



Associazione Laureati in Lingue
Università degli Studi di Udine

Le Simplegadi

Rivista internazionale on-line di lingue e letterature moderne
International refereed online journal of modern languages and literatures

<http://all.uniud.it/simplegadi>
ISSN 1824-5226

Diasporic Itineraries in World Literatures in English

Anno XIII, Numero 14
Novembre 2015



Le Simplegadi

<http://all.uniud.it/simplegadi>

**Rivista accademica on-line dell'Associazione dei Laureati in Lingue Straniere
dell'Università di Udine**

International refereed online journal of modern languages and literatures

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Comitato di redazione / Editorial Board:

Direttore responsabile / Editor-in-chief: Antonella Riem antonella.riem@uniud.it

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E-mail: simplegadi@uniud.it

Sede amministrativa / Address:

Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere

via Mantica, 3

33100 Udine

Italia

Tel: 0432556778



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Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Udine N.2 del 5 marzo 2003

ISSN 1824-5226

Indirizzo Direttore responsabile / Address of Editor-in-Chief:

Prof. Antonella Riem Natale

Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere

via Mantica, 3

33100 Udine, Italia

e-mail: antonella.riem@uniud.it

tel. 0432 556773

E-mail: simplegadi@uniud.it

Rivista Annuale - Pubblicazione del numero in corso: 30 novembre 2015

Issued on 30th November 2015

Rivista accademica fascia 'A' - Anvur

Refereed 'A' ranked journal

Diasporic Itineraries in World Literatures in English

Le Simplegadi

Anno XIII, Numero 14, Novembre 2015

<http://all.uniud.it/simplegadi> - ISSN 1824-5226

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Apirana Taylor

In These Winds

In these winds blow many songs

in the call of the Cheyenne, Sioux and Cherokee

in the red shadow of the Commanche moon
across the plains of bleached buffalo bones

in these winds blow many songs

in the *haka*¹ of the Maori
in *karakia*² to the gods

in these winds blow many songs

calling us together

to dance to the rising sun
our *haka* of the *wairua*³

the call of warrior people
*tihei mauriora*⁴.

¹ *Haka* (dance).

² *Karakia* (incantation).

³ *Wairua* (spirit).

⁴ *Tihei mauriora* (the first breath of life).

Karanga

When on to the *marae*⁵ I'm called
 my heart hears the words, *karanga mai, karanga mai*⁶
 taken back I am by the first woman
 to the first woman to the first call
 to the *manu tiorooro*⁷ singing
 to the twelve heavens, *haere mai ra haere mai ra*⁸
 thus begins the journey back to the beginning
 sailing the *waka*⁹ to the *mauri Maori*¹⁰
 on the *marae atea*¹¹ where the dust of *Tumatauenga*¹² whirls
 in the *waiata*¹³ of *korero*¹⁴ seeking *te ao marama*¹⁵
 opening like a bud
 the people weave the light
 from threads of memory
 stories stitching weaving
 everyone together with laughter tears and *korero*.

Microscope

To write of beauty
 and seek
 in the pool
 to view the tiny
 amoeba
 with wonder
 on its journey.

⁵ *Marae* (a courtyard or open space in front of Maori traditional ancestral houses, the centre of daily life and also the place of Maori spiritual sustenance and rituals).

⁶ *Karanga mai* (to call). In this poem it is a spiritual call called only by women sent out to the twelve heavens.

⁷ *Manu tiorooro* (a singing bird, this refers to a female composer of songs).

⁸ *Haere mai ra* (welcome).

⁹ *Waka* (canoe). Canoes are of sacred significance to Maori

¹⁰ *Mauri Maori* (Maori spiritual life force).

¹¹ *Marae atea* (place of light and understanding).

¹² *Tumatauenga* (God of man, war, and challenge).

¹³ *Waiata* (song).

¹⁴ *Korero* (conversation).

¹⁵ *Te ao marama* (world of knowledge).

Apirana Taylor is a Maori poet, playwright, novelist, short story writer, actor, painter, story teller and musician from Aotearoa/New Zealand. His Tribes are Ngati Porou, Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngati Ruanui and Te Ati Awa. He is also of Pakeha (European descent). He has published several books of poetry, three books of short stories, a novel and a book of plays. His second novel entitled *Five Strings* will be published in 2016. He has held writers residencies at Massey University and Canterbury University and has taught creative writing. He frequently tours nationally and internationally as poet often accompanying his work with contemporary and traditional Maori music.

haka@paradise.net



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Adib Khan

Diasporic Homes

"...the act of imagination is bound up with memory".
(Morrison 1991: 305)

Home? Of course, I have a home! In fact I have two – one is a conventional brick-veneered house in a suburb of a Victorian country town in Australia. I have lived here for the past thirty-five years and my attachment to this residence can be attributed to the familiarity of a long-term association. As for the other place...well, it is not entirely my doing. The Muses were involved. It is built on the foundation of remembrance and given shape by my imagination. It's not only unusual but very special, an ideal place of sojourn where I can dwell in the utmost comfort and roam freely between 'what was' and 'what is', without any restrictions or pangs of deprivation. It is also the source of my creative inspiration. In an instant I can conjure up this collage of a rambling, two-storied building crowded with events and people who influenced me and shaped my formative years. It doesn't seem strange that I meet them in different guises, sometimes as I was and then as I am now. But the people I meet have not changed. Relatives, friends, enemies and acquaintances are blessed with agelessness. They provide drama, relationships, frailties of human nature, glimpses of nobility and mean-mindedness; in other words, the material for fiction. You see, I have discovered the powers of a sorcerer, a wizard...a magus, a storyteller. But alas! If the truth were known I am more of a trickster. Hocus Pocus! And I am away! There it is- my Camelot, Shangri-la, Utopia...Call it what you will, but it is a landscape I can call my own. It is a sanctuary, an immutable retreat where I wander and create, a haven barricaded against the afflictions of Time. It's a place where past and present merge into a composite of the occidental and the oriental, somewhere I can feel no tension or disharmony between my divided self. Here I can peel back the years, rediscover and refurbish my past, locate my cultural coordinates and reassure myself about who I am now and where I began. Among the rooms there is a chamber of mirrors where I can encounter multiple reflections of myself. 'I am a part of all that I have met,' claimed Tennyson's Ulysses and the line reverberates within me, reinforcing the plurality of my identity. Here I am not confused and nor do I feel any sense of loss because I can instantly reclaim the past without leaving the present.

Well, where is it? I hear you frame the unasked question with growing impatience.

Why do you want to know?

How can you get there?

Such persistence should be rewarded, I suppose. All right, I will give you directions. It's really quite simple. Dive into the imagination. Take what is there. Then... 'Second to the right and straight on till morning.' What's that? Why am I being so impossibly vague? But that is what Peter Pan said to Wendy about the way to Neverland... Oh, you'll never find it. That's the point! It's my private place which I guard with the utmost jealousy, a creation of memory and imagination. It is shrouded in a permanent fog and I am its custodian with the key to its entrance.

For writers belonging to a diasporic community and leading what Homi Bhabha calls 'border lives,' there is a dual consciousness of place – one which is physically located in the present and the other which is elusive and intangible, strewn in the maze of memory. By dabbling in creative writing, an expatriate finds the opportunity to widen and diversify the cultural landscape. The tensions inherent in the awareness of the 'foreignness' of the past and the 'alienation' of the present, coupled with the unsettled dissatisfaction they generate, are often the energising forces of creativity. For those who are paradoxically blessed and burdened with twin lives of polarised cultures, any form of creative exercise is not merely an indulgence in aesthetics or an expression of socio-political concern. The creative process itself leads to a search, discovery and an engagement with parts of the missing self, those elusive but crucial segments of one's past which appear to have gone missing and cannot be verified by the empirical reality of the present, but which, nevertheless, live in memory. For the diasporic voice, any form of creativity is also an attempt to link with and reclaim what has been and how all this gives shape and meaning to the progression in one's life. In the anxiety to discover selfhood as a constant, it is inevitable to find multiple and composite images of identity, thus creating confusion and disappointment about missing the focus on a single vision of selfhood and a lack of anchorage to a specific place and community. Thomas Turino is of the opinion that a human identity evolves as result of a variety of experiences and interaction with the environment over a person's lifetime. One can, therefore, suggest that the formation of identity is 'hybrid' because it entails engagement with facets of diverse experiences. "Diasporic identities, however", Turino goes on to say, "are dramatically hybrid because of the multiple... iconic maps of reality and bases for cultural resources" (Turino 2014: 13).

For many of us the notion of a 'new beginning' may stem from the desperation to escape hardships, war, socio-economic deprivation and situations which are traumatic and stressful in the extreme. The overwhelming desire to seek a better and peaceful life is often the impetus which subdues the fear of dislocation and gives us the courage to confront whatever dangers imperil the travel ahead. Many of us are

not capable of projecting our thoughts to the future and perceive the subtleties in the changes which await us.

Often we undertake the migratory journey with stuporous naivety, without pausing to contemplate the implications of a seismic cultural shift. In our eagerness to leave and recreate ourselves in a foreign environment, we pay scant attention to anthropologist Clifford Geertz's claim that "there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture" (Geertz 1965: 112). In other words, both communally and individually, culture embodies us in its mesh of socio-political, religious and economic structures. It is a continuum of man's history and determinant of humankind's development, linking our past with humanity's present condition and beyond. The obvious conclusion is that it is impossible to entirely leave behind our indigenous environment which nourished and shaped us and redefine ourselves as brand new entities without the influence of the past. Our irrevocable connection with what may eventually be considered to be a foreign past is through memory. It cannot be obliterated and nor can it be forgotten. Inadvertently we drag the past with us into the new world where we think our troubles will evaporate.

The experience of diaspora is so varied and complex in its emotional, intellectual and physical dimensions that it defies any reductive explanation of commonality which might resonate across cultures. There has to be, of course, a recognition of some of the fundamental generalities associated with displacement. We can say that there is most certainly a reconfiguration of lives in alien cultures characterised by anticipation, excitement, trepidation, loneliness, nostalgia, questions of identity, adoption of new cultural habits and a struggle to come to terms with the unfamiliarity of different lifestyles.

Despite the eventual attunement to a new life rhythm, a migrant is not necessarily always at ease with himself. There can be sudden and periodic bouts of puzzlement and moments of hollowness when one feels as though chunks of selfhood have disappeared. There is a haunting sense of loss and the bitterness of incompleteness which are not immediately identifiable. Alienation begins to creep in as one realises the foreignness of customs and rituals, a lack of the fervour of patriotism and sincerity in the celebratory events of one's adopted country and the exposure to the view that one must be assimilated into the mainstream culture. Introspection lacks clarity because the inner landscape of experiences is weirdly diverse, murky and confused. Among all the unanswered questions, what eventually crops up as one of the most vital is "What is my nation?" Macmorris' famous query in *King Henry V* (Act 3, sc. ii) is one which most of us eventually face in response to that feeling that a critical element is missing from our newly found lives. Nothing is palpably wrong and yet everything is not quite right. It is the

uncertainty of not knowing where one belongs which compels us to examine the dilemma of diaspora and seek an imaginative respite to quell the agitation.

The abjectness of feeling rootless can often force us to seek security in a past which is often redesigned by the effect of the imagination on memory. Memory is selective because imagination edits, deletes, highlights and bridges those chasms of forgetfulness in the past to suit our needs. "Memory is the mind's own theatre", observed Octavio Paz. It "invents and erases" (Paz 1979: 189). On this great stage of the mind, the imagination becomes a leading player as we activate the creativity within us. William Safran suggests that members of a diasporic community have tenacious memories about their homeland with which they continue to "relate personally or vicariously...in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship" (Safran 1991: 84).

The propensity to remember is a natural and cognitive characteristic in humans. Recalling the past often maps the changes in identity and provides a referential framework for the understanding of who we are and how we arrived at a particular point in the present. Memory, however, is not just about perspectives but also about place situations. Location gives anchorage to events and concretises the images which memory provides. A locality acts as memory's grid and, within that network, there can be loci or even a single locus, "a place easily grasped by the memory such as a house, an inter-columnar space, a corner, an arch or the like" (Yates 1966: 6). It is usually within a setting that we remember meaningful happenings and events.

There are gaps and holes in what we recall and the manner in which we plug them with inventions of the imagination is almost reflexive. Remembering is an act of creation, a reinvention of a segment of the past by the imaginative manipulation of events and incidents, often for the sake of achieving a desired end. It could be for emotional satisfaction, stress alleviation, identity check or fulfilment of an incomplete or unrequited experience of the past.

For an expatriate, memory is also a crucial aid to the understanding of the necessity and the complexity of the multiple meanings of 'home' and acts as a bridge to a past which can often appear to be remote and inconsistent because of the 'flickering' and 'unsteady' images formulated in remembering¹⁶. The cultural splintering, which results from an expatriate's experience of dislocation, is usually at the centre of the perception of living in no-man's-land. In an essay, Edward Said quotes Simone Weil's succinct and lucid comment on a fundamental human need. "To be rooted", she said, "is perhaps the most important and least recognised need

¹⁶ This idea is well articulated in William F. Brewer's essay, "What is Recollective Memory?" (1996).

of the human soul" (Said, 1991: 364). To uproot oneself from an indigenous culture, with the assumption that it is easy to be replanted in alien soil, is a fallacy of diasporic thinking.

The awareness of the tension between what memory serves up about the place of beginning and the empirical reality of what is now home creeps is gradual. It is fraught with transient emotional ripples which we try to underplay as part of our public persona to appear balanced and well-adjusted to our new circumstances. In private the anguish over the missing self is less restrained. There are no easy solutions to such an abstract problem. The polarisation between the past and the present and the attempt to reconcile and align them in a linear continuum of the development of one's identity can be the stirrings of creativity. The need for articulation becomes a compulsion and it can be achieved through an art form which one can contemplate and rationalise in an attempt to accept the changes in selfhood. Such expression is not necessarily dramatic. It revolves around the recollection of the past and can take the form of day dreams, imagined sequence of events, snatches of written words, doodling or sketches. Memory becomes a vital part of the process of creating and recreating, censoring and refurbishing and, above all, selecting the perspective of recall. Judy Giles makes the point that "Memory is an act of remembering that can create new understanding of both the past and the present. Memories are an active process by which meaning is created; they are not depositories of fact" (Giles 2002: 22).

It is a mistake to treat memory and imagination as separate entities working independently to reach conclusions about the diasporic self. Allowance has to be made for both the dynamics of an inextricably changing, symbiotic relationship and the possibility that a free-roaming imagination also entails an ongoing reshaping of memory. The past is not entirely grounded in some unquestionable form of absolutism because memory is not entirely reliable. As Siegfried Kracauer reminds us: "Memory encompasses neither the entire spatial appearance of a state of affairs nor its entire temporal course. Compared to photography, memory's records are full of gaps" (Kracauer 1995: 50). Like Roland Barthes' notion of *punctum*, there are short and sharp points of remembrance which provide no more than patchy, general information. Nevertheless, some of the images are also puncture points which are entrances to what Barthes refers to as "subtle beyond" (Barthes 1981: 26). What memory cannot provide, the imagination does. The liaison between 'fact' and 'fiction' is sandpapered by the artistic craft to produce a seamless product.

