 71).

[726] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 112.

[727] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 109–10.

killed the future while still making use of living people in the present'.[728] In the second, in equally unforgettable phrasing, Wolfe suggested that 'the chronic negator' of the logic of elimination was, and had always been, 'the White penis'.[729] Fiona Probyn captures the ostensible contradiction neatly, noting that 'the white fathers were both agents of assimilation (providing opportunity for state control over Aboriginal people) and irritants to segregationist belief (flouting attempts to outlaw "miscegenation")'.[730]

On closer examination, however, this apparent paradox can be interpreted instead as a problem (the 'irritants to segregationist belief' that resulted from 'the sexual bombardment' of Indigenous women by non-Indigenous men) and a solution (child removal as a means of enacting the 'disappearance', or elimination, of Indigenous people). The two can be, indeed can arguably *only* be, read together, so that child removal and associated absorptionist measures (including especially definitions of Aboriginality, the regulation of marriage and control of sexual relations) only make sense in light of 'the spectre of a "rising tide of colour"' that seemingly threatened to overwhelm white Australia. Anthropological theories that supported absorptionist and assimilationist 'solutions' to Australia's 'Aboriginal problem', in its various guises, were not developed in a vacuum, and what Michael Griffiths has termed the 'biopolitical correspondences' between anthropology, 'native administration' and settler nationalism in the late 1930s are abundantly in evidence.[731]

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[728] Ibid., 110–11. It should by now go without saying that not all relations and encounters between white men and Aboriginal women conformed to a definition of 'use and abuse', and that even when they did they did not necessarily or comprehensively operate to (re)enforce 'European domination' (see, for example, Ann McGrath, *Illicit Love: Interracial Sex and Marriage in the United States and Australia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015)). Yet the exceptions in this instance do no more to disprove the general rule than the exercise of 'weapons of the weak' inverts the power relations that make them necessary in the first place (James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985)).

[729] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 112.

[730] Fiona Probyn, 'The White Father: Denial, Paternalism and Community', *Cultural Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2003): 63.

[731] Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'. Russell McGregor demonstrates the less than logical correspondences between theories of Aboriginal–Caucasian race-relatedness and advocates of biological absorption in the 1930s (see 'An Aboriginal Caucasian: Some Uses for Racial Kinship in Early Twentieth Century Australia', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 1 (1996); '"Breed Out the Colour" or the Importance of Being White', *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no. 120 (2002)). As the following discussion shows, these correspondences were put to use, extended and adapted by indigenising settler nationalists such as

Whereas earlier evolutionary anthropological theses envisaged the inevitable and unavoidable decline and ultimately disappearance of Indigenous peoples in contact with the 'superior' colonising civilisation at the spatial and temporal 'frontier',[732] the reversal of demographic decline amongst especially Aboriginal people of mixed descent in the 1930s precipitated different understandings, and responses. Tamsin Donaldson points to the disruptive potential 'the birth of new individuals descended from both locals and invaders' possesses with regard to 'the very terms, and terminology, of the colonial encounter'.[733] In response, as Russell McGregor remarks, the (gradual, halting, partial) move from evolutionist anticipations of 'the passing of the Aborigines' towards anticipations of biological absorption and, ultimately, an Aboriginal elimination of a different kind, amounted to and entailed a shift from 'inevitability of nature to imposition of state'.[734] This is a specific example of the process Patrick Wolfe recently identified, whereby 'racialisation represents a response to the crisis occasioned when colonisers are threatened with the requirement to share social space with the colonised'.[735]

Federation had already rendered indigeneity anomalous within the bounds of the settler nation; the imagined geography of Australian settler colonialism had shifted, and what had been consigned to the 'outback' was now unavoidably within.[736] While the troubling

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Stephensen as well. Such correspondences, even collaborations, between anthropologists, governments and state authorities, and artists of every ilk, are characteristic of settler indigenisms elsewhere, as Coronado highlights in relation to *indigenismo*, for example (*The Andes Imagined*). As are reproductive regimes 'concerned with limiting the reproduction of indigenous men, controlling the reproduction of indigenous women, and stealing indigenous children' (Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 116). See, for example, Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); also Katherine Ellinghaus, 'Absorbing the "Aboriginal Problem": Controlling Interracial Marriage in Australia in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries', *Aboriginal History* 27 (2003); Katherine Ellinghaus, 'Biological Absorption and Genocide: A Comparison of Indigenous Assimilation Policies in the United States and Australia', *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 4, no. 1 (2009).

[732] Rose and Davis, *Dislocating the Frontier*.

[733] Tamsin Donaldson, 'Australian Tales of Mystery and Miscegenation', in *Investigating Arthur Upfield: A Centenary Collection of Critical Essays*, eds Kees de Hoog and Carol Hetherington (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 62.

[734] McGregor, '"Breed Out the Colour"', 287.

[735] Wolfe, *Traces of History*, 14.

[736] Although there was always an *uninhabited* 'out-back beyond' (see note 302).

nature of this anomalous coexistence had been soothed by social evolutionist imaginings of the inevitable demise of the Indigenous presence, the 1930s demographic transition indicated that new solutions to the 'Aboriginal problem' (that is, new responses to the settler predicament) would be required. Biological absorption and its sociocultural successor — assimilationism — imagined, in different ways, the transferral of Indigenous people from the troubling category 'indigene' into the settler body politic, with the added benefit (for some) of indigenising the settler in the process.

Given the nature of the 'problem', and the risk it appeared to many to present to 'national cohesion and national progress', it was perhaps inevitable that '[o]ver the interwar years, the idea that half-castes could be elevated into civilisation gained a firmer grip on the white Australian imagination'. This belief served precisely to negate the risk itself and re-enabled the reassuring nationalist belief in an imminent resolution of the triangular settler-colonial situation into the more familiar, and relatively more easily negotiated, dyadic colonial one.[737] As the seminal *Bringing Them Home* report concluded in 1997:

> Aboriginal children were not removed because their 'white blood' made them 'white children' and part of the 'white community'. They were removed because their Aboriginality was 'a problem'. They were removed because, if they stayed with 'their group', they would acquire their 'habits', their culture and traditions.[738]

Beyond the (deeply entangled) realms of anthropology and settler-colonial governance, it is no coincidence, as Ellen Smith has observed, and as noted above, that it was in this period that 'Australian cultural nationalism [became] explicitly invested in the Aboriginal figure, Aboriginal culture, and an Aboriginal past as aesthetic and cultural resources in the construction of a unique national identity'.[739] Michael Griffiths goes so

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[737] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, 137, 141.

[738] Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Sydney: HREOC, 1997), n.p.

[739] Smith, 'Writing Native', 7.

far as to contend that '[t]he history of literary nationalism in Australia … corresponds with the biopolitics of Aboriginal "protection", "absorption", and "assimilation"'. He suggests that '[w]hile experts on the "Aboriginal question" were imagining the "long-range plan" by which Aboriginal presence would be evacuated from the national scene, literary nationalists were attempting to position their visions of future homogeneity in relation to the "Aborigines question"'.[740] More specifically, and of particular relevance to *Capricornia*, the 'half-caste' protagonist emerges in this context as 'a new kind of character'.[741] And yet, despite these apparent correspondences and even convergences, the underlying imperatives between absorption and indigenisation diverge, as the following discussion will attempt to illustrate.

Whereas the absorptionist imperative was the maintenance of a 'white Australia', with sometimes ambivalently or inadvertently progressive principles and even policies adopted in relation to Indigenous peoples as means towards this end, for the settler nationalists under consideration here the objective was not a white nation, but rather an indigenised settler one. Consequently, indigeneity could be and was read differently between these two traditions, with absorptionists re-reading Indigenous blood negatively, as a downgraded threat with regard to the risks of atavistic effects on the settler complexion, and indigenising settler nationalists re-interpreting indigeneity positively as a symbolic (or, for Herbert, biological) resource to be consumed, appropriated and/or 'bred in' to (rather than out of) the settler nation for the purpose of its indigenisation. Despite drawing on similar revisions in anthropological understandings, and despite ultimately possessing similar implications in terms of the literal and symbolic processes of displacement, disavowal and replacement enacted on and against Indigenous peoples towards the achievements of their dissimilar ends, the

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[740] Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences', 24, 30.

[741] Mickey Dewar, 'The Literary Construction of "Half-Caste" in the 1930s: Gender, Sexuality and Race in the Northern Territory', in *Connection and Disconnection: Encounters Between Settlers and Indigenous People in the Northern Territory*, eds Tony Austin and Suzanne Parry (Darwin: NTU Press, 1998), 179.

two traditions should be understood in relation to rather than congruent with one another.

For some indigenising settler nationalists in the 1930s and into the 1940s, such as Ingamells and Herbert, investment in the figure of the indigene was indeed explicit; for others, such as Stephensen and Clem Christesen of *Meanjin*, it would remain more implicit. Yet each of these examples is indicative of 'the role Aboriginal culture played in the search for a national sense of belonging' in this period and, it must be noted, since.[742] At this historical juncture, compelled by external ambivalences to turn inwards in search of a distinctive national culture and identity that could establish the basis for national cultural independence, settler nationalists found themselves confronting the prospect of a persistent Indigenous presence within the settler nation, and were forced to negotiate, in one way or another, the triangular relations of settler colonialism rather than the dyadic ones of colonialism proper.

It is into this historical-cultural context that the present chapter situates Xavier Herbert's notions of hybridity and indigeneity, and it does so in relation to Ingamells' divergent, indigenist position and, especially, his erstwhile supporter and editor, and subsequent adversary, Stephensen. As outlined, in attempting to negotiate the complex circumstances in which he found himself operating, Stephensen apparently subscribed to the 'Aryan Aborigines' hypothesis as a means of claiming a 'deep history'[743] on the Australian continent of 'a million years, or more'.[744] In an inversion of both Stephensen's

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[742] Carter, 'Critics, Writers, Intellectuals', 269–70. While Jindyworobak and *Meanjin*, along with *Galmahra* and the Australian Literary Society's journal *Corroboree*, are clear examples of linguistic indigenisation through effacement, so too are more ambivalent examples such as *Walkabout* (on *Walkabout* as an indigenising initiative, see Mitchell Rolls and Anna Johnston, *Travelling Home, Walkabout Magazine and Mid-Twentieth-Century Australia* (London & New York: Anthem, 2016)), or penetrationist examples such as the 'Aboriginalities' section of *The Bulletin* mentioned above. There were many then, as now, that objected to the very notion. Alister Kershaw, for example, linked Ingamells and Christesen, to the advantage of neither: 'Rex Ingamells, dressed in eucalyptus leaves / Wearing his genitals upon his sleeves / And carrying a boomerang and spear / Looks round to see if Christesen is near / (These are the closest friends in all the nations — / Each imitates the other's imitations.) / Each rides upon a large goanna's back — / "Meanjin Papers", "Jindyworobak"' (quoted in Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 212).
[743] See Denis Byrne, 'Deep Nation: Australia's Acquisition of an Indigenous Past', *Aboriginal History* 20 (1996).
[744] Stephensen, 'The Foundations of History'.

temporal as well as the absorptionists' biological narratives, in which settlers' 'semen [was] conceptualised as a bleaching agent',[745] however, Herbert celebrated instead the potentiality of what he termed 'Euraustralian' hybridity to attain settler indigeneity through miscegenation. While these approaches are ostensibly at odds, it is the suggestion here that they share settler indigenisation and independence as their ultimate aims.

The following discussion employs three encounters typical of settler-colonial imaginaries to illustrate the differences between the responses to the settler predicament articulated by Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert, but also to tie them together within the broader, precedent tradition of indigenising settler nationalism.

Encounter no. 1: The passing of the mantle

> Settler (male) encounters Aboriginal (male) in a moment of recognition as the Aboriginal dies and the settler flourishes. In that moment the Aboriginal passes the mantle of belonging to the land (autochthony) to the settler. A new relationship is established as the settler inherits the world of the Aboriginal … The White man knows that he belongs to the future, and that the Aboriginal man belongs to the past. The dynamic between them is an act of conferral … Treating whole groups of people as if they were generations, the relationship is linear: the ancient autochthon passes away and the settler takes his place as the new (and superior) indigene.[746]

As described in Chapter 2, Herbert's contemporary 'Inky' Stephensen was an influential figure in the Australian literary and cultural scene in the 1930s. As publisher, editor and political polemicist he consistently advocated the development of what he termed 'indigenous Australian culture' (by which he meant an independent settler one) until his

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[745] Marilyn Lake, 'Colonised and Colonising: The White Australian Feminist Subject', *Women's History Review* 2, no. 3 (1993): 383.
[746] Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country*, 117.

internment on suspicion of collaboration with the Japanese undermined his influence forever after.[747] In *Foundations*, Stephensen squarely acknowledged, and wrote against, the ambivalence of the period in which he was writing.[748]

Over the course of his essay, Stephensen laid out his argument that an original, 'indigenous' (settler) Australian culture would emerge through the interplay between 'Race and Place' under 'unique' Australian conditions.[749] For Stephensen, 'Race and Place' formed the 'two permanent elements in a culture, and Place … is even more important than Race'.[750] This turn away from more typical notions of Australian nationality in terms of either British race patriotism, or Hancock's famous 'independent Australian Britons', is reflected in Stephensen's adaptation of Hancock's metaphor regarding national maturation.[751] For Hancock, such a process entailed 'a transplanting of stocks and the sending down of roots in a new soil'.[752] In Stephensen's original revisioning, however, Australian culture is conceptualised as a 'native plant', while British culture is the 'imported phosphates' the plant 'cannot do without'.[753] While the coherence of Stephensen's metaphor begins to unravel on closer examination — why, for example, if the plant is native, is it not Indigenous? — it responds to the dual settler desire for indigenisation and Europeanisation in new and important ways. In place of transplanted British stock attempting to penetrate a foreign soil to put down national cultural roots, here an 'indigenous' settler culture emerges from the land itself, while its imported cultural inheritance remains available as fertiliser for the purposes of national cultural development.