Acceptance of the fact that life is marked with imperfections and dissatisfaction is an acknowledgement of the inevitable discrepancy between the ideal and the real. To avoid a despairing self-pity we have to take measures to reconstruct the past as a place of temporary retirement which is not an anathema to the conscience or the

emotions. It has to be somewhere which offers sustenance and reassurance that despite the cultural fractures life has been worthwhile and enriching. Of course, there are no guarantees that we will not experience doubt, regret, sadness and even anguish. "Man must suffer to be wise" (Aeschylus 1956: 140) laments the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Regardless of whatever wisdom we gather during the ordeal of resettlement, there will remain the uncertainty of whether it was the right decision to uproot oneself from one's indigenous culture. But that is the hefty payment for the richness of experiences to be gained from living simultaneously in two places.

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Adib Khan is an Australian novelist of Bangladeshi origin. He moved to Australia in 1973 for post-graduate studies at Monash University and then taught creative writing at the TAFE branch of Ballarat University (Vic.). He has published five novels. *Seasonal Adjustments* (1994) won the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, the Book of the Year award in the 1994 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and the 1995 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book, and was also shortlisted for the 1994 Age Book of the Year award. *Solitude of Illusions* (1996) was shortlisted for the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, and the Ethnic Affairs Commission Award in the 1997 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. It won the 1997 Tilly Aston Braille Book of the Year Award.

khan.a.and.s@outlook.com



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Raphael D'Abdon

Friuli Blues

Chestnut wood
pale in the dusky fog
jade waters rest
where resins grey

before the rain
there were shadows
across the vines
i wonder how many flowers
fell today
how many petals will travel
with the clouds

the last moment near tears
late light floods the hills
of friuli
crows rise to the sky
to never return

their shade specks
a road as empty
as a dry river
where my youth said goodbye
where i planted a pine tree
when i was six

oh corners of my heart where nows and thens touch borders
and sometimes overlap
making visions ravishing
it is hard to ride through this day
stirred by memories and emotions
that hit me
like storm waves hit a lighthouse

immersed
in the daze of sensual anarchy
i bathe
in the warmth of a blues
hidden in
the mist
of belonging

Pretoria, 15 November 2013

Good Fathers

i drop my daughter at school
kiss her good day
and head back to the car

an old indian man is walking slowly behind it
he carries a stick
“can you give me a lift, son?” he asks
“sure, sir”

he laboriously gets into the car
as i crank up the engine

“you see that big house in front of the school, son?
that’s my daughter’s house.
she’s director of human resources at shell
and my son is c.e.o. at the water engineering department in durban”

pride oozing from his watery eyes

“you raised good kids, sir. what’s the secret?”
“i sat every night after work with them to help with the homework
in the weekend i took them to sport
or to the park to make them run and play.
i played soccer for south africa in my youth,
although my legs are weary now”

i stop by the robot to drop him off

he opens the door and says:
"it was my birthday yesterday"
"it was my father's birthday too"
"thank you for the lift, son"
"it was a pleasure, sir"

smiling
he sheds a tear and greets me
holding his stick with a trembling hand.

"what's your name, sir?" i ask
"sam"
"goodbye, mr sam"
"goodbye, son"

i hit the road and i too shed a few tears
thinking about good fathers,
hoping to be one myself

thinking about mine
so many rivers and mountains away from me,

i play a cd he gave me when i left home

his eyes in the rear view mirror

for a moment, i don't feel alon

Rietvlei, 4 september 2014

An Unfolding Miracle

I have listened to the words of sages

and followed awkward truthtellers

footprints where the snow
has iced

traversing a river
that never existed
i can feel the hands of healers
weaving upon
our massacred earth

their eyes write pages
of brighter days

the human world
is breathless

a better humanity
glistens inside
what is felt by many
as an unfolding miracle

Pretoria, 2 April 2015 (written after the massacre at the [Garissa University](#) in [Kenya](#))

Beginnings

At home
still
thinking of home

hush
where springs become rivers
rivers become bays
bays become oceans
and oceans become
dreams

moonlight
a star dies
a story rises

imaginary time
memories
images
words
tunes
signs

beginnings
of new journeys

Raphael d'Abdon is Lecturer at the English Studies Department of the University of South Africa. In 2013 he published the book *Marikana. A Moment in Time*, his debut poetry collection *Sunnyside Nightwalk*, and was featured at the "Poetry Africa" festival. He has published several articles on spoken word poetry and his most recent publication, "Reconceptualizing Poetry as a Multimodal Genre" (Newfield & d'Abdon), will appear in the *TESOL Quarterly*.

dabdor@unisa.ac.za



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Paul Sharrad

A National (Diasporic?) Living Treasure: Thomas Keneally

Abstract I: Malgrado Thomas Keneally sia riconosciuto come autore nazionale australiano, la sua reputazione internazionale e l'analisi, nei suoi romanzi, dell'esilio coloniale, dell'alienazione degli Aborigeni e delle migrazioni nel corso della storia riflettono aspetti dall'esperienza diasporica che dilatano lo stesso termine sino ad abbracciare aspetti 'transnazionali'.

Abstract II: Although Thomas Keneally is firmly located as a national figure, his international literary career and his novels' inspection of colonial exile, Aboriginal alienation, and movements of people throughout history reflect aspects of diasporic experience, while pushing the term itself into wider meaning of the transnational.

It may seem odd to be discussing Thomas Keneally in the context of diaspora. Born in the suburbs of Sydney, amongst contemporary Australian novelists, he is a National Living Treasure, has served on almost every national body representing writers, took part in a commission investigating the renovation of the Australian constitution, has his plaque in the 'writer's walk of fame' near the Opera House and is renowned for his support of the Manly rugby team and long residence in and around Sydney. In recent years he has published three volumes of stories about Australians, a work of history that consolidates his position as the grand old man right at the centre of Australian literary culture.

And yet, there are aspects of his life and work that do reflect diasporic experience. Moreover, the topics and wide distribution of his writing give his oeuvre the kind of transnational engagement that performs the work of diasporic destabilising of national cultural boundaries. For a while, Keneally did live overseas: for about a year in Britain, then later for two stints in California teaching creative writing at the University of California, Irvine. His first foray into living abroad coincided with the period in London of the Great Australian Expatriate: satirist Barry Humphries, poet Peter Porter, feminist Germaine Greer, general cultural commentator Clive James. Australia was renewing its national literary and film culture in the late 1960s and early seventies, and sensitive to old colonial power, so its 'culture police' looked askance at artists who chose to go abroad, and took an

even darker view of ones who wrote about people and landscapes other than in Australia — about “wombats and trade unionists”, to quote one of several complaints of the younger Keneally, who regularly railed against “my destiny of being a literary exile in my own nation” (Hickson 1985: 32). When his trip overseas led him to write about Joan of Arc (*Blood Red, Sister Rose* 1974), the 1918 Armistice negotiations (*Gossip from the Forest* 1975) and the partisan campaign against the Nazis in former Yugoslavia (*Season in Purgatory* 1976), Australian reviewers began to write him off as having abandoned his origins. Speculating in 1975 on his chances of winning the Booker in 1975, a journalist said, “it is another step in Keneally’s path away from being an Australian novelist” and Max Harris around the time Keneally finally wins the Booker grumbles (incorrectly): “What is increasingly clear is that he is not an Australian-published author these days” (*Sun Herald* 1975; Harris 1982). At this point in his career, being a diasporic Australian had little effect on the home nation; it merely confirmed the colonial binary. However, *Gossip from the Forest* was so experimental in its recourse to dramatic dialogue and sufficiently linked with Australian national mythologising of its role in World War One to garner good reviews both at home and abroad — D. R. Burns praised its concise style, comparing it to Hemingway, and Charles A. Brady declared Keneally “the most original writer in English”! (Burns 1975: 210; Brady 1976) and, along with its being shortlisted for the Booker Prize and filmed by Granada Television, it and its fellows helped to push the limits of what an Australian novel might be. By 1983 an Australian journalist asking “When do our Authors stop being Australian?” notes Keneally’s books appearing at the Frankfurt Book Fair and comments that “for all his undoubted Australian roots and lifestyle [he] is a prime example of the author who becomes international rather than national” and quotes his publisher, Ion Trewin, “Thomas Keneally is now accepted for whatever he writes, regardless of the setting” (Hedgcock 1983: 13).

Like Patrick White before him, Keneally would only be indulged in his expatriation and investigation of themes not directly relevant to Australia once he had been officially recognized by Europe via his winning the Booker Prize in 1982 and by the US in winning the Los Angeles Times Book of the Year award. Keneally also redeemed himself in the eyes of Australian critics by returning to his homeland and to Australian characters and settings, achieving successes with his revisionist view of pioneering white Australia from an Aboriginal perspective, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1972) and his return to the story of Australia’s convict colony in *The Playmaker* (1987). It is worth noting that the former work was drafted in London, and owes some of its ironic take on settler triumphalist history to the author’s distance from his home society. Again, although *Blacksmith* received immediate national acceptance, and played a part in Australia’s reconstruction of a national film industry, it was international recognition of the book (most evident in its being awarded the Royal Society of Literature prize) and international circulation of its screen version that produced a quantum leap in Keneally’s wider reputation.

At this time, Keneally, even if not himself significantly split in either his work or life along the 'home and away' lines of diasporic experience (Hall 1996; Mishra 1996), was mentally exercised by white Australian society being collectively diasporic. The dominant national culture was derived from Britain and Europe and still expressed itself in colonial subservience to or nationalist aggressive opposition against its colonial origins. Keneally's essays up to the 1980s regularly talk about the lingering sense of antipodean 'exile' from cultural belonging (Krausmann 1979: 52; Keneally 1977). As he admits, this sense of diasporic disconnect does not affect younger Australians (Stretton 2002: 22), and in so far as the author continues to write works influenced by an older postcolonial sense of disrupted connectedness to historical antecedents, his positive reception has arguably been confined to people of his own generation, even though he consciously endeavours to break with the old foundational myths of a white settler Anglo nation. Regardless, however, of his reception within Australia, the international circulation of his books, and their consistent interest in current events overseas (Palestine Liberation Front activism in *Flying Hero Class*, for example) give his work a possible set of effects attributable to a transnational, if not a completely diasporic consciousness.

The ability to 'write back' to colonial sources and disturb set beliefs — to 'provincialise' the European metropolitan centre (Ashcroft & al. 1982; Chakrabarty 2000) — relies on an author holding a position as 'provincial' while being knowledgeable about metropolitan culture. To some extent, *Towards Asmara* (1989), Keneally's novel about the Eritrean war of liberation against Mengistu's Ethiopia, relocates 'first world' readers to an onlooking edge of affairs. It does this in centring its drama in Africa and showing up simplistic 'first world' charity efforts by both celebrity individuals and NGOs, and by exposing the shortcomings of Western individuals who take it upon themselves to become involved in 'third world' causes. The book also disrupts the nation space of Australia by having its protagonist moving at the start from Melbourne to a remote Aboriginal community. He and his wife discover a diasporic unsettlement of being at home while not at home, and the stress sends them both in different directions: the man becoming a foreign correspondent and eventually going to Eritrea. *Blood Red, Sister Rose* also attempts a fracturing of cemented myths inherited from Europe in turning Joan of Arc into an Australian 'bush' girl to show up her ordinary peasant origins and the ridiculous system of chivalry amongst Europe's elite. *A Victim of the Aurora* (1977) equally throws a critical light on the Edwardian values of heroism and Empire that informed both Britain and Australia, dramatising the collapse of an old world that happened during the First World War, then in the commercialisation of culture via Hollywood, and finally in the abandonment of former colonies when Britain entered European markets. Arguably it needed a 'diasporic' stance — an outsider who also 'owned' the culture via educational and ethnic connections — to be able to give worn 'home' orthodoxies a fresh, sharp glow of lived truth.

Keneally is of course from Irish stock, and his work constantly alludes to this fact. His first major success was *Bring Larks and Heroes* (1967), a tale of an Irish servant woman and an Irishman co-opted into the British army trying to make a future together amid inimical forces of class, 'race', political division and an alien land. His two novels about seminary life (his first, *The Place at Whitton*, 1964, and *Three Cheers for the Paraclete*, 1968) centre on the Irish priests and trainees who dominated Catholic life in Australia, and his second novel, *The Fear* (1965) dramatises episodes from his working-class Irish-Catholic childhood. Later, Keneally tells the stories of his maternal and paternal great-grandparents, one lot deported as convicts (*Bettany's Book* 2000), the other fleeing famine to become shopkeepers in country New South Wales (*A River Town* 1995). While writing these books, Keneally also set about recording the epic of Irish population movement as the result of the potato famine and anti-colonial protests. *The Great Shame* (1998) tracks the fortunes of many diasporic figures, some sent to Australia, escaping imprisonment there, and becoming leading figures in the US.

This body of work has not commonly been discussed in terms of 'migrant' or 'diasporic' writing amongst scholars of Australian literature, mainly because by the time those terms came into use they related to a new wave of immigrants from Italy, Greece and northern Europe. The Irish were absorbed into hegemonic Anglophone Australia. Up until the mid-1970s, however, Irish and Catholics were regarded as second-class citizens relative to an Anglo-Scots Protestant social norm, and sectarian prejudice and conflict was not uncommon if mostly kept out of public sight. It surfaced most noticeably in Irish opposition to Australia's involvement in imperial wars and to its proposed conscription of men to fight in World War One (Brennan 1964). Keneally shows something of how the Irish diaspora fractured Anglo-centric colonial society in his first two novels and his memoir, *Homebush Boy* (1985), in which fundamentalist Protestants distribute vilifying 'anti-Papist' leaflets and picket Catholic convents to 'rescue' young women being supposedly forced into nunneries. Later, his free-thinking Irish protagonist in *A River Town* (1995) is socially ostracised for failing to voice his approval of the Boer War. Keneally always seems to have been at the centre of Australian letters, so it comes as a shock to find Patrick White denouncing him to friends as a "bog-Irish failed priest" and fulminating against the fashion at the time for plays and novels about tormented Catholic priests (White 1994). In this context, Keneally's writing can be read as doing the work of minority diasporic literature: speaking to the majority to insert the group into cultural 'presence' and to call into question the dominant singular figuring of the nation. His championing of Aboriginal causes can also be seen as originating in his own family's history of being positioned within but also at the edges of Australian society.

Nonetheless, the increasing message of Keneally's work is not one of diasporic separation and psychic angst, but rather the miraculous process of displaced peasants, expelled criminals and deported political dissidents gradually coming to terms with each

other and their new land and forging a new national community — whether in Australia or in the United States. This is the theme of the non-fictional history of first settlement, *The Commonwealth of Thieves* (2005) and of its fictional precursor, *The Playmaker* (1987). *Bettany's Book*, along with the family history of convict emancipation and settlement explored by one of two sisters, also includes the story of the other sister who goes to the Sudan to carry out famine relief work. Her Sudanese doctor lover suffers persecution and is led to move overseas into exile, but not to join the sister who has returned to Australia to wage on-line human rights activism against the detention and torture of Sudanese dissidents. These tales might be read as engaging with diaspora, but the ending of the book records the convicts becoming respected citizens, and the sister settling back into Sydney life: it ends, "Slowly, over the course of the year,...she settled herself to become what [her convict ancestor] had no choice in becoming: an Australian" (Keneally 2000: 598).

Such an ending is not possible for people traumatised before resettlement. One work that does reflect a fully diasporic experience is *A Family Madness* (1985). Here we find the split simultaneity of past and present, Europe and Australia, preying upon a Byelorussian family. Their wartime history of nationalists doing deals with German occupation in order to survive creates legacies of guilt and rage that lead to a violent self-destruction incomprehensible to the insulated Australians they live amongst. Keneally's allegory about life under Saddam Hussein (*The Tyrant's Novel*, 2003) was another book based on testimony from interned refugees in Australia. As such, it is itself a tale of global diasporic movements as well as the author's attack on one nation's harsh treatment of people fleeing from war and persecution. Keneally also wrote about a Russian exile in Queensland who takes an Australian with him back to the fighting of the Russian Revolution (*The People's Train* 2009). His more recent *Shame and the Captives* (2013) is about Italian and Japanese prisoners of war in rural Australia and how their presence disturbs local life and how 1940s Australian life both disrupts and exacerbates cultural assumptions amongst the internees. Though there is clearly an interest in international movements to and through Australia, and in showing Australia's under-regarded historical ties to international affairs, Keneally's work usually relies on a normative Australian setting, protagonist or onlooker against which the immigrant or traveller appears as an outsider to be understood and sympathised with. In this way, much of his fiction cannot really be described as fundamentally engaged with diasporic themes.

However, Keneally is perhaps best known for working with material from another major diasporic community. His Booker-winning *Schindler's Ark* (or *Schindler's List*, 1982) compiles oral histories of Holocaust survivors and shapes them into a fictive drama. This work emerged directly as the result of Keneally's years teaching creative writing in the United States and indirectly through sympathies based on his family's history of diaspora and ethnic difference from dominant social groups. While Keneally kept a postcard of his Sydney beach home on his office door in California, suggesting the kind of double vision

of the diasporic subject (Hall, Mishra), he also shuttled to and fro between America and Australia, with side trips to Eritrea and Europe, so acted more as a cosmopolitan transnational. However, his years in the States allowed him to see aspects of Australian history as it shifted focus from Britain to America during and after World War Two, and to see elements of American history from a non-US perspective. His wartime novel of a fringe player on the global stage, *The Cut-Rate Kingdom* (1980), and the war-time murder thriller *An Angel in Australia* (2002) can be attributed to this 'offshore' perspective. The reverse view is seen in Keneally's fictional dramatization of a lesser-known battle in the US Civil War, *Confederates* (1979), plus his later short biography, *Lincoln* (2003), and his travelogue on south-western USA, *The Place Where Souls Are Born* (1992).

If the content of these works do not cohere into a tidily diasporic package, the work that the more well-known texts perform can certainly be considered as opening up borders of nation, ethnicity and culture to transnational negotiations. Keneally's 'Catholic' novels, for example, have clearly been translated in places like Spain and Poland to contribute to debate about the role of the church in those countries. *Schindler's Ark* is now translated into more than two dozen languages, and the huge pile of reviews and letters — both of appreciation and outrage — that it provoked from all over the globe attest to the book's active intervention in Holocaust awareness. Equally, *Towards Asmara* generated international awareness of the aspirations of an embattled minority and of the politics behind global food charity, engaged the author in lobbying the Australian government to recognise the provisional Eritrean administration, and the book was distributed to international observers attending the nation's first elections.

In fact, an overview of Keneally's fiction reveals so many movements within texts and of texts, mainly driven by empire, war and famine, it would seem that diasporas and their dynamics are so much the norm of modern life that the theoretical category can no longer be deployed with the same power to dissect specific cultural positionings or promote their place within national cultures. Keneally himself has been an inveterate traveller across three continents and Antarctica, and has developed three semi-autonomous but interconnected literary careers in Australia, Britain and the US (see Carter 2013). As such, he better fits a category of transnational writer. Whatever the label we apply to him, it is clear that Keneally and his work have challenged narrow national constructions of what literature should be and where its field of operations can be. In the process, it has also shifted perceptions of histories from around the world and much of this project has been compatible with the dynamics of diasporic experience.

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Paul Sharrad has taught postcolonial literatures and published widely in the field. He has edited the CRNLE *Reviews Journal* and *new literatures review* and currently edits the New Literatures section of *The Year's Work in English Studies*. He has just completed co-editing volume 12 of *The Oxford History of the Novel in English* (with Coral Anne Howells and Gerry Turcotte), has books on Raja Rao, Albert Wendt and postcolonial literary history and is currently working on a book about how Thomas Keneally's literary career was constructed.

psharrad@uow.edu.au



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Maria Paola Guarducci

Getting Away with Diaspora: Scotland and South Africa in Zoë Wicomb's *The One that Got Away*

Abstract I: Questo articolo analizza le implicazioni legate alla diaspora nella narrativa di Zoë Wicomb, scrittrice nata in Sudafrica e migrata in Scozia durante l'apartheid. Appartenenza alla terra d'origine e radicamento in quella di adozione vengono tematizzati nella sua narrativa, dove si caratterizzano in modo tale da rivelare la costruzione ideologica dei concetti di 'nazione' e 'casa'. Mi soffermerò in particolare sulla seconda raccolta di racconti di Wicomb, *The One that Got Away* (2008), con la sua doppia ambientazione in Sudafrica e Scozia.

Abstract II: My article examines the diasporic implications in the fictional works of Zoë Wicomb, who was born in South Africa and migrated to Scotland during apartheid. The ideas of 'belonging' to her motherland and 'rooting' in her country of adoption play a crucial role in her narrative revealing the ideological fabrication of concepts such as 'nation' and 'home'. I focus in particular on Wicomb's second collection of short stories, *The One that Got Away* (2008), set both in South Africa and Scotland.

This article discusses the role of South Africa and Scotland and the relationship between them in the fictional work of Zoë Wicomb, who was born in Namaqualand (South Africa) and migrated to Scotland in the Seventies, during the apartheid regime. Wicomb is widely acknowledged as one of the leading figures of South African literature and she has played a key role in cultural debates on identity, gender, roots and ethnicity, nationhood, literature, and feminism held in the country during and after apartheid. Wicomb's diasporic consciousness and her familiarity with two places differently but deeply informed by colonial politics play a key role in her narrative, which develops around her concern for, as Carli Coetzee put it, the "unreliable status of origins and originals" (Coetzee 2010: 559) and the difficulty of untangling the question of home and belonging from a theoretical point of view, that is without taking into account the psychological and emotional subjectivity of the individuals. Wicomb's fiction, I believe, is the place where all these knots come to the fore.

Exile, travelling, putting down roots are key issues in Wicomb's life as well as in her writings. Her fictional works (three novels and two collections of connected short stories published between 1987 and 2014) are set mainly in Cape Town, although England first and Scotland later feature, in different measures - Scotland more and more as time progresses - in all her texts. A stereotyped green and rainy England, derived from Thomas Hardy and the BA English literature syllabus, is the place Frida Shenton migrates to in order to avoid the daily boycott of her life under apartheid in *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987). In *David's Story* (2000), Glasgow is the city where the former guerrilla fighter David Dirkse went in the Eighties to make contact with anti-apartheid cells abroad. Europe is the destination of a long holiday overseas for Marion Campbell, the South African protagonist of *Playing in the Light* (2006), who needs to take a break after finding out she is a coloured brought up as a white under apartheid due to her family light skin complexion. Among her wanderings around the 'old continent', Scotland is the place where Marion ends up and meets a fellow South African while tracing some of her remote Scottish ancestors¹⁷.

In Wicomb's fiction there is a thread linking the idea of 'here' and 'there', 'home' and 'away': this is structured in such a way as to produce a continuous sense of relativity about spatial issues. In *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town*, for example, the notion of 'away' coincides with the emotionally unwelcoming place where Frieda has to reluctantly accommodate herself in order to avoid a more complicated positioning 'at home', a far more inhospitable place for a coloured woman under apartheid. Being recognised as an ordinary citizen with the same rights as everybody else in the UK does not put Frieda at ease. On the contrary, she is homesick and haunted by a sense of displacement: "So much rain, I concluded, and I'm in the wrong bloody hemisphere" (Wicomb 1987: 112).

In *David's Story*, Wicomb opts for an historical approach and elaborates on the connections between South Africa and Scotland. The two countries have indeed many ties: the slave trade can be easily traced as the backdrop to Glasgow's economic growth in modern times; later on, the anti-apartheid struggle became rooted there because many Scots perceived their own history of oppression within the United Kingdom, and under Margaret Thatcher in particular, as a colonial evil equal to apartheid (Filling and Stuart 1991). The relationships between the two countries have continued to the present day: once freed from Robben Island, where he served a long sentence together with Nelson Mandela, ANC leader Govan Mbeki went to Scotland and the Glasgow City Council recently named one of its main university buildings after him. In *David's Story* the rewriting of the past is a step in the (de)construction of identities, as Fiona McCann has underlined (McCann 2010:

¹⁷ Wicomb has always been skeptical about the issue of roots, especially in postcolonial societies, where these are mixed and untraceable. In the novel, Marion's search is a subplot which does not progress. Instead, the young woman develops relationships with the locals and with a Zulu acquaintance of hers who is in Scotland for business.

27); history and geography are both perceived as haunting and unstable presences rather than reliable sets of data. Thus, the novel accounts for David's aporetic attempts to learn some truths about himself and his family/national/ethnic history and identity. Sensations and emotions prove that the interaction between any specific space (including its history) and the individual who permanently or momentarily inhabits it is fundamental in the production of meanings. There is no way to eschew the intimate, private, distinctive aspects of this ever-changing relationship: hanging around the rainy Northern streets of Glasgow, David is

fascinated by a city in which he could enjoy the unfamiliar and yet read the well-known names of places at home: Kelvingrove, Glencoe, Aberdeen, Lyndoch, Sutherland, Fraserburgh, Dundee. There was no danger of feeling lost in Scotland, except that he felt dizzy with the to-ing and fro-ing between rain-sodden place names and the dry, dusty dorps at home. It was as if, along with his watcher, the vast terrain of South Africa had accompanied him as map, now folded and tucked into wee Scotland, and who in such wind and rain would choose to unfold a map? [...] In this friendly foreign city, his visit had become an exercise in recognizing the unknown, in remembering the familiar that cast its pall over the new (Wicomb 2000: 188-189).

Building on the idea of the *wrong bloody hemisphere* suggested in *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town*, Wicomb goes back to the dizziness provoked by being abroad in *Playing in the Light*. Here dislocation is commented upon using words that recall her first work and, once again, all prefixed ideas of 'abroad' tumble in the face of a series of overwhelming sensations. What should be a travelling experience for the character turns out to be more than Marion expected when she left 'home'. In London,

Marion experiences the world in reverse, she feels the topsy-turviness of being in the *wrong hemisphere*. [...] Believing that at some level she knows the country, or the language, she is shocked to find herself a stranger, so very different from the natives, although the motley crowds about her can hardly all be natives. The sensation of a hole, a curious, negative definition of the familiar emptiness, develops in her chest, and she feels compelled to see a doctor. But there is nothing wrong (Wicomb 2006: 188-189, my italics).

Scotland plays a key role in *October* (2014), being the country where the South African (partially autobiographical) protagonist settles during apartheid. Asked to go back to the new South Africa for family reasons, Mercia Murrey's diasporic standpoint makes way for a series of sharp comments on exile, belonging and affiliation that once again stress the uneasiness of the relationship between the individual and her space:

Return has always been a tricky notion, teeming with thorns. Why, people often ask, has she not returned to the country after Mandela's release? She would shake her head, shrug, would not deign to answer. As if exile were a frozen affair in which you are kept pristinely in the past, one that a swift thaw could restore so that, rinsed and refreshed, you are returned in mint condition to an original time, an original place (Wicomb 2014: 144).

However, it is *The One that Got Away* (2008), the author's second collection of short stories, which throws a light on Wicomb's complex diasporic perspective. In this work, Scotland and South Africa constitute a dual setting and the characters, many of whom recur from one story to the other, either have relationships with both places as natives/residents/exiles/travellers/visitors, or are related to them via parenthood or friendships. A network of connections more or less visible between Scotland and South Africa explored in these stories testifies to the slippery ground the notion of 'home' is supposed to derive from.

Accustomed to both South Africa and Scotland, Wicomb represents the two countries in familiar and unfamiliar fashions at the same time; as homely and un-homely, dissociating herself from their patronizing, clear cut and auto-referential rhetoric of nation and identity. Due to her physical, emotional and intellectual involvement with Africa and Europe, Wicomb has an innovative autonomy in her reflection on the role of places in the interpretation of objects and signs and, therefore, on the instability and arbitrariness of cultural meanings fashioned around inflexible ideas of history and geography. Discussing *Playing in the Light*, Carli Coetzee rightly pinpoints Wicomb's 'obsession' with libraries and archives and underlines the author's "interest in the context in which a text is read and interpreted" (Coetzee 2010: 559). In *The One that Got Away* Wicomb goes one step further and uses the space itself as a text, proving that the contexts in which space is read and interpreted entails a continuous shift of meaning. If we are to perceive it, there is no space without bodies crossing it and the resulting versatility makes it impossible to produce a coherent idea of the relationship between the individual, nation and belonging. A good example of Wicomb's approach to space and its (dis)contents is shown in *The One That Got Away* in the way she uses the Doulton Fountain, a Glasgow monument related to South Africa. This fountain comes to embody new attitudes towards place, nations and belonging because it changes according to different viewing and to the different emotions it evokes in its viewers.



The first story of the collection, *Boy in a Jute-Sack Hood*, is about a Scotsman, Grant Fotheringay, an historian who, as a student in the Seventies, is involved in the widespread Scottish protests against apartheid. Unable to find a job in Glasgow or Edinburgh as an adult, he obtains, quite fortuitously, an academic position in Cape Town and moves there: to the place he fought for when he was young. In a flashback on his childhood in Gorbals, a deprived neighbourhood in Glasgow, Wicomb sketches a shy boy and his dreamlike fascination with faraway places. Long before he commits himself to opposing the politics of a distant country he has never been to:

It was from the grand old derelict fountain on the Green, its cracked, blunt-nosed sculptures, that his dreams were fed. There a child from the Gorbals could escape to far-off lands via the terracotta tableaux of the colonies. [...] Trailing his red kite, he became an explorer, a discoverer of things that no Glaswegian had dreamt of; he wandered through weird vegetation, slew the giants of Africa and sailed off to India (Wicomb 2008: 10-11).