And yet in the context in which he was writing, in turning inwards towards the *genius loci*, the 'Spirit of the Place',[754] as the site of emergence for an 'indigenous' settler national

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[747] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 68.
[748] See Munro, 'Introduction'.
[749] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, Part I.
[750] Ibid., 15.
[751] Hancock, *Australia*, chapter three.
[752] Ibid., 261.
[753] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 24.
[754] Ibid., Part I.

culture, Stephensen was compelled to address himself towards settler Australia's Indigenous antecedents, even if largely in passing. In two brief mentions, Stephensen suggested that 'Culture in Australia' would begin 'not from the Aborigines, who have been suppressed and exterminated, but from British culture'. Yet he also proposed the 'advisability' of adopting a form of 'Initiation Corroboree' from 'our admirable predecessors in sovereignty over the territory of Australia Felix' as a means of instantiating Australian 'national lore', without which there could be 'no national centre: no nation'.[755] Here, Indigenous peoples are relegated to the past in a familiar form of Fabian's aforementioned 'denial of coevalness', while their legitimate national belonging is rendered available to now-sovereign settlers for the purpose of indigenisation.[756]

One possible explanation for the apparent paradox of Stephensen's native/non-native 'gumtree', and a potential (if implausible) strategy for superseding his confrontation with an antecedent Indigenous authority, might be located in his apparent subscription to one of the multiple variants of the so-called Aryan Aborigine, or Dark or Black Caucasian hypotheses. These 'polyvalent' theories of Aboriginal–Caucasian race-relatedness, though they began to be developed in the late 19th century, gained traction in the mid-1920s and especially into the 1930s under the influence of figures such as Herbert Basedow, J. B. Cleland and others at the University of Adelaide, Frederic Wood Jones at the University of Melbourne, as well as the German anthropologist Carl Taüber, who in 1932 proposed that human life had originated in Australia.[757] In 1941, Stephensen wrote to Rex Ingamells that Aboriginal people were '[o]ur spiritual (perhaps our

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[755] Ibid., 12, 98.

[756] Fabian, *Time and the Other*, chapter one.

[757] See Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2005); Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, chapter three; Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'; McGregor, '"Breed Out the Colour"'; McGregor, 'An Aboriginal Caucasian'; Smith, 'White Aborigines'; Heidi Zogbaum, *Changing Skin Colour in Australia: Herbert Basedow and the Black Caucasian* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2010). This theory, too, had settler-colonial parallels, as in the 'Aryan Maori' thesis famously elaborated in Edward Tregear's 1885 indigenising text of that name (see Thomas, *Possessions*, chapter three). Thomas quotes historian M. P. K. Sorrensen's apt response: 'What better myth could there be for a young country struggling for nationhood and for the amalgamation of its races than this reunification of Aryans?' (ibid., 109).

physical) ancestors, (for the Aborigines are the oldest Aryans on earth)'.[758] Stephensen elaborated this position in his unpublished novel, appropriately entitled *The Settlers*, which bears more than a passing resemblance to Herbert's *Capricornia*, in subject matter if not in style, and certainly not success.[759] In it, one of the characters, Dr Morpeth, declares that 'Life began here in Australia … the Garden of Eden was here. The Tree of Life grew here':

> This is the Oldest Continent. There used to be a land-bridge from here to Asia. Man evolved here from tree-marsupials which had evolved into monkeys and apes … The Aryan race began in Australia. Australia is the original home of the white man. In coming to this land we are returning home. Australia is home to the white man. Marvellous things will happen as a result of this homecoming.[760]

Morpeth articulates precisely the kind of circularity Stephensen's indigenising settler nationalism requires: 'The Australian Aborigine … is the same blood as us! You and I, [he tells the Vicar, another of the novel's protagonists], are Australian aborigines [sic] of a million years ago; gone white in the cold latitudes'.[761]

The prevailing interpretation of Stephensen's extreme variety of isolationist nationalism has held that it was little more than an antipodean variety of European fascism.[762] From

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[758] Stephensen, Letter to Rex Ingamells.

[759] Percy R. Stephensen, 'The Settlers', n.d., MLMSS 1284, Box 13, P. R. Stephensen – Papers and Pictorial Material, ca. 1905–1971, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Stephensen's unfinished manuscript contained the section titles: 'settling', 'settled', 'unsettled', and 'resettled'. It is almost too appropriate that Stephensen completed 'settling', but only made it a few pages into 'settled'.

[760] Ibid. As testament to what McGregor terms the 'polyvalence' of these theories, Frederic Wood Jones' version ran in precisely the opposite direct: in his rendition, Aboriginal people in Australia originated in Europe, with the 'ironic twist' that they were therefore 'a pioneer from the home-lands that subsequently gave birth to the white usurpers of [their] hunting grounds' (quoted in McGregor, 'An Aboriginal Caucasian', 14).

[761] Stephensen, 'The Settlers'.

[762] For example, Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*; Winter, *The Australia First Movement*. For my contrary interpretation, see Dan Tout, 'Reframing "Inky" Stephensen's Place in Australian Cultural History', *Settler Colonial Studies* 7, no. 1 (2017). It is telling that, as his title suggests, Bird is sensitive to the role Aboriginal symbolism has to play in indigenising settler nationalism, but it is also indicative that his interpretive recourse is to European examples and explanatory frames. In the absence of an interpretive framework more closely attuned to local conditions, Bird brings together a heterogeneous group of writers, artists, academics, politicians and more (including all three of my subjects) under the banner of 'Australian dreamers and

such a perspective, his system of racial classification can be straightforwardly attributed to the fact that 'Nazi racial doctrine classed Australian Aborigines as Aryan, as they were certainly not Jewish'.[763] However, this is to neglect the purpose race-relatedness theory served within Stephensen's broader project of settler indigenisation. Stephensen's 'deep purpose', to borrow Monahan's term, was the promotion and protection of an 'indigenous' settler national culture, which would inherit the best aspects of both British and Indigenous cultures but emerge from the Australian environment distinct from — as a 'transcending inclusion' of — both.

James Saleam, president of the revived version of Stephensen's original Australia First Party, misdiagnosed as fascist what he inadvertently revealed as settler colonial, arguing that '[t]he utilization of indigenous symbolism was not unknown to international fascism. The "European" fascists of South America adopted Indianist motifs to proclaim their nativism'.[764] Far from merely an importation of Nazi racial doctrine, for Stephensen, as Smith perceptively concludes, 'the doctrine of Aryanism was detached from Europe and transplanted to Australia for the sake of an Australian national trajectory in which the Aryan Aborigine was really just the settler cast backwards, grounded in a million-year tradition'. For Stephensen, as Smith has argued, 'the theory of Caucasian roots … offered a way for white Australians to claim an Aboriginal genealogy'.[765]

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enthusiasts for Nazi Germany'. Within this generalised category, Bird incorporates those he (correctly) identifies as desirous of a 'white Dreamtime' — those who, like the Jindyworobaks, sought to 'draw inspiration from the aboriginal [sic] dreamtime, the so-called *Alcheringa*' — alongside a wide variety of settler (and non-settler) nationalists, as well as actual fascists and fascist sympathisers, and thus implies an inherent equivalence between them (*Nazi Dreamtime*, xi–xiii). This not only has the troubling effect of associating and thereby incriminating a diverse selection of subjects as 'fellow-travellers of the Right' (ibid., xii), but also completely evades any questions that might arise concerning the importance and implications of settler colonialism in Australia. Indeed, Bird's book implicitly distinguishes between 'bad' Nazi settlers (a grouping which includes anyone associated with Stephensen, or with any of his associates) and, we can only assume, 'good' non-Nazi ones, while glossing over Indigenous experiences altogether. Actual Indigenous people, for their part, only appear in Bird's account to the extent that they are instrumentalised by his subjects, while none of colonialism, settler colonialism or imperialism rate a mention at all.

[763] Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 19.
[764] Saleam, 'The Other Radicalism', 53.
[765] Smith, 'Writing Native', 114.

Stephensen's thesis of race-relatedness between settlers and indigenes was not based on the simple fact that Indigenous peoples in Australia were not Jewish, but rather that this view facilitated his circular, if contradictory, narrative of settler indigenisation in which settlers were returning home — bearing the mantle of European civilisation — to inherit the mantle of belonging from their 'admirable' Indigenous 'predecessors' through their interactions and encounters with the spirit of the place. Whereas in typical settler-colonial renditions of Aboriginal–Caucasian race-relatedness, 'Europeans were not "returning" to Australia, but the Aborigines had once been "Europeans"', Stephensen takes this one step further to suggest that Europeans were, in fact, 'returning' home.[766]

Stephensen's native plant was, it turns out, native after all, just a new and superior variety 'gone white in the cold latitudes'. Yet even though for Stephensen it was the native (settler) plant rather than the 'phosphates' of British culture that 'concerns us most', he was nevertheless prepared to admit the central role of 'English culture … in building up our own indigenous culture'.[767] In an exemplary yet original settler-colonial manoeuvre, Stephensen's apparent acceptance of race-relatedness theory served to enable a claim to settler Australia's inheritance of *both* British civilisation and indigeneity. In his conceptualisation, settlers were both 'indigenous' and European, and at the same time neither.

Stephensen's was a sophisticated, if ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to articulate the possibility of simultaneous neo-European replication and settler indigenisation, and represented a unique response to the 'problem of the fragment', or the settler predicament as I have defined it here. In a series of creative, if not entirely consistent, temporal manoeuvres, Stephensen positioned Indigenous peoples as in the present but of the past, condemned the British for their violent colonisation, and postponed the advent of the Australian nation until such time as the 'stains' of both convicts and colonisation had been washed away. So, in the same essay, Stephensen could refer to

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[766] See Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 36–37.
[767] Stephensen, *The Foundations of Culture*, 24–25.

Indigenous peoples as 'suppressed and exterminated', condemn *British* colonisation for that violent process of suppression and extermination, praise Aboriginal people as 'our admirable predecessors in sovereignty', and still conclude with his future hopes for 'A New Britannia in Another World!', for Australia to stand as the guardian of 'white civilisation, of white culture, of white traditions upon this earth'.[768] Stephensen's settlers *are* Rose's 'new (and superior)' indigenes, who clearly belong to the future while their Indigenous antecedents belong to the past.[769]

Miles Franklin has described *The Foundations of Culture in Australia* as 'more assiduously consulted than acknowledged', a circumstance that no doubt owes much to Stephensen's increasingly extreme expressions of isolationist nationalism, anti-Semitism and sympathy for forces opposed to the British Empire, including Germany and Japan, and his consequent internment.[770] Stephensen's essay did not escape the attention of either Ingamells, or Xavier Herbert, however. Like Stephensen, their underlying objectives were the indigenisation of the settler, and the settler nation, although the strategies each developed and deployed towards that end were original and, in some ways, even more radical than the semi-penetrationism of Stephensen's position. Albeit in very different ways, both Ingamells and Herbert took the 'continuing desire' Phillip Mead identifies 'in the white Australian imaginary … for a species of cultural–racial syncretism' in new and revealing directions.[771]

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[768] Ibid., 12, 118, 98, 189, 89–90.

[769] In her elaboration of the 'long transitive moment' of settler-colonial invasion, Rose adopts the metaphor of right and left hands, in which the left has the task of 'erasing specific life', while the right hand 'of conquest' brings 'productivity, growth, and civilisation' in its wake: 'The left hand creates the *tabula rasa* upon which the right hand will inscribe its civilisation' (*Reports from a Wild Country*, 61–62). The correspondences with the conceptual process of settler colonialism sketched out in Chapter 1 are clear. In Stephensen's articulation of this indigenising narrative, the left hand is British, while the 'beneficent' right hand belongs to the incipient 'indigenous' national culture he is concerned to construct.

[770] Franklin, *Laughter, Not for a Cage*, 215.

[771] Mead, 'Nation, Literature, Location', 560.

Encounter no. 2: Antecedent authorities

> [A]n authentic consciousness trying to grasp the distinctive characteristics of European society in Australia would, sooner or later, find itself face to face with the Aborigine and the land … Whether one moved backwards in time or outward in space, one met the Aborigine. Since both movements were necessary for a renewed understanding of nationhood, it transpired that the Aborigine was caught in a debate on the question of an Australian identity.[772]

Ingamells, somewhat alarmingly declaring Stephensen 'not Australian enough', was at least in part inspired by Stephensen's manifesto to develop his own thesis of settler indigenisation based, as we have seen, on a synthesis between settler Australia's cultural and linguistic inheritance and the Australian environment, and drawing on a decontextualised 'essence' of indigeneity as an indigenising resource. In an attempt to imagine a similar transfer as that envisaged by Stephensen, albeit a transfer articulated in significantly different ways, finding themselves confronted by the figure of the indigene in their attempt to attune the English language to the Australian environment, the Jindyworobaks sought to accept both the mantle of civilisation from their European forebears as well as the mantle of belonging from their Indigenous antecedents. In doing so, they sought a means of superseding the settler predicament. John Barnes encapsulates the difference between the projects of 'adjusting' man to land pursued by the Jindyworobaks and the *Bulletin* school neatly: 'It was not the quality of life lived by the white settlers in the bush that the Jindyworobaks were concerned with, but the environment as it had existed before the settlers had come'.[773]

Griffiths' analysis of the prevailing 'biopolitical correspondences' between anthropology, the state and settler cultural nationalism in the period under examination here convincingly highlights the common absorptionist and assimilationist narratives

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[772] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 173, 177.
[773] Quoted in Dally, 'The Jindyworobak Movement', 331.

and objectives within and between these various agencies.[774] Yet whereas one of the Griffiths' subjects, Xavier Herbert, as the following section shows, was clearly representative of an important and long-lasting tradition of simultaneously absorptionist *and* indigenising settler nationalism, albeit a confused and ambivalent one, the Jindyworobaks were also, and arguably much more closely, aligned with the anti-assimilationism of one of Ingamells' early and most important influences, T. G. H. Strehlow. In this, they too were at times confused and often ambivalent, yet the contradictory impulses they expressed are instructive nonetheless, not only because they enable a re-reading of the Jindyworobaks' cultural significance in relation to their time and place, and as an original and emergent rather than primitive (or primitivist) response to the exigencies of their historical and cultural context, but also and conversely as a means of problematising the otherwise ostensibly sympathetic anti-assimilationism of Strehlow, and others such as W. E. H. Stanner along with him.