In the lower part of the fountain, which he still remembers badly damaged, smelling of excrements and surrounded by rubbish and broken bottles, his favourite section is that with the South African characters:



He favoured the bearded man in the South African tableau with a gun by his side, and at his feet a sweet, odd-looking girl who would speak in a lovely sing-song voice, quite unlike the slags who smoked and cursed in the close. But best of all was the ostrich with a long snake-neck and full, soft feathers like the girl's bosom, an image that guided his hand at night under the blanket and brought wet dreams of coupling with a continent (Wicomb 2008: 11).

The European man with the gun, the *odd-looking girl*, associated via simile with the iconic South African animal and leading the boy to a nocturnal solitary climax, parody the well-known metaphor for colonialism: a male practice embodying a patronizing attitude towards the land: unexplored, exotic and attractive – *odd-looking* – like a virgin to rape. In this story, the fountain has the side function of anticipating Grant's flight to far-off lands as a young man and adult; he will travel to India and eventually, as we learn, re-locate precisely to South Africa.

The Doulton Fountain was manufactured at the end of the Nineteenth century to celebrate Queen Victoria's reign over the four main British colonies (Australia, South Africa, India, Canada) and was one of the ornaments for the May 1888 International Exhibition of Science, Art and Industry in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow¹⁸. By the end of the century, the Victorian monument had been moved to Glasgow Green Park, where it slowly underwent abandonment and disrepair (leading to the conditions described in the memories of the daydreamer adolescent Grant) until 2002, when it was restored to be relocated in 2004 in front of the People's Palace, where it still stands. In this renovated shape we find it yet again in another story of this collection, *There's the Bird that Never Flew*. Here Jane, a South African coloured who travels to Glasgow with her husband for their honeymoon, takes a walk in the park to have a closer look at the monument which attracted her attention a couple of days before, when the rain did not allow her a careful examination of it. Jane has already gathered a lot of information about the fountain from leaflets and people. At first sight, she perceives the four niches/colonies as pretty much alike; then, seeing them again and again and stopping in front of the South African one, her attention is captured by the ostrich, Grant's favourite piece. As Julika Griem (2011: 396) underlines, Jane's insistence helps her to overcome the 'repetitive' quality of the colonial representation; that is, Jane's repetitive gazing radically changes the meaning of what she sees. To her, indeed, the ostrich means something different from Grant's interpretation and leads her to reflect elsewhere:

Of course, unmistakably the Cape rather than the riches of the Rand – the exotic flora and fauna that lured the Brits in pursuit of pure knowledge and scientific progress. No wonder the ostrich holds its head up for inspection. And then, following the line of the neck, Jane aligns upon the woman she has passed over at least twice. How could she have not noticed before, for there in the niche, sitting cool as a cucumber in the Glasgow chill, is a young woman, no more than a girl, but unmistakably coloured... Jesus, she says aloud; she has not been looking properly after all, has missed the girl in all that elaborate Victorian detail and modelled in the same white stone as all the other figures. South Africa, then, comes to offer a different kind of knowledge. Astonishing – and Jane stands transfixed as the water

¹⁸ A sort of Scottish counterpart of the more famous 1850 London Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace (Hyde Park).

carriers seem to aim at the pitchers at her - quite unbelievable that more than a hundred years ago miscegenation was celebrated in a public work here in the 'centre' (Wicomb 2008: 71).

The bearded man to Jane's 'culturally' expert gaze is clearly a Boer, not an Englishman, and the young woman a coloured, not an unidentified *sweet odd-looking girl* whose most attractive detail is her bosom. But she gazes further, guessing an intimate, forbidden relationship between the two:

The two figures looking out of the tableau do not instantly reveal their relationship to each other, but the fabric of the woman's classical garb brushes against his right leg, partially covering his knee, which is turned slightly towards her. The brush of clothing and the symmetries, the repeated verticals of spade and rifle in contact with each left hand, are metonymies of matter-of-fact intimacy. They are unmistakably a couple (Wicomb 2008: 77).

There is a third point of view on this fountain, belonging to Margaret, a local cleaner Jane questions about the monument:

Margaret hasn't seen it; it's only been moved there recently, although she seems to remember it elsewhere on the Green, carted over from the West End they said. She was only a girl then, but she recalls the monument being a dump, all in a mess, the fountain dead, statues without noses, the Queen's head lopped off as the winos threw their bottles of Buckfast at the figures, and the dog shat in the dry moat. She, Margaret, doesn't give a toss for all them tourist walkabouts. She nods at Jane with friendly contempt. See yous, she says cryptically, yous get to see everything, but you dinnae know a thing about the real Glasgow. That's why she stays put like that great grandda, stops at home, best place from which to keep an eye on the world (Wicomb 2008: 74).

The same object can, thus, produce quite different outcomes according to the watcher and his/her personal and cultural contexts. Seen from three perspectives, the fountain is also told in different linguistic registers. While in the case of Grant we receive the information from an omniscient narrator who relates with irony the child's sexual excitement in bed provoked by the memory of the statue – possibly suggesting also a puerile aspect in the colonial practices themselves – the two women's attitudes and thoughts about the fountain are given by way of an interior monologue which is typical in Wicomb's fiction, especially in the case of female characters. At the same time, though, classism is also at work: Jane and Grant, transnational characters, elaborate on their relationship with the monument; they interact with it, unlike 'motionless' Margaret, a working-class woman, who has probably never travelled in all her life and for whom the fountain is only a run-down, dirty

monument she has not seen for ages and, in a passive aggressive attitude, does not give a toss about. For Grant it stands as a symbol of his life to come; for Jane it suggests new interpretations of her country, unthinkable at home. To her, the statues also seem to say that there was a possible world, 'abroad', where a South African interethnic couple could exist (Richter 2011: 386). On the other hand, Margaret erases the fountain from her experience: she ignores its restyling possibly marking Glasgow's change of skin in the last couple of decades, a change she has not even acknowledged.

In her essay *Setting, Intertextuality and the Resurrection of the Postcolonial Author* (2004), Wicomb openly deals with the question of writing about South Africa while being based mainly in Scotland: "the impingement of my otherness in Scotland necessitates South African fictions" (Wicomb 2004: 13), she comments. In this essay, taking the cue from Kaja Silverman's concept of *proprioceptivity* (Silverman 1996), loosely translated as 'grabbing one's ownness', that is the body's sensation of occupying a point in space, Wicomb expresses her unease with Homi Bhabha's notion of the *inbetween space* occupied by postcolonial subjects (Richter 2011: 376). In Bhabha's *interstitial*, Wicomb sees the same dangerous denial of the corporality of the postcolonial writer "in much the same way as does the foreign culture that hosts her invisibility" (Wicomb 2004: 23).

Wicomb has been defined as a cosmopolitan writer, not so much because she is an African living in Europe and travelling a lot, but because her fiction builds a cobweb of intertextualities connecting faraway places in unpredictable ways as if to show that we all live in heterogeneous conditions (Driver 2010: 529) and every effort to build a coherent geographical or historical tale, devoid of the individual's emotional and psychological implications, is doomed to failure. The recurring characters in the stories, characters who can interact amongst themselves as well as ignore each other, stand for Wicomb's idea of the world: a small place, after all, but open to infinite readings and intersections.

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Photographs

Figure 1 - *Doulton Fountain, Glasgow* by Jacqueline Banerjee
<http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/fountains/3.html> [accessed on 31 July, 2015]

Figure 2 - *Doulton Fountain (detail), Glasgow* by Fergus Murray (courtesy of the author).

Maria Paola Guarducci is Associate Professor of English Literature at Roma Tre University. Among her fields of research: South African literature in English, Black British literature, relationship between the English canon and the Empire. She has published a monograph on the post-apartheid South African novel (*Dopo l'interregno. Il romanzo sudafricano e la transizione*, 2008) and articles on Jane Austen, W.M. Thackeray, Joseph Conrad, Samuel Beckett, George Lamming, Sam Selvon, South African women poets, etc. She has co-edited with Annalisa Oboe, *Le Simplegadi Special Issue: Cultures and Imperialisms* (XII, n. 12, 2014).

mariapaola.guarducci@uniroma3.it



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Andrew Taylor

Is there an Australian Pastoral Poetry?

Abstract I: La Pastorale è un noto genere letterario diffuso in Europa dal Rinascimento al diciottesimo secolo. Esisteva anche in altre forme artistiche, soprattutto nelle arti visive, e dopo la sua scomparsa come genere distinto alcuni dei suoi elementi costitutivi sono sopravvissuti nel ventesimo secolo, per esempio nella musica. Con la diffusione della cultura europea nelle colonie l'influenza della pastorale si è estesa ad altri paesi, con esiti differenti. Di recente, il termine 'pastorale' ha riacquisito importanza nella letteratura in inglese, non solo in Gran Bretagna ma anche, in particolare, negli Stati Uniti e in Australia, assieme ad un incremento della scrittura legata alla consapevolezza ecologica rispetto al mondo naturale, soprattutto nel caso del paesaggio. Questo ha portato, negli ultimi decenni, a delle ridefinizioni del termine 'pastorale'. Saranno perciò esaminati una serie di poeti australiani per verificare se, e come, la loro scrittura sul paesaggio ha una relazione con, o incorpora, elementi della pastorale. Il poeta australiano John Kinsella, in particolare, è stato un portavoce riconosciuto a favore di una nuova definizione della pastorale. Le sue opere ripercorrono il passaggio da una ridefinizione politicamente attiva e anticoloniale della pastorale ad un coinvolgimento principalmente etico, nonché più sereno e armonico, con il mondo naturale.

Abstract II: Pastoral was common as a European literary genre from the Renaissance until the eighteenth century. It existed in other artistic forms as well, especially in the visual arts, and after its demise as a distinct genre elements of it persisted into the twentieth century, for example in music. With the colonial spread of European culture the pastoral influence also extended into other countries, with a mixed fate. Recently, the term Pastoral has come back into prominence in literature in English, not only in Great Britain but also, notably in the USA and Australia, with the growth of writing motivated by ecological involvement with the natural world, especially landscape. This has led to re-definitions of the term Pastoral in the last few decades. A number of Australian poets are looked at to see whether, and how, their writing about landscape might relate to, or incorporate elements of the

Pastoral. The Australian poet John Kinsella, in particular, has been a widely published spokesperson for a new definition of Pastoral. His published works trace his move from a politically activist anti-colonialist redefinition of Pastoral towards a quieter, more harmonious, and essentially ethical engagement with the natural world.

What is Pastoral?

There is little dispute about what is meant by the term Pastoral, what I specify as the *Traditional* Pastoral, as it manifested in sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century European literature, painting and music. It has generally been considered to signify an idealized picture of rural life, written by an urban artist for an urban readership. (The shepherds and shepherdesses depicted would have been, of course, illiterate in real life, something conveniently ignored within the genre.) The fact that its roots can be traced back to Virgil's "Eclogues" (42-39 BCE) and before that via Theocritus (3rd C BCE) to Hesiod's "Works and Days" (700 BCE ca) need not detain us. The Traditional Pastoral in post-Medieval culture is a Renaissance invention. Could it, and has it, survived the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution?

It has certainly received clear-eyed scrutiny from twentieth century critics. M. H. Abrams puts it succinctly: "the traditional pastoral ever since Virgil has been a deliberately conventional poem expressing an urban poets nostalgic image of the peace and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting" (Abrams 1999: 202). One thinks of Adam and Eve before the Serpent's cunning incursion into their rural perfection in "Paradise Lost", where their biggest worry must surely have been whether it rained on their picnics. More cutting than Abrams, William Empson called pastoral a "polite pretence" (Empson 1935: 18) "which was felt to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor" (Empson 1935: 17). Raymond Williams is harsher in his critique, arguing that pastoral can "serve to cover and evade the actual and bitter contradictions of the time" (Williams 1973: 60). All three critics bring a political consciousness to bear on the genre.

One must not over-emphasise the role of the French and industrial revolutions in the demise of the Pastoral. Romanticism had its part to play too (one thinks of Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage" (1797) or "Michael" (1800), and before him, of Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village" (1770) and George Crabbe's "The Village" (1783). But it is hard to find a better image of the disruptive incursion of the new mechanical age into what seems to have been an immemorial rural tranquility than the opening pages of D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*, with the building of the railway across the land where the Brangwens had, it seems for centuries, existed in some kind of undisturbed harmony with the land and its

natural rhythms. And one must not forget, in this context, the title of Leo Marx's ground breaking 1964 study, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. (The machine in the garden was not, as one might expect, a lawnmower, but the railroad and its accompanying technology.)

Nonetheless, Traditional Pastoral has continued in forms other than poetry, especially in music. In English music, one thinks for example of Frederick Delius (1863-1934). His beautiful "Florida Suite" (1887) was written after his stint as a manager of an orange grove in Florida. It was inspired by the rhythms and qualities of the music of black workers, but without the slightest hint of the post-bellum poverty and injustice of the American Deep South. Then there is George Butterworth's (1885-1916) setting of Houseman's "A Shropshire Lad" (1911-12), and Vaughan Williams' composition "The Lark Ascending" (1921) and his 3rd Symphony, titled "A Pastoral Symphony" (1922), like Beethoven's. Williams (1872-1958) was an avid collector of rural folk music, but there is a world of difference between his music and that of his Hungarian Modernist contemporary, Bela Bartok (1881-1945).

I would like to mention one other example of Traditional Pastoral in modern forms which, for want of a better name, I would call the Heimat program, or homeland or locality program. This is a phenomenon of German television and, for all that I know, it could exist on other networks too. Each program, some as long as an hour in duration, is a beautifully shot study of some rural area, for example of the Lake District of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern or the river Lahn, with its villages, farms, woodlands, animals, and traditional occupations. One might see a woman making mustard, or baking traditional cakes for a wedding, or weaving or embroidering or making lace. One might see a cooper crafting a barrel, or testing and tasting some home-made fruit wine, or engaged in some other traditional, apparently immemorial occupation. In these programs it never rains, and there is no sight of the autobahn, or of the wind farm just over the hill, or of the nuclear power plant in the process of being decommissioned a few kilometers away. Contemporary Traditional Pastoral? Well, yes.

At this point, perhaps prematurely, certainly tentatively, I wish to offer my own not entirely original definition of Pastoral. By Pastoral, I mean a genre or mode, written or otherwise created from an urban vantage and employing a rural subject matter, in which an underlying tension between urban and rural can be discerned or unravelled. This tension is crucial to my definition, as it is in a less obvious sense a continuation of the political consciousness noted in the three earlier critics. The tension serves to disguise itself, as in the Traditional Pastoral, as harmony, sweetness and light. For example, it is only by a strenuous effort of neglect, or ignoring, that the camera can be made to point steadfastly away from all that is not tradition and harmony. It is only the overwhelming power of tradition and class that enabled Delius to betray no trace of the suffering of his black workers in his idyllic music.