Where Ingamells' indigenism has been examined in relation to anthropological understandings, it has usually been to question his level of interest, ridicule the extent of his understanding, and/or relate his program of indigenist appropriation to the romantic strand of 'imperialist nostalgia' exemplified by James Devaney's *The Vanished Tribes* and its more famous counterpart, published in 1938, the year of the Jindies' inception, Daisy Bates' *The Passing of the Aborigines*.[775] Thus both man and mission have usually been interpreted as arising at and articulating the tail end of the social evolutionary paradigm, and the doomed race ideal along with it.[776] Aspects of these

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[774] See Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences'. Griffiths' emphasis is on A. P. Elkin and his influence on and relationship to settler cultural nationalism; mine is on the more directly correspondent figure of Strehlow in particular. While Elkin is of less relevance to the present discussion, however, his own intimations of an indigenising imperative are intriguing nonetheless. Echoing Stephensen, and foreshadowing Souter, in what Griffiths describes as a 'fleeting … vague and inchoate' reference, Elkin proposed that settlers should adopt some form of 'initiation … in spirit' in order to 'gain some conception of what life means to the Aborigines' ('Unsettling Artifacts', 206–07).

[775] Renato Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', *Representations*, no. 26 (1989); James Devaney, *The Vanished Tribes* (Sydney: Cornstalk, 1929); Daisy Bates, *The Passing of the Aborigines: A Lifetime spent among the Natives of Australia* (Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Library, 2009).

[776] See, for example, Robert Sellick, 'The Jindyworobaks and Aboriginality', in *Southwords: Essays on South Australian Writing*, ed. Philip Butterss (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1995). Sellick wrote that 'the Jindyworobaks saw the Dreaming as a lost heroic age', and suggested that this explained 'the attraction of

understandings certainly permeated Ingamells' thinking, as evident in his assertion, for example, that Aboriginal culture had 'itself, for the most part, died with the tribes'. Yet here, once again, the indigenising imperative is made evident by his immediately subsequent suggestion that 'something of its spirit has been preserved', the 'assimilation' of which, he contends, 'is essential to the honest development of Australian culture'.[777]

The continuities and discontinuities between the traditions that underpin the first part of Ingamells' proposition, and the revaluations and motivations underlying the second, are instructive. If we take Baldwin Spencer and Ted Strehlow as broadly representative of these two traditions, the primary differences between them may be rendered most clearly with reference to Spencer's early appraisal of Aboriginal culture, and Strehlow's subsequent riposte. The former's description of Australia as 'the present refuge of creatures, often crude and quaint, that have elsewhere passed away and given place to higher forms' is now infamous, as is his suggestion that '[i]t has been possible to study in Australia human beings that still remain on the cultural level of men of the Stone Age'.[778] On the contrary, in introducing his life's work, *Songs of Central Australia*, Strehlow wrote explicitly against Spencer's view, insisting:

> It is a pity that in the past there have been so few Australian students who were interested in cultural, and especially in linguistic, studies among the natives of our continent. Thus, by far the greater part of the songs of Tasmania, Victoria, coastal New South Wales, and coastal South Australia, have been lost to posterity; and … little effort has been made so far to record the poetry of the tribes that remain in the northern and central parts of our country. This neglect has not been merely accidental. It arises from the fact that not only the average citizen but also most anthropologists and missionaries during the nineteenth century regarded our aboriginals as

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James Devaney's stories, since he set them in an already vanished past' (114). Much the same could be said of Strehlow, with some important modifications.
[777] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 17.
[778] Carter, *Dispossession, Dreams and Diversity*, 71.

constituting one of the lowest-standing human races in the scale of culture and development. It was not thought necessary to learn the language of these 'primitives', who were generally regarded as practically sub-human creatures.[779]

It is difficult to read Spencer's purpose as anything other than that which Strehlow is concerned to critique. Strehlow's aim, on the other hand, in contrast and in opposition to Spencer's, was to place 'the Aranda on a spiritual level with other cultures', to re-render Spencer and Gillen's subjects 'as highly cognisant celebratory subjects, poets and artists of their life, makers of their culture, rather than doomed aspects of nature' and, in doing so, to 'credit them with full humanity'. And yet, despite these clearly identifiable differences and Strehlow's undeniable achievements towards his undoubtedly more positive ends, what Elkin described as Strehlow's 'literary liaisons' were as much, if not more so, practices of 'salvage linguistics' intended to preserve Arrernte (Aranda) traditions for (settler) 'posterity' as they were based on any real hope or advocacy for their continuity.[780]

As his later critique of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) revealed, Strehlow's chief concern was the 'preservation of the most comprehensive *records* of traditional aboriginal culture … so that their richness, interdependence, and intrinsic value could be understood *and appreciated by posterity*' rather than the preservation of Aboriginal culture, or indeed its living representatives, as such.[781] In this, as Jones' application of the term 'salvage linguistics' implies, Strehlow's project shared at least some degree of affinity with the 'salvage ethnography' typical of much settler-colonial anthropology, from Franz Boas to Baldwin Spencer, and all the way through to a more sympathetic figure such as W. E. H. Stanner, whose distinctions between 'High' and

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779 T. G. H. Strehlow, *Songs of Central Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1971).
780 Barry Hill, *Broken Song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession* (Milsons Point: Knopf, 2002). On Strehlow's practice as a project of 'salvage linguistics', see Jones, 'Strehlow, Theodor', n.p.
781 Tim Rowse, *Rethinking Social Justice: From 'Peoples' to 'Populations'* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2012), 50, emphasis added.

'Low' Aboriginal cultures allowed positive interpretations of the former to coexist alongside a distinct lack of optimism for their future survival.[782]

Whether Strehlow's project should therefore be understood as representing simply one more iteration of the common settler refrains of fatalism concerning Indigenous futures that reverberate throughout Australian history right up to the present, albeit a more sympathetic one, or whether in fact it discloses an underlying belief in, even desire for, the doomed race ideal expressed under changing circumstances, is open for debate. Yet it is telling that Strehlow continued his critique of the AIAS by insisting that its 'most significant' purpose was that of setting down and preserving its records of Aboriginal culture 'in a form in which the possibility that this culture might contribute *to the enrichment of our "white" Australian way of life* could be recognized by at least the more thoughtful citizens of this country'.[783]

Strehlow, like Spencer, wrote in an elegiac mode, but Strehlow's innovations were twofold: firstly, to extend the temporal scope of Rose's symbolic encounter without disrupting the teleological progression of displacement and replacement it entails — the demise of Aboriginal culture and its supersession by a superior, settler one; and secondly, to revalue an Indigenous culture imagined as already in the process of passing. The initial shift is a temporal one — from pure elegy towards what Hodge and Mishra have termed 'premature elegy'[784] — and it is within this shift that Spencer's denigration is transformed into Strehlow's admiration without disrupting the ultimate (imagined) disappearance of the troubling, 'authentic' Indigenous presence from within the settler nation. The crucial difference between 'premature' and pure elegy, the latter more

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[782] As Stanner reflected in his famous Boyer Lectures of 1968, '[w]here a society was breaking down (as with most of the Aborigines) we thought it our task to salvage pieces of information and from them try to work out the traditional social forms' (*The Dreaming & Other Essays*, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Black Inc. Agenda, 2009), 181). Even the essay Robert Manne describes as 'Stanner's masterpiece' — 'Durmugam: A Nangiomeri' — is in fact a tale of decline: from an immutable High Culture to a degraded, 'cult'-like 'new High Culture', to the 'Low Culture' he would later describe as 'a kind of residuum', Stanner recounts a familiar settler narrative in which '[t]he Aboriginal system has *in part* widely broken down and cannot be restored' (ibid., 48, emphasis in original).
[783] Quoted in Rowse, *Rethinking Social Justice*, 50, emphasis added.
[784] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 42.

closely aligned with Rosaldo's 'imperialist nostalgia' — one looking forward, the other back, but both focusing on the moment of the Other's demise — is precisely the (albeit fleeting) meeting the former implies, and the 'act of conferral' such a meeting allows. It is in this fleeting moment of encounter, but this moment only, that Strehlow's subjects are granted their 'full humanity'.

Strehlow's important modifications to the social evolutionary paradigm may be seen as responding anthropologically to precisely the changing circumstances this thesis has been concerned to emphasise: Aboriginal demographic, if not cultural, continuity on the one hand, and the multiple crises of Australian settler-colonial modernity on the other. Whereas for Spencer, his subjects' status as 'a Stone Age people … doomed to extinction' rendered anthropology 'of necessity elegiac, mourning the last vestiges of "the Stone Age"', demographic shifts combined with changing understandings of race led Strehlow, and Stanner too, to reimagine the disappearance in cultural rather than empirical terms.[785] As Jeremy Beckett observed, with explicit reference to Strehlow:

> While Australia was told that Aborigines were not going to die out, it was also given to understand that Aboriginality was doomed. Timeless and unchanging, Aboriginal culture was incapable of co-existence with the modern world: 'the old Aboriginal cultures are collapsing everywhere under the Impact of white settlement, mining exploitation, pastoral expansion and the effects of Government "assimilation" policies'.[786]

As Strehlow put it as late as 1963, the 'old Aboriginal world is now facing its final twilight' — the task of the AIAS and anthropologists more generally was therefore to study Aboriginal culture 'before it was too late', so that what could be salvaged from it could be incorporated into the 'national heritage'.[787] A. P. Elkin famously agreed, electing

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[785] Patrick Brantlinger, 'Notes on the Postmodernity of Fake(?) Aboriginal Literature', *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no. 4 (2011): 139.

[786] Jeremy Beckett, 'The Past in the Present; the Present in the Past: Constructing a National Aboriginality', in *Past and Present: The Construction of Aboriginality*, ed. Jeremy Beckett (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994), 201.

[787] Quoted in ibid.

to title his 1968 paper and subsequent article on the Institute's role and purpose 'Before It Is Too Late'. Here, Elkin framed the Institute's emergence and ongoing importance in relation to 'the sure and certain dying out of tribes and by the even quicker breakdown of their culture'. On the basis of an extremely unfortunate mining analogy, Elkin praised the Institute's practices of 'observing, surveying, probing, sounding, drilling and extracting', from which he felt confident the 'dividends' would 'be high'.[788] Drawing on the Elkin example, Deborah Bird Rose insightfully concludes 'that anthropologists have been the necrologists of the nation'.[789]

Strehlow was certainly more closely attuned than was Ingamells to the external imperatives behind his own indigenising project, noting that 'the spirit of co-operation and kinship that once expressed itself in the institutions of our Australian natives [the tensing is instructive] … might perhaps be helpful in the solution of some of our own problems and those of the modern civilised world'.[790] As Russell McGregor remarks, Strehlow (unlike Stephensen) 'did not suggest that white Australians should copy Aboriginal social institutions or mimic their rituals; rather, he asked them to cultivate an appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and social systems, from which they might formulate new antidotes to the ills of modernity'.[791] In McGregor's assessment, while Strehlow 'tried to resist relapsing into a romance of the noble savage', he was 'not always successful'. Yet while his intellectual engagement with 'the ills of modernity' was more direct than Ingamells, their indigenising projects were otherwise almost indistinguishable from one another, even if they arose and were prosecuted in relation to different cultural fields.[792]

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[788] A. P. Elkin, 'Before It Is Too Late', in *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology: Modern Studies in the Social Anthropology of the Australian Aborigines*, ed. Ronald M. Berndt (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1970), 19.

[789] Deborah Bird Rose, 'Hard Times: An Australian Study', in *Quicksands: Foundational Histories in Australia & Aotearoa New Zealand*, eds Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas, and Hilary Ericksen (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 15.

[790] Quoted in McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 130.

[791] Quoted in ibid.

[792] Ibid.

Strehlow quite literally saw himself as the inheritor, the 'trustee', of Aboriginal traditions, as both Tim Rowse and more recently Barry Hill make clear.[793] Hill recalls Strehlow's self-understanding as 'a white custodian of Aboriginal culture … as the recipient of all last things'.[794] There is an instructive distinction here between the settler indigenist project and the modernist-primitivist one explored in the previous chapter. If, on the one hand, as Kirkpatrick highlights, T. S. Elliott's 1919 praise for the maxim 'return to the sources' was based on the notion that 'primitive art and poetry can help our understanding of civilised art and poetry … can even, through the studies and experiments of the artist or poet, revivify the contemporary activities', settler indigenism in the manner of the Jindyworobaks (and, indeed, Strehlow) proposes instead to 'inherit the sources' to vivify an emergent national culture under construction.[795]

Like Strehlow, Ingamells wrote in what Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra termed the 'premature elegiac' mode, as Peter Kirkpatrick has observed.[796] Smith points out that this mode 'provided one way that the Jindyworobaks drew on the symbolic potential of the Aboriginal while at the same time eliding a series of anxieties about priority and legitimacy'.[797] Like Strehlow, Ingamells sought to revaluate Indigenous culture, and he subscribed to the equivalence Strehlow had attempted to draw between 'the legends of the Luritcha, Aranda and other tribes [sic]' and 'those of ancient Greece' (and, like Strehlow, he was ridiculed and vilified as a result).[798] Finally, and most significantly, like Strehlow, Ingamells urged settler Australians to study Indigenous culture not, or not only, for the sake of such study in and of itself, or even necessarily out of concern for his nominated subject's living representatives, but rather for what it might offer settler Australians in terms of the development of their own 'indigenous' culture in tune with their environment (although, as already noted, while indigenising imperatives and

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[793] Quote from Rowse, *Rethinking Social Justice*, xvi; see also Hill, *Broken Song*.
[794] Hill, *Broken Song*.
[795] See Kirkpatrick, 'Jindy Modernist', 110.
[796] Hodge and Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream*, 42.
[797] Smith, 'Writing Native', 188.
[798] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 16.

genuine concern for actual Indigenous people may have been contradictory, they were not necessarily mutually exclusive, as the evident affinities between Strehlow and Ingamells reaffirm).