On the other hand that tension can rupture the pretence of harmony, exposing the discrepancies and injustices and malignancies of the urban/rural relationship. But that is not what one calls Traditional Pastoral.

Australian landscape poetry

If one accepts my tentative definition of Pastoral, both potentially positive and potentially negative, one might want to ask whether landscape poetry is inescapably Pastoral by its very nature, or whether it can be pastoral at all. With the development of a literature in English in Australia in the nineteenth century, elements of the English Pastoral inevitably migrated to the continent. But in such a radically unfamiliar antipodean environment, coming to terms with the landscape became a primary concern, especially with the poets and painters. What relation, if any, did their landscape poetry and paintings bear to Pastoral?

In this context I think it is useful to follow Paul Kane's distinction, in his essay, "Woful Shepherds" between Pastoral as a genre, and Pastoral as a mode that can appear in many different genres. (In this distinction Kane, and I, differ from Paul Alpers in his *What is Pastoral?* – in that Alpers considers all Pastoral as mode rather than genre.) While conceding that there was a genre called Pastoral Poetry from the Renaissance until the eighteenth century, (what I have been calling Traditional Pastoral), Kane argues that at other times "Pastoral moves freely across many genres and always has... but it is not, in itself, a genre" (Kane 2004: 270). If we accept this distinction between pastoral as a genre (which had a specific time and place) and pastoral as a mode (which does not), one can use the term more flexibly and precisely. In his book *Farther Afield in the Study of Nature Oriented Literature* (2000) P. D. Murphy expands on this: "By a mode I mean a philosophical or conceptual orientation rather than a style or structure (which are what constitute a genre)" (Murphy 2000: 4). When I turn later to discuss the work of John Kinsella, the Australian writer most identified with the term Pastoral today, this distinction is relevant.

Ivor Indyk starts his chapter on the Australian pastoral in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* with these words: "If we define pastoral as the poetry of fulfillment and ease, in which the world of nature acknowledges and celebrates the desire of man, then we should have to admit that there are not many genuine examples of Australian pastoral" (Indyk 1988: 353). I would disagree with Indyk's characterization of Pastoral, as being somewhat too simple. Nonetheless one can agree with him when he claims that "Australian nature or landscape poetry... is... a tortured affair" characterised by estrangement and isolation (Indyk 1988: 353). As such, it would most certainly not qualify as Pastoral as characterized above. And it contradicts the rather strange claim by Corey

Wakeling, in his Introduction to a recent anthology, *Outcrop*, for the “fervency with which colonial poets took up the pastoral mode” (Wakeling, Corey & Balius 2013: 13).

Several nineteenth century poets, notably Charles Harpur (1813) and Henry Kendall (1813-1882), did write poems celebrating rural ease and fulfillment. “A Midsummer Noon in the Australian Forest”, by Charles Harpur, is probably the most famous instance, ending as it does with these peaceful lines:

O, 'tis easeful here to lie
Hidden from noon's scorching eye,
In this grassy cool recess
Musing thus of quietness (Harpur 1973: 25).

Yet even in such a moment of peace as this poem celebrates, we are gently reminded that noon's eye, the sun, can be ‘scorching’. (This is the ‘Et in Arcadia Ego’ theme explicated so brilliantly by Erwin Panofsky in his analysis of Poussin's (1594-1665) painting of that name.) And in Harpur's more gothic “The Creek of the Four Graves”, what looks at first to be an idyllic bush landscape turns out to be the site of a gruesome multiple murder (Harpur 1973: 3).

The characteristic note in nineteenth century Australian literature's response to nature is set, however, not so much by the poets as by prose writers such as Henry Lawson (1867-1922), Barbara Baynton (1857-1929), Joseph Furphy (1843-1912) and Henry Handel Richardson (1870-1946). The opening of Lawson's most famous story, *The Drover's Wife*, epitomises a bleak vision of the Australian landscape:

The bush consists of stunted, rotten native appletrees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which were sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilization (Lawson 1944: 89).

In such a forbidding and inhospitable environment, the best one can hope for is to survive with whatever dignity and courage one can muster. In Barbara Baynton's stories in *Bush Studies*, such as “Squeaker's Mate” (Baynton 1972: 54) and “The Chosen Vessel” (Baynton 1972: 132), one finds an even grimmer vision, the bush becoming a heartless participant in grotesque abuse, rape and murder, offering neither refuge nor consolation to the victims.

The painters' response to nature, at the end of the nineteenth century, could not have been more different. Arthur Streeton (1867-1943) painted *Fire's on, Lapstone Tunnel*, a picture of a tunnel disaster, in 1891, and Tom Roberts (1856-1931) painted a pastoral disaster in *The Break Away* in the same year. But instead of the estrangement and threat registered in the literature, we find in these paintings exultation in, celebration of, colour and light. Other contemporary Australian painters, also painting *en plein air*, such as

Frederick McCubbin (1855-1917) and Charles Conder (1868-1909), share this celebratory quality. It has marked the 'Heidelberg School' as distinct from the European Impressionists, to whom they've been likened.

So Australian painters constructed one landscape, and the writers another. However the alienation and distrust in early Australian writers has gradually been replaced, in many writers today, by a delight in, and love for, Australian landscape and a moving sense of belonging *within* it. Subject/writer and object/nature have moved towards the kind of integration that Lawrence Buell, in his book *Writing for an Endangered World*, calls "environmental connectedness" (Buell 2001: 17) and "place-connectedness" (Buell 2001: 28). This is something especially pertinent to some recent work by John Kinsella. (In a different context, this is a phenomenon explored by Peter Read in his book *Belonging*.) This may partly be explained by a growing understanding and care for a land no longer felt to be alien and threatening. Another factor may be a greater understanding of, and respect for, the indigenous peoples' traditional relationship to the land, even while it is complicated by an awareness of the colonisers' role in their dispossession. It has also been complicated by an awareness of ecological threat that the late nineteenth century artists – both painters and writers – did not feel. The threat now is not to the human from nature, but to nature from what we humans do to it. I will briefly attempt to trace the development and nature of this 'place-connectedness' or integration, and to see whether it is compatible with either characterisations of Pastoral that I have outlined above.

Kenneth Slessor's (1901-71) "South Country" comes immediately to mind, as a confirmation of Indyk's judgment that Australian landscape is 'a tortured affair'. Here is an unrelentingly harsh landscape where birth occurs in the most primal and difficult way:

...even the dwindled hills are small and bare,
As if, rebellious, buried, pitiful,
Something below pushed up a knob of skull,
Feeling its way to air (Slessor 1986: 132).

Is the land really so hostile to thought? Or to humanity in general? What were Slessor's thoughts on the land's indigenous inhabitants, one wonders, whose relation to the land could not have been more different? What is clear, however, is that Slessor is writing within the construction of landscape exemplified by, and largely created by, the earlier prose writers.

In contrast to Slessor there is Judith Wright (1915-2000). Her commitment to the rights and welfare of the indigenous peoples is too well documented to need elaboration, as was her love of Australian nature and her efforts on behalf of conservation. The other side of this consciousness, however, was that Wright's poetry was suffused with guilt for what her predecessors had done. Writing poetry for almost four decades after Slessor fell silent, Wright pointed the way forward. But the burden of the guilt she had assumed

always divided her from what she wished to celebrate. In this respect she could be considered to display that tension I consider a characterization of Pastoral.

David Campbell (1915-79) was a poet and grazier who lived near Canberra. Campbell wrote poetry in many modes, but those he wrote about his experience as grazier are most relevant here. The little poem, "Droving", is an exquisite expression of belonging to the land by working within it, and of generation – the 'tall son' with 'his girl' to whom, he hopes, his farm will be passed on, so that the cruelty of time and mortality is blunted. It is short enough to quote in full:

Down the red stock route, my tall son
Droves with his girl the white-faced steers
From the high country, as we would years
Ago beneath a daylight moon.
But now these two must bring them down
Between the snow-gums and the briars
Hung with their thousand golden tears,
To camp beside the creek at noon.
And finding them so sure and young,
The flower-fat mob their only care,
The days I thought beyond recall
Are ringed about with magpie song;
And it seems in spite of death and war
Time's not so desperate after all (Campbell 1973: 92).

In his essay titled "Squatter Pastoral", Chris Wallace-Crabbe defines in Campbell's writing "a peculiar serenity, a lyrical plainness of style, which is also the expression of region and occupation", to which he gives the name "squatter pastoral" (Wallace-Crabbe 1990: 75). In addition he notes elements of traditional pastoral genre, such as "simple swains, shepherdesses, sweaty nymphs or hayseeds", which also appear in Campbell's poetry (Wallace-Crabbe 1990: 76). In "Droving" we find such traditional pastoral elements as the young swain and his female companion at ease beside the creek, the rural setting, and even the shadow of time and death, the 'Et in Arcadia ego' theme. Bearing in mind Paul Kane's distinction between genre and mode, one could say that while a number of Campbell's poems, including "Droving", display pastoral elements, they do not strictly belong to the Traditional Pastoral genre. Neither do the poems of John Shaw Neilson (1872-1942), despite their quiet and subtle celebration of the natural and the non-urban, because they are neither nostalgic nor self-deluding, and Neilson himself was a poor rural worker who wrote unmistakably from that context. Like John Clare (1793-1864), he most definitely did not write from an urban vantage for an urban readership, one of the characteristics of traditional Pastoral. And neither did Campbell.

It could be argued that in following Empson and Williams, my definition of pastoral is too narrow for today's literary practice, especially Australian. Still, definitions are only useful if they define, and there is a danger that *any* poetry dealing with landscape and the rural may be called pastoral, thus making the term cover too much ground to be of any real use. As Alpers wrote in 1986, "modern studies tend to use "pastoral" with ungoverned inclusiveness" (Alpers 1986: Preface). Ivor Indyk comes close to that, I suggest, although his essay contains fine discussions of John Shaw Neilson and David Campbell. The English critic Terry Gifford offers one way forward. In his book *Pastoral*, Gifford postulates what he calls the "post-pastoral", which achieves "a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human" (Gifford 1999: 148). Avoiding the artificialities and escapism of modern British and American exemplars of traditional pastoral, the post-pastoral is conscious of our exploitation of the natural world and the harm we do to it, while also responding to, even celebrating, its complex vitality. Gifford is redefining the Pastoral as an ecologically responsible literary activity, whether poetry, fiction, whatever, regardless of its genealogy in literary history.

Landscape poetry as such (and I want to stress that 'as such') cannot therefore be, and should not be, confused with Pastoral. There are as many versions of landscape poetry as there are of Pastoral – more probably. Much landscape poetry can employ elements of the Pastoral mode without being traditional or any other kind of Pastoral. And much landscape poetry that displays Buell's 'place-connectedness' fails to display that tension that I consider a characteristic of Pastoral. But some does.

Three contemporary Australian poets

In an essay titled "The Purposes of Landscape Poetry: Ecology or Psychology?" (2010) I have previously discussed the work of three Australian poets who, like Campbell, have been writing what can loosely be called landscape poetry. The geographer Dennis Cosgrove writes that landscape "is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of the world" (Cosgrove 1984: 13). Even more succinctly, he writes that "Landscape is a way of seeing the world" (Cosgrove 1984: 12). In my earlier essay I discussed the poetry of Philip Hodgins (1959-95), Les A. Murray (1938) and John Kinsella (1963), to discern what 'purpose' their poetry served each of them. By purpose I mean the underlying, or over-riding, psychological or social, or in the case of Murray, spiritual imperative animating their poetry.

Philip Hodgins

Of the three poets I discussed only the third, and youngest, John Kinsella, can meaningfully be associated with the term Pastoral. Both in his poetry, and in his writing

about poetry, he displays a clear continuation and creative transformation of Pastoral within contemporary post-colonial Australian literature. On the other hand, while both Hodgins and Murray are excellent poets, their poetry serves different ends and springs from different preoccupations. Hodgins died of leukemia at the tragically early age of thirty-six, and one can only speculate on what he would have written had he lived longer. Some of his poems deal mercilessly with the horrors of his illness and its therapy. But Hodgins was a farmer, and much of his poetry deals with the details of rural life. Keenly aware of the ups and downs of farming life, Hodgins in no way idealises or romanticizes it. His landscape or, more precisely, rural poetry displays the same ruthless, clear eyed realism as do the poems about his illness. Also, written from within a rural point of view, they do not display the kind of tension that I consider a defining element of Pastoral. It is significant that in a poem alluding to Virgil, "Second thoughts on the Georgics" (Hodgins 2000: 100), it is Virgil's treatise on agriculture, animal husbandry and beekeeping, not the Pastoral *Eclogues*, that is referred to.

Les A. Murray

Les A. Murray is perhaps the best known Australian poet today, despite Kinsella's prodigious output. Much of his earlier poetry explicitly contrasts the rural with the urban world, very much to the detriment of the latter. For example, "When Sydney and the bush meet now / there is no common ground" (Murray 1994: 132). This has led many people to see him in some way as a poet only of the country. This however is a mistake, as his output has an impressive breadth and depth of concern. Even a relatively early poem, "An absolutely ordinary rainbow" (Murray 1994: 24) describes how the sight of "a fellow crying in Martin Place" transforms the everyday ordinary urban scene into an epiphanic scene of something approaching a miracle.

In fact, the animating spirit of Murray's whole oeuvre as a poet is a spiritual one. A long sequence such as "Walking to the Cattle Place" (Murray 1994: 77) reaches back to a pre-agricultural era "beyond roads or the stave plough" (Murray 1994: 63), an era which for Murray exemplifies a mythic sacredness inextricable from the exigencies of everyday life. Each of his numerous books is dedicated 'To the glory of God', whether articulating the world from the point of view of insects or animals, or from that of an urban dweller (as Murray was for many years) or from someone living in the country (as he now does). His poetry thus has a spiritual or religious dimension that Hodgins unflinchingly refuses to accommodate. This is also something incompatible with Pastoral as it has been understood, and as now I define it.

John Kinsella

Of all Australian poets, Kinsella is the one most closely associated with the term Pastoral. He is a passionate advocate of what he terms “international regionalism”. In a recent interview in the Griffith Review (Kinsella 2003: 41), for example, he defines this as “a way of discussing and viewing the local in an international context”. Equally, it is a way of bringing the international to bear on the local, of giving it a renewed life within a local context. Two books of his essays are particularly relevant here. In the collection of lectures, *Contrary Rhetoric* (Kinsella 2008), he has a chapter titled “Is there an Australian Pastoral?” (Kinsella 2008: 131-161). But of more relevance is what he writes in the slightly earlier book of essays, *Disclosed Poetics* (Kinsella 2007). Part I of that book is titled Pastoral, landscape, place...” In the first section, titled Definitions of pastoral?” he writes, “Traditionally, pastoral worked as a vehicle of empowerment for the educated classes through the idyllicising and most often romanticizing of the rural world” (Kinsella 2007: 1), and a bit later, “The pastoral is fundamentally the city’s idea of the country” (Kinsella 2007: 5) and also “the pastoral is a mirror to the monopolizing of comfort, power, control” (Kinsella 2007: 5). In other words, for Kinsella the Traditional Pastoral genre is a vehicle for asserting the superiority of the city and its power over the rural and, by extension, over nature. If there has been an Australian Pastoral (and in *Contrary Rhetoric* he writes, “There have been many Australian rural poets, but few pastoral poets”) (Kinsella 2008: 131) it would necessarily have a colonizing aspect, one that would assert its dominance not only over nature but also over the indigenous people.