Ingamells clearly did not possess the resources or familiarity to innovate in the manner of Strehlow, either literary- or otherwise, and Strehlow's *Songs of Central Australia* would subsequently, as Philip Jones points out, do more 'to establish the Dreaming and the Aboriginal world-view as key concepts in an emerging Australian cultural identity' than the Jindyworobaks ever did.[799] Yet in the realm of settler cultural nationalism, Ingamells' indigenism inherited and developed Strehlow's innovations in important and influential ways, to the extent that Griffiths has deemed the Jindies 'the apotheosis of settler (post)colonial plagiarism'.[800] Adam Shoemaker captures the dynamics at play when he notes that the Jindyworobaks

> sought to develop a truly indigenous White Australian culture, using Aboriginal culture — or rather, their superficial understanding of it — as the theoretical key. And to what end? Primarily, to establish the autonomy of Australian culture from that of European countries, particularly England … most of the original Jindyworobaks told their readers next to nothing about Aboriginal people. Rather, their usage of the ostensible trappings of Black Australian languages was indicative of a kind of souvenir mentality.[801]

Strehlow concluded *Songs of Central Australia* with the entirely Jindyworobak-compatible suggestion that:

> This book, dealing as it does with Central Australian aboriginal [sic] songs, has attempted to probe deeply into matters that have a special interest for white Australians like myself … If we are to develop a literature which will appeal strongly to an Australian audience, then our future writers and poets

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[799] Jones, 'Strehlow, Theodor', n.p. Roland Robinson stands, perhaps, as the lone exception to this rule.
[800] Griffiths, 'Unsettling Artifacts', 222.
[801] Shoemaker, *Black Words, White Page*, 57.

will have to garb their verse and prose with new trappings that will harmonize with the Australian background against which we are living our own daily lives. It is therefore to be hoped that a perusal of the ancient material that constitutes the aboriginal sacred songs of Central Australia will not prove entirely unrewarding to our future poets: the imagery found here does harmonize with the outward shape and inward spirit of our continent. It is my belief that when the strong web of future Australian verse comes to be woven, probably some of its strands will be found to be poetic threads spun on the Stone Age hair-spindles of Central Australia.[802]

Strehlow's purpose, as much as it was cast backwards for posterity, was also, as Hill has it, 'thrown forward': the book 'was meant to embody more than the old songs of the old culture. It offered a promise — culturally speaking — of … a reconciling future'.[803] And yet, contrary to the implied emphasis on the settler–indigene relation carried by the term 'reconciling' in Hill's account, Strehlow's hoped-for reconciliation was as much one between settler Australians and their environment — the 'harmonization' of settler national culture with 'the Australian background against which we are living our own daily lives' — as was Ingamells' desired synthesis. As early as 1935, Strehlow had written to Ingamells' in relation to his first book of verse, *Gumtops* (in what appears to have been intended as a review of the collection, but which as far as I can ascertain remained unpublished):

The Australian poet, if his work is to have enduring value, must cease to be a third-rate imitator of outworn European conventions and bizarre Western experiments in verse … He must become, first and foremost, a true native of Australia, and cease to be a virtual stranger in his own homeland … It seems to me — if a personal opinion is acceptable — that the poet of 'Gumtops' is one of these true 'natives'; that he has succeeded in presenting a truthful and

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[802] Strehlow, *Songs of Central Australia*, 728–29.
[803] Hill, *Broken Song*.

sympathetic picture in verse of Central Australia, with considerable skill and in terms of fine poetry.[804]

Tellingly, when Strehlow published *Songs of Central Australia* in 1971, he did not provide 'any precise details about when, where and from whom they had been collected'.[805] The resemblances between the abstraction of Indigenous language and symbolism from its cultural context underpinning Ingamells' project of indigenist appropriation and Strehlow's own are striking. Of course, a romantic revaluation and a continuing belief in the ideal of a doomed race are by no means contradictory, let alone incompatible; indeed, such a revaluation fulfils the requirements of the settler indigenising imperative neatly by transforming the 'remnant' culture from something to be rejected into a resource worthy of being absorbed. Strehlow's 'salvage linguistics' were entirely compatible with Ingamells' settler indigenism, since the revaluation of Indigenous culture *in* and *for* 'posterity' does precisely nothing to disrupt the settler transition Rose's encounter exemplifies.

As Wolfe has argued, the generalisation of the Arrernte concept of *alchera* or *alcheringa* (the 'dreaming', or, even more problematically, 'dream-time') implied an acknowledgement of the Indigenous other's persistence into the present (in contradiction of the 'denial of coevalness' characteristic of evolutionary anthropology) alongside an apparently positive revaluation of Indigenous spirituality, while nevertheless maintaining Indigenous peoples' status as *outside* time, and therefore history.[806] In the same way, Strehlow's and Ingamells' similarly sympathetic reappraisals of the value of Indigenous culture to their contemporary settler Australian society did not meaningfully, if at all, disrupt the prevailing sense of teleological transition from

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[804] Strehlow, Letter to Rex Ingamells.

[805] Sven Lindqvist, *Terra Nullius: A Journey through No One's Land*, trans. Sarah Death (New York: The New Press, 2007), 168.

[806] Wolfe, 'On Being Woken Up'. Wolfe argues that 'the Dreaming complex constituted an ideological elaboration of the doctrine of *terra nullius*, emptying the land so that settler and landscape formed a dual interaction with the characteristic proportions of mind over matter' (ibid., 210)— this was precisely Ingamells' construction.

Indigenous to 'indigenous' Australia on which they drew, and to which they contributed. What they did both achieve, however, at least in some limited way — under conditions in which the development of an independent, 'indigenous' settler national culture seemed simultaneously more urgent and more problematic — was to provide a new nationalist narrative in which 'authentic' Indigenous culture could still be envisaged as on the verge of disappearance, yet in which this culture could and should be 'sublimated' and inherited by the superior settler one in order that the latter might distinguish itself from its metropolitan other and simultaneously solve the problem of its environmental alienation.[807]

Encounter no. 3: The alien face in the mirror

The white Canadian looks at the Indian. The Indian is Other and therefore alien. But the Indian is indigenous and therefore cannot be alien. So the Canadian must be alien. But how can the Canadian be alien within Canada?[808]

If the white Australian tries to find his Aboriginal face in the mirror, he may come to see his own face as the face of the oppressor.[809]

In 1936, Xavier Herbert wrote in characteristically zealous fashion to Stephensen, exclaiming:

My Dear Inky,

A moment ago I concluded your book Foundations of Culture. What can I say about it? …. How your inspired message made me feel! … I dream of being made a patrol officer, so that I may go right home to the old people and become one of them. But I've not forgotten 'the True Commonwealth'. I

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[807] Ingamells and Tilbrook, *Conditional Culture*, 18.
[808] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, 12.
[809] Birch, 'Whitefella Jump Up', 87.

still tear up such Sydney Morning Heralds as I find, and bare my teeth at Pommies.

Yes — and I'm working to found a gigantic organisation called the Euraustralian League, comprised of so-called half-castes and quarter-castes, and of any whitefellas … [who believe] that the culture of the land will grow like gum trees from the soil. These Euraustralians — or yeller-fellers as the transplanted Pommies call them — are a great race. There are something like 20,000 already …

We are not Australians, Inky. Only those lucky people are. They are I should say the most vigorous race of people on the earth. I love them, and envy them their nationality. Curse the fates that arranged that I should be born a colonial Pommy! Will you work with me to organise this Euraustralian race so it will rise up and up and increase and multiply and eventually sweep the Pommies back into the sea?

PS. Some day I shall write 'True Commonwealth', a vast tale of the rise of the Euraustralians and the birth of the happiest nation on the earth and some day I shall father a Euraustralian so as to truly root myself in this dear earth and so as to legitimise my bastard whitefella genius.[810]

Whereas for Ingamells, environmental values were paramount, and a decontextualized, abstracted Indigenous symbolism appeared as an instrument towards their realisation, for Stephensen, place was primary and a racial equivalence between Aboriginality and Aryanism opened him up to the utility of indigeneity for the purpose of settler indigenisation. Herbert was far more biologically oriented, and racially constrained. As Smith suggests,

for Herbert the symbolic recourses [sic] of place are inadequate and the figure of the 'Euraustralian' allows him to imagine a national blood-line.

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[810] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 69–71.

Herbert's model of national identity is biological, a matter of parentage. The Euraustralian represents for Herbert a national genealogy born of the soil and transmitted by blood, and a counter to the 'transplanted pommie,' the colonial heritage that Herbert regretfully identifies as his own.[811]

If Stephensen usurped an already suppressed and exterminated indigeneity through an imagined racial inheritance — a passing of the mantle of belonging — based on the interplay between 'race and place', and Ingamells 'assimilated' a remnant indigeneity through symbolic appropriation at the very moment of the (imagined) 'passing of the Aborigines',[812] Herbert proposed a radical project of racial hybridity that not only reversed the temporal trajectory of Stephensen's and Ingamells' transfers, but inverted the racial understandings on which they were based. Yet while Herbert's project is certainly one of hybridisation — as captured by Mudrooroo in his introduction to the 1990 edition of *Capricornia*, where he summarises Herbert's 'Great Aussie Yarn' as being about 'the producing of a "new" race from the mixture of Aboriginal and European stock' — the resultant amalgam is not a hybrid indigene, but rather an indigenised *settler*. Herbert's version of the 'transcending inclusion' of settler identity works towards rather than away from settler supremacy.[813]

Herbert was clearly aware of the demographic transition outlined above, since he says as much in his letter to Stephensen. Whereas the response of the absorptionists was, despite its inherent contradictions, ultimately eugenicist, Herbert's response was miscegenist. Contrary to prevailing absorptionist ideas and ideals — themselves comprising a (not wholly consistent) set of responses to 'the spectre of a "rising tide of

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[811] Smith, 'Writing Native', 131.

[812] This is a moment of transition, and while McGregor concludes his study of what I have been calling the 'doomed race ideal' at the outbreak of the Second World War, it is notable that Daisy Bates' influential 'study' on *The Passing of the Aborigines* was published in 1938. The multiple significance of 'passing' is instructive: in order to 'pass' as indigenised, Ingamells worked in the 'premature elegiac' mode to establish the discursive frame in which the passing encounter between settler and indigene (during which the mantle of belonging would pass from the latter to the former) could be imagined *prior* to the foreordained 'passing' of Indigenous people themselves.

[813] Mudrooroo Nyoongah, 'Introduction', in *Capricornia* (North Ryde: Collins/Angus & Robertson, 1990), xiv.

colour"'[814] that seemingly threatened to overwhelm white Australia — Herbert's desire was to become 'one of them', or at least to 'legitimise' his claim to indigeneity through (illegitimate) reproduction. For Stephensen, the future of the Indigenous population was as biological and spiritual ancestor to the new (and superior) 'indigenous' settler. For Ingamells, it was the spiritual component and the connection to land that mattered, and Indigenous culture was of interest primarily as an instrument of settler adaptation. For Herbert, the transition was the other way around, and the future of the settler nation would be an 'indigenous' one only by virtue of 'breeding in' indigeneity through miscegenation.[815]

As Fiona Probyn-Rapsey has argued, Herbert's almost certainly apocryphal mythologisation of Cecil Cook, the coiner of the phrase 'breed out the colour', as an albino renders corporeal the distinctions between them. For Herbert, Cook's program of 'breeding out the colour' leads to a kind of ghastly ghostliness, associated with the alienation and illegitimacy he sought to overcome (a 'whiteness that is "out of place"'), while Herbert's contrary 'skin politics' of '"breeding in" the indigeneity' leads towards the 'perfection' of a 'light-skinned breed, even tanned Caucasian' for the '"new" Australian body politic'. Probyn-Rapsey concludes that Herbert's '"son of the soil" nationalism' was not so far from the 'state-sanctioned future vision of a White Nation' advocated by the absorptionists, since 'both placed Aboriginal people at the source of white belonging'.[816] Yet whereas the absorptionist position leads towards settler acclimation through biological absorption, Herbert's nationalist teleology leads on the contrary towards settler indigenisation through miscegenation.

Even if the absorptionist program at times supported 'remarkably progressive' social policies for Indigenous people themselves, it ultimately envisaged a white settler nation

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[814] McGregor, '"Breed Out the Colour"', 290.
[815] Probyn-Rapsey, 'Some Whites are Whiter', 168.
[816] Ibid., 159, 168.

(albeit one better acclimatised by virtue of the very process of absorption).[817] Herbert, on the other hand, like Stephensen and Ingamells, envisaged an *'indigenous'* settler nation. McGregor concludes that for the absorptionists 'the problem was that half-castes were not white'.[818] For Herbert the problem was that white Australians were not (yet) 'indigenous' (and therefore not yet legitimate). For Cook, as McGregor points out, 'there could be no better pathway of social betterment than the one that led to whiteness … Equally, there could be no other pathway to national membership'.[819] For Herbert, on the other hand, there could be no pathway to settler national legitimacy other than through biological (rather than cultural, as was the case for Ingamells) indigenisation.

The absorptionist project was closely aligned with the defensive nationalism of White Australia, even if it sought to ameliorate through biological adaptation some of the difficulties of its articulation in the tropics — it was, after all, the threat of 'the Commonwealth' being overwhelmed by a rising 'half-caste' population that compelled its adoption and implementation. Whereas the absorptionist response expressed a 'recurrent panic of constraint',[820] and was by-and-large reactive rather than future-oriented, the indigenising settler nationalisms of Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert were precisely the opposite. Albeit in different ways, these three figures each attempted to grapple with, and to find ways to supersede, the historical, cultural and structural circumstances in which they found themselves, marked as they were by external ambivalence and internal alienation and ambiguity.

Herbert's position was also a misogynist one, since it assumed the settler father would pass on and reciprocally receive an essence of indigeneity through the very act of procreation with an Aboriginal woman, who represents nothing more than a vessel for

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[817] Tony Austin, 'Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and "Half-Castes" in the Northern Territory 1927–1939', *Aboriginal History* 14 (1990): 119–20; see also Tony Austin, *Never Trust a Government Man: Northern Territory Aboriginal Policy 1911–1939* (Darwin: NTU Press, 1997).
[818] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, 137.
[819] McGregor, '"Breed Out the Colour"', 301.
[820] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 159.

the absorption and transmogrification of settler illegitimacy into hybrid indigeneity.[821] For all Herbert's 'radical assertions of a "Euraustralian" or hybrid nation, Herbert was myopic and dismissive of the women attached to the "lean loins" he hoped it would spring from'.[822] As Liz Conor has argued, 'realizing a dream nation of "cream-caramel" Australians' hinges on 'the repudiation of the enunciative position of Aboriginal maternity'; Aboriginal mothers are negated in the process of transferring their indigeneity to Herbert's 'great [new] race' of 'Euraustralians'.[823] The effacement of Aboriginal mothers, and indeed of women in general, Indigenous and otherwise, is common to the nationalisms of Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert, but only for Herbert do Aboriginal mothers have a direct but disavowed role to play in producing his hybrid indigenised-settler version of the 'Coming Man'.[824] (Herbert's position is also an egoistic one: whereas Stephensen and Ingamells were broadly concerned with the development, albeit via different means, of an 'indigenous' settler national culture through penetration and/or appropriation, Herbert was concerned primarily with individual legitimation-by-indigenisation — with *his* ability to 'claim the right to live in this land' — and proposed the possibility of 'infus[ing] my very blood into the Aboriginal race' as the only possible solution.)

This misogyny played out in Herbert's novels where, as Smith points out, '[a]lmost all the Aboriginal women die … and all the Aboriginal mothers die'.[825] On the one hand, these critiques are part of Herbert's broader 'social critique' and exist to 'draw attention to what Herbert calls the nation's "mad pride in colour" and the "foul neglect" of Aboriginal and mixed-race people'; on the other hand, however, they are at the same time 'a structural condition of the intensely patriarchal nature of Herbert's nationalism, which depends on the annihilation of women'.[826] Here Smith draws our attention to the

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[821] See Conor, 'A "Nation So Ill-Begotten"'.
[822] Conor, 'Blood Call and "Natural Flutters"', 70.
[823] Conor, 'A "Nation So Ill-Begotten"', 99.
[824] See White, *Inventing Australia*.
[825] Smith, 'White Aborigines', 17–18.
[826] Smith, 'Writing Native', 137.

correspondences between Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* and Herbert's novels, but also between Herbert's novels and the endless representations and reiterations of what Tim Rowse calls the 'Dying Native fantasy', so consistently central to settler imaginings of 'indigenous' (settler) futures.[827] An obvious example of the latter is Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* (1955), the titular character's name recycled, presumably self-consciously, in *Australia* as the name of Drover's dog. (The mare belonging to Lady Sarah's husband Lord Maitland is called 'Capricornia', just for good measure.)

Indeed, Baz Luhrmann's obvious, and acknowledged, debt to Herbert is evident in the indigenising vision of triangular intercultural relations his film manifests.[828] The triangulation of Luhrmann's vision, in which Lady Sarah represents the civilising influence of the British mother (country), Drover the 'new and superior' settler-becoming-'indigenous' and Nullah the Herbertian manifestation of their dual retrospective indigenisation, comprises what John Morton frames as a kind of settler-colonial 'holy trinity'.[829] Morton aptly captures the nature of the film as 'a lengthy meditation on the problem of national legitimacy', a sentiment Jackie Hogan echoes in describing the film as 'an exercise in national wish fulfillment'.[830]

This is evident in, for example, the 'flooding rains' that follow, and appear as a symbolic consequence of, the consummation of Lady Sarah and Drover's relationship. Here, in a synecdoche of reconciliation between British and settler interests in and over the lands of 'Australia' (between our 'two Australias'), Luhrmann evokes settler fantasies of 'making deserts bloom' — intractably bound up with the settler-colonial ideologies of cultivation and colonisation explored in Chapter 1 — to render the lands fertile and

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[827] Rowse, 'Indigenous Heterogeneity'.

[828] The film's credits acknowledge 'the contribution made by the late Xavier Herbert in chronicling the events of northern Australia in his novels *Capricornia* and *Poor Fellow My Country*'. On Herbert's influence as extending beyond this passing 'nod', and *Poor Fellow My Country* in particular as 'the literary precedent' to *Australia*, see Conor, 'A "Nation So Ill-Begotten"'.

[829] See John Morton, 'Redeeming the Bastard Child: Exploring Legitimacy and Contradiction in *Australia*', *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 4, no. 2 (2010).

[830] Ibid., 159; Jackie Hogan, 'Gendered and Racialised Discourses of National Identity in Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*', *Journal of Australian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2010): 63.

productive as a result of settler indigenisation.[831] This is made explicit when, having thus legitimated their belonging to the land, and having tethered the land to them (having, that is, made the land their own by virtue of improvement), Lady Sarah and Drover are jointly anointed '*indigenous*', Nullah's Aboriginal hand overlaying Lady Sarah's pale one on Drover's suitably tanned chest. (It is a powerful hand, having already demonstrated its ability to stop a stampeding herd of cattle in its tracks.) Ultimately, having completed the necessary act of conferral and having therefore outlived his utility for Luhrmann's indigenising narrative, at the end of the film Nullah is free to follow the film's representative of 'authentic' Aboriginality, King George, into the 'never-never', that mythical 'indigenizing' space simultaneously so central to the settler national imaginary and yet beyond its temporal and spatial boundaries.[832]

The persistence of the indigenising imperative, even conceding the different ways in which it is expressed — racially and biologically in particular — between 1938 and 2008 tells us something of the nature and persistence of the settler predicament.

Proximity and confrontation

Herbert's position is thus simultaneously aligned with and distinct from Stephensen's and Ingamells' imaginings of an originary emergence — of a new, 'indigenous' settler emerging through the interaction between 'race and place', the unmediated (or, in Ingamells' case, mediated) encounter between the settler and the land so foundational to the imagined geographies of settler colonialism. As Munro observes, Stephensen and Herbert 'shared a strong sense of the *genius loci*, the special spirit of the land which a number of Australian writers sought to express in the 1930s', Ingamells clearly among

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[831] See Alan George, '"Making the Desert Bloom": A Myth Examined', *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8, no. 2 (1979); Shmuel Lederman, 'Making the Desert Bloom: Hannah Arendt and Zionist Discourse', *The European Legacy* 21, no. 4 (2016). Tellingly, and somewhat surprisingly given the film's clear affinities with indigenising settler nationalism, Marcia Langton praised the film for having 'leaped over the ruins of the "history wars" and given Australians a new past', a new 'myth of national origin' ('Faraway Downs Fantasy Resonates Close to Home', *The Age*, 23 November, 2008, n.p.).
[832] For an alternate reading of *Australia* as a nevertheless indigenising text, see Stadler and Mitchell, 'Never-Never Land'.

them.[833] One possible explanation for the differences between the similarly indigenising settler nationalist projects pursued by Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert relates to the latter's relative proximity to, and knowledge of, the numerically rising population of mixed descent, as well as his particular position along the settler–metropole divide. Herbert advocated what we might unsavourily term 'indigenisation through insemination' because in his search for 'Australia Felix, the site of the true Commonwealth', the itinerant Herbert found himself more directly and consistently confronted by the reality of his own status as 'alien', as 'an invader', than did the urban-dwelling 'man of letters' Stephensen.[834]

Stephensen and Herbert were contemporaries, both born in the year of Australian federation, in the moment the 'frontier' officially, symbolically closed, and both grew up in relatively isolated parts of Australia, Stephensen in Queensland and Herbert in north-west Western Australia. They both developed an early love of the bush and a sense of affinity with the Australian environment that provided the background for much of their creative output. The two first met in Sydney in 1933, shortly after they had both returned from England, where they had similarly experienced the dual sense of alienation from home (in Australia) and home (in 'the mother country') that was the lot of so many Australian authors and intellectuals at the time and after. Both Stephensen and Herbert responded by (re)dedicating themselves to the cause of Australian cultural nationalism despite expressing equally ambivalent sentiments about Australia as the country they loved populated by people they despised.

Yet there were important distinctions between these two figures, in terms of their class backgrounds and positions, and the forms and degrees of cultural capital they possessed. Stephensen, for example, was much more in touch with European culture and felt more at home in England than had Herbert during his brief stint in London. As Munro points out, while 'Stephensen was mixing in London literary society and enjoying long

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[833] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 140.

[834] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 71; Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 1.

vacations in Paris, Herbert was navvying in the Northern Territory on the north–south railway line, mustering cattle, hunting crocodiles, or working as a diver on a pearling lugger'. Earlier, during his short stopover in London on his way to Oxford in late 1924, Stephensen described feeling as if he were 'truly in the centre of the world', and realising 'what a sleepy colonial backwater he had left behind'.[835]

These distinctions continued in Australia, where Stephensen felt at home in Sydney and Herbert avoided the city as far as possible:

> Stephensen was a thoroughly metropolitan type; a flamboyant talker, drinker and polemicist. Though Herbert could be as talkative as Stephensen, cities threw him off balance, and he preferred the life of a wandering bushman and recluse. It was the landscape and people of the north which sustained his creative spirit and powered his narrative genius.[836]

Partly because of their different backgrounds, personalities and social statuses, Herbert's anti-colonialism was even more visceral than Stephensen's, as was the alienation he felt on his arrival in London, and again on his return to Australia. As Herbert's biographer Frances de Groen suggests, 'his experience of failure and alienation in London precipitated a severe emotional crisis'.[837] In some ways, this 'crisis' made the tension between settler and metropole more straightforward for Herbert to negotiate than it was for Stephensen, yet it also complicated his negotiation of the settler–indigene dialectic, since he had more at stake in its resolution. This was further complicated by his first-hand knowledge of Australia in general, and the Aboriginal populations of the north in particular.

By the time he visited London, against the 'awful background' of which he produced the first draft of *Capricornia*, Herbert had already travelled extensively throughout the Northern Territory, where he witnessed first-hand the impoverishment and abuse

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[835] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 139, 31.
[836] Ibid., 139.
[837] Frances de Groen, *Xavier Herbert: A Biography* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1998), 75.

experienced by the local Aboriginal population.[838] He later reflected on his departure from Sydney to the North on Australia Day 1935: 'I went to commune with the Spirit of the Land, but found something much more urgent to give my attention to — the unutterable misery of its custodians'.[839] As Healy has observed: 'The Aborigines were a natural part of the world Herbert wrote about, so it cannot be said that Herbert discovered them in the way … [his] contemporaries in "settled" Australia had to.'[840]

While some have read into Herbert's background, especially his illegitimacy, a confessional psychology underpinning his oeuvre,[841] Sean Monahan convincingly argues that what Herbert called the 'deep purpose' of his novels was that of 'presenting a view of the Australian ethos', and that his 'real subject … is neither Aboriginals nor metaphysics, but Australia'.[842] This subject was hardly unique, but his approach to it certainly was. Monahan's summary of *Capricornia* expresses this succinctly: 'Aboriginals and whites make a country called Australia.'[843] As Liz Conor and Ann McGrath have recently reemphasised, this deep purpose — what they refer to as his obsessive ambition 'to write the great Australian novel' which 'capture[d] the "true spirit of the land"' — remained consistent until and beyond Herbert's subsequent revisitation of both the

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[838] Monahan, *A Long and Winding Road*, 51.

[839] Quoted in Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 157.

[840] Ibid., 154.

[841] For example, de Groen, *Herbert: A Biography*.

[842] Monahan, *A Long and Winding Road*, 86, 47. In keeping with his metaphysicist credentials, Vincent Buckley famously offered a (fairly unconvincing) reinterpretation of Herbert's epic as 'not only social, but metaphysical … concerned not only with the social injustice done to aborigines [sic] and half-castes, but with a cosmic injustice done to all men. The book is about the universe' ('Capricornia', in *Australian Literary Criticism*, ed. Grahame Johnston (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962), 169). More recently, Ellen Smith has offered a (far more convincing) rereading of *Capricornia* as a 'complex, multifarious and heteroglossic novel [which] exceeds and challenges the very possibility of coherent national space and a coherent national story' ('Remapping *Capricornia*: Xavier Herbert's Cosmopolitan Imagination', *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2017): 126). While I agree with Smith's reading of the manifold contradictions manifest in Herbert's 'nationalist sermonising', rather than interpreting these as reflecting 'cosmopolitan sensibilities' (ibid., 137), I offer an alternative reading that sees settler nationalism as an inherently contradictory project. See Dan Tout, 'Encountering Indigeneity: Xavier Herbert, 'Inky' Stephensen and the Problems of Settler Nationalism', *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2017).

[843] Monahan, *A Long and Winding Road*, 35.

scene and themes of *Capricornia* in *Poor Fellow My Country*, published in 1975, a novel similarly heralded in terms of its 'national significance' as 'THE Australian classic'.[844]

Herbert's original nationalist equation seems to have been informed by his background and positioning in relation to both metropolitan England and Indigenous Australia, which produced in him a level of sensitivity to his, and other settler Australians', status as both 'native and alien' unusual among his contemporaries. According to de Groen, Herbert possessed an early and consistent awareness of 'the ambivalence of his own situation as both coloniser and colonised'.[845] His continual confrontation with his dual sense of alienation — from England as well as from the Australia with which he identified — seems to have compelled him towards an indigenising project that, by virtue of his knowledge of and interest in Aboriginal Australia, could not have been founded on the kinds of disavowal and displacement characteristic of Stephensen's position, nor the decontextualised indigenism of Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks.

For Ingamells' part, as Robert Sellick suggests, despite Brian Elliott's suggestion that Ingamells' birthplace at Orroroo, which he describes as 'one of the far limits of the Arunta tribe', may have 'played a part' in his interest in Aboriginal culture, if not Aboriginal people themselves, there is little evidence that any of the Jindyworobaks had more than 'minimal contact with actual Aboriginal peoples'. As Sellick concludes, the Jindies, Ingamells foremost amongst them, 'were essentially urban writers and there are suggestions that their construction of an Australia and an Aboriginal society within it was the product of an urban need'.[846] As Griffiths also argues, the fact that Ingamells had only encountered Aboriginal culture indirectly through 'scientific treatises' and in 'museums' — as well as through decontextualised elegies such as Devaney's — indicates 'the degree to which Aboriginal influence was to be an inheritance of "spirit" that did not challenge the … idea that Australia's indigenous people made up a "doomed

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[844] Liz Conor and Ann McGrath, 'Xavier Herbert: Forgotten or Repressed?', *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 2 (2017): 62–63.

[845] de Groen, *Herbert: A Biography*, 85, 68.

[846] Sellick, 'The Jindyworobaks and Aboriginality', 112.

race"'.[847] Kirkpatrick's concise description of the Jindyworobaks as 'opportunistic rather than systematic students of Aboriginal culture' certainly seems to hold.[848] While Adam Shoemaker argues that the 'souvenir mentality' evinced by Jindyworobak indigenism, which 'told their readers next to nothing about Aboriginal people', indicates that they have 'been ascribed too much significance' in examinations of the 'Aboriginal theme in Australian literature', on the contrary it is precisely the indigenising imperative underlying their project of radical indigenism that makes them especially instructive for an understanding of indigenising settler nationalism more broadly.[849]

Rowse remarks, reasonably and accurately, that even 'if Stephensen did not follow as faithfully as Ingamells the call of "Alchera", he was certainly more in touch with the actualities of Aboriginal life and opinion', and his '"indigenism" achieved more concrete political expression than Ingamells'.[850] If Ingamells represents one extreme on the scale of understanding and engagement with regard to the experiences of actually existing Aboriginal people, and Stephensen, despite his relative urbanity, occupies a middle-ground, Herbert came much closer to an actual intellectual, creative and indeed political encounter with Aboriginal people themselves (even if this remained highly problematic in its expressions and implications).