It is for this reason that Kinsella sees the need to totally reject that stance; what he proposes is a new version, a Post-Colonial version of Pastoral. He writes. “I feel an obligation to overturn the language of exploitation and disempowerment that has characterized the pastoral” (Kinsella 2007: 11). And “The radical pastoral poet wants radical change” (Kinsella 2007: 10). And again, “the aim of radical pastoral is surely to highlight (even rectify: it is a machine for change) abuses of the non-human ‘natural’, of inequalities and injustices in hierarchical interactions” (Kinsella 2007: 7). Kinsella’s debt to Raymond Williams is obvious, but his subsequent call for a revolution of language is his own. “So where do we find the radical pastoral?” he asks. I quote at length:

What about the death of a fox on the vacant lot, the churchyard being pesticides, graveyard losing more and more of its bush periphery, sports ground so saturated in herbicide and pesticide sprays that it glows. Window-box pastorals of the city are not a revolution, but a realigning. We have to think tangentially (Kinsella, 2007: 15).

Clearly Kinsella’s affinity with Terry Gifford’s understanding of the term is apparent. And since Empson affirmed that there is more than one version of Pastoral, Kinsella has chosen this term for a poetry that radically realigns city viewpoint and rural reality. And which, given Australia’s colonial past, radically wakens us to the disempowerment and injustice suffered by the country’s indigenous peoples. It is, inescapably, a political pastoral.

Kinsella's most extended exercise in his new version of Pastoral is to be found in three volumes of poetry: *The Silo* (1995/1997), *The Hunt* (1998) and *The New Arcadia* (2005). The last of these even pictures on its front cover Poussin's painting *Et in Arcadia ego* (1637-38), and of course calls to mind the poems by the Italian poet Jacopo Sannazaro (1458-1530) and Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586). But Kinsella's *Arcadia* is a far cry from the harmonies and courtliness of the traditional Pastoral. *The Hunt* in particular expresses Kinsella's anger at the way nature has been despoiled by bad farming practices, and at the dispossession of the country's indigenous inhabitants. All three books are set in what in Western Australia is called the Wheatbelt, a vast stretch of land inland from, and to the north of Perth, devoted to the farming of wheat. This is an area that Kinsella knows intimately, and where he now lives. The poems detail not only the damage done to the land, but also to the people living there, whose lives can be brutalized and emotionally impoverished. In many of them the language is fractured, jagged and discordant, articulating the fracturing of Kinsella's way of seeing the world, his landscape. In *The New Arcadia*, for example, he angrily laments the cruelty and ignorance with which some farmers slaughter the local parrots (called Twenty-eights) by shooting and poisoning:

they rouse the farmer's gun
and the malicious ones who poison
wheat and watch as the flock
chokes on tongues (Kinsella 2005: 66).

Kinsella adopts Terry Gifford's term anti-pastoral, and uses his own term, poison pastoral, for this kind of writing. (Gifford's term appears in his *Green Voices*, a study of modern British Pastoral.) This is where Kinsella's call for a revolution of language to disrupt and overturn the hidden assumptions of Traditional Pastoral comes into play, and it is a manifestation of the tension that I consider essential to my understanding of Pastoral.

By the time he published *Jam Tree Gully* (2012) Kinsella's discordant landscape, his way of seeing the world, and consequently discordant language has abated. In fact, there were elements of this development already in *The New Arcadia* where he could at times assert the unity of language and landscape. For example in one poem he states "I borrow words / from before I could speak, the tones of wandoo and mallee, / intricacies of roots..." (Kinsella 2012: 142). Wandoo and mallee are two kinds of native vegetation, and the calm syntax of the poem is itself a reflection of this new-found harmony between the language of nature and the language of the human. In the words of Robert Macfarlane, in his recent book *Landmarks*, there is "a sense of reciprocal perception between human and non-human" (Macfarlane 2015: II, unpaginated).

This more harmonious note, in which the natural and the human align in syntax, comes more to the fore in *Jam Tree Gully* (a jam tree is a type of eucalypt), and even more so in the more recent collection, *Divine Comedy: Journeys into a Regional Geography* (2008).

Consequently Kinsella's overt interest in radical pastoral seems to have waned, though elements of it are still to be found in his recent collection of small prose pieces, *Tide* (2013), with their depiction at times of the cruelty and brutality of country life. In some of this more recent poetry there are still people shooting animals or maybe even other people, the spraying of poisons, the almost intolerable heat, drought that withers the little trees he has planted, rain that washes the topsoil downhill. But in one of his essays he alludes to a desire to settle firmly in one place – in the country – and absorb himself into its life – just as Murray did. And that is exactly what he does in these recent poems. They are a luminous and joyous witness to the intricacies and complexities – and contradictions – of what happens in one small part of the country when one dwells in it - dwells *on* it - with intense concentration. When one not only takes from it, but gives oneself to it. To go back to Buell's phrase, they are a poetry of 'place connectedness'. Or to use Macfarlane's words, they are examples of a language which can "restore a measure of wonder in our relations with nature" (Macfarlane 2015: *ibid.*).

Given the political conscience of Kinsella's oeuvre, the consciousness that gave rise to his radical or poison Pastoral, there is one further and crucial element in this more recent poetry. It is animated by a delight in the wonders and beauties of so much of the natural world, certainly. But also by his belief that he is doing the right thing, by an *ethical* affirmation. His guiding spirit is the American writer Henry David Thoreau (1817-62), who is frequently quoted in the poems' epigraphs. It is an ethics of respect, of giving oneself to the natural world in such a way that its riches are given back in response. The earlier disharmony, discord between the natural and the human, is resolved in this relationship, and the discordant language has been resolved into harmony too. This is the poetry of someone for whom the terms Pastoral, radical Pastoral, even poison Pastoral, have been of use in a realignment of interests, ethics and language. And now they can be put a little to one side – at least for the moment. The book's short final poem, "Envoy: On Melodeclamation", encapsulates this:

How has the stony earth
so effectively hidden the bones
of the people who came first?

Maybe the stones
are those bones
and we can't distinguish –

or won't – the sounds of native birds
accompanying our words,
fulfilling our wishes (Kinsella 2013: 157).

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Andrew Taylor is the author of more than fifteen books of poetry, the most recent being *Collected Poems* (Salt, UK 2004) and *The unhaunting* (Salt, UK 2009), which was short listed for the 2009 Western Australian Premier's Book Awards. He has published much literary criticism, and written the libretti for two operas, as well as translating poetry from German and Italian. He is Professor Emeritus at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia but now divides his time between Sydney and Wiesbaden in Germany.
a.taylor@ecu.edu.au



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Lucio De Capitani

Diasporic History and Transnational Networks in Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*

Abstract I: *Baumgartner's Bombay* di Anita Desai adotta la prospettiva di un ebreo tedesco scampato allo sterminio nazista e di un'ex cabarettista per collegare le storie di India e Germania. Quest'articolo esamina come questi personaggi – testimoni di una molteplicità di storie e ricettacoli di una varietà di istanze culturali – diano vita ad una rete diasporica di connessioni che smantella la solidità della storia ufficiale e dà un senso alla desolata esperienza dell'esilio.

Abstract II: Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* adopts the perspective of a German Jewish Holocaust survivor and of a former cabaret performer to connect the histories of Germany and India. This paper examines how these characters – witnesses to a multiplicity of stories and receptacles of a variety of cultural instances – engender a diasporic network that dismantles the solidity of official history and grants a meaning to the desolate experience of exile.

Diaspora and exile are undoubtedly ambivalent and controversial conditions. As Edward Said claims, the experience of exile, at least within the “large, impersonal setting” of the mass displacements of the contemporary age, is hardly ever romantic or enriching, and cannot be conceived as “beneficially humanistic” (Said 2000: 173) without banalising the havoc it wrecks on people. However, even with these premises, Said acknowledges that exile does maintain some beneficial traits. As he explains, “most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*” (Said 2000: 186). This contrapuntal vision, the potential to juxtapose different worlds, enabling people to establish unexpected connections, is arguably *the* redeeming feature of diasporic experiences. As a case in point, Anita Desai's 1988 novel *Baumgartner's Bombay* explores precisely this tangle of ambiguities.

The novel tells the story of a German Jewish Holocaust survivor, Hugo Baumgartner, who is forced to escape to India to survive Nazi persecution, leaving his mother behind. When World War II breaks out, he is arrested by the British and interned as a “hostile alien”. He is released at the end of the war, in time to see Calcutta devastated by Partition.

After collecting a packet of postcards from his mother – from which he understands that she was brought to a concentration camp and murdered – he seeks shelter in Bombay, where he spends the rest of his life, his only friend being Lotte, a gin-addicted former cabaret girl he had met in his early days in India. Hugo is ultimately killed by a drug-crazed hippie, Kurt. The novel ends with Lotte in her flat, contemplating Hugo's postcards, which she has managed to get hold of.

Desai's two previous novels – *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and *In Custody* (1984) – tackled the consequences of Partition in Delhi and the crisis of Urdu culture in postcolonial India. *Baumgartner's Bombay*, seemingly a radical thematic shift, is actually a consistent development of these concerns. As Aamir Mufti claims, the Jewish question in Europe represented the inception of "set of paradigmatic narratives, conceptual frameworks, motifs, and formal relationships concerned with the very question of minority existence, which [were] then disseminated globally" (Mufti 2007: 2). Its general features were re-enacted within the debate on the role of Muslims in India. There is, therefore, a coherent pattern linking *Baumgartner's Bombay* and the two novels that preceded it, as all these works, exposing interrelated discourses of marginalization, deal with minorities and individuals assaulted by history. In *Baumgartner's Bombay*, the networks of oppression that Desai had mapped within the Indian context are investigated in Europe, only to come back to India as the narrative unfolds.

The idea of connecting people and histories is arguably the leading principle of the novel. This paper explores how Desai employs diasporic and liminal figures like Hugo and Lotte to create a subversive counter-history. The two characters, emerging from backgrounds that include Jewish archetypes and Holocaust narrative tropes, and Weimar Republic cinematic and literary imagery, are conceived as witnesses to a multiplicity of stories and receptacles of a variety of cultural instances, which they carry from one continent to another. They thus engender a diasporic network that dismantles the solidity of national history and grants a meaning to the desolate experience of exile. I will therefore try to sketch the cultural and literary constellations from which Hugo and Lotte emerge and connect them with Desai's ensuing vision of history.

It would seem at first that the titular character, Hugo Baumgartner, is defined essentially by his Jewishness. As a Jew who travels from place to place, unable to find companionship, Hugo lends itself to a mythical reading as a Wandering Jew. More problematically, the helpless Hugo seemingly represents the stereotype of the Jew as a passive victim of Holocaust violence. Hugo's death at the hands of Kurt, which he somehow foresees but does little to prevent, might be taken as a proof that Desai frames her character as absorbed within a victim identity. Desai, however, insisted that she had no intention of "[feeding] the myth of the passive Jew who walked willingly into the internment camps, a willing victim of Hitlerism" (Demas Bliss & Desai 1988: 523), and that "Hugo is not a representative of the Jewish race to me but of the human race, of displaced

and dispossessed people and tribes all over the world" (Demas Bliss & Desai 1988: 523).

The idea of Hugo as a universal symbol of human suffering makes sense especially if we consider Desai's attempt to focus on an international – and not merely Indian – panorama of oppression. Desai's humanism, however, is rooted in the historical specificity of the settings she deploys. In Alex Stähler's words, "the Indian setting is relevant in that it allows Desai to point out affinities between the brittle realities in this country by comparison with the German backdrop" (Stähler 2010: 85). Desai's "associative style" (Stähler 2010: 87) exposes her character to a multiplicity of different, but not random, histories, and connects faraway cultural spaces through an ethical effort of imagination, bringing together the pieces of a complex transnational puzzle.

This conception of overlapping histories is consistent with the origins of Hugo as a character. Desai mentions two main sources for Hugo. The first one is her mother, a German expatriate. Desai states that "all the material for [the Berlin chapter] comes from the stories my mother would tell me of her childhood in Berlin [...]. It was an effort to reconstruct the world of her childhood in pre-World War II Germany" (Demas Bliss & Desai 1988: 526). However, the opportunity to integrate this background within an Indian narrative came through an Austrian Jew living in Bombay. As Desai recounts:

I knew someone who knew him, who used to go to the races with him [...]. When he died [...] my friend was asked to go through his belongings and dispose of them. He brought me a packet of letters to read; they were written in German, and he wanted to know if they were important. They were not; they said very little, simply contained everyday questions and were filled with endearments [...]. These letters were all stamped with the same number. Later I read that Jews in concentration camps during the holocaust were allowed to write a certain number of letters, during the early years at least. These letters were stamped with the numbers they bore in the camps. Only then did I realize what that number had meant. I did not know this man's history or anything about his past. I needed to invent one (Desai & Pandit 1995: 155–156).

Desai realized that she could provide the man with the background borrowed from her mother. The two stories were hence re-imagined as one in the character of Hugo, who allows them to interact and become mutually illuminating, to acquire a meaning they did not have by themselves. Filling the blank spaces of the story of the Austrian Jew, Desai triggered the interaction between the silenced stories of Germany and India.

Desai highlights analogies between periods of German and Indian history, such as between the last years of the Weimar Republic and the Indian Partition. As a witness to both, Hugo is the one who connects the memories of these instances of violence. The Nazi attacks in Berlin during the *Kristallnacht* are described in similar terms as the Great Calcutta Killing, which Hugo witnesses years later: in both scenes Hugo is woken up by

horrifying screams, and in both scenes the characters watch the enactment of violence from a window, at very relative safety distance. Desai's mirroring histories recount also subtler instances of violence. One is the gradual dispossession, in concrete terms, of minorities, and their resulting psychological devastation. In Germany, the protagonist of the manoeuvre is the businessman Pfuehl, that exploits the breakdown of Hugo's father to take over his business. Despite the gentle façade, Pfuehl is relentless and ruthless in his psychological pressure on Herr Baumgartner, contributing to the latter's suicide. On the other hand, the situation of Habibullah, Hugo's Muslim acquaintance, compelled to leave Calcutta due to the Partition riots, is not too different. When Hugo meets him, he is being forced to sell all his goods for a fraction of their value to a Marwari trader, who is probably behaving like Pfuehl. However the two episodes are not symmetric, but tackle the issue from two different perspectives – the former shows the schemes of the perpetrator, the latter the plight of the victim. Desai creates complementary situations that Hugo's peripheral vision brings together, filling the gaps of the two fragmented narratives.