In a letter to Arthur Dibley, Herbert admitted:

> I've come to envy these half-castes their heritage, so much so that, for all my love of the soil & all my pride in being born of it, I must confess that I'm simply an invader & that there is no hope of my ever being able to claim the right to live in this land unless I infuse my very blood into the Aboriginal race.[851]

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[847] Griffiths, 'Biopolitical Correspondences', 32–33.
[848] Kirkpatrick, '"Fearful Affinity"', 129.
[849] Shoemaker, *Black Words, White Page*, 57.
[850] Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War', 44.
[851] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 71.

This is a confirmation that Herbert experienced precisely the encounters J. J. Healy and Tony Birch describe. Herbert did look for his Aboriginal face in the mirror — and sometimes he found it, telling Dibley 'I have a blackfellas mind' and 'I can see things blackfella fashion'.[852] Yet he was consistently reminded of his ambivalent status as both 'native and alien' by virtue of his own reflection, and his direct encounters with those more 'Australian' than himself.[853] He could not, as an 'authentic consciousness', imagine himself in contact with the 'Spirit of the Land' he had set out from Sydney in search of, and which Stephensen so easily emphasised, without recognising that it belonged to someone else.

In a highly original response, Herbert reversed the temporal trajectory of Stephensen's transfer and inverted the biological understandings on which it was based. Contrary to the 'passing of the mantle' Stephensen imagined, whereby the mantle of belonging — of indigeneity — would pass from the 'ancient' indigene to the 'superior', 'civilised' settler, in Herbert's imaginings, the settler would do the passing too. For Herbert, the population of mixed descent would genetically inherit (and somehow — it's not clear how — pass backwards to its male progenitors) both indigeneity *and* civilisation. This represents another unique response to a common settler conundrum, yet while Herbert's and Stephensen's positions differed in important respects, settler indigenisation and independence remained their equally overriding concerns. In this they were not innocent, and their shared project of settler indigenisation had significant implications for the symbolic place of Indigenous peoples within the settler nation they were attempting to construct.

The politics of settler indigenisation

The focus of both Stephensen's and Herbert's brands of settler cultural nationalism remained squarely on imagining 'indigenous' national futures for settler Australia/ns, and they both exhibited a tendency to instrumentalise indigeneity as a means towards

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[852] de Groen, *Herbert: A Biography*, 104.
[853] Ibid., 85.

that end. In this, they conformed to other narratives of settler indigenisation, which have as a prerequisite the destruction, or at least disavowal, of the empirical indigene 'within civilisation'.[854] In much the same way that the opposing sides of the 'two Australias' divide debate the proper relationship between settler Australia's European inheritance and its new environment *in the absence* and *at the expense* of the Indigenous peoples whose lands they similarly seek to usurp — thereby discursively enacting the displacement, disavowal and, at least for the penetrationist-nationalist side of the divide, the replacement of the indigene in and of the land — both the penetrationist and appropriationist indigenising options fulfil the same function, albeit via different means.

And yet, as Tim Rowse has argued, and as suggested in preceding chapters with regard to both Stephensen and Ingamells, settler indigenism 'has also sometimes included sensitivity to the grievances and wishes of actual Indigenous people'.[855] This was clearly the case for Herbert as much as it was for Stephensen, if not more so, and the former's level of awareness and sensitivity was almost certainly both greater and more pressing than was Ingamells'. While Stephensen's position involved an imaginative transfer of sovereignty and national belonging from the indigene to the settler, and envisioned the displacement of Indigenous peoples for the purpose of replacing them on and of the land, he was not unaware of or insensitive to the plight of Indigenous people themselves. Nor was Herbert, who attempted to negotiate his anti-imperialist indigenising imperative alongside his concern for the experiences of actual Aboriginal people, especially those in the Northern Territory. As Stephensen's biographer Craig Munro remarks, Stephensen and Herbert 'shared a fascination for the Aborigines and a sense of outrage at their mistreatment and degradation'. As a result of the biographical circumstances outlined above, however, Herbert's engagement with 'the Aboriginal cause' was 'less theoretical' than Stephensen's, and it was his commitment that helped

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[854] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 208.
[855] Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War', 28, 42.

convert Stephensen's sympathy into practical support for the Aboriginal rights movement in the late 1930s.[856]

In the lead up to *Capricornia*'s publication, Stephensen became involved with the Aborigines Progressive Association (APA) led by William Ferguson and Jack Patten, for whom he helped plan the Day of Mourning protest against Australia's sesquicentenary celebrations on Australia Day 1938. Stephensen had met Patten while serving as secretary of the Aborigines' Citizenship Committee, and he went on to write, edit and produce various materials for the APA, as well as to shadow-edit the APA journal, *Abo Call*.[857] David Bird goes so far as to describe Stephensen as a 'driving force' behind the APA and its protest meetings around this time, and suggests the possibility that their famous pamphlet 'Aborigines Claim Citizen Rights' was 'actually written' by Stephensen.[858] Stephensen and the Publicist Publishing Company deliberately scheduled publication of Herbert's novel to coincide with the Day of Mourning and made good use of the protests in promoting it, Stephensen explicitly linking the novel to 'the Aboriginal Question'. As a result, Stephensen's motivations for supporting these protests in particular, and the early Aboriginal rights movement more generally, have been called into question on the suspicion he may have only offered his support as a means of promoting Herbert's novel, in the success of which he was deeply invested.[859]

Commercial concerns would hardly have dissuaded him from supporting the APA and the cause of Aboriginal citizenship — as Munro remarks, both Stephensen and Herbert 'had good reasons for wanting *Capricornia* to be a success, and Aboriginal protest would

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[856] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 139.
[857] Ibid., chapter eleven.
[858] Bird, *Nazi Dreamtime*, 71.
[859] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 181. This was a suspicion reportedly harboured by Ferguson at the time. According to Jack Horner and Marcia Langton, Ferguson 'suspected that *Abo Call* might simply be a ploy to create publicity for Xavier Herbert's novel *Capricornia*, which Stephensen and Miles were publishing' ('The Day of Mourning', 35). Horner and Langton suggest that this suspicion may have contributed to the weakening of the alliance between Patten and Ferguson and therefore the APA itself, although they also acknowledge, presaging Smith's account, that 'Stephensen … was probably in sympathy with the Aborigines on nationalist grounds' (ibid., 34–35).

provide useful publicity'.[860] Barbara Winter suggests that once *Capricornia* was published 'the *Publicist* lost interest in Aboriginal affairs', and implies that this loss of interest occurred almost immediately.[861] And yet it is also the case that, as Muirden points out, Stephensen 'expressed sympathy with the Aborigines' before and beyond the promotion of Herbert's novel.[862] As one limited but suggestive example, when, in 1939, Patten was arrested as a result of the Cummeragunja walk-off, it was Stephensen who bailed him out.[863] Perhaps more importantly, the critiques offered by Herbert's novel and the Aboriginal rights movement in general were entirely (if implausibly) consistent with the ethical distinction Stephensen had already drawn between the destructive effects of *British* colonisation on the one hand and 'a specifically white "Australian decency" on the other'. By applying the same set of temporal manoeuvres utilised in *The Foundations of Culture*, Stephensen was able to make 'an interest in Aboriginal rights part of a specifically anti-British nationalist agenda', and this comprised an integral component of Herbert's anti-colonial nationalism too.[864]

It should also be acknowledged that the political positions adopted by Stephensen and Herbert were broadly aligned with the activities and aspirations of Aboriginal activists of the time, including those of the APA, even if their underlying imperatives and intentions bore very different implications for all agencies involved. As Rowse remarks:

> We can find in Stephensen's *Australian Abo Call* the criticisms and demands
> that characterised the emerging Aboriginal political voice in the 1930s: for
> security of land and of family, to be spared the squalor of government
> 'stations', and to be properly educated.[865]

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[860] Munro, *Wild Man of Letters*, 181.

[861] Winter, *The Australia First Movement*, 21.

[862] Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots*, 47.

[863] Mitchell Rolls and Murray Johnson, *Historical Dictionary of Australian Aborigines* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 140.

[864] Smith, 'Writing Native', 125.

[865] Rowse, 'Modernism, Indigenism and War', 44.

Patten and Ferguson even grounded their claims in the same racial theories espoused by Stephensen, asserting in the context of their campaign for citizenship rights that it had been scientifically 'prove[n] that the Australian Aboriginal is somewhat similar in blood to yourselves'.[866] Similar understandings had been presented by the non-Aboriginal activist Mary Bennett in her book *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being* (1930), where she insisted that Aboriginal people 'belong to the Caucasian stock' in order to oppose rather than advocate for Aboriginal absorption.[867] Whereas the sometimes 'progressive' principles promoted by the absorptionists were more than offset by the destructive effects of the policies they advocated and implemented, the reverse was true for Herbert and Stephensen, and despite the inherently destructive implications of their indigenising settler nationalisms, these did not necessarily preclude concurrent, if contradictory, advocacy and action to advance the interests of Aboriginal people themselves.

The contradictions these competing objectives and complicated political alignments produced were manifest in Herbert's 'dream', which he outlined in a letter to Dibley in 1936:

> Do you know what I've been dreaming of doing? Why, no less than
> dreaming of teaching the Aboriginal race to accept citizenship & win a place
> in the Nation, & honourable place, so that they may cross with the invaders
> & enrich the new Nation with their blood.[868]

To this end, Herbert helped to found the 'Euraustralian League' with Valentine McGinness (described by Herbert as 'a great Australian' and 'the truest Australian I have ever met', and the inspiration for the character of Norman Shillingsworth in *Capricornia*).[869] Initially, Herbert described the organisation's objective as being 'to teach

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[866] John Thomas Patten and William Ferguson, 'Aborigines Claim Citizen Rights', in *Survival: A History of Aboriginal Life in New South Wales*, ed. Nigel Parbury (Sydney: Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 1986), 112.
[867] Quoted in McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 9.
[868] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 71.
[869] Tony Austin, 'McGinness, Valentine Bynoe (1910–1988)', in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, n.d.).

pride of race to these people & to teach others to honour them & ultimately to found a Nation', proclaiming how '[f]antastic' it would be 'to teach people to feel proud of Aboriginal blood'. Less than two months later, however, Herbert admitted to Dibley that he had been 'dodging the issue' and that even having founded the organisation it was 'mainly ambition to be elected that is causing me to take such an interest in the Euraustralians'. He also expressed his disappointment that attendees of the organisation's first meeting were 'the worst type', but nevertheless noted his gratification that they had seemed impressed by his performance.[870]

We might read into Herbert's 'dodging' of 'the issue' and his disillusionment with the reality of the Euraustralian League a disjuncture between his underlying desire for personal and national legitimacy — which, given his background and the context in which he lived and worked, was necessarily reliant on Indigenous peoples as an indigenising resource — and his stated aspiration to work with actual Indigenous people in order that they might 'accept citizenship & win a place in the Nation'.[871] Indeed, even in his original articulation of this ambition the prospects of citizenship and national inclusion ostensibly offered to Indigenous people were positioned as subordinate to the purpose of settler indigenisation such a process would, in Herbert's view, make possible. Despite the work he and McGinness had undertaken to improve conditions at Kahlin in 1935–36, Herbert's comments therefore suggest that, like Stephensen, his 'deep purpose' remained the indigenisation of the settler nation and, by extension, himself.[872] His description of his audience is telling: 'It is for the native born — the non-indigenous indigenes — that I have written always'.[873] And his expressly stated purpose in selecting a 'half-caste' protagonist for *Capricornia* seems only to further bear this out:

> I think every born Australian, we born Australians, are all bits of
>
> blackfellows … I suppose I made my central characters of 'Capricornia' half-

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[870] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 71, 77.
[871] Ibid., 71.
[872] See Austin, 'McGinness, Valentine'.
[873] de Groen and Hergenhan, *Herbert: Letters*, 77.

caste aboriginal [sic] because through them I feel truly at home in the beloved land. Perhaps identity with these makes my Australian readers feel the same, maybe that's the secret of 'Capricornia'.[874]

Conclusion

Throughout the course of Australian literary-cultural history, many if not most articulations of settler nationalism have neglected the complexity of the settler-colonial system of relationships this thesis has emphasised. Yet such attempts do not simply supersede the circumstances of their own production by virtue of their failure or refusal to acknowledge them. The competing positions of anti-imperial nationalism and empire loyalism, and of the radical-nationalist and universalist traditions, are typically addressed towards the tension between settler and metropole, while attempting to obscure from view the settler–indigene dialectic that incessantly unsettles them, or at least leaves them incomplete. Even the 'middle-ground' positions of the likes of C. Hartley Grattan and H. M. Green focus on and account for only one aspect of the settler situation. Indeed, the entire narrative structure of 'two Australias', in which settler and metropolitan agencies proceed dialectically towards an inevitable moment of cultural synthesis and national maturation — whether for the purposes of national independence or re-integration — operates precisely in the way Alan Lawson suggests: as a 'strategic disavowal of the colonising act'.

On the contrary, confronted by the circumstances of their own, and Australia's, reality, 'Inky' Stephensen, Rex Ingamells and Xavier Herbert addressed themselves, albeit in divergent and idiosyncratic ways, towards the 'neglected strand' of Australian nationalism[875] — what this thesis has characterised as the identificatory dialectic between settler and indigene — in ways that attempted to grapple with settlers' ambiguous and ambivalent situatedness as simultaneously coloniser and colonised. While their responses were problematic, in racial and, especially for Herbert, sexual terms, and their

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[874] Quoted in Dewar, 'The Literary Construction of "Half-Caste"', 185.
[875] Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine*, 165.

proposed solutions neither comprehensive nor entirely convincing, it is nevertheless one of the distinguishing characteristics of these settler nationalists' approaches that they recognised and acknowledged the complexity of the settler situation, and attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to negotiate its complex terrain. The following, concluding chapter of this dissertation explores the ways in which the understanding of these indigenising settler nationalists *as* indigenising settler nationalists responding to the complexities of the settler-colonial predicament presented here might provide a useful starting point for revealing the persistent contradictions inherent within the settler-colonial situation, and thereby illuminating possible paths towards a post-settler dispensation.