Desai knows that the way of the world is not to mix up different national histories. Such awareness is best articulated when Hugo hears of the activities of the Indian National Army, a nationalist formation who tried, during the World War II, to overthrow the British rule with the help of the Japanese army. The discovery of this further internal front grants Hugo an insight on the nature of conflict and history:

His war was not their war. And they had had their own war. War within war within war. Everyone engaged in a separate war, and each war opposed to another war. If they could be kept separate, chaos would be averted. Or so they seemed to think, ignoring the fact that chaos was already upon them. [...] A great web in which each one was trapped, a nightmare from which one could not emerge (Desai 2007: 206).

Hugo understands that even if we follow a single thread of history we ultimately remain trapped in the 'great web'. Desai seems to suggest that, since this entanglement is inevitable, it may be worthwhile to actively try to follow multiple historical trajectories. Consistently, her protagonist becomes a receptacle of stories, which are merged within one overly complicated life. It is precisely Hugo's marginality that allows him to bring a valuable insight into the situations he lives in. Desai's strategy consists in "selecting out of the edges [...] of Baumgartner's failing vision slivers of urban decrepitude" (Belliappa 2008: 349), which however, once connected, emerge from the nightmare of history as meaningful.

The other character that plays a similar role is Lotte, the former cabaret performer. Her real name, Lotte, is connected, in a German context, with the angelic female figure of Goethe's *Werther*. Lotte's stage names, instead, recall icons of Weimar Republic culture. In Germany she is known as Lulu, in India she is known as Lola. Lulu is the character created

by Frank Wedekind for the diptych of plays *Erdgeist* (1895) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1904), focused on the arch femme fatale Lulu, who, in a part of the play, works precisely as a vaudeville artist. The plays are the basis for the iconic Weimar film *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1929), directed by G. W. Pabst and starring Louise Brooks. Lola-Lola, on the other hand, is the cynical cabaret singer played by Marlene Dietrich in another classic Weimar film, Josef von Sternberg's *Der Blaue Engel* (1930), based on Heinrich Mann's novel *Professor Unrat* (1905).

Lotte, therefore, brings along a significant historical and cultural density. She is an almost parodic version of the bewitching Lulu/Brooks and Lola-Lola/Dietrich. In particular, in certain aspects, Desai may have created Lotte as a downfallen Marlene Dietrich. When we first meet her, she sings a clumsy rendition of 'Lili Marlene', Dietrich's signature song. Both Dietrich and Lotte are expatriates – with the difference that Dietrich's life ended in a fancy flat in Paris. She too, moreover, had significant problems with alcohol. Most importantly, their legs – Dietrich was well-known for her magnificent legs, which, however, as she grew older, suffered from severe circulation problems (see Bach 2011). Unsurprisingly, the first detail we get to know about Lotte is that she is escaping from the flat of the recently murdered Hugo "at [...] a speed no one would have thought possible on those red heels that were no longer firm but wobbled drunkenly under the weight of her thick, purple-veined legs" (Desai 2007: 7, my italics).

Another literary connection that may illuminate Lotte's role within the novel, emerging once again, from late Weimar period, is Sally Bowles, a character created by Christopher Isherwood in his short story 'Sally Bowles' (1939), part of the collection *Goodbye to Berlin*. The character – best known through *Cabaret* (1972), the film adaptation of Isherwood's story, in which she was played by Liza Minnelli – is a would-be actress who sings in a night club, leading a bohemian life in the Berlin of the early '30s. Sally is particularly close to Lotte as regards some personality traits and their role within the poetics of their respective works. Both are self-assured, decadent characters, with a tendency towards self-delusion. Most importantly, both are unaware of the historical situation they live in, adopting a glamorous 'devil-may-care' attitude towards political or historical developments surrounding them.

In both *Goodbye to Berlin* and *Baumgartner's Bombay*, the cabaret girl seems to provide essentially a bohemian touch to the picture. Both characters, however, represent an important aspect of the poetics of the novels. Both works present history in a discontinuous pattern, focusing on the marginal viewpoint of their characters, revealing only at a given time the inexorable presence of historical forces. Isherwood's sketches map the gradual rise of Nazism in Weimar Germany. Short story after short story, Nazism occupies more and more space in the texture of the city and of the narrative, until it is accepted by the Berliners as a natural fact. Desai's global odyssey, on the other hand, depicts the constant attempt of exiles like Hugo and Lotte to run away from the centre of

things, only to be caught by history again, hitting them suddenly and violently like a landmine. She alternates moments of truce, like the first period of Hugo's and Lotte's life in India, and moments of elevated historical density, like the Partition riots.

Within this framework, the cabaret girl epitomizes the unawareness of ordinary people when they are confronted with history. Both Lotte and Sally, thinking it is possible to escape from history in a glittering flash of glamour, naively believe that historical turmoil had nothing to do with them. More specifically, Lotte, mimicking the style of Weimar cabaret, vaudeville and cinema, brings the typically late-Weimar idea of "dancing on a volcano" – Gustav Stresemann's phrase to describe the unthinking celebration on the verge of catastrophe we also read of in Isherwood – to the Indian context. Through Lotte, Desai establishes another historical bridge between pre-war Germany, about to experience the Nazi regime, and pre-independence India, about to experience Partition.

However Lotte endorses a different role at the end of the novel. When she returns to her flat with Hugo's postcards – in the scene that opens and ends the novel – she becomes the custodian of the diasporic history Desai has been sketching throughout the novel. In this sequence, Lotte confronts the postcards three times. Her first attempts leave her utterly overwhelmed, but, in the short passage that closes the novel, Lotte emerges as a more focused figure, ready to embrace the significance of the postcards:

By the teapot, on the table, she spread out the cards, sniffing at longer and longer intervals. She moved them about till they were all in orderly row before her. All. Each one stamped with the number: J 673/1. As if they provided her with clues to a puzzle, a meaning to the meaningless (Desai 2007: 273).

What is, then, the meaning of the postcards?

Firstly, the postcards – written by Hugo's mother from the concentration camp – represent the transnational and intricate structure of the novel, as their complex origins contain the whole of the novel's multiple narrative threads. They speak of Hugo's childhood in pre-war Germany. They bear the mark of Holocaust. They waited for Hugo while he was interned. They were part of his mourning in Calcutta, while Partition was taking place. They stayed with him for the rest of his life in Bombay. Finally, they survived Hugo's death. The postcards *are* Hugo's story, and therefore do contain the clues to give meaning to the meaningless, explaining the far-reaching reasons of Hugo's death in Bombay. Lotte, having perhaps understood this secret connection, becomes the custodian of Hugo's life.

Secondly, the novel opens with a quote from T.S. Eliot from the *Four Quartets*: "In my beginning is my end". The quotation refers to the structure of the novel, which begins with the final scene and closes with the reprise of that very scene. However, it also refers to the postcards: the letters of the Austrian Jew of Bombay that Desai had the chance to envision were the starting point for her experiments with imagination to fill the blanks of that

otherwise forgotten existence. The final image of *Baumgartner's Bombay* – Lotte, reading the postcards – represents the inception of the writing process of the novel itself. The postcards testify to the survival of a network, ranging from Berlin to Bombay, in the midst of the catastrophes of history.

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Lucio De Capitani è dottorando presso l'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia. I suoi interessi di ricerca includono la letteratura indiana in lingua inglese, la *world literature* e l'antropologia. Nel 2013 ha tradotto il testo teatrale *Frost/Nixon* di Peter Morgan per il teatro Elfo Puccini di Milano.

lucio.decapitani90@gmail.com



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Elisa A. Pantaleo

La diaspora americana in Europa: il caso degli espatriati in *Tender is the Night* di F. Scott Fitzgerald

Abstract I: Dal 1921 al 1930 F. Scott Fitzgerald fece quattro viaggi in Europa e visse per circa quattro anni in Francia e per un anno in Svizzera. I soggiorni all'estero e il clima multiculturale di Parigi e della Costa Azzurra provocarono un significativo cambiamento nell'atteggiamento dello scrittore verso l'Europa: *Tender is the Night* testimonia il passaggio dal nazionalismo intransigente delle prime lettere di viaggio a una crescente sensibilità verso l'Altro europeo. Il confronto con l'Europa, che nel romanzo si concretizza in un'ibridazione della lingua e dei personaggi, porta lo scrittore a una rilettura della propria identità in chiave cosmopolita.

Abstract II: From 1921 to 1930, F. Scott Fitzgerald travelled to Europe four times, and he spent almost four years in France and one year in Switzerland. While living abroad in the multicultural environment of Paris and of the French Riviera, his attitude towards Europe underwent a major change. *Tender is the Night* marks a significant transition from the narrow nationalism of Fitzgerald's first travel correspondence to an increased sensitivity towards European otherness. The cultural encounter with Europe – that in the novel is rendered through an hybridization of the language and the characters – helped the author to reinterpret his identity in a cosmopolitan perspective.

L'itinerario diasporico di Francis Scott Fitzgerald cominciò il 3 maggio 1921, quando, insieme alla moglie Zelda, lo scrittore si imbarcò sull'*Aquitania* alla volta dell'Europa. Il viaggio si protrasse fino al 27 luglio: i Fitzgerald visitarono l'Inghilterra, la Francia e l'Italia; ma il ritratto del Vecchio continente, delineato in una lettera del luglio 1921 a Edmund Wilson, fu alquanto impietoso.

God damn the continent of Europe. It is of merely antiquarian interest. Rome is only a few years behind Tyre and Babylon. The negroid streak creeps northward to defile the nordic race. Already the Italians have the souls of blackamoors. Raise the bars of immigration and permit only Scandinavians, Teutons, Anglo Saxons and Celts to enter. France made me sick. It's silly pose as the thing the world has to save. I think

it's a shame that England and America didn't let Germany conquer Europe. It's the only thing that would have saved the fleet of tottering old wrecks. My reactions were all philistine, anti-socialistic, provincial and racially snobbish. I believe at last in the white man's burden. We are as far above the modern frenchman as he is above the negro. Even in art! Italy has no one. When Anatole France dies French literature will be a silly jealous rehashing of technical quarrels. They're thru and done. You may have spoken in jest about N.Y. as the capitol of culture but in 25 years it will be just as London is now. Culture follows money and all the refinements of aestheticism can't stave off its change of seat (Christ! What a metaphor). We will be the Romans in the next generation as the English are now (Fitzgerald 1921: 46-47).

Tuttavia verso la metà di aprile del 1924 i Fitzgerald salparono di nuovo per l'Europa, con l'intenzione di trasferirsi temporaneamente in Costa Azzurra per risparmiare: "We were going to the Old World to find a new rhythm for our lives, with a true conviction that we had left our old selves behind forever – and with a capital of just over seven thousand dollars" (Fitzgerald 1924: 41).

Dopo avere vissuto per qualche mese a Saint-Raphaël, partirono alla volta dell'Italia e ai primi di maggio del 1925 affittarono un appartamento a Parigi, dove entrarono nel circolo degli espatriati e degli artisti che gravitavano intorno al salotto di Gertrude Stein. A marzo del 1926 si ristabilirono in Costa Azzurra e ci rimasero fino a dicembre, quando tornarono in America.

Ma quello non fu l'unico soggiorno lungo in Europa: dopo il terzo viaggio nel Vecchio continente – dall'aprile al settembre del 1928 – a marzo del 1929 lo scrittore e la famiglia emigrarono ancora una volta in Francia. Alla fine di aprile del 1930 Zelda ebbe il primo esaurimento nervoso e, in seguito a un breve ricovero nella clinica Malmaison di Parigi, i Fitzgerald si spostarono in Svizzera; poi a metà settembre del 1931 rientrarono definitivamente negli Stati Uniti.

Benché gli anni in Europa abbiano sollevato non pochi dibattiti critici in relazione alla vita dello scrittore e alla sua produzione letteraria – lo stesso Fitzgerald parla del Vecchio continente come un luogo di "1000 parties and no work" (Fitzgerald 1919-1938: 75) –, quella fu anche la fase più matura della sua carriera e portò, tra le molte opere composte in quel periodo, alla creazione del suo capolavoro: *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Molti sono i documenti a testimonianza della vita nel Vecchio continente: lettere, saggi, racconti e soprattutto *Tender Is the Night* (1934), il romanzo europeo di Fitzgerald. In *The International Theme in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Literature* (1995) E.A. Weston suddivide gli scritti europei in tre periodi: le opere del primo periodo – *Rags Martin-Jones and the Prince of Wales* (1924), *How to Live on Practically Nothing a Year* (1924), *A Penny Spent* (1925), *Not in the Guidebook* (1925) e *Love in the Night* (1925) – sono intrise di un ottimismo romantico e descrivono l'Europa come un luogo in cui realizzare i sogni e le ambizioni giovanili; i

racconti del periodo intermedio – *Majesty* (1929), *The Rough Crossing* (1929), *The Swimmers* (1929), *Two Wrongs* (1930), *A New Leaf* (1931), *One Trip Abroad* (1930), *The Bridal Party* (1930), *Hotel Child* (1931), *Flight and Pursuit* (1932) e *Indecision* (1931) – narrano invece perdite e delusioni; infine, la produzione dell'ultimo periodo – *Babylon Revisited* (1931), *Tender Is the Night* (1934) – è caratterizzata da note di tristezza e nostalgia e racconta storie di decadenza morale e di declino. Weston sottolinea, però, che manca un'analisi approfondita del ruolo degli europei nella produzione letteraria dello scrittore: all'epoca il tema dell'internazionalità era stato trattato solo in due saggi, incentrati sull'immagine della Svizzera (Schmid 1978) e dell'Italia (Raulston 1978).

Senza dubbio il vuoto critico è stato in parte colmato dal saggio "Fitzgerald's expatriate years and the European stories": l'autore propone un percorso analitico che spazia dai racconti di ambientazione europea degli anni Venti, a due scritti del 1935, composti dopo il ritorno in America, e asserisce che "Between the earlier and later European stories we observe a notable shift from exuberant nationalism toward a more tolerant cosmopolitanism, as well as an intensifying awareness of expatriation's irreversible consequences" (Kennedy 2001: 119).

L'itinerario diasporico nel Vecchio continente creò le condizioni ideali di incontro e di convivenza con l'Altro europeo, che cambiarono radicalmente la percezione iniziale di Fitzgerald sull'Europa e lo portarono a una profonda riflessione introspettiva sulla propria identità di cittadino americano espatriato e sull'americanità in generale. Più di ogni altra opera, *Tender Is the Night* è in questo senso il testamento di Fitzgerald sull'esito degli anni di soggiorno all'estero.

Il romanzo, fortemente autobiografico, ebbe una composizione travagliata – lo scrittore cominciò a lavorarci in Europa nel 1925, ma lo terminò nove anni più tardi negli Stati Uniti – e racconta la storia di Dick e Nicole Diver: una giovane coppia di americani che – come i Fitzgerald – vive in Costa Azzurra, circondata da una comunità di espatriati dediti alla vita mondana, e viaggia tra Parigi, la Svizzera l'Austria e l'Italia. Già dal primo capitolo è chiaro che Dick/Fitzgerald e Nicole/Zelda non assomigliano agli altri turisti arrivati in Francia negli anni d'oro della capitale e della riviera: "A tourist is somebody who gets up early and goes to cathedrals and talks about scenery" (Fitzgerald 1930: 579) dice Mrs Miles in *One Trip Abroad* (1930) – il racconto a cui Fitzgerald attinse a piene mani per la stesura di *Tender Is the Night*; come invece nota Rosemary, l'altro personaggio centrale di *Tender Is the Night*: "Something made them unlike the Americans she had known of late" (Fitzgerald 1934: 11), e quel qualcosa è dato proprio dalla permanenza dei Diver/Fitzgerald in Europa e dalla loro capacità di penetrare nel Vecchio continente.

Fin dalle prime pagine del romanzo, infatti, lo scrittore presenta una comunità americana contaminata dall'Altro e dall'altrove in cui i personaggi vivono. C'è una doppia forza che sottende la compagnia di espatriati nell'opera: da un lato Dick e il suo entourage costituiscono un circolo chiuso in sé stesso, all'apparenza avulso dall'ambiente circostante

e ben attento a non lasciarsi assimilare e contaminare dall'Europa: a metà del primo capitolo Rosemary nota che il gruppo di Dick è caratterizzato da "the atmosphere of a community upon which it would be presumptuous to intrude" (Fitzgerald 1934:10) e alla fine del terzo capitolo ammette che "they obviously formed a self-sufficient little group, and once their umbrellas, bamboo rugs, dogs, and children were set out in place, that part of the plage was literally fenced in" (Fitzgerald 1934:23); d'altro canto, però, c'è un'intima corrispondenza tra i Diver e la Costa Azzurra. Al capitolo sette, per esempio, si legge: "the diffused magic of the hot sweet South had withdrawn into them – the soft-pawed night and the ghostly wash of the Mediterranean far below – the magic left these things and melted into the two Divers and became part of them" (Fitzgerald 1934: 48).

Gli espatriati di *Tender Is the Night* si muovono in un contesto multiculturale a cui è difficile restare impermeabili; sono molti gli europei che fanno la loro comparsa nel romanzo: i francesi, gli italiani, gli svizzeri, i russi, gli inglesi. In superficie il ritratto dell'Altro è piuttosto stereotipato e visto attraverso il filtro del nazionalismo americano: i francesi sono assetati di denaro e aggressivi – come Tommy Barban che nel decimo capitolo del primo libro dà un ceffone a Mr McKisco o la cuoca Augustine che nel quinto capitolo del terzo libro minaccia Dick con una mannaia; la Svizzera è un Paese di mutilati e moribondi, un crocevia che accoglie senza domande indiscrete "people who are no longer *persona grata* in France or Italy" (Fitzgerald 1934: 322); gli inglesi sono ridicolizzati per le loro maniere affettate e per l'ipocrisia nascosta dietro i titoli nobiliari: "England was like a rich man after a disastrous orgy who makes up to the household by chatting with them individually, when it is obvious to them that he is only trying to get back his self-respect in order to usurp his former power" (Fitzgerald 1934: 256-257). I miliardari russi sono apprezzati per i loro modi galanti, ma vengono sempre presentati in una condizione di decadenza: dopo la grande rivoluzione chi è tornato in Costa Azzurra fa l'autista, il cameriere, il maggiordomo, la *femme de chambre*; gli italiani sono senza dubbio i peggiori agli occhi di Dick/Fitzgerald: "Do you know what these old Roman families are? They're bandits, they're the ones who got possession of the temples and palaces after Rome went to pieces and preyed on the people" (Fitzgerald 1934: 291) dice Dick a Collis Clay al ventiduesimo capitolo del secondo libro.

Eppure sotto questa patina di intransigenza verso i popoli europei, la sensibilità di Fitzgerald per la contaminazione culturale è molto forte: da un punto di vista linguistico l'americano subisce numerose incursioni di francese, italiano, tedesco e spagnolo. Il francese è usato soprattutto nelle situazioni di forte tensione emotiva: nel dialogo per regolare i conti dopo il duello all'undicesimo capitolo del primo libro, nei commenti alla scena dell'omicidio di Maria Wallis al diciannovesimo capitolo, nella discussione tra Tommy e Dick in seguito al tradimento di Nicole all'undicesimo capitolo del terzo libro, come a volere offrire al lettore un'ottica straniante rispetto agli eventi crudi di cui gli americani sono protagonisti. Il tedesco ha un'aura accademica: è la lingua dei trattati

scientifici del dottor Diver e dei colloqui con il dottor Gregorovious e il dottor Dohmler; l'italiano appare nella scena più violenta del romanzo e dà ancora più colore al temperamento animalesco e intollerante delle forze dell'ordine romane.

C'è anche un forte 'contagio' fonetico tra le lingue: i francesi, ad esempio, chiamano gli americani con l'appellativo "Meestaire", un adattamento lessicale e fonetico dell'inglese *Mister*; lo stesso Dick, nella scena dell'incidente al capitolo quindici del secondo libro, traduce la propria identità dall'americano al francese, chiedendo al figlio Lanier di andare a cercare soccorso alla pensione vicina e dire: "La voiture *Divare* [Diver] est cassée" (Fitzgerald 1934: 253). E ancora, al capitolo ventidue del secondo libro Dick cerca di contrattare il prezzo della corsa con i tassisti romani, proponendo "Trente-cinque lire e mancie" (Fitzgerald 1934: 294), e nel capitolo successivo, dopo il pestaggio, Baby esorta i carabinieri a fare qualcosa per Dick e reagisce al loro "We can do nothing until we are ordered" con un "Bay-nay!", che starebbe per l'italiano *Bene!* (Fitzgerald 1934: 300).

A ciò si aggiunge il fatto che i personaggi sembrano non avere una nazionalità ben definita: nelle ultime pagine del libro la spiaggia di Gausse, un luogo di ritrovo emblematico per gli espatriati in Costa Azzurra, viene descritta come "an international society" in cui "it would be hard to say who was not admitted" (Fitzgerald 1934: 361). Più la comunità di americani cerca di definirsi in opposizione all'Altro europeo, più Fitzgerald ne sottolinea la natura ibrida: Dick Diver, che incarna simbolicamente la genesi e il fallimento del sogno americano, ha in realtà origini irlandesi – al pari dello stesso Fitzgerald: "His voice, with some faint Irish melody running through it, wooed the world" (Fitzgerald 1934: 28), "That part of him which seemed to fit his reddish Irish coloring she [Nicole] knew least" (Fitzgerald 1934: 190); Rosemary ha studiato a Parigi e "sometimes the French manners of her early adolescence and the democratic manners of America, these latter superimposed, made a certain confusion and let her in for just such things" (Fitzgerald 1934: 13-14); Lanier e Topsy, i figli di Dick e Nicole, hanno "the odd chanting accent of American children brought up in France" (Fitzgerald 1934: 40); Campion "was of indeterminate nationality, but spoke English with a slow Oxford drawl" (Fitzgerald 1934: 10); Mr McKisco ha impresso addosso "an uncertain and fumbling snobbery, a delight in ignorance and a deliberate rudeness, all lifted from the English" (Fitzgerald 1934: 49); Mr. Brady parla con "a faintly defiant cockney accent" (Fitzgerald 1934: 33); Tommy Barban è metà americano e metà francese, ha studiato in Inghilterra e ha indossato "the uniforms of eight countries" (Fitzgerald 1934: 42). Anche la storia della famiglia americana dei Warren, il cui cognome a Chicago causa "a psychological metamorphosis in people" (Fitzgerald 1934: 212), ha in realtà forti legami con l'Europa: la madre di Baby e Nicole ripeteva sempre alle figlie che "we knew our way around Europe. She did, of course: she was born a German citizen" (Fitzgerald 1934: 91); Mr. Devereux Warren, il padre di Nicole, parla in tedesco con il dottor Dohmler perché "he had been educated at Göttingen" (Fitzgerald 1934: 168); Baby Warren è "an American girl in the grip of a life-long Anglophilia"

(Fitzgerald 1934: 230) e Nicole sa parlare quattro lingue – tutte europee – e nel tempo libero traduce dall'inglese al francese.

Come ne *The Great Gatsby*, il fulcro di *Tender Is the Night* è il fallimento del sogno americano; ma se il *Gatsby* era per ambientazioni – New York e Long Island – e per tematiche un romanzo decisamente americano, in *Tender Is the Night*, grazie agli stratagemmi linguistici e narrativi illustrati, gli ideali dell'America, messi a confronto con l'Europa, superano i confini nazionali e stimolano una doppia riflessione: sull'America – quella delle origini e quella contemporanea a Fitzgerald – e sull'identità dello scrittore e degli espatriati. C'è in tutto il romanzo un confronto continuo tra i valori originari dei pellegrini e la modernità, caratterizzata dal trionfo dell'avere sull'essere: il declino progressivo di Dick rappresenta simbolicamente la sconfitta dei propositi dei padri, degli antichi valori di "honor, courtesy, and courage" (Fitzgerald 1934: 268) che – come Dick – vengono inghiottiti dai soldi. Ma non è solo il denaro a cambiare profondamente il dottor Diver: il soggiorno in Europa lo rende incapace di tornare in patria, di riadattarsi alla cultura da cui proviene. Il diciannovesimo capitolo del secondo libro è particolarmente significativo al riguardo: in occasione del funerale del padre, Dick ripercorre i luoghi degli insediamenti primordiali in America: "the trains that bore him first to Buffalo, and then south to Virginia [...] he saw a star he knew, and a cold moon bright over Chesapeake Bay; he heard the rasping wheels of buckboards turning, the lovely fatuous voices, the sound of sluggish primeval rivers flowing softly under soft Indian names" (Fitzgerald 1934: 269), ma si rende conto che "he had no more ties here now and did not believe he would come back [...] Good-by, my father--good-by, all my fathers" (Fitzgerald 1934: 269-270).

Insistendo sul rapporto dialogico tra America ed Europa, in *Tender Is the Night* Fitzgerald non soltanto mette in luce la necessità inevitabile per una giovane nazione di rapportarsi con il suo progenitore, ma si schiera a fianco di tutti quei modernisti di orientamento internazionale – Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, Robert Frost, Sinclair Lewis, etc. – che vogliono sprovvincializzare la letteratura americana in un continente, l'Europa, che dà loro una maggiore libertà di espressione. Benché la diaspora artistica del primo Novecento abbia senza dubbio un carattere elitario e presenti problematiche etniche, sociali ed economiche assai diverse dalla scrittura diasporica contemporanea, il soggiorno in un continente Altro, il confronto e la convivenza con culture diverse dalla propria, hanno spinto l'autore – nonostante l'epoca di forti nazionalismi – a oltrepassare i rigidi confini nazionali e a ripensare la propria identità in chiave cosmopolita.

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Elisa Pantaleo è traduttrice letteraria dall'inglese. Nel 2013 si laurea in traduzione letteraria presso il Dipartimento milanese dell'Università di Strasburgo, traducendo *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* di F. Scott Fitzgerald (Feltrinelli Zoom, 2014). Dello stesso autore è uscita nella raccolta *Racconti*, a cura di Franca Cavagnoli (Feltrinelli, 2013), la sua traduzione di *Un breve viaggio a casa*; ha inoltre tradotto e curato *Tenera è la notte* (Feltrinelli, 2015). Dal 2014 lavora a un progetto di ricerca sulle traduzioni italiane di *Tender Is the Night* per il dottorato in Studi Linguistici, Letterari e Interculturali in ambito europeo ed extraeuropeo dell'Università degli Studi di Milano.

pantaleo.elisaaurora@unimi.it

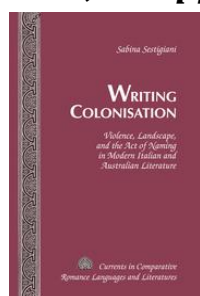


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Paolo Bertinetti

Writing Colonisation: Violence, Landscape, and the Act of Naming in Modern Italian and Australian Literature

Sabina Sestigiani. 2014. *Writing Colonisation: Violence, Landscape, and the Act of Naming in Modern Italian and Australian Literature*. Peter Lang: New York, 254 pp., US\$ 87.95. ISBN 9781433123986.



http://www.peterlang.com/download/datasheet/75932/datasheet_312398.pdf

Sestigiani's innovative essay examines the relation between language, violence and colonialism through comparing some key works by Italian and Australian writers; and combines an illuminating investigation on the symbolic meaning of space, border and the unknown (which is based on the rationalization of space in Western culture), with a philosophical, linguistic and anthropological approach to colonisation.

The most striking feature of her scrutiny, which investigates the ways in which language has been utilised to ideologise the colonial experience (particularly with respect to the relationship between landscape and language), is to be found in the fourth and fifth chapters of her essay, dedicated to the act of naming and to Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*.

The book is divided in three parts and has eight chapters; and is a crucial critical analysis and comparison between selected Australian and Italian narrative texts that explores landscape, its definitions, representations and critical discourses. Sestigiani's scrutiny originally contributes to the study of colonialism in its relationship with language and the act of naming, and it also adds meaningful insights on the authors analysed.

Place naming, as Sestigiani shows adapting Benjamin's theory of *Ursprache* to her theme, becomes a way to possess an unknown territory and to subdue it through a process of appropriation (in stark contrast she offers an interesting example of the non-arbitrary bond between language and things in aboriginal place-naming). In the fourth chapter Sestigiani also takes into consideration Heidegger's view of the act of naming (his theory

of an 'enframing' of reality), which she discusses in the context of her inquiry in a very convincing way.

Through Benjamin's reflection on language, Sestigiani dedicates the following chapter to a textual analysis of the element of place-naming in David Malouf's *An Imaginary Life*: Ovid, during his exile in "barbaric" Tomis, is presented as trying to capture the myth of a pristine language devoid of the deceits of communication. "Malouf builds on Ovid's incapacity to adapt to the new environment, and gradually starts linking the poet's scornful rejection to his being deprived of language". As Ovid tries unsuccessfully to "translate" that foreign and barbaric land in Latin, *An Imaginary Life* advocates a parallelism with the Australian reality, where the "language of civilization" and the act of naming a hostile environment end up recreating a concocted otherness.

The entire book is characterized by an impressive richness of critical discourse and offers an original and engaging standpoint on the fallacies of the colonial adventure.

Paolo Bertinetti is Professor of English Literature at the University of Turin. Among his publications are studies on 20th-century English Theatre, Restoration drama, Graham Greene, postcolonial literature and espionage novel. He is editor and co-author of a two-volume history of English literature and of a short history of English literature, both published by Einaudi.

paolo.bertinetti@unito.it