Conclusion

> The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. Such an inventory must therefore be made at the outset.[876]
>
> Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks*, c1930s

> History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.[877]
>
> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1995

> The call to forget the past is accompanied by practices that perpetuate the past.[878]
>
> Deborah Bird Rose, 'Dark Times', 1997

In the 1930s, as we have seen, the exigencies of the period McLeod defined in relation to 'a series of malign circumstances: depression, world war, depression, world war' precipitated an inward turn on the part of some settler nationalists away from the sites of conflict and crisis and towards the Australian continent as a site of refuge and escape, and of national cultural emergence.[879] And yet in the context of a concurrent reversal in the demographic decline of Aboriginal people, and of Aboriginal people of mixed descent in particular, those who looked to Australia's *genius loci*, the spirit of place, for

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[876] Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916–1935*, ed. David Forgacs (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 326.

[877] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), xi.

[878] Deborah Bird Rose, 'Dark Times and Excluded Bodies in the Colonisation of Australia', in *The Resurgence of Racism: Howard, Hanson and the Race Debate*, eds Geoffrey Gray and Christine Winter (Clayton: Monash Publications in History, 1997), 98.

[879] McLeod, *The Pattern of Australian Culture*, 8.

belonging, legitimation and inspiration for the incipient national culture and identity they sought to construct, found themselves confronted by the historical conditions and contradictions of their own national and cultural origins. The positions articulated by Stephensen, Ingamells and Herbert can be read, as they have been here, as exemplary if not representative (as well as problematic and unsuccessful) responses to the settler predicament as it presented itself to Australian settler nationalists in this historical period. Yet while theirs were responses provoked and conditioned by circumstances of time and place, the impulses they reflect were, and remain, of persistent concern.

Indigenising settler nationalism today

As evidence of the persistence of the indigenising imperative, in addition to the readings of the three subjects examined here, with Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* following closely, if belatedly, in Herbert's wake, we might refer to Terry Goldie's instructive readings of Patrick White as an indigenising settler nationalist and to Cynthia vanden Driesen's recent and largely corroboratory analysis.[880] We might also highlight the continuities between Bernard Smith's call for 'cultural convergence' and the 'Last of the Jindyworobaks' from whom he appropriated the idea, and from there back to the indigenising settler nationalists with whom we have been concerned.[881] For a more contemporary example, we might look to Ken Gelder's convincing and incisive interpretation of Peter Read's work on non-Indigenous belonging as part of the tradition identified here. Gelder situates Read as 'a nation-builder' in a long line of settler national(ist) historians desirous of establishing a 'deep relationship' with country organised around notions of 'sharing' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Crucially, Gelder perceives the contradictory logic underpinning Read's indigenising project — where 'Aboriginal people remain Aboriginal, but settlers become indigenous'. Gelder also perceptively points to John Molony's *The Native Born: The First*

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[880] Goldie, *Fear and Temptation*, chapter ten; Cynthia vanden Driesen, *Writing the Nation: Patrick White and the Indigene* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2009).
[881] See Smith, *The Spectre of Truganini*.

White Australians (2000) as an example of penetrationist indigenisation par excellence (although he doesn't use these terms).[882]

In 2003, Germaine Greer published her controversial manifesto of indigenising settler nationalism, 'Whitefella Jump Up', which bore the telling subtitle 'The Shortest Way to Nationhood'. On the basis of some spurious historiography, Greer called for non-Aboriginal Australians to recognise that Australia 'has been an Aboriginal country all along', and then she delivered the kicker. Claiming with confidence that 'whitefellas can achieve a measure of Aboriginality', Greer urged her fellow settler Australians to look in the mirror, and on the (mis)understanding that Aboriginality is 'a nationality', state the indigenising affirmation: 'I was born in an Aboriginal country, therefore I must be considered Aboriginal'.[883] (It was in response to Greer's provocation that Tony Birch offered the encounter explored above, in which the same non-Aboriginal person might instead 'come to see his own face as the face of the oppressor'.) Importantly, indigenising claims such as these are far from immaterial in their implications and effects, as Janice Newton illustrates in relation to the rejection of proposals that a new suburb in the Ballarat area be given the local Aboriginal placename 'Mullawallah'.[884]

More moderately, moving on from Read's desire for settler belonging as a suggestive starting point, we might also note the increasing frequency with which indigenising narratives have been appearing in recent years in response and in relation to the rising threat of climate change. To begin with an important and indicative example, Michael Cathcart concluded his story of settler Australia's foolhardy 'water dreamers' in 2009 with

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[882] Ken Gelder, 'The Imaginary Eco-(Pre-)Historian: Peter Read's *Belonging* as a Postcolonial "Symptom"', *Australian Humanities Review*, no. 19 (2000): n.p.

[883] Germaine Greer, 'Whitefella Jump Up: The Shortest Way to Nationhood', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 11 (2003): 13, 15.

[884] See Janice Newton, 'Rural Autochthony? The Rejection of an Aboriginal Placename in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia', *Cultural Studies Review* 22, no. 2 (2016).

a new hope of reconciliation. Between settlers and the indigenous peoples. And between settlers and the land itself … The First Fleeters were wet-country people. And this is a book about how they learned to belong … They are learning too, that this is not 'a new country'. They are starting to imagine that they share an Australian story that stretches back over 40,000 years. They are starting to belong.[885]

More recently, Bill Gammage concluded his important and influential account of Indigenous environmental management and cultivation, *The Biggest Estate*, in which he carefully dismantles the ideological fallacies and failures of recognition that underpin the *terra nullius* doctrine, with a chapter called 'Becoming Australian'. Here, having regretfully recalled the 'invasion of new people and ideas' at the expense of '[a] majestic achievement' of which '[o]nly fragments remain', Gammage makes a now-familiar move in turning towards the future to imagine a moment of settler indigenisation. On the presumptive ruins of Indigenous civilisation, Gammage declares: 'We have a continent to learn. If we are to survive, let alone feel at home, we must begin to understand our country. If we succeed, one day we might become Australian.'[886]

The temporality of Gammage's narrative is instructive. This dissertation has emphasised the apparent and ongoing 'incipience' of the Australian settler national culture and identity (and associated literary tradition). In 2010, James Curran and Stuart Ward concluded their analysis of 'Australia after Empire' — the *Unknown Nation* — by observing that Australia has appeared to be 'endlessly coming of age'. The future matters. Greer's essay is specifically framed, in a paradoxically contradistinctive echo of Herbert's Euraustralianism, as offering settler Australians a path to (future) 'nationhood'; as Ward remarked elsewhere, '"real" nationhood was something

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[885] Michael Cathcart, *The Water Dreamers: The Remarkable History of Our Dry Continent* (Melbourne: Text, 2009), 337.
[886] Gammage, *The Biggest Estate*, 323.

discussed in the future tense'.[887] This is characteristic of settler fantasies of colonial fulfilment, in which, 'despite recurring fantasies of ultimate supersession', 'indigenisation and neo-European replication … are never complete, and a settler society is always, in Deriddean terms, a society "to come," characterized by the promise rather than the practice of a "settled" lifestyle'.[888]

The demise of Britishness as a 'credible totem of civic and sentimental allegiance' in the wake of empire — the historical process Curran and Ward characterise as 'the unravelling of the empire and Britain's retreat into Europe' — undoubtedly raised important and ongoing questions about Australian national identity and Australia's place in the world, arguably even to the extent that they caused what Donald Horne described as a 'general "national identity" crisis'.[889] Yet two is not three, and this crisis was also provoked, and the responses settlers provided conditioned, by decolonisation, the rise of a powerful international indigenous rights movement, and its local manifestations in the form of the Indigenous activism through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples attained a level of symbolic national inclusion in 1967 and demanded rights and recognition in its wake.[890]

It is no coincidence that the two periods in which clearly indigenising forms of settler nationalism emerge — the 1970s and the 1930s — are those in which both aspects of settler Australia's triangular system of relations were simultaneously subject to

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[887] Ward, 'The "New Nationalism"', 239.

[888] Veracini, 'The Settler-Colonial Situation', 107.

[889] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 7, 16, 61. Ward had already pointed to the settler-colonial parallels elsewhere (see 'The "New Nationalism"').

[890] See, for example, Chesterman and Galligan, *Citizens Without Rights*; Attwood and Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights*; Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines*; Attwood and Markus, *The 1967 Referendum*. There are clearly important differences between Indigenous demands for citizenship and self-determination, let alone sovereignty, both in terms of what they mean for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and for settlers — and the settler state — as well, but for present purposes the very existence of a visible Indigenous presence making political demands can be considered as presenting the same essential challenge to the nature and content of settler nationalism, in all its various forms.

significant strain.[891] Bernard Smith recognised this periodisation when he called for 'cultural convergence':

> [T]he crucial challenge to our culture lies in the capacity to come to terms with the continuing Aboriginal presence. For the greater part of our history we have attempted to put it out of sight and out of mind but, during the past fifty years or so, it has become once again, as it was at the foundation of white society here, a part of our cultural experience … More recently, during the past ten years or so, the Aborigine has also become a political presence.[892]

Moran theorised the forms of 'indigenising settler nationalism' he identified as emerging in the post-1967 context as a more progressive and inclusive alternative to what he termed 'assimilationist settler nationalism' (a penetrationist mode in Goldie's terms, and mine).[893] And yet Moran's terminology is telling: his article is titled 'As Australia Decolonizes'. On the one hand, he sees assimilationist settler nationalism as largely continuous with the assimilation policy that prevailed between the 1930s and the 1960s (into which he incorporates policies of biological absorption), but on the other he heralds indigenising settler nationalism as entailing and enacting 'an expanded and transformed vision of national identity'.[894] His fuller description is instructive:

> Indigenizing settler nationalism represents an important emotional shift for settler Australians. It involves a reaching out to embrace the indigenous (and their Aboriginality) as full moral members of a shared Australian nation. The claim is that through such an act the Australian nation would become less a

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[891] Others have highlighted the period around the 1988 bicentenary celebrations and after as marked by a renewed nationalist engagement with the figure of the indigene (see, for example, Andrew Lattas, 'Aborigines and Contemporary Australian Nationalism: Primordiality and the Cultural Politics of Othernesss', *Social Analysis*, no. 27 (1990); Andrew Lattas, 'Nationalism, Aesthetic Redemption and Aboriginality', *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 3 (1991); Andrew Lattas, 'Primitivism, Nationalism and Individualism in Australian Popular Culture', *Journal of Australian Studies* 16, no. 35 (1992); Andrew Lattas, 'Essentialism, Memory and Resistance: Aboriginality and the Politics of Authenticity', *Oceania* 63, no. 3 (1993)).

[892] Smith, *The Spectre of Truganini*, 44.

[893] Moran, 'As Australia Decolonizes'.

[894] Ibid., 1029–30.

settler nation than a 'tapestry' nation with the indigenous accorded a central, identity-giving place. Their cultural heritage, their long and deep spiritual connection with Australian lands, given as a 'gift' to the national community, would indigenize the Australian nation as a whole. In this process, it is claimed, Australia would become a truly post-colonial nation.[895]

Moran draws a clear distinction between what he sees as 'precursors' to indigenising settler nationalism, including the Jindyworobaks, on the grounds that they sought to 'inherit' Indigenous symbolism and motifs from a 'dying race', and contemporary indigenising nationalism, which in his interpretation 'means the incorporation of the indigenous people themselves as present-day bearers of the oldest living culture known to humanity'. Yet these traditions are not so far apart, and certainly not incompatible, and his remark that Indigenous people 'are seen as those who can add depth and continuity to a national culture that has only sunk shallow roots into Australian soil' reveals that once again it is the *indigenising settler* and *his* nation that remain of utmost concern.[896]

It is not my intention to draw a series of false equivalences between penetrationist accounts of the 'first white Australians' or non-Aboriginal Aboriginality, advocacy of 'cultural convergence', attempts to recognise and engage with Indigenous knowledges in relation to the environment, or reconciliatory forms of nationalism that seek to centre Indigenous peoples within the life of the nation (or, indeed, between any of these indigenising options and those I have dealt with in this thesis). There are clearly important distinctions to be drawn in terms of the attitudes they represent, and the levels of recognition, respect and engagement they allow or accord to Indigenous people themselves. There is, at the very least, an identifiable shift in the valuation of

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[895] Ibid., 1030.
[896] Ibid., 1032–33.

Aboriginality within contemporary indigenising narratives compared with those of the 1930s. As Bain Attwood observes,

> Aboriginality has probably always been an element in the construction of Australian identity, but whereas its role was previously premised upon it being construed as a lack (vis-a-vis Australia's 'whiteness', modernity, progress, etc), its significance now derives from it being imagined in positive terms, indeed upon it being idealised.[897]

While, as we have seen, the valuations of Aboriginality drawn on and perpetuated by the indigenising settler nationalisms of the 1930s were more complex than Attwood's interpretation allows, his general observation holds, and perhaps the efforts of Ingamells, Strehlow and others towards precisely such a revaluation are suggestive of even closer correspondences and connections than may otherwise be apparent. Yet in attempting to draw attention to the continuities as well as the discontinuities between contemporary, post-1967 and earlier indigenising nationalisms, I am concerned to extend my critique *beyond* the standard problematisation of explicit acts of indigenist appropriation to the underlying imperatives and implications of indigenising settler nationalism itself.

In his outstanding recent *Quarterly Essay*, 'Moment of Truth: History and Australia's Future', Mark McKenna covers some familiar ground:

> Australians have long lacked confidence in their civilisation. Deeply ashamed until the 1970s of our convict ancestry and colonial origins, forever measuring our society and culture against superior British and European models, endlessly 'coming of age' or pining for prominence on an imagined 'world stage' while our political leaders shrilly proclaim that we live in 'the greatest country in the world' — we have long preferred self-congratulation

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[897] Bain Attwood, ed., *In the Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines and Australia* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996), xxiii.

to criticism. In this respect, we are not exceptional. Yet the most profound source of our alienation from the continent remains to be fully appreciated and overcome. Until the late twentieth century, white Australia was intent on conquering, eradicating and forgetting Indigenous Australia. We believed that history began in 1770 on the shores of Botany Bay. We were not only estranged from the history of the country's violent foundation on the frontier, we were also completely disconnected from the 'spiritual' and 'ancient sovereignty' of Aboriginal people. This too was something we sought to overcome, or reduce to the level of superstition and fairytale. Now the Uluru Statement asks us to confirm that we have overturned our assumptions — not only about the beginning of 'history,' but also about our relationship with the country and our identity as a people. It is both an invitation and a challenge: to embrace the ancient sovereignty that we have long denied and finally allow it to form the bedrock of our nation's identity. After all that has happened since 1770, this is a gift of incalculable generosity. And it speaks directly to key elements of the new constitutional settlement we are attempting to establish in the years ahead: recognition, the republic and truth-telling.

The Uluru Statement's invitation to ground the Commonwealth's sovereignty in the ancient sovereignty of Indigenous Australia goes to the heart of the coming republic.[898]

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[898] McKenna, 'Moment of Truth', 65–66. McKenna has for some time been concerned to bring together the 'two histories' of 'colonial self-government and … histories of colonial policy towards Aboriginal people', which as he points out have 'traditionally been written in parallel rather than in tandem … [and] almost never meet. They orbit the colonial past as if on separate trajectories' ('Transplanted to Savage Shores: Indigenous Australians and British Birthrights in the Mid Nineteenth-Century Australian Colonies', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 13, no. 1 (2012): n.p.).

Given the current political climate, these are valuable reminders of what may be necessary, and what may be done.[899] And yet, in light of the preceding discussion, I want to urge, and to exercise, a certain degree of caution when presented with a proposed *solution* to the question of 'our nation's identity', even a reconciliatory one. Indeed, precisely because the settler predicament is a predicament and not a problem, as I have contended throughout this dissertation, I want to close by suggesting that decolonising proposals in relation to settler-colonial societies should be conceived as responses rather than solutions.

Settler decolonisation as a response rather than a solution

Unlike colonialism, settler colonialism is not subject to the conceptually and chronologically — though clearly not politically or historically — straightforward process of decolonisation, due to a series of impediments.[900] Indeed, as Patrick Wolfe pointed out, settler colonialism has proven peculiarly 'impervious to regime change'.[901] Not only does the term 'settler' operate to enforce the perception of permanence and fixity in contradistinction to the implicit impermanence of colonialism (the 'settler' stays, while the 'colonial' sojourner returns), but the fact that decolonisation is typically conceived in nationalism's teleological terms 'as a transaction whereby a colonial state is transformed into a self-governing territorial successor polity' means that 'problems inevitably arise when the (settler) colonising state is the self-governing territorial successor polity'.[902]

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[899] And to be perfectly clear: I support the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sovereignties; I endorse the notion of an Australian republic; and I advocate — and work to advance — the essential task of truth-telling.

[900] See Lorenzo Veracini, 'Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation', *Borderlands e-Journal* 6, no. 2 (2007); Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, especially chapter four; Veracini, 'Introducing Settler Colonial Studies'; Veracini, 'Isopolitics'; Lorenzo Veracini, 'Understanding Colonialism and Settler Colonialism as Distinct Formations', *Interventions* 16, no. 5 (2014); Lorenzo Veracini, 'Indigenes and Settlers (Fourth World)', in *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, eds Prasenjit Duara, Viren Murthy, and Andrew Sartori (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2014); Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, especially the conclusion.

[901] Wolfe, 'The Elimination of the Native', 402.

[902] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 105.

In typical colonial formations characterised by 'a bilateral opposition between coloniser and colonised, and between colonising metropole and colonised periphery', decolonisation proceeds through the relatively (at least theoretically) uncomplicated process of dismantling the relations of domination between coloniser and colonised on which the colonial situation rests and culminates in the attainment of (post)colonial independence (even if, as many have shown, this independence is often more rhetorical than real). Yet within the inherently ambivalent 'triangular system of relationships' characterising the settler situation, settler attempts to supersede either of the dual dialectics involved (between settlers as colonisers and their colonised Indigenous counterparts on the one hand, or between settlers as colonised and their colonising metropolitan counterparts on the other) are constrained by, and impact upon, the other agencies and relationships involved. In particular, settler attempts to unilaterally assert their independence against the metropole function as a 'strategic disavowal of the colonizing act' in relation to pre-existing Indigenous populations by concentrating on only one aspect of the settler-colonial system of relations (settler–metropole) and thereby concealing the other (settler–indigene).[903] In Alan Lawson's important account, this is the very point of settler cultural nationalism, within which

> we can identify one vector of difference (the difference between colonizing subject and colonized subject: settler-Indigene) being replaced by another (the difference between colonizing subject and imperial centre: settler-imperium) … The national is what replaces the indigenous and in doing so conceals its participation in colonization by nominating a new colonized subject — the colonizer or invader-settler.[904]

In this sense, since 'decolonisation's traditional focus on external relations and sovereign independence or autonomous self-rule against a variety of imperial metropolitan centres

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903 Lawson, 'Postcolonial Theory', n.p.
904 Ibid. As Ann McGrath remarks of Ward's seminal nationalist 'legend', '[f]or the legend to work, the white man, not the indigenes, must be primarily seen as the colonised group' ('Europeans and Aborigines', 41).

inevitably obscures the position of settler colonised indigenous constituencies',[905] settler claims for independence should not be conceived as comparable in either form or intent to calls for decolonisation, but rather as strategies for the concealment and continuation of their dominant position vis-à-vis the Indigenous peoples they seek to displace in order to replace.[906] Conversely and as a consequence, substantive moves towards settler-colonial decolonisation necessarily involve more than the straightforward attainment of settler independence.

Settler independence and settler decolonisation do not therefore involve equivalent processes or purposes, and do not produce analogous outcomes; nor are they similarly subject to historical supersession. Settler claims for national independence do not, indeed they cannot, lead to a temporally delineated phase of post-settler colonialism in line with the hyphenated form post-colonialism, but rather result in the conceptual collapse and thereby concealment of the trilateral relations definitive of the settler situation. And yet, since the typically teleological narrative trajectory of settler nationalism is itself directed towards the supersession of the settler's (perceived) subordinate position in relation to the metropole, concealment of the settler-colonial system of relations in which the settler is both coloniser and colonised remains its primary purpose and principal effect. Settler nationalism amounts to an ultimately ineffectually unilateral approach that attempts (but fails) to resolve in bilateral terms an intractably trilateral dilemma. The persistence of an Indigenous presence within the settler body politic (despite its strategic disavowal) serves as a reminder of the structural insurmountability of the settler predicament; 'invasion is a structure not an event'.[907]

And yet to insist on settler-colonial invasion as an ongoing process is not to concede defeat. On the contrary, only by focusing on the resilient features — what Wolfe has

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[905] Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 105.

[906] See Elizabeth Strakosch and Alissa Macoun, 'The Vanishing Endpoint of Settler Colonialism', in *Stolen Lands, Broken Cultures: The Settler-Colonial Present*, eds John Hinkson, Paul James, and Lorenzo Veracini (North Carlton: Arena, 2012).

[907] Wolfe, *The Transformation of Anthropology*, 2.

termed the 'cultural logic' — of settler colonialism and its cultural manifestations does it become possible to 'keep both the continuity and the differences in view [which], in turn, enables us to perceive the underlying coherence of Australian history'.[908] This, along with exposure of the triangular relations inherent in and characteristic of the settler situation — which, for so long as they remain hidden, operate to obscure the continuing colonial relations of domination and subordination between settler and indigene in which the settler order is involved, and invested — is precisely the objective of pursuing the analysis of settler-colonial phenomena.

Crucially, as we have seen, the promise of settler-colonial completion, or of settler decolonisation, which from the perspective of settlers themselves are one and the same — that is, the imagined moment 'when the settler society will have fully replaced Indigenous societies on their land, and naturalized this replacement' — is continually deferred, and remains the settler project's 'vanishing endpoint'.[909] As Elizabeth Strakosch has recently highlighted, 'settler colonialism constantly works to dissolve its own colonial status', and this 'outcome is presented as constantly deferred and delayed, but ultimately unavoidable', so that settler-colonial formations seem to be constantly 'trapped in [their] own tragic and permanent incompletion'.[910] This persistent mode of continual deferral is not merely unresolved and therefore unsatisfactory for the settler collective, but also has very real impacts for indigenous peoples themselves, as Jodi A. Byrd makes clear:

> As the liberal state and its supporters and critics struggle over the meaning
> of pluralism, habitation, inclusion, and enfranchisement, indigenous peoples
> and nations, who provide the ontological and literal ground for such

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[908] Wolfe, 'Nation and MiscegeNation', 96.

[909] Strakosch and Macoun, 'The Vanishing Endpoint'.

[910] Elizabeth Strakosch, 'Beyond Colonial Completion: Arendt, Settler Colonialism and the End of Politics', in *The Limits of Settler Colonial Reconciliation: Non-Indigenous People and the Responsibility to Engage*, eds Sarah Maddison, Tom Clark, and Ravi de Costa (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 16.

debates, are continually deferred into a past that never happened and a future that will never come.[911]

To the extent that ostensibly decolonising initiatives, including the recently revived notion of a 'reconciled republic', for example, are conceived and promoted as strategies targeting the same unreachable endpoint, we should remain sceptical. But perhaps the clue is in the conclusion, and the conclusion — which is to say the hoped-for but ultimately unattainable resolution of what I have termed the settler predicament — is to be avoided altogether. Perhaps the task of seeking what Veracini terms a 'post-settler passage' entails precisely the avoidance of further striving towards settler-colonial completion, whether in its eliminatory or reconciliatory guises. In this regard, Veracini's recent suggestion that contrary to settler colonialism's will towards the 'negation of exile' its embrace represents the most promising alternative may provide a useful starting point. And a turn away from the indigenising imperative and towards, instead, what Veracini terms 'nonsovereign-nonindigenous belonging' may represent a critical first step in this direction. Crucially, in a hypothetical context in which the promise of settler-colonial completion, or the resolution or supersession of the settler predicament, has been abandoned, since 'the indigenous–settler relationship in [such] a … dispensation is finally imagined as ongoing, decolonisation will not be a solution but a practice'.[912]

In consideration of the persistent features of the settler-colonial situation emphasised throughout this dissertation, in which the settler collective seeks simultaneously to conceal and to supersede the conditions of its own existence, the current government's refusal to listen to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' demands for a 'First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution', presented in the Uluru Statement from the

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[911] Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 221.
[912] Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 96, 109.

Heart, is hardly surprising.[913] McKenna contextualises this contemporary claim met by refusal in relation to a long history of the same, including especially Yorta Yorta activist William Cooper's petition to King George V, on receipt of which the Lyons government exercised its settler-colonial prerogative by refusing to deliver it to the 'higher authority' to whom it was addressed.[914] Cooper, one of the organisers, alongside Patten and Ferguson, of the Day of Mourning, delivered a 'stinging response to Lyons':

> White men … claimed that they had 'found' a 'new' country — Australia. This country was not new, it was already in possession of and inhabited by millions of blacks, who, while unarmed, excepting spears and boomerangs, nevertheless owned the country as their God given heritage … How much compensation have we had? How much of our land has been paid for? Not one iota. Again we state that we are the original owners of the country. In spite of force, prestige, or anything else you like, morally the land is ours.[915]

Despite the Uluru Statement's concluding statement that '[i]n 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard', as McKenna remarks, 'William Cooper's words go unanswered. At a fundamental level, we have failed to see, failed to listen, failed even to hear'.[916]

Veracini highlights the manifold inconsistencies and contradictions manifest in settler articulations of settlerness, which can only conceivably be sustained if uttered separately. If, on the one hand, the settler insists on his superiority vis-à-vis the indigene because he is metropolitan, at the same time and on the other, he insists on his sovereignty vis-à-vis the metropole because he is (becoming) 'indigenous'. The settler is,

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[913] 'Uluru Statement from the Heart', *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 8, no. 29 (2017): 8. It is important to note that this proposal was not universally endorsed or supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves, especially in its apparent acceptance of the validity of the Australian Constitution, regarded by many as illegitimate if not illegal. Yet it is an important political pivot point around which the settler predicament currently moves.

[914] On Cooper's petition, see Andrew Markus, 'William Cooper and the 1937 Petition to the King', *Aboriginal History* 7, no. 1 (1983). On Indigenous peoples' understandable inclination to direct their appeals to 'higher authorities', see de Costa, *A Higher Authority*.

[915] Quoted in McKenna, 'Moment of Truth', 3.

[916] 'Uluru Statement', 8; McKenna, 'Moment of Truth', 4.

as I have already observed, two-faced. And yet a revelation of these contradictions may, as Veracini suggests, induce 'a crisis in a profoundly settler colonial logic': 'if something goes without saying, actually saying it may become a necessity'. If the settler's two incompatible, contradictory claims can be brought into the same analytical frame, as I have attempted to achieve in relation to an admittedly limited historical example here, this may ultimately come to be one 'moment when the coherence of the settler claim finally falls apart'.[917]

The Uluru Statement highlighted 'the structural nature of our problem', and if 'Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle', this coming together is not a resolution, but rather a response. (Although the troubled and troubling history of Makarrata, which has notably functioned in the context of ongoing Indigenous campaigns for treaty as a settler-colonial strategy of avoidance in relation to the question of sovereignty, must not go unacknowledged.) Ilan Pappe expresses qualified hopefulness in his search for a 'thirdspace', which is directly — and positively — antithetical to the 'thirdspace' of settlerness I have identified as integral to indigenising settler nationalism, but which is also, albeit less directly, opposed to Johnson's thirdspaces *outside* the hegemony of settler control. Pappe argues that the coming together of settlers and 'natives' within such a space might 'produce a native invitation for the settler to stay'.[918] While such an invitation can only ethically be considered as a secondary outcome rather than a primary motivation to engage in moves towards a post-settler passage, the Uluru Statement is already precisely such an invitation. It even says so: 'We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future'.[919]

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[917] Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 99–102.

[918] Ilan Pappe, 'Collaboration in Struggle in Palestine: The Search for a Thirdspace', *Settler Colonial Studies* 4, no. 4 (2014): 398.

[919] 'Uluru Statement', 8.

Yet the Uluru Statement is not an invitation to remain within a settler-colonial mode of displacement, disavowal and replacement, or one of constant deferral into perpetually vanishing endpoints, or one which attempts to conceal the realities of the settler predicament Cooper and so many others before and since have attempted to compel settlers to confront. It is, on the contrary, an invitation to stay in a predicament that is recognised as such, and all that this entails. Crucially, it is an Indigenous invitation, not an indigenising initiative. In this, it refuses the settler demand to resolve or discontinue Indigenous–settler relations and insists instead on their continuation.[920] The embrace of exile — of non-sovereign non-Indigenous (and even non-'indigenous') belonging — that acceptance of this invitation would entail would be uncomfortable, and it would be, as Strakosch insists, political.[921] And yet this is, indeed it must be, a necessary first step towards a post-settler passage which is, after all, albeit in a radically different form, the ultimate objective of the settler-colonial project itself.

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[920] Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, 103.
[921] See Strakosch, 'Beyond Colonial Completion'.

